TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESERVICE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' LIFE HISTORIES AND THEIR CONCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE-ORIENTED DEMOCRACY

by

JOSEPH R. NICHOLS, JR.

(Under the Direction of Hilary G. Conklin)

ABSTRACT

This research provides a case study of how two preservice social studies student teachers' autobiographical narratives relate to how they conceptualize social justice-oriented democracy. Through the use of life history interviews, observations of classroom practice, and document analysis, this study explores how this relationship was manifested in each participant's student teaching seminar and field experience. This research was designed to draw a picture of who preservice social studies teachers are so that teacher educators can develop a better understanding of how preservice teachers use their autobiographical narratives as one means through which they can interpret their democratic identity.

INDEX WORDS: Social Studies Education, Democracy and Education, Social Justice-Oriented Democracy, Preservice Teacher Education, Life History Methods

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DEDICATION

This work and labor of love is dedicated to all the social studies teachers who sacrifice everyday to make the United States a more just, equitable, and democratic society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the product of a journey that I could not have trod alone. Without the support of my colleagues, mentors, friends, and family, I am most certain that I would still be wandering in the woods. Thank you all for being my compass. Thank you all for providing me a map. And thank you all for reminding me that, yes, it is ok to stop and ask for directions.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents for having agreed to pay for as much education as I was willing and able to complete. At the time my dad made this promise to me, he seemed to be in a most safe position. I was uninterested in anything that even smelled of school. Somewhere along the way, however, I grew to love everything about learning. As I gained an appreciation for my educational journey, my parents were stuck with the bill. So, without you, I cannot imagine how any of this work would have been possible.

Next, I would like to thank Georgia College & State University Professor of Government and Sociology Hank Edmondson. Without having attended his classes, I doubt that this work would have ever gotten off the ground. Through his example, I learned how to read critically and listen openly. I also learned how to craft thoughtful arguments and began to discover how powerful schooling can be for the transformation of life and American democracy. Dr. Edmondson helped me understand that the fate of American democracy and society is directly impacted by the political socialization that occurs in our public schools. And although he and I may not agree about what schools should look like, I cannot underestimate the impact that Dr. Edmondson's guidance has had on my work. I cannot remember having had a better teacher.

Without the dedication and support of my doctoral committee, I do not believe that I would have finished this project. Hilary, my advisor, has been my steady guide. Throughout my research and writing process, she proved to be the lighthouse I looked to as I navigated through what often appeared to be think fog. At the same time, Todd not only challenged me to think more critically about my research, but he also took the time to help me become a better teacher educator in the classroom. Lastly, Stephanie always pointed me toward different, more interesting modes of thought about my work. Thank you to a group of phenomenal teacher educators. I can only hope to live up to the models of practice that you have set forth for me.

To my mentor Stephanie Serriere, I cannot begin to describe the joy that I have found in our conversations about social studies and democracy. Your example makes me more excited and more passionate about this important work. I hope to continue these conversations for many years. You are truly a great scholar.

Writing this dissertation would have been lonely had I not had the constant companionship of my pets. To Matt, my dog, I send a big thank you for laying at my feet. Without you, I would have had to talk to myself. At least with you by my side, I looked less like a crazy academic mumbling into the atmosphere. To Louisa, my cat, I send not a thank you, but an acknowledgement. I am sure I would have been much more productive had you not walked back-and-forth in front of my computer, laid on my data sets and readings, meowed incessantly at my feet, and used my lap as a springboard for jumping on and off my desk.

Finally and most importantly, Katy Nichols has been by my side through this whole ordeal. She has played many roles – sounding board, friend, therapist, banker – and has sacrificed much to see that this project was finished. I know that her support was critical to my

success. So, Katy, the only words that I can think to say are: There is no one like you. You are the best.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> "The stories people tell about themselves are interesting not only for the events and characters they describe but for something in the construction of the stories themselves. The ways in which individuals recount their histories – what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audiences – all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life: they are the means by which identities may be fashioned" (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992, p. 1).

The sky was blue. As we sat on the patio waiting for our drinks, I watched a teenaged couple in a convertible dance down the road. They seemed happy, lost, and oblivious to the world around them. With each beat of the music, they bobbed, bobbed, bobbed their heads and sang at the top of their lungs. I enjoyed watching that teenaged couple. I became imaginatively wrapped in their blissfulness.

I turned back toward my family. My father-in-law had just picked up a piece of bread to butter it when something happened. A strange man in a long and tattered shirt who had been sauntering outside the iron fence that enclosed the restaurant patio turned toward us. As my father-in-law put the butter knife back down on his plate, this lost and ragged man walked over

toward our table. And like a prisoner peering through his cell, the man placed his hands on the bars of the iron fence and asked us for some help. So, my father-in-law handed our visitor his piece of buttered bread.

Like a flash of lightening, the man spat on the bread and threw it back in my father-in-law's face. The man could see that we were startled. No one at the table had expected that turn of events. And as if in response to our unasked questions about what had just happened, the man yelled, "I don't need no bread!" We then started to laugh. The man stared blankly at us, we continued to eat, and he walked away.

For a long time, I did not know how to make sense of that event. I suppose that most people would have forgotten about what had taken place that sunny, summer afternoon. Or they would have laughed and continued to retell the same story. Each time starting, "Remember when that crazy homeless guy..." And they would have ended with, "My God, he was rude!" For a while, I did forget and I did retell that same old story. Yet, while writing this dissertation, my mind has forced me to revisit this seemingly insignificant moment. I have begun to rethink what that experience might have meant. What does my family's interaction with that man say about how I am positioned in the world? How does my reflection on that interaction help me interpret how I see issues of justice as they are enacted in my everyday life?

Rawls (2001), in his exegesis on justice, notes that any expression of power or liberty or any distribution of goods is only just if it is allocated "to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society" (p. 43). In other words, social justice in American society is dependent on our commitment and ability to redistribute our resources in ways that would benefit the man in my story. He did not want a simple, single piece of bread. Instead, what I think he wanted was for society to extend a hand and give him his fair share. In my mind, the

interaction between my family and this man is simply a metaphor for the structural inequalities that are built into the society in which we live. The haves, in this case represented by my family, are often living in separate spaces from the have-nots. In the story, we were sitting comfortably in a fenced-in restaurant patio. We were separated from the have-nots by an iron fence. We were safely protected from the ragged man. Our only interaction with him, as is often the case with these two groups, was through that fence. We did not cross that fence so that we could better understand the man. Instead, we handed him a piece of bread. We had handed him something that he did not want.

My continued reflection on this interaction as a metaphor for how justice often plays out in American society has enabled me to better understand how I think about episodes of injustice and how I handle those episodes in my everyday life. Because I want to be a person that works against the injustices of our society, this reflective process is important to helping me fashion my identity as a person. Through thinking about my reaction to this man's behavior, I have begun to recognize how I can replicate hegemonic power relations in the simplest of my actions. My laughter was an expression of power. It was an affront on that man's humanity and his needs as an individual. I leave this life experience knowing that it has impacted how I view my interactions with others, especially others that are different from me.

I share this story to point out that storying can be one tool that individuals can use to construct their identities and define themselves according to their lived experiences (e.g., McAdams, 1988, 1993; McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006; & Sarbin, 1986). From this perspective, "storytelling appears to be a fundamental way of expressing ourselves and our worlds to others" (McAdams, 1993, p. 27). Accordingly, the storytelling process is one central means by which researchers can begin to understand how individuals make sense of themselves

and their work. Therefore, the research study presented in this dissertation provides an exploration of how two preservice social studies student teachers use autobiographical narratives to describe how they make sense of democracy and democratic citizenship. In this study, I also place specific emphasis on how those narratives are or are not lived out in each preservice student teacher's field experience and student teaching seminar.

In this chapter, I first state the research problem. The focus of this section will be to argue that although narrative accounts in teaching and teacher education are relatively commonplace, more research work needs to be done to look into how preservice social studies student teachers' autobiographical narratives connect to democracy and social justice. Second, I outline my research questions. Third, I share two stories from my teacher education practice. These two stories will provide a foundation for how I began to develop this research. In the fourth section of this chapter, I specifically discuss how these two stories helped me focus my thinking about how preservice social studies teachers conceptualize democracy and democratic citizenship. Finally, I provide an outline of the remaining chapters.

Statement of Research Problem

Social justice in teacher education requires that teacher educators attend to the social, political, and economic structures that perpetuate injustices (e.g., McDonald & Zeichner, 2008). This work means that teacher education programs should account for hegemonic power relations such as privilege and poverty, classism, racism, sexism, and other means through which public political spaces are closed to individuals and groups (see Adams, Blumenfeld, Castañeda, Hackman, Peters, & Zúñiga, 2010; Bell, 2007 for examples). And as United States society moves toward greater levels of ethnic diversity, debate about the role of education and assimilation is becoming more pervasive and more heated. For example, the *New York Times* (Thompson, 2009,

March 14) recently reported that in the suburbs outside Washington, DC polarization between immigrant groups and white Americans outside school has been affecting students inside school. As one student noted, "If I am going to end up cleaning houses with my mother... why go to school" (Cost Versus Benefits, para. 5)? Situations such as the one described by this student are the scenarios that social justice teacher educators should consider in their classrooms. Accordingly, teacher educators who are focused on helping promote social justice notions of citizenship and democracy (e.g., Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a,b) need to directly confront the real issues that students are living in their daily lives. Cochran-Smith, Shakman, Jong, Terrell, Barnatt, and McQuillan (2009) rightly point out that these teacher educators should be tasked with helping their preservice learners promote experiences that give students, like the girl worried about cleaning houses with her mother, the agency to change society so that it is more equitable, just, and democratic.

As a social studies teacher educator committed to furthering our understanding of teaching that will help support justice-oriented democracy, I am interested in how preservice social studies teachers' life experiences relate to how they conceptualize democracy, democratic citizenship, and democratic teaching practice. Because the organization of American society is built around hegemonic power relations, how preservice social studies teachers understand these issues and their interaction in the classroom can be an important component toward creating educational experiences that help foster justice and equality. As Stanley (2010) makes clear, "Schooling has functioned, in general, to transmit the dominant social order, preserving the status quo" (p. 17). Teachers with a social justice-orientation of democratic citizenship can work against this traditional set-up of schooling by implementing democratic practices in their teaching (Ochoa-Becker, 2007).

Even though democratic social studies education is conceived by social studies teacher educators as a method by which secondary social studies teachers can foster democratic citizenship, the majority of American social studies classrooms often do very little to promote high quality civic education programs (Kahne & Middaugh, 2010). Arguing for strong democratic education, Ochoa-Becker (2007) points out that "democratic teaching requires teachers who are deeply committed to democratic principles and who see the development of informed, thoughtful and democratic decision makers as their most significant responsibility" (p. 216). Furthermore, several scholars (e.g., Gillette & Schultz, 2008; Hahn, 1998; Hahn & Alviar-Martin, 2008; Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999) have argued that for preservice teachers to teach for democracy they must first have had experience participating in acts that will help lead toward a democratic mindset. And although the educational literature is replete with analyses of the types of citizens necessary to cultivate democracy (e.g., Avery, 2002; Biesta, 2007; Parker, 1996, 1997, 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a,b) and descriptions of educative practices needed to promote democratic growth (e.g., Dewey, 1916/2007; Engle, 1960/1996; Hess, 2002, 2008, 2009; Parker, 2001, 2003, 2008; Ochoa-Becker, 2007), very little research exists that illustrates how preservice social studies teachers' life experiences with democracy relates to how they conceptualize democracy, democratic citizenship, and democratic teaching practice. As Dinkelman (1999) notes in his study about teacher education and preservice social studies teachers' conceptions of democracy, "When [the participants] were first exposed to the idea of democratic citizenship as a rationale for social studies, it was brand new to all of them" (p. 32). Dinkelman's finding raises several interesting and unanswered questions for social studies teacher education. For example, what kinds of experiences do preservice social studies teachers have with democracy? How do those life experiences relate to their conceptions of

democracy, democratic citizenship, and their ability to teach in ways that promote democratic society? My goal with this research is to outline the cases of two preservice social studies teachers so that social studies teacher educators can better answer these questions.

At the same time, although life history studies have been conducted in literacy education (e.g., Johnson, 2007; Muchmore, 2001), physical education (e.g., Sykes, 2001; Wedgwood, 2005), and career analyses of teachers (e.g., Ball & Goodson, 1985; Goodson, 1992, 1994; Kelchtermans, 1993; Sikes, Measor, & Woods, 1985), I have not been able to find any studies that use life history methods in preservice social studies teacher education. From my review of literature, I have found that only Munro (1998) employs life history methods in the social studies. Her study, however, focuses on career teachers' culture of resistance and does not examine preservice teacher learning. This dissertation, therefore, is designed to open new avenues for research that will enable social studies teacher educators to answer Adler's (2008) call that "one place to begin inquiring into teacher beliefs is to ask about prospective teachers' beliefs about the nature of social studies and citizenship" (p. 341). By looking into the lives of those that are studying to become social studies teachers, I will illustrate how life history can be used in the social studies as one means for developing an understanding of preservice teacher learning about democracy.

In conjunction with my focus on life history methods, this dissertation is grounded in a narrative approach to qualitative research in that I examine the stories that my participants told me during the research process. Specially, I am concerned with the role that narrative thinking (e.g., Bruner, 1991; Bruner & Kalmar, 1998; McAdams, 1988, 1993; McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006; Sarbin, 1986) can play in preservice social studies teacher learning. In this sense, my dissertation focuses on how my participants used the stories from their life experiences to

help them conceptualize social justice-oriented democracy. And although narrative accounts in teaching and teaching teachers about teaching are commonplace in teacher education research (e.g., Clemente & Ramírez, 2008; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1999; Doecke, Brown, & Loughran, 2000; Witherell & Noddings, 1991), I argue that social studies teacher educators should work to better understand how preservice social studies teachers' narrative play out in the way that they learn about democracy, democratic citizenship, and democratic teaching practice.

I argue that social studies teacher education should assume a more complex accounting of how people construct their understanding of the world through the stories that they tell. Teacher education researchers in the social studies who are interested in examining how preservice social studies teachers come to understand democracy and democratic citizenship can explore the autobiographical narratives of those preservice social studies teachers. Several scholars have argued that examining the life experiences of teachers can help teacher educators develop a more complex picture of how teachers make sense of their teaching practice and their profession (e.g., Gomez, Rodriguez, & Agosto, 2008; Goodson, 1994; Johnson, 2007; Knowles, 1992). These same scholars have also called for teacher education researchers to further investigate teachers' life histories. By looking into the lives of two preservice social studies teachers, this study works toward answering this call for research.

Research Questions

In order to promote a more just and equitable society, social studies teachers should work toward developing curricular experiences that afford social transformation (Stanley, 2010). By applying life history methods to explore how preservice social studies teachers learn about democracy, my research goal is to develop a better understanding of the experiences that may lead preservice social studies teachers to conceptualize democracy as founded on a perspective

of social justice. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how preservice social studies teachers' life histories relate to their understanding of social justice-oriented democracy. Specifically, I am interested in the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between preservice social studies teachers' life histories and their conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy?
2. How is this relationship manifested in their student teaching seminar, their student teaching practice, and their developing rationale for teaching social studies?

In this dissertation, my goal in answering these questions will be to create a window through which teacher educators can begin to understand how life experiences may help preservice social studies teachers develop a social justice-orientation toward democracy.

Stories From My Teacher Education Practice

When reflecting on the problem outlined above and on my questions about how life experiences relate to preservice learning about democracy, my thinking has consistently returned to two stories from my teacher education practice. Each story presents an incident that had occurred in one of the social studies curriculum courses that I have taught at Southern University[1]. In telling these stories, I hope to begin to uncover the nature of the work that is presented in this dissertation.

A Photo of Inauguration Practice

During the third week of January 2009 when the country was engrossed in the inauguration of President Barack Obama, I found a picture on the *New York Times* (Crowley, 2009, January 12) webpage that I thought provided interesting commentary on United States society. The picture showed members of the United States military standing position in practice

[1] To help ensure confidentiality, the name Southern University is a pseudonym.

for the upcoming inauguration. On a park bench in the background, a homeless man was shown attempting to get some rest. He was tightly bundled against the frigid temperatures characteristic of a late January day in the Mid-Atlantic.

I displayed this photo in my social studies curriculum course and asked that my students free-write about the following question: "What does this photo tell us about democracy?" After several minutes, I asked volunteers to share what they had written. A few students spoke about the political and transitional characteristics of democratic government such as the logistics associated with smooth changes in power. One student, however, took a very strong stance which, to be honest, caught me off-guard. This student pointed out that for her the picture showed that democracy did not equal choice. Being perplexed by what she had meant, I asked this student if she could please elaborate on her comment. What followed was what caught me by surprise. She continued, in my interpretation, with an air of belligerence and frustration by noting that the homeless man had not been forced into his homelessness. This student also noted that the service men and women depicted in the photo, unlike the homeless man lying on the bench, had chosen to do something meaningful with their lives. Of course, I still could not figure out how this student's description of the photo explained her statement about democracy not equaling choice.

I remember that I had been completely surprised and disturbed. I remember that several thoughts had raced through my head. How had this student come to see homelessness as nothing more than a choice? Why was this viewpoint brought out by my question about democracy? I left class that day concluding that this individual viewed democratic society narrowly and simply. I assumed that this student defined democracy as only a social platform that individuals use to express and fulfill their self-interests. Democracy, according to this student's perspective, I

thought, seemed only to be about individual choice and not about communal responsibility. I left class assuming that this student's definition of democracy did not include Dewey's (1916/2007) "mode of associated living" (p. 66). I remember wondering and questioning why my student had conceptualized democracy in this way. I also remember not having had any answers to my questions.

The Case of Troy Davis

October 2008 proved to be a salient month in my development as a novice social studies teacher educator. On an abnormally cold fall day, the case of Troy Davis had been brought to my attention during a meeting of the social studies curriculum course I had been teaching. At that time, Mr. Davis was regarded as one of the most famous and controversial residents of the state of Georgia's penal system. Mr. Davis' case had drawn international attention to America's use of capital punishment. Amnesty International (2009) had been vehemently arguing that Mr. Davis had been improperly convicted of murdering an off-duty Savannah, GA, police officer and should, therefore, be granted clemency from execution. The European Union had strongly protested Mr. Davis' conviction by urging the President of the European Parliament to submit a written statement to Georgia's governor asking that he stay Mr. Davis' execution (Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 2008, October 24).

A student in my social studies curriculum course had brought Mr. Davis' case to our attention during a class discussion about democratic values. In an attempt to push our stagnating discussion forward, my student mentioned that the case of Troy Davis provided a concrete example for how justice was being enacted in American society. This student's goal had been to engage the class in a discussion on the meanings of justice, how those meanings might interact with democracy and democratic citizenship, and how those meanings and interactions could be

incorporated into social studies teaching practice. My student argued that, as future social studies teachers, the class needed to spend some time developing an understanding of these concepts. And although this student had not explicitly argued for Troy Davis to be pronounced innocent, she had encouraged the class to problematize justice and critique how justice was being enacted in our society. As I left class that day, I was excited. I remember thinking that finally one of my students was beginning to think through and develop a complex definition for democracy and democratic citizenship as well as an exploration for what those definitions might mean for social studies teaching practice. I remember thinking to myself, "Wow! She gets it."

The Two Stories, My Thoughts, and the Origins of My Research

I tell these two stories because they provide the juxtaposition against which this research originated in my thinking about preservice social studies teacher education and its relationship to democracy. In the first story, I had come to think of my student's views of homelessness as antidemocratic. That student's view that the homeless man had not been forced into his homelessness had caused me to interpret her thoughts on democracy as a system that enacts a "you get what you deserve" attitude. At the same time, I had viewed the student in the second story as one who had come to conceptualize democracy and the enactment of justice as a social responsibility. The second student's concern that the preservice teachers in my curriculum course needed to be aware of and participate in discussions about situations like that of Troy Davis had given credence to my perspective about her thinking.

These characterizations, whether fair or unfair, are what formed the foundation of thought out of which I derived this dissertation. As evidenced by my stories from practice, one of my preservice teacher's thoughts about democracy and justice were seemingly individualistic; whereas, the other student's thoughts seemed to be more communitarian. However, I could not

figure out what might have caused these students to react so differently to the concepts of democracy and justice. How were these two students matriculating through the same social studies teacher education program and emerging with such different interpretations of a core social studies concept – democracy? As such, I became interested in the role that lived experience plays in the preservice teacher learning process. Through my reflection on these two stories, I began to specifically ask myself how preservice teachers' autobiographies might relate to their conceptualization of democracy, democratic citizenship, and democratic teaching practice. Therefore, this dissertation attempts to answer my questions. By using life history methods (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001), I have developed a case study that examines how two preservice social studies teachers' autobiographical narratives relate to their thinking about democracy and its place in secondary social studies teaching practice.

Chapter Outlines

In Chapter 2, I will focus on the literature and theoretical frames that guided this research. Specifically, I will be concerned with three areas of literature: (1) Narrative research in teacher education, (2) Life history methods in narrative teacher education research, and (3) Social studies teachers' conceptions of democracy. With regards to the theoretical frames, I will outline the theories of preservice teacher learning as well as theories of democracy and the social studies that I used to organize my research.

Chapter 3 will present the methodology that I used to conduct this study. In this chapter, I will focus on my research design, data analysis, and subjectivity as a researcher. For my research design, I will discuss the following: (1) The research site and program context of study, (2) my research participants, (3) and how I collected my data. In the section on data analysis, I will

outline how I coded and categorized my data to make meaning of this research. Regarding my researcher subjectivity, I will present my story and how I have come to think about the world.

Chapter 4 and 5 will focus on the case of Rebekah.[2] In Chapter 4, I will present Rebekah's life history and the themes that I used to analyze her life history's relationship to her conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy. In Chapter 5, my focus will be on making sense of how Rebekah's life history played out in her student teaching practice and participation in the student teaching seminar as well as her definition of democracy.

In Chapter 6 and 7, I will outline the case of Heidi.[3] Like my chapters about Rebekah, Chapter 6 will present Heidi's life history and the themes that I used to analyze her life history's relationship to her conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy. Chapter 7 will focus on making sense of how Heidi's life history played out in her student teaching practice, participation in the student teaching seminar, and how Heidi's life history helped her develop her definition of democracy.

Lastly, I will present my conclusions to this study in Chapter 8. I will discuss the implications of this study by focusing on critical and social justice-oriented democratic citizenship and social justice-oriented democracy in social studies teacher education. For example, I found that my participants used the themes from their life histories to guide how they thought about democracy and social studies teaching albeit in often contradictory ways. At the same time, I will argue that social studies teacher educators can use life history methods to look at who their preservice teachers are so that they can better connect their teacher education classrooms to the life themes that preservice teachers often use to guide their practice. In this

[2] Rebekah is a pseudonym.

[3] Heidi is a pseudonym.

chapter, I will also outline my study's limitations as well as place a call for future work. Specifically, this section will look at what I could not do in my research. In that sense, I will outline the questions that I believe this research has raised for teacher education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMES

This chapter is organized into two main sections. First, I present a review of the relevant literature that is associated with this study. In this section, my goal is to show how my study is positioned within the academic literature of preservice teacher education, especially in the social studies. Second, I outline the theoretical frames that drive my research work. These frames include a theory of preservice teacher learning as well as social justice-oriented democracy.

Literature Review

This study and my thinking about how preservice teachers' autobiographical narratives relate to the work of teacher education are informed by three categories of research. The review that I present in this section was drawn from the literature on the role of narrative in teacher education, specific research within narrative work that examines teacher education researchers' use of life history methods, and research from the social studies literature regarding preservice social studies teachers' perspectives about democracy. In this section, I first outline how narratives have been used by teacher education researchers as one means for exploring teachers professional and personal identities. Second, I narrow my review by focusing on how life history methods have been employed by teacher education researchers to account for how teachers use autobiographical narratives as a way to account for their teaching identities. Finally, I examine the social studies literature to illustrate how narrative and life history methods could be used to

help teacher educators better understand how preservice social studies teachers conceptualize democracy.

Narrative in Teacher Education

Narrative is one tool teacher education researchers have used in their quest to understand teaching and the complex process of teaching teachers about teaching. Carter and Doyle (1996) as well as Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) point out that research on teachers' personal narratives is concerned with the use of storying because stories about teaching help teachers communicate their knowledge about practice. For example, research focusing on how teachers use personal narrative to create and gain professional practical knowledge has been conducted by Clandinin (1989); Clandinin and Connelly (1995); Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1999); and Whelan, Huber, Rose, Davies, and Clandinin (2001). Setting the foundation for this work, Clandinin (1989) argues that "it is clear that learning to teach involves much more than learning and applying skills. Learning to teach involves the narrative reconstruction of a teacher's experience as personal practical knowledge and is shaped through its expression in practical situations" (p. 137). From this perspective, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) report, teacher knowledge is "personal practical knowledge" that can be grounded in stories about the experience of each teacher's work. Taking this foundation a step further, Connelly and Clandinin (1995, 1999) argue that teachers need shifting identities as well as shifting stories to make sense of their work as that work is constantly creating new opportunities to interpret and reinterpret teaching. In other words, personal narratives can provide teachers a fluid means for creating knowledge about practice.

Whelan, Huber, Rose, Davies, and Clandinin (2001) continue this research in their case study of how one teacher, Annie, tells and retells her stories about practice. And although

Annie's stories about practice changed as the contexts in which she worked changed, Whelan et al. point out that her stories had a tendency to "become reified with certain characters always storied the same way" (p. 149). Therefore, Whelan et al. argue that teacher education researchers can learn about a teacher's understanding of practice by listening for themes that emerge across stories and across teaching contexts.

Following the research foundation established by Connelly and Clandinin, studies conducted by Doecke, Brown, and Loughran (2000) as well as Clemente and Ramírez (2008) also focus on how teachers use narrative as one means for expressing their knowledge about practice. Doeck, Brown, and Loughran (2000) point out that although "teacher talk has long been devalued as merely in-house chatter" (p. 343), a detailed analysis of its contents can uncover teachers' theories about schooling, students, curriculum, and the like. At the same time, Clemente and Ramírez (2008) illustrate that one common way teachers share their knowledge is through narrative relationships with others. And although this research base helps teacher education researchers understand teacher knowledge, more work needs to be done that looks into how life experiences impact that knowledge and what role those experiences play in mediating classroom teaching practice.

From a different perspective, Witherell and Noddings (1991) present a series of research and commentary pieces that focuses on narrative as a way of knowing and caring, narrative as a notion of self and other, and narrative and dialogue as a paradigm for teaching and learning. In their edited volume, *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*, Witherell (1991) illustrates how narratives can be used to define notions of self and other and how these notions can be used in teacher education research. In her chapter, Witherell explores the contradictory nature of self in relation to other. She argues that the "social formation, or the ways we define

and are defined by our social and cultural contexts" contributes to how we create our identity. This process, according to Witherell, is often messy because we walk through social and cultural contexts that can be contradictory to one another. Witherell's point is that although stories help us define ourselves and help others define who we are, the nature of the definition process means that individuals' identities are always changing and are not always coherent. Accordingly, teacher education researchers interested in how teachers fashion their professional and personal identities should, therefore, account for the unique nature of each teacher's narrative with respect to the particular time and context of their research.

Other researchers who have conducted narrative studies include Marsh (2002) and Leshem and Trafford (2006). In both studies, the researchers examine the role of talk in contributing to teacher identity. Marsh (2002) positions this narrative process as socially negotiated and individually enacted. Accordingly, she makes clear that the fashioning of teaching identities is ideological:

> As individuals appropriate fragments of particular discourses they absorb the ideologies inherent in them. Ideologies structure how we visualize the world while simultaneously locating us within it. As we are introduced to different ways of seeing, thinking, and acting through our interactions with others, various ideologies enter into our consciousness and come into contact with those things that we already hold as "true" (p. 334).

As a result of her study, Marsh concludes that the discourses that teachers are exposed to grounds their understanding of teaching and students. Leshem and Trafford (2006), on the other hand, approach narrative in teacher education as a reflective tool that can be used to develop a more nuanced teaching identity. They argue that practicing as well as preservice teachers who

are afforded the opportunity to revisit the stories that they tell can use those stories to unpack their thinking about teaching.

Finally, Schultz and Oyler's (2006) narrative work is specific to teacher education for democracy. By looking at *Project Citizen* (Center for Civic Education, 2004), Schultz and Oyler (2006) collected data from classroom observations, interviews, focus group sessions, and reflection journals to explore teacher authority. After reviewing the narratives that they collected, Schultz and Oyler concluded that the issues and decision-making focus of their participants' curricula and the experiences it fostered created a classroom structure that democratized authority between teacher and students. And although the researchers used narrative inquiry as a research tool to investigate a classroom experience, I am left questioning how the student and teacher narratives helped the members of this community learn about power, citizenship, and democracy.

In this subsection, I have presented a brief review of the narrative work that scholars have conducted in teacher education research. From my reading of this literature, I believe that narrative work can provide teacher educators tools that can help them develop better understandings of how teachers learn about teaching. However, because I specifically employ life history methods in narrative teacher education research for this study, the next subsection outlines my review of the work that has been conducted in this area.

Life History Methods as Narrative Teacher Education Research

Educational researchers have used life history methods to explore and come to a better understanding of how teachers' life experiences affect the work that they do as well as how they interpret that work. In the life history literature, several scholars (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1999; Kelchtermans, 1993) have argued that the life history method

is one way that teacher education researchers can examine how teachers construct their professional and personal identities. In this section, I present a review of the literature on life history methods in narrative teacher education research.

In the life history literature, several scholars (e.g., Ball & Goodson, 1985; Goodson, 1994; Kelchtermans, 1993; Sikes, Measor, & Woods, 1985) have used this method to develop an understanding of the role that teachers' life experiences play in their work by looking at teachers' careers. Research conducted under this frame, according to Carter and Doyle (1996), is concerned with how teachers' selves change as they navigate through different stages of the career-span. Ball and Goodson (1985), for example, provide a collection of essays that account for how changes in political and economic contexts as well as changes in institutional working conditions affect how teachers come to understand their work. In this collection, Sikes (1985) notes that the teaching pressures impacting individual teacher's work change according to where the teacher is located in her lifespan and career life cycle. She argues that these pressures are mediated by socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-historical influences on teachers' lives. However, what this work does not acknowledge is how teachers have positioned themselves politically with respect to those influences. This work also does not focus on how teachers have interpreted the influences listed by Sikes as one means through which they conceptualize democracy and democratic citizenship.

Other scholars who have studied career teachers include Muchmore (2001); Sykes (2001); Wedgwood (2005); and Goodson and Choi (2008). These researchers have focused on how teachers' life histories help them conceptualize the work that they are doing in the classroom. Muchmore (2001), for example, uses life history methods to look at how a teacher constructs her belief systems about teaching. In his study, Muchmore presents a case study of

how one preservice teacher's life experiences contribute to her understanding of literacy education practices. By drawing from Ball and Goodson (1985) and Goodson's (1992) argument that one cannot understand teachers' practices without first understanding their lives, Muchmore (2001) presents his research as an example of one way teacher education researchers can piece teachers' life experiences to the work that they are doing. What Muchmore does not do, however, is examine how his participant uses her autobiographical narrative as one means by which she can understand her professional identity as a teacher. After reviewing this study, I am left questioning how Muchmore's participant's autobiographical narrative is related to what she actually does in the classroom. My hope is to explore this connection through my research.

Both Sykes (2001) and Wedgwood (2005) examine the life histories of physical education teachers. In her study, Sykes (2001) employs a feminist-poststructural life history to look at interpretations of sexuality among female physical education teachers. Wedgwood (2005), on the other hand, uses life history methods to explore whether or not athletic males who teach physical education simply pass a hegemonic understanding of athleticism to their male students. Although both Sykes (2001) and Wedgwood (2005) both found these constructions of sexuality playing out in paradoxical, often contradictory, ways, their studies illustrate the importance of life history methods in teacher education research. By opening their research to the lives of those actually being researched, Sykes (2001) and Wedgwood (2005) are able to ground their case studies in the personal experiences of the teachers with whom they are trying to make sense of the work of teaching, especially the emotional characteristics involved with that work.

The work of Goodson and Choi (2008), on the other hand, combines life history methods with collective memory techniques to account for career teachers' professionalism. In their

study, Goodson and Choi found that teachers' interpretations of their professionalism can be divided into three categories: The Successful, The Suffering, and The Strategic. In all three cases, the participants in this study defined their professionalism against the school or public community in which they worked. For example, "The Strategic were dominated by strategic compliance. Teacher professionalism of 'The Strategic' appeared to fulfill accountability as expected by the pubic but with problematic ethics" (p. 13). Nevertheless, Goodson and Choi did not extend their study to explore how these teachers' definitions of professional impacted the way that they taught their classes.

On the preservice level, Knowles (1992); McNay (2001); Trotman and Kerr (2001); Sikes and Everington (2004); Johnson (2007); and Gomez, Rodriguez, and Agosto (2008) have used life history methods to examine how life experiences relate to preservice teacher learning in teacher education programs. Knowles (1992) built the early foundation for this research in his series of case studies about the connections that exist between preservice teachers' biographies and the work that they do in their field settings. In this work, Knowles builds a useful framework for helping teacher education researchers analyze possible correlations between beginning teachers' life experiences and their teaching behavior.

Knowles develops an interactive biographical transformation model around which he views how preservice teachers develop their teacher identity. For Knowles, preservice teachers' interpretations of their formative experiences are translated into schema that are used to build frameworks for making teaching decisions. In this process, "role models and practices are either upheld or rejected by some function of the individual's prior perspective, relations with role model teachers, or the assigned meanings of various situations" (p. 138). Knowles, therefore, concludes that preservice teachers' life histories provide the foundation for the decisions they

make in their teaching practice. As such, he calls for teacher education researchers to conduct more research that examines the life experiences of preservice teachers.

McNay's (2001) work presents a unique case study of one second-career male teacher's experience changing from one profession to the profession of teaching. She finds that life history methods can "provide an incomparable sense of the depth, complexity, and richness of the lives of the beginning teachers who are the subjects of these accounts" (p. 143). By employing life history research tools, McNay was able to uncover the pervasiveness that her participant's calling to teach has had on his emerging definition of what it means to be a teacher. In this case, George, McNay's participant, defined his mission as a teacher in terms of a religious calling. As a former pastor of a large church, George viewed his transition to teaching as the next phase of a professional path that was defined by helping people. However, McNay does not outline in her study how George's life experiences and subsequent definition of teaching relate to the philosophy of teaching that he actually employed in his classroom. In my study, I work to draw correlations between how my participants' life histories help them to define not only what it means to be a teacher, but also how those life histories play out in their social studies teaching practice.

Trotman and Kerr (2001) as well as Sikes and Everington (2004) use life history to look at how preservice teachers' personal and professional selves are integrated with one another. To fulfill this mission, Trotman and Kerr (2001) employ autobiographical journals so that their teacher education students can "become more conscious of the values and beliefs that they had internalized as a consequence of their apprenticeship of observation" (p. 160). Sikes and Everington (2004) use life history interviews to draw connections between religious educators' personal experiences with religious education and their attempts to define themselves as religious

teachers. In both studies, the research goal is to blur the lines between the personal and professional.

Johnson (2007), in her life history study, presents a case study of Julie Robbins' attempt to employ literacy teaching practices that are founded on an "ethics of access" – a philosophy of teaching that is focused on providing students access to literacy tools. According to Johnson's analysis of Julie's autobiographical narrative, Julie's understanding of teaching as an expression of an "ethics of access" could be connected to the institutional and societal structures that make the distribution of literacy resources possible. Johnson found that Julie Robbins' goal of helping provide her students access to literacy tools was founded on the assumption that that access would enable them to work against the institutional and structural systems that prevent that access. In her study, Johnson specifically makes the connections between her participant's life history and her teaching practice. For instance, Johnson notes that "in her early life experiences, Julie's sense of alienation from certain textual materials and diverse individuals has given shape to an approach of teaching that I call an ethics of access" (p. 311). My goal with this research study is to make similar comparisons in the social studies with regards to social justice-oriented democracy.

Finally, Gomez, Rodriguez, and Agosto (2008) present a case study of two Latino/a preservice teachers who were enrolled in the elementary education program at a large Midwestern research university. In their study, Gomez, Rodriguez, and Agosto found that being a Latino/a preservice teacher can be riddled with contradiction. For example:

> Sonny and Patricia [the participants] both were asserting that they were not "Mexican," the "deviant newcomers" of peers' imaginations; they were of a *different* ethnic heritage and were not in the category of what a "Mexican" embodies that resided in the minds of

> their classmates. Sonny and Patricia were asserting that they wished to be seen as people who deserved full citizenship rights in the eyes of those who interacted with them (p. 1668, emphasis in original).

According to Gomez, Rodriguez, and Agosto, life history methods provided them the tools necessary to uncover these confusions of identity.

This research illustrates how life history methods can be used by teacher education researchers as one tool for exploring who preservice and practicing teachers are. Unlike demographic studies of the teaching force (e.g., Zumwalt & Craig, 2005, 2008), life history research can provide teacher educators with glimpses of individual socializing experiences and more detailed accounts of the individuals who are teaching and being trained to teach. In this dissertation, my goal is to not only offer an ethnographic picture of two preservice social studies teacher education students, but I also hope to draw correlations between who those students are and how they are thinking about democracy, democratic citizenship, and its role in social studies teaching practice.

Social Studies Teachers' Conceptions of Democracy

Social studies teachers' definitions of democracy are diffuse. As Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith, and Sullivan (1997) and Westheimer and Kahne (2004 a,b) point out, teachers and students can be categorized according to how they view democratic citizenship. On the one hand, these teachers can define democratic citizenship as an act of personal responsibility (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004 a,b) whereby they work toward a model of citizenship that is used to help foster "law-abiding and obedient citizens" who do not actively work in the civic arena (Anderson et al., 1997, p. 346). On the other hand, teachers can teach in ways that will help promote more holistic versions of democracy built on difference, dialogue, and mutual trust (e.g.,

Parker, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2008). Teacher educators committed to teacher education for democracy should explore how preservice teachers' constructions of democracy affect their emerging purposes for teaching social studies. As Chant (2002) points out, "investigations regarding personal theorizing and practice may enhance our understanding of how teachers can use an awareness of background beliefs to help improve their teaching" (p. 538). For Biesta (2007), this work means that one's conception of education for democracy is founded on and framed by their interpretation of what it means to be a democratic person. What is unclear, however, is how preservice teachers' life experiences relate to their understanding of the democratic person and democracy. In this dissertation, I argue that social studies teacher educators could use life history methods to implement more successful teacher education practices that aim toward teaching about and for democracy. By looking at how preservice social studies teachers use their life histories to understand democracy and democratic education, social studies teacher educators could examine how this relationship between life theme and democracy plays out in one's participation in a teacher education program.

In this sense, early research by Adler (1984), Ross (1987), and Johnston (1990) provide a foundation for exploring how preservice social studies teachers make sense of their learning to become classroom teachers. In their work, each of these researchers argue that preservice teachers' background beliefs filter their interpretation of teacher education content and experience which affects how preservice knowledge about social studies education is constructed. For example, Adler (1984), in her study of elementary preservice social studies teachers' field experiences and their developing social studies practice, found that preservice beliefs impacted whether or not the teachers in her study viewed social studies knowledge as something that elementary students could create themselves. Furthermore, by expanding on

Adler's findings, Ross (1987) and Johnston (1990) note that preservice teachers' background beliefs make the process of teacher education difficult and ambiguous, especially when those background beliefs are not identified or understood.

At the same time, Kickbusch (1987) approaches the problem of preservice beliefs and teacher education by examining the discourse that surrounds how preservice social studies teachers learn about citizenship education in their teacher education programs. He concludes that the dominance of centrist discourse (e.g., promotes the status quo, views the dominant political, economic, and social institutions and processes as not in need of change) about citizenship has created a narrow view of democracy among preservice social studies teachers. In his findings, Kickbusch points out that the language used by preservice teachers to describe citizenship education includes statements such as "to inculcate the history and values of the political system, to teach rights and responsibilities, to explain the social contract, and to produce conformity to certain beliefs and laws" (p. 179). Therefore, Kickbusch concludes that preservice teachers have a limited understanding of democracy.

More recent research by Fickel (2000), Pryor (2006), and Doppen (2007) uses this foundation to specifically examine how preservice social studies teachers' beliefs relate to democracy. In the first study, Fickel (2000) presents a case study of how one career social studies teacher's teaching is shaped by his understanding of democracy. Mr. Franklin, Fickel's participant, notes that "the purpose of education and of being a teacher is the development of active, critically thoughtful citizens who are able to make informed choices in all aspects of their lives" (p. 369-370). And although Fickel locates three loci of experience (family background and childhood experience; high school; teacher education) that have helped shape Mr. Franklin's understanding of democracy, Fickel's focus is only on Mr. Franklin as an in-service teacher. She

does not use this research framework to explore social studies teachers at the preservice level. The purpose of my study is to develop an account for how preservice social studies teachers conceptualize democracy.

Pryor (2006), on the other hand, outlines three dimensions that she found are necessary for elementary preservice social studies teachers to develop an understanding of democracy. First, according to Pryor, preservice teachers should account for learning about democracy and teaching democracy. She found that those preservice teachers able to construct working definitions of democracy and how those definitions relate to social studies education can connect their understandings to formal curricula that had been explored in their teacher education programs. Second, the preservice teachers in Pryor's study who supported efforts to implement democratic classroom practices also believed that those contributed positively to their students' learning. According to Pryor, preservice social studies teachers are able to exhibit an openness to democratic teaching if they are exposed to a serious exploration of democratic ideas. Third, Pryor found that preservice teachers believe that more support is needed from teacher education programs if they are to successfully implement democratic teaching practices. Several students commented that "demonstration of democratic practices by their mentor teachers during their field experience would be helpful" (p. 144). Nevertheless, Pryor's findings indicate that the preservice teachers in her study tended to remain positive about their ability to implement democratic education in their school setting.

Although Pryor argues that a positive attitude toward democracy and democratic education remained among the participants she studied, this orientation was related to those preservice teachers' attitudes and knowledge about democracy, the abilities of their students, and what they thought could be accomplished in public schooling. With regards to this claim, she

argues that the first year of teaching had "failed to 'wash out' the strength of the teachers' beliefs about their knowledge of democratic practice and their intention to implement it" (p. 108). However, because I am unclear as to whether or not Pryor followed these students into the field for that first year, I argue that deeper exploration is needed to paint a better picture of how the preconceived beliefs of preservice social studies teachers relate to their teaching practice. My research is aimed at beginning that process. By asking preservice student teachers in the social studies to tell stories about their lives and by observing their teaching in their field experiences, I hope that this research begins to fashion a deeper account for how my participants view themselves in relation to democracy and how that view plays out in their teaching practice.

Adding to Pryor's (2006) research about elementary preservice social studies teachers' beliefs about democratic education, Doppen (2007) looks at how graduate preservice social studies teachers' beliefs change in relationship to their experiences with teacher education. Using survey materials and interview data, he finds that "teacher educators can influence the beliefs preservice teachers hold about teaching and learning social studies" (p. 62). According to Doppen, because students enter teacher education programs with no strong belief system regarding the teaching and learning of social studies, he argues that teacher educators can significantly influence how preservice teachers mold their dispositions. Doppen does not, however, clearly answer what belief systems preservice social studies teacher do have, how student dispositions relate to democracy, and where those beliefs and dispositions originate. He also does not look at how preservice social studies teachers' beliefs about democracy play out in their student teaching field experience.

The research presented above makes clear that social studies teacher educators committed to democratic teacher education practices must account for what beliefs their preservice teachers

bring with them to their teacher education programs. In conjunction with preservice teacher beliefs and experiences, social studies teacher educators should be committed to incorporating democratic experiences into their teacher education courses. As Rubin and Justice (2005) note, teacher educators must model democratic practice if they are to help foster democratic practitioners. Yet, as pointed out in this literature review, teacher education researchers have done little to connect preservice social studies teachers' life experiences with how they conceptualize democracy, democratic citizenship, and democratic teaching practice. I argue that to help preservice teachers develop a stronger understanding of democracy in general and social justice-oriented democracy in specific teacher educators should examine the lived experiences of their preservice students. This work should help social studies teacher educators better understanding how those lived experiences relate to their preservice students' developing conceptions of what democracy means.

Theoretical Frames

This research study is grounded in a theoretical framework of preservice teacher learning that views learning as a social and experiential process that is focused on "who" preservice teachers are and how that "who" impacts their learning. My study is also grounded on a specific theoretical approach to understanding democracy through a social justice lens. My goal in this dissertation is to juxtapose each participant's conceptualization of democracy against the views outlined in this section of Chapter 2. In making this comparison, I will examine the life history themes that may have led my participants to conceptualize democracy in this way.

Preservice Teacher Learning

As I pulled into the parking lot my upper body was dancing to the techno music that I was blasting through my car speakers. I was excited and my music had been having its planned

effect of putting me in the mood to conquer the world. My first day on the job as a new high school social studies teacher was only a few bell rings away. I felt that with a cup of coffee, my syllabus, and a group of eager students I could make anything possible.

I walked into the classroom that I had spent the summer preparing, sat at my desk, read the *New York Times*, and waited. I felt oddly at peace with what was about to happen. For a moment, I thought that I might actually know what I was doing and that I could do it well. However, this feeling did not last long. At 8:00am the bell rang and throngs of students clamored through the door, sat in their desks, and looked at me in anticipation. Suddenly, I realized that I had no idea what I was doing. I thought to myself, "Oh, shit! What have I gotten into?" With no route of escape, I simply opened my mouth and proceeded to fumble through the first day.

Although I started my new career in education with trepidation and no previous teacher training, I slowly improved my practice and reached a point that I thought was producing student engagement and learning. By my second year teaching, I was proud of the teacher that I had become. The students loved my class yet they complained about its difficulty. The other teachers respected the work that I was doing. And, most importantly for my pride and self-confidence, my administrators showered me with compliments and stellar teaching evaluations. Nevertheless, I was unhappy with the amount of knowledge that I had about the profession of teaching and I was certain that I could do better work.

About halfway through my third year of teaching, I decided to enroll in a doctoral program in social studies education. As a graduate student, I have had the opportunity to study, among other things, various theories of preservice teacher learning. My reading in this area as well as my continued reflection of my own experience in the classroom has pointed me toward theories of teacher learning that are grounded in who preservice teachers are, what their life

experiences mean for who they become as teachers, and the socialization forces that may drive preservice teachers' rationales for teaching. I now know that my brief tenure as a high school teacher was heavily impacted by these components of learning about teaching. As a result, I have come to believe that for teacher education to be most effective teacher educators should look into and develop understandings of the lives of those that they teach. Therefore, this study is grounded in a theory of preservice teacher learning that accounts for who preservice teachers are.

Teacher Learning as "Who" Preservice Teachers Are. Teacher learning can be described as a process that involves multiple perspectives of understanding such as socio-cultural and cognitive theories as well as analyses of varying educational contexts such as teacher education programs and field experience locations (e.g., Borko & Putnam, 1996; Clift & Brady, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Zeichner & Conklin, 2008). However, the theoretical foundation for this study is grounded on the assumption that focusing on who teachers are can provide powerful insights into how they learn about teaching. To illustrate the theoretical frame of teacher learning as a personal endeavor, I draw from work by the following theorists: Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1995); Feiman-Nemser (2008); Rodgers and Scott (2008); Zeichner and Gore (1990); and Britzman (2003).

Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1995) characterize teacher learning as a *Who, What, Where, When, How* process. And although the what, where, when, and how associated with teacher learning are important, this study's focus is with the who component of this process. Regarding the who of teacher learning, Feiman-Nemser and Remillard note that teacher education must account for who preservice teachers are, their orientations to learning, their experiences with diversity, and their beliefs about teaching and learning, subject matter, students, and the teacher education process. This accounting for the who of preservice teacher learning

means that teacher educators must consider each learner's apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) as well as her beliefs and orientation to the world. Further, the personal knowledge (Aitken & Mildon, 1991; Gomez, Walker, & Page, 2000; Levin & He, 2008) as well as the personal histories that go into how those preservice teachers produce that knowledge (Holt-Reynolds; Trotman & Kerr, 2001) are important components of this orientation to preservice teacher learning. As Feiman-Nemser (2001) makes clear, "the images and beliefs that prospective teachers bring to their preservice preparation serve as filters for making sense of the knowledge and experiences they encounter" (p. 1016). Therefore, teacher education research that explores preservice teacher learning should look into who the preservice teachers are and what they bring with them to their teacher education programs. One goal of this study is to get at the who associated with preservice social studies teacher learning through the use of autobiographical narrative so that preservice knowledge and thinking can become more visible to social studies teacher educators.

In conjunction with Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1995), Feiman-Nemser's (2008) *Think, Know, Feel, Act* approach to preservice teacher learning adds a different dimension to the teacher learning perspective discussed above. In Feiman-Nemser's first construct, think, she refers "to the intellectual work of teaching and the influence of cognitive science on studies of teacher learning" (p. 698). Feiman-Nemser's second category, know, speaks to the knowledge that is necessary for teaching such as content-based subject matter knowledge. This category also refers to teachers' knowledge of teaching – that knowledge that can only be acquired through practice. The third category, feel, "signals the fact that teaching and learning to teach are deeply personal work, engaging teachers' emotions and identity as well as their intellect" (p. 699). Because teacher learning consists of emotional components, teacher education researchers need

to be cognizant of how emotion affects the teacher learning process. Finally, Feiman-Nemser argues that learning to become a teacher requires that preservice teachers learn how to act like teachers. This construct includes the "skills, strategies, and routines and the judgment to figure out what to do when" which is likely to be best learned in conjunction with practical experience (p. 699).

Feiman-Nemser's *Think, Know, Feel, Act* also provides an important theoretical underpinning for the study presented in this dissertation. Because my research calls for an exploration of how the who of preservice learning plays out in an individual's teaching, I am interested in how the preservice social studies teachers in my study think, know, feel, and act during their in-service field experiences. From my perspective, the thinking, knowing, feeling, and acting that preservice teachers enact in their student teaching semester helps define who they are as teachers. Therefore, I argue that in order to look fully at the who associated with preservice learning, teacher educators must also account for Feiman-Nemser's framework.

Adding to Feiman-Nemser's framework, Rodgers and Scott (2008) discuss how preservice and career teachers form their identities as teachers. They argue that this identity formation processes holds:

> (1) that identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple *contexts* which bring, social, cultural, political, and historical forces to bear upon that formation; (2) that identity is formed in *relationship* with others and involves *emotions*; (3) that identity is *shifting, unstable, and multiple*; and, (4) that identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through *stories* over time (p. 733, emphasis in original).

Identity formation, according to this perspective, is dependent on myriad factors and is an unstable construct that is constantly changing as the episodes of living change. As such, Rodgers

and Scott recommend that preservice teacher learning should include opportunities for preservice learners to investigate themselves, critically analyze the social, political, and economic positions that may cause them to believe what they believe, and discuss how those beliefs position them as teachers and learners. As Rosaen and Florio-Ruane (2008) make clear, "we need to learn more about how engaging in analysis of experience as the relationship among language, culture, activity, and thought have the potential to transform teacher education to provide more powerful learning experiences" (p. 726). By employing life history methods, this study will not only explore the identity formation process outlined by Rodgers and Scott (2008); but I hope to also answer Rosaen and Florio-Ruane's (2008) call for research.

Zeichner and Gore (1990), on the other hand, approach teacher learning as a means through which teachers enter into membership of the professional community of teaching. This perspective argues that as preservice teachers move through their primary and secondary school experiences along with their participation in formal teacher education programs, they develop a sense for what is and is not good teaching. And although teachers continue in this socialization process long after they enter into the professional community, this analysis of teacher learning is only concerned with the socialization that occurs before and during preservice participation in a teacher education program.

Dealing with teacher socialization before teacher education, Lortie (1975) argues that teaching teachers about teaching is especially difficult in that teacher educators must account for years of "apprenticeship of observation." This apprenticeship problem, according to Lortie, means that "the comparative impact of initial socialization makes considerable difference over the life of an occupation" (p. 55). In other words, how one is exposed to a profession affects how she comes to view that profession. For teaching, the problem of apprenticeship is that every

individual who wants to enter the profession develops, through several years of direct exposure and interaction with teachers, a conception of what good teaching should look like. Labaree (2008), expanding on Lortie's (1975) argument, is right to point out that "prospective teachers think they know how to teach before entering teacher education programs, which allows little authority or esteem for these programs" (p. 299). Therefore, teacher education should deal with the reality that preservice teachers are not blank slates with no exposure to the profession. Accordingly, my theory of preservice teacher learning accounts for this component of who preservice teachers are. Through the use of life history, this study attempts to draw connections between my participants' stories about their apprenticeship of observation and how they are thinking about teaching social studies for social justice-oriented democracy.

In conjunction with the socialization that occurs before teacher education, preservice learners also go through a socialization process while enrolled in their teacher education programs. And even though preservice teachers' participation in teacher education can seem like an "interlude in which the practical value of prior classroom experience is suspended" (Weiland, 2008, p. 1205), preservice teachers do make connections between the knowledge they learned through their apprenticeship of observation and the knowledge that is being taught by teacher educators. From this perspective, I argue that preservice teacher learning is the consequence of an interactive process whereby teachers' knowledge is always being confirmed, negotiated, and displaced. As such, teacher learning can be viewed as an interactive process whereby "teachers influence and shape that into which they are being socialized at the same time that they are being shaped by a variety of forces at many different levels" (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 341). Teacher socialization in teacher education, therefore, can be a messy course of action. Everything is being shaped by everything else and it is very difficult to determine what and how that shaping plays

out in the teacher education process. As Britzman (2003) points out, teachers are "being shaped by their work as well as shaping their work" (p. 25). She, therefore, calls on teacher educators to study preservice teachers' lived experiences as one means by which we can begin to understand how they fashion their teaching identities.

My research is grounded upon a theoretical assumption of preservice teacher learning that who preservice teachers are and the sociological and ecological experiences that shape their socialization makes, to use Feiman-Nemser's (2008) words, preservice teacher learning "deeply personal work" (p. 699). Therefore, I argue that life history methods that extract preservice teachers' autobiographical narratives can help teacher educators understand the personal components associated with the preservice teacher learning process. Through the use of autobiographical narratives, preservice teachers can connect their shaping and reshaping identities to the broader social world. As Wortham (2001) notes, "Narrators do more than represent themselves in autobiographical narratives. They also act out particular selves in telling those stories, and in doing so they can construct and sometimes transform themselves" (p. 17). From this perspective, preservice teachers can use their narratives to help them construct their personal and professional identities. And because this process is ongoing, these narratives and how they are enacted by their tellers play out in often contradictory ways. In this sense, we are always in the process of becoming. My hope is that the research presented in this dissertation will provide one example for how this process can work in preservice social studies teacher education.

Democracy and the Social Studies

One of the main purposes for the social studies in American secondary schools was outlined in the 1916 report of the Social Studies Committee of the National Educational

Association Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (Evans, 2004). According to this report, the civic mission of American high schools was to consist of and be housed in a social studies component that "should have for their conscious and constant purpose the cultivation of good citizenship" (p. 9). However, as Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) have pointed out in their analysis of citizenship teaching practices, American social studies teachers have defined this civic mission to mean different things. Therefore, even though I argue that democratic social studies education should be conceptualized as a method that teachers can use to help their students promote more equitable and just societies, how teachers implement this mission plays out very differently in their practice. And although a number of scholars (e.g., Anderson, Avery, Pederson, Smith, & Sullivan, 1997; Arbowitz & Harnish, 2006; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a,b) have analyzed this varied practice, my theoretical concern is with perspectives of citizenship education that focus on helping students develop a social justice-orientation toward democracy and democratic citizenship.

Social Justice-Oriented Democracy. The sun shimmered on the water below while the clouds danced in the wind above. I noticed that the hair of the couple in front of me was being caressed by the breeze as they walked hand-in-hand on the winding path. It was a brilliant Autumn day. And while I walked alone next to the river in my hometown, I admired the old cemetery that lined the banks opposite the muddy flow. Its rolling hills encased monuments that seemed to be echoing a not so distant past onto the endless sky. As I continued walking, I thought about how those monuments – some large, some small, and some that were probably unnoticeable – illustrated that in death we are not equal. Even after we pass from this earth, some individual lives still seem to make larger shadows on the ground and bigger scars on the sky.

I rounded the bend in the river and walked under the Second Street Bridge. On the other side of the water, I noticed a tent village that had been set-up under the protective cover of steel and concrete. Outside one of the tents I saw a man hanging his tattered laundry and I began to imagine what his life might be like.

The rains come slowly.
Winds start to blow calmly.
The boats in the harbor sway to sounds of silence.
And the idyllic sounds of cicadas comfort one to sleep.

He is homeless.
He is poor.
And he nauseates at the sound of cicadas.

Hatred burns.
Hatred oozes.
And he takes pleasure in crushing cicadas.

He is abandoned...

And no one knows his story.
People scorn.
People gawk.

And no one asks about him and cicadas.
No one asks.
No one asks at all.

And the idyllic sounds of cicadas comfort men in homes to sleep.
The rains come harshly.
Winds start to blow gustily.
The boats in the harbor sway violently to dissonant chords.[4]

I had written this poem to illustrate the injustice that I saw and felt that day. However, as a friend pointed out to me, this poem is fraught with problems. Not only do I project my assumptions about the homeless man's life onto him, but I also paint a picture of homelessness that is no different from the scorners and gawkers that I mention in my poem. So, I was faced

[4] This poem is titled "The Seemingly Comfortable Sound of Cicadas" and was written in 2009.

with a decision. I could remove this poem and pretend that my assumptions as a white, middle-class, male had not been pointed out to me. Or I could include this poem to illustrate my own struggles with social justice issues. I chose the latter so that I could not only expose myself in this research, but so that I could also highlight the contradictory nature of individual lives. As my discussion of this poem makes clear, I am deeply troubled by social injustices yet I am also trapped by the mainstream meritocratic discourses that characterize United States society. And the contradictions that arise between my thoughts and concerns and my own position in this society are often hard to reconcile.

Although I am concerned with the inequalities and inequitable distribution of resources that exist in the United States, my own life has been one of privilege and affluence. As such, I am faced with paradoxical emotions that I find difficult to reconcile and interpret. On the one hand, I want to make sense of poverty by not projecting my assumptions onto the lives of people such as the homeless man. However, I cannot escape the life that I have lived and the conscious and subconscious assumptions that that life has provided me. Even though my poem does not acknowledge the complexity of the homeless man's life, I believe that by leaving it in this text I can make evident the assumptions that I bring to my work. I hope that this explanation of my struggles with this poem can also point out the struggles that I, myself, have had with trying to conceptualize social justice issues and how they are lived in people's lives. This dissertation is not simply a look into the lives of two preservice social studies teachers so much as it is a look into my own life as a social studies teacher educator who has assumptions, is distributed by my assumptions, and is working to figure out what all of that means relative to the life that I am living.

I journeyed back to the river not long after I wrote about the man who hates cicada bugs. It was an overcast and cold day that seemed to provide an ominous omen. Under the bridge on the opposite bank, the tents were gone. And although I could see that life had once flourished on that spot, only a barrel remained. The ruins of the man's civilization were apparent in the absence of his tent. I thought that I should cry. Why had I been guilty of not really noticing that man's presence? If I were to pass him on the street, would I really notice that he were there?

In order to promote a more just and equitable society, social studies teachers and teacher educators should work to take action against the injustices that permeate our everyday lives. Instead of simply giving the man who hates cicada bugs food or providing him shelter, I argue that the social studies should follow the example of the Bayside Students for Justice discussed by Westheimer and Kahne (2004b). Like the students and teachers in this program, social studies teachers and teacher educators concerned with social justice should create experiences that encourage their students to ask questions about why situations like that of the man in my story exist and are tolerated in such a resource wealthy society. Teachers and teacher educators who have a justice-orientation toward democracy are able to "consider collective strategies for change that challenge injustice and, when possible, address root causes of problems" (p. 243). Why must men be required to live in tent villages and what can we do to permanently eliminate problems such as this one?

According to Westheimer and Kahne (2004 a,b), the justice-oriented citizen uses her civic agency to effect change in society. This focus on action is an important goal of social justice in education (McDonald, 2005). In their teaching, teachers and teacher educators as well as preservice student teachers should work to give their student citizens tools that will help them make decisions about the structure of the society in which they will live. Unlike citizens who

stop at a personally responsible or participatory (see Westheimer & Kahne, 2004 a,b) understanding of citizenship, citizens with a social justice-orientation ask questions about how society is organized. From this perspective, "learning facts within this discourse [citizenship education], is important only insofar as those facts help to promote and propel active learning about the actual workings of political life" (Arbowitz & Harnish, p. 673). In this study, I am interested in how preservice social studies teachers' life histories relate to how active they are in their questioning of and subsequent working to restructure society through their teaching practice.

My goal with this research is to attempt to create a window through which social studies teacher educators can view how two preservice social studies teachers conceptualize social justice-oriented democracy. As Ochoa-Becker (2007) points out, issues of social justice should be pursued if the product of democratic living is to be a serious goal of social studies education. Social justice in democratic social studies education, therefore, questions dehumanizing power relations (see Adams, Blumenfeld, Castañeda, Hackman, Peters, & Zúñiga, 2010; Bell, 2007 for examples) and uses individual liberty and agency in ways that produce more equitable living arrangements (Lummis1996). Based on this premise, social studies teachers and teacher educators as well as preservice teachers who hold a social justice-orientation toward democracy will want to provide their students with tools that will help produce informed social criticism (Vinson & Ross, 2001). As Bickmore (2008) makes clear, this idea involves not only providing access to democratic forms of knowledge to those who have been systematically locked out by dominant groups, but this idea also involves mobilizing that knowledge in ways that contribute to social transformation. The goal of this social justice-orientation is, therefore, to find ways to

help citizens utilize their agency to explicitly confront the dynamics of power and privilege, the political institutions, and social relationships that perpetuate injustice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the literature and theoretical frameworks that position my research. I have reviewed narrative research in teacher education, life history methods in narrative teacher education research, and research that examines social studies teachers' conceptions of democracy. In this study, I have worked to combine these areas of research to present a case study of how two preservice social studies teachers' autobiographical narratives relate to their thinking about democracy, democratic citizenship, and democratic teaching practice. The preservice teacher learning theory that drives my research accounts for the "who" of preservice teachers. I argue that who preservice teachers are impacts how they think about democracy and what they do in the classroom. Specifically, I am interested in my participants' thinking about social justice-oriented democracy. As such, I also outlined a theory of democracy that affords social justice as its goal for action. Taking into account this literature base and using these theories of learning and democracy, I now turn to the specifics of my study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological approaches used in this study. With the perspective that "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practice" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42), the research in this dissertation utilizes the qualitative paradigm. First, I focus on this study's grounding in narrative and life history methods. My goal is to convey why both narrative and life history approaches are important for teacher education research, especially research about preservice teacher learning. Second, I outline my research design. In this section, I not only discuss the context for this research and my process of participant selection, but I also summarize my process of data collection. Fourth, I briefly outline my approach to data analysis. I specifically focus on how Charmaz's (2006) advice about constant comparative processes has enabled me to make sense of the data in this research. Finally, I document my researcher subjectivity. By exposing the elements of my life that underlie my thinking as a teacher, teacher educator, and researcher, I hope to hold myself accountable in the writing of this research.

Narratives and Life History Methods

My focus on my participants' narratives in this research is founded on the assumption that narratives or stories can provide the medium through which individuals construct meaning about present and past as well as possible future events in their lives. According to Bruner (1991), narrative focus is important because "we organize our experience and our memory of

human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on" (p. 4). And, as McAdams (1988, 1993) points out, we use storying as one way in which we can define ourselves, redefine ourselves, and position ourselves in the world. From this perspective, narrative can provide individuals an important, changing, and unstable avenue for telling about the self (Bruner & Kalmar, 1998). In other words, we can use storying to create identities and define ourselves according to our lived experiences (e.g., McAdams, 1988, 1993; McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006; Robinson & Hawpe, 1986; Sarbin, 1986). For Wortham (2001), this process can be characterized through autobiographical narrative in that "autobiographical narratives do more than represent events and characters; they also presuppose a certain version of the social world and position the narrator and audience with respect to that social world and with respect to each other" (p. 9). Through the use of autobiography, narratives in qualitative research can be used to better understand how people view themselves in relation to the events and characters in their lives.

With regards to social justice-oriented democracy, I advocate that qualitative researchers can use life history methods to look at how their participants talk about the various facets of their political socialization (Hahn, 1998; Hahn & Alviar-Martin, 2008). For example, participant talk about concepts such as religious values, family dynamics, and socio-economic status will help illustrate how these participants might be thinking about democracy and democratic citizenship. Because people's views are shaped by the contextual forces that surround them, those contextual forces must be accounted for in research on people's lives. My religious values, for example, help focus my work in the area of social justice. The empathy and accountability that I was taught in Sunday School have helped push me to work to solve social problems such as poverty and racism and to account for how I might uphold those scourges through my individual actions.

Therefore, the research outlined in this dissertation used the narrative approach to question participants so that they could fashion stories about the socialization characteristics of their lives. And although I specifically discuss the elements of the life history and life story interview in more detail in later sections of this chapter, I want to mention that the life story interview protocol that I used was designed to elicit stories that will help me show how my participants' life experiences may have contributed to their understanding of social justice-oriented democracy.

Under this umbrella of qualitative research, life history methods can provide specific tools that researchers can use to collect their participants' autobiographical narratives. Life history, as defined by Cole and Knowles (2001), is used to develop "an account of one's life or segments of one's life written or told for purposes of understanding oneself in relation to broader context – familial, institutional, and societal, for instance" (p. 21). Because I am interested in how preservice social studies teachers' autobiographical narratives relate to their conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy, I am concerned with the implementation of life history as a tool for research. Therefore, this dissertation is grounded on the presentation of my participants' autobiographical narratives and how those narratives relate to the work they did in their student teaching field placement and student teaching seminar.

Research Design and Data Collection

In this section, I now turn to outline the specific research design procedures that drove my research. I will discuss the research site and program context of this study, my participant selection decisions and research participants, and the data collection techniques that I employed while conducting this research.

Research Site and Program Context of Study

This study was conducted in the undergraduate social studies education program at Southern University.[5] As a research-oriented institution, most courses taught in this program were staffed by doctoral students who were taking classes as well as playing the role of novice teacher educators. In this sense, an undergraduate preservice teacher could matriculate through the program and only be instructed by doctoral students who were also learning the language (e.g., goals, commitments, learning objective, etc.) of the program, what it means to be a teacher of teachers, and were working to develop their own research interests and experiences. Along with a base curriculum of educational foundations and psychology classes, the preservice students in the social studies education program were required to complete a series of social studies specific education class (see Table 3-1).

Table 3-1: Social Studies Education Program Sequence

Program Sequence	Coursework Requirements
Sophomore Year	• Introductory Education Courses in Foundations and Psychology • Initial Field Experience in Social Studies Education **Admission to Program**
Junior Year	• Social Studies Content Area Coursework (e.g., History, Political Science, Geography, Etc.)
Senior Year Semester 1	• Social Studies Curriculum in Secondary Schools • Methods of Teaching Social Studies in Secondary Schools • Senior Field Experience in Social Studies Education
Senior Year Semester 2	• Student Teaching Experience • Student Teaching Seminar

[5] Southern University is a pseudonym.

In the remainder of this section, I will detail the programmatic context of Southern University's social studies education program. Specifically, I will focus my discussion on the philosophical orientation and goals of the program. Because my study was conducted during the student teaching semester, I will only focus on Senior Year Semester 2 of the program sequence.

Program Focus and Philosophical Orientation. I chose to conduct my study in Southern University's social studies education program for two reasons. First, Southern University provided a convenient site for research. Because I was a doctoral student in the program, Southern University afforded me easy access to research participants, the student teaching seminar, and student teaching placements. I had already developed relationships with the people in this program that could make this research possible. Second, I was interested in conducting my study in Southern University's social studies education program because of its programmatic focus and philosophical orientation. As a doctoral student in this program, I had become interested in the concepts that I was being asked to explore in my coursework.

At the same time, I worked as a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) in Southern University's preservice social studies teacher education program. Within my purview as a GTA, I was charged with teaching courses[6] as well as supervising student teachers. And although this position provided me insider perspectives to the program in which this research was situated, I must admit that this work was also fraught with complex sensitivities. As Conklin (2009) has made clear, insider research can be a challenging endeavor. How do you represent friends and colleagues? What do you do with sensitive information about how they do their jobs? And, in this case, how do I balance my role as a university supervisor with my work as a teacher

[6] During my time as a GTA in Southern University's social studies education program, I taught sections of the following courses: Social Studies Curriculum in Secondary Schools, Methods of Teaching Social Studies in Secondary Schools, and Senior Field Experience in Social Studies Education.

education researcher? To answer these questions, I have worked hard to let my colleagues and participants speak for themselves.

As I have mentioned, this study was conducted in a program context that supported preservice learning about democratic and social justice philosophies of teaching. According to the program framework,[7] the teacher educators in Southern University's social studies education program were asked to help prepare their students to do the following:

- Demonstrate understanding of foundations, aims, and practices of social studies education and their relationship to democracy.
- Use knowledge of social, linguistic, and cultural diversity to create an equitable and culturally responsive classroom.
- Create democratic learning communities characterized by collaboration, mutual support, and shared decision-making.
- Advocate teaching and learning that support equity and high expectations for all students.

Accordingly, I was interested in how students at Southern University were thinking about these concepts of democracy and social justice and how they thought those concepts relate to the purpose of social studies as well as their work as social studies teachers.

The Student Teaching Semester. Once each preservice learner has successfully matriculated through the methods, curriculum, and practicum block (Senior Year Semester 1, Table 3-1), they are required to participate in an intensive twelve week field-based student teaching experience as well as a weekly university-based seminar. Because each student teaching context is unique and differs across placement locations, I will discuss each participant's field-based experience in their respective case chapters. However, Southern University does outline

[7] For a detailed list of Southern University's standards for the preservice social studies education program, see Appendix A.

several common expectations for each individual that is student teaching. Those requirements are: (1) each preservice student teacher is expected, to the extent possible, to teach 40 percent of their cooperating teacher's course load; (2) each preservice student teacher is expected to participate in many of the "other duties" required of teachers; (3) each preservice student teacher is required to experiment with and work toward a better understanding of Southern University's social studies education program standards;[8] and (4) each preservice student teacher is required to participate in a series of field observations with a university supervisor.[9]

At the same time, each preservice student teacher is required to participate in a weekly university-based seminar. The general focus of this seminar is to examine issues related to the aims, persistent problems, and theoretical arguments that come-up during the student teaching field experience. In this space, preservice student teachers are afforded the opportunity to:

- Develop an orientation towards all students that is grounded in fairness and respect.
- Examine how social studies has been taught traditionally and develop an understanding of why the status quo persists.
- Develop an understanding of the social injustices that persist in U.S. schooling.
- Experience powerful possibilities for teaching and learning social studies and the purposes associated with those possibilities.
- Develop an appreciation for the complexity and challenges of implementing powerful social studies teaching and learning.

[8] For a detailed list of Southern University's standards for the preservice social studies education program, see Appendix A.

[9] This information was collected from my experience as a university supervisor in Southern University's social studies education program.

- Develop the ability to articulate the pedagogical decisions that these methods involve for teachers. (Student Teaching Seminar, Syllabus, Spring 2010)

With this guiding framework, the preservice students in the student teaching seminar are required to submit an electronic portfolio assignment that accounts for their work in the program, the seminar, and their student teaching field experience. This assignment is designed to be the capstone experience for all preservice learners that are finishing their work in Southern University's social studies education program. In their portfolios, these preservice learners are asked to unpack, digest, and explain how they are thinking about each of the program's benchmark standards.

Research Participants

Participants for this study were selected from the undergraduate social studies education program at Southern University. Following Patton's (1990) suggestion for purposeful sampling, my participant selection was driven by my research questions as well as specific selection criteria. Because life history interviews are more effective when the researcher and participant have had an opportunity to develop a relationship with one another (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001), my first criteria was to choose participants that I already knew. Therefore, participants for this study were chosen from a pool of students that I had taught in the Social Studies Curriculum in Secondary Schools course in Spring 2009 and the Methods of Teaching Social Studies in Secondary Schools course in Fall 2009 and who were student teaching in Spring 2010. To facilitate my field observations, I also narrowed my pool of possible participants to the student teachers that I had been assigned to supervise in the field.

From this pool of eight possible participants, I asked for volunteers who would be interested in taking part in my study. My goal was to select two participants, one male and one

female, and, to the extent possible, mirror the broader demographic make-up of my selection pool. And although I had believed that it was important to include both male and female voices in this research because gender can shape one's autobiographical narrative in powerful ways, my study only includes female voices. Of the three individuals that volunteered for this study, only the two female participants, Rebekah and Heidi, met my initial screening criteria.

Because I was interested in choosing participants that may view democracy and democratic citizenship through a social justice lens, I had asked each of the three volunteers a series of screening questions about democracy, social justice, and their personal experiences with injustice. My selection protocol included the following questions:

- What is the purpose of social studies in schools?
- How do you define democracy?
- Are there certain characteristics that you think are necessary for democracy to work?
- What are your thoughts on justice?
- Has there been a time when you have experienced injustice?
- How have those kinds of experiences helped you define justice?
- Do you think that there is a difference between the terms justice and social justice?
- What are your opinions of the term social justice?

My screening process involved interviewing and audio taping each volunteer's responses to these interview questions. I conducted these interviews in December 2009 and transcribed each volunteer's answers during that time. My goal in asking these questions was to garner an initial sense for how my possible participants were thinking about issues of democracy and social justice.

Because I was interested in participants who could articulate the way that they were thinking about social justice-oriented democracy, I looked for talk that indicated that the participant could think about economic, social, and political problems in ways that might vision a more just and equitable society. For example, Rebekah talked extensively about her personal experiences with acts of injustice in high school:

> I came into class one day and there was this swastika on my desk. That was not right, it should not have been there. This kid used to sit behind me and draw on my shirt and then tell people, "Oh, don't sit there, it's got Jew germs." That's wrong. So, I told the teacher about it and all she did was move my seat. That was not right, that should not have happened. That kid should have gotten in trouble. (Screening Interview, 7 December 2009)

In this interview, Rebekah also noted that these experiences had led her to think about the way that people treat one another and how she saw her role as a future social studies teacher directly confronting such issues.

Heidi and Rebekah wanted to participate in this study because they believe that one of the goals of powerful social studies education is to help uphold social justice. They both thought that their understanding of social studies would enable them to help their students analyze the economic, social, and political problems that characterize American society. As Heidi pointed out in her screening interview, "I think that the purpose of social studies is to help students go make a more equitable society" (Screening Interview, 7 December 2009). Accordingly, both Heidi and Rebekah were willing to volunteer for this study because they wanted to know more about themselves, their understanding of the social studies, their conceptions of democracy and social justice, and how those understandings and conceptions interplayed in their learning to

teach. In Table 3-2, I have presented a summary of my research participants and their differences. This information provided me with a starting point for the life story interviews that are discussed in the next subsection.

Table 3-2: Research Participants

Participant Characteristic	Heidi	Rebekah
Gender	Female	Female
Ethnicity	White	Jewish
Religious Affiliation	Non-Religious	Religious / Reformed Judaism
Socio-Economic Class	Upper-Middle Income	Lower-Middle Income
Parents' Occupations	Father: Financial Advisor Mother: Homemaker	Father: Jewelry Store Owner Mother: Hairdresser

Data Collection

This research study involved the collection of several data types. In this subsection, I outline each of my data collection methods in detail. I also discuss the data that was afforded by each collection method as well as how I envisioned using that data to answer my research questions. Table 3-3 provides a summative overview of the data that I collected for this study and how that data fit within my broad collection categories of interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Table 3-3: Overview of Data

Interviews	Observations	Artifacts
Life Story Interview • 3 Semi-Structured Audiotaped and Transcribed Sessions Democracy Interview • 1 Semi-Structured Audiotaped and Transcribed Session	Field Experience • 3 Observations and Field Notes • 3 Post-Observation Conferences Audiotaped and Transcribed Seminar Course • 13 Seminar Class Meetings Videotaped and Field Notes	Classroom Materials • Lesson Plans • Assignments / Rubrics Seminar Materials • Course Syllabus • Assignments / Readings • Course Handouts • Participant Notes

Individually Designed Interview • 1 Semi-Structured Audiotaped and Transcribed Session	• 5 Field Instructor Breakout Sessions Audiotaped and Transcribed	Program Materials • Course Syllabi • Program Standards Field Placement Materials • School Information • Community Information Life Story History Materials • Community Information • Census Data Eportfolio

Life Story Interviews. I began my research by collecting each participant's life history narrative. Through conducting a series of life story interviews (Atkinson, 1998, 2002), my goal was to fashion an account for the types of life experiences that each participant has had. I was specifically interested in those experiences that might have helped my participants develop a perspective of democratic citizenship that is focused on social justice-oriented goals. Because I wanted to develop an understanding for how each participant uses storying as one means for interpreting her life experience, I employed a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B) that asked a series of standardized questions of each participant. I then asked follow-up questions that were directed toward each participant's individual stories. These interviews took place over a series of several weeks in December 2009 and January 2010 and took place at a location of each participant's choosing (e.g., coffee shop, restaurant, etc.).

This interview format can be seen in my approach to questioning in my first life history interview session with Rebekah. For example, I began my interview by asking her the following question from my interview protocol: "What stands out in your life over the past few years?" To which she responded:

> I would have to say the birth of [Gigi].[10] When she came into the world, it just changed everything in my life. Like from where I wanted to go to school to where I want to end-up living after school. She's the biggest reason why I can't move too far from [Lillyton].[11] I mean, I can't be too far away from her, I love that little girl. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

As I sat and listened to Rebekah talk about her sister, Rebekah made it very evident that Gigi's birth had had a profound impact on her life. Therefore, I followed-up by asking her a more personalized question that I had tailored to her specific answer. I asked, "I can tell that Gigi's birth has been a really important event in your life. Has she changed your orientation toward or the way you think about life in general?" Rebekah's response this time exposed one of the reasons why Gigi's birth had had such an impact. She noted:

> Yeah. My mom had [Gigi] when I was a senior in high school. And, you know when you're in high school, you question everything like God. But I was in the room when [Gigi] was born and I saw life being brought into this world. I was like, there has to be something else out there. It totally changed the way I see things. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

By asking this follow-up question, I was able to uncover more specific detail about Rebekah's life. And although this excerpt provides only one example of how I used my interview protocol to then develop personalized questions about each participant's life, I believe that this process enabled me to garner a better account for each of my participant's life experiences.

[10] Gigi is Rebekah's younger sister and is a pseudonym.

[11] Lillyton is a pseudonym.

Because the purpose of this study is to move toward developing an understanding for how preservice social studies teachers' life histories relate to their conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy, it was imperative that I complete this step before moving to the next stages of research outlined in this chapter. According to Atkinson (1998), "Life stories can clearly serve as a primary means for understanding the pattern of an individual life" (p. 5). The crux of this research is to begin to see how each individual's life patterns relates to how she was conceptualizing democracy. In order to make these connections, each participant's life story interview formed the foundation through which I collected my additional data.

Accordingly, I completed the life story interview stage of my research in January 2010 before I collected data in their student teaching and seminar experiences. Following Johnson's (2007) advice, the life story interview was broken into three sessions that lasted approximately one-and-one-half to two hours a session. I also audio-recorded and transcribed each interview session as well as provided each participant the opportunity to look over the final transcripts.

Field Observations and Post-Observation Conferences. With the life story interviews as a foundation, I observed each participant's student teaching in her field experience to account for her instruction in the classroom. This step of my research consisted of three observations that were spread throughout the semester. And even though I would have preferred to spend more time in my participants' classrooms, I had to commit to each participating school system that I would only observe and collect data during my scheduled university supervision visits. Because the observation load for Southern University consisted of three site visits, I chose to observe my participants' teaching three times.

My goal with these observations was to see how each participant taught for democracy. Does the participant's conceptualization of democracy and democratic citizenship for social

justice show-up in her teaching practice? What does each participant's teaching say about how she conceptualizes democracy and democratic citizenship for social justice? What does each participant's teaching say about her rationale for teaching social studies?

As I conducted these observations, I took field notes on each participant's teaching as it related to the following:

1. Information that may show how each participant was enacting her autobiographical narratives in her teaching practice.
2. Information that may illustrate how each participant might have been conceptualizing democracy and democratic citizenship.
3. Information that might point toward each participant's purpose for teaching social studies.

And although each of my observations was a focused observation (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000) that centered on these three areas of consideration, my field notes also included all aspects of my participants' teaching practice. Because I was also in each of these student's classrooms as their university supervisor, I took field notes that focused on the following:

1. Information about the content that each participant was teaching.
2. Information about the methods/instructional practices that each participant employed to teach that content.
3. Information about how each participant interacted with and provided support to her students.

These field notes were not only data for this research, but they also provided discussion context for my next data collection method – the post-observation conference.

Accompanying each observation visit, I held a post-observation conference with my participants so that we could discuss the day's teaching. These post-observation conferences were audiotaped and transcribed and focused on questions such as:

- What was your rationale for teaching that lesson?
- What about that content was worthwhile?
- What concerned you about today's class? What did you find exciting about and what went well with today's class?
- What did you want your students to learn from today's lesson?
- Why do you think today's lesson went like it did?

These post-observation conferences afforded me the opportunity to discuss my participants' teaching in detail. My goal in this data collection step was to gather information about my participants' understanding of teaching, the social studies, and to see whether or not those understandings related to their verbal commitment to social justice-oriented democracy and their life experiences. And even though I asked some of these questions in my role as university supervisor, each of them helped me think about my participants' teaching practice – especially as that practice exhibited their understanding of social justice-oriented democracy.

Seminar Observations and Post-Seminar Questions. I observed thirteen of the fifteen class meetings of my participants' student teaching seminar. I observed each of these meetings in their entirety and each meeting lasted between two hours and two hours and forty-five minutes. These observations were videotaped and I took general field notes on each participant's participation in the seminar as it related to the following:

1. Information that may show how each participant enacted her autobiographical narratives as she participated in the weekly course meetings.

2. Information that might have illustrated how each participant conceptualized democracy and democratic citizenship in the seminar space.
3. Information that might point toward each participant's purpose for teaching social studies while that purpose was being further developed in seminar.

This step of my research was important in that it allowed me to better gauge how my participants were conceptualizing teaching, learning, and what it means to be a social studies teacher.

During this stage of my research, I also conducted two follow-up interviews with each of my participants that lasted approximately one hour a piece. One follow-up interview focused specifically on my participants' understandings of democracy and democratic citizenship and was the same for each participant. The other follow-up interview was derived from each participant's life story, her experiences with student teaching, and her participation in the student teaching seminar. Therefore, this follow-up interview was different for each participant. My purpose with this step in the research process was to ask questions that could draw connections between each participant's autobiographical narrative, her conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy, and how those conceptions were playing out in her field experiences and seminar course. I have attached a copy of all three follow-up interviews in Appendix C, D, and E.

I believe that both the field experience and seminar observations were a critical component of my data collection. According to Johnson (2007), one reason for the importance of these observations in life history research work is because teacher educators have not been able to fully "pursue the interrelationships among the particularities of preservice teachers' life circumstances, the larger contexts in which these teachers are matured, and their accumulated pedagogical standpoints" (p. 305). By conducting the field and seminar observations, I was able

to begin to see how the themes that were discussed in my participants' narratives were actually emerging in their teaching and learning about teaching.

Field Instructor Breakout Sessions. The student teaching seminar at Southern University had a component of instruction that the program called field instructor (F.I.) breakout sessions. These sessions consisted of bi-weekly meetings that took place between the university supervisors and their assigned preservice student teachers. As their university supervisor, I facilitated my participants' breakout sessions. The purpose of this space was to provide each supervisor with an opportunity to discuss common teaching problems (e.g., classroom management, how to lead a Socratic seminar) with his or her group of student teachers. Because this space provided an intimate setting for each student teacher to discuss her teaching and to talk about her understandings of the social studies, I audio-recorded and transcribed each of these meetings. My focus was to collect my participants' voices and to look for instances of talk that might be related to the scope of this research.

Artifacts. In conjunction with the data mentioned above, I collected a series of artifacts that helped me better interpret how each participant was conceptualizing social justice-oriented democracy. Hodder (2000) recommends collecting documents and artifacts as a means by which researchers can match participant talk in interviews to the work that they are doing and the experiences that they have had. With life history research specifically, Cole and Knowles (2001) argue that life history researchers should collect the following:

- Artifacts that are primarily information or data about a life.
- Artifacts that are primarily representations of a life.
- Artifacts that are related to the contexts within which a participant's life is situated (p. 85-86).

Furthermore, to provide one example of how artifacts can be collected in life history research, Johnson (2007) made an effort to collect information on the local communities, landmarks, and events that were mentioned in each of her participant's life stories. She argues that such information and its related artifacts can provide the researcher a better understanding of the contexts that surround a participant's life.

Like Johnson, I collected information on the local communities, landmarks, and events that were noted by my participants in their autobiographical narratives. For example, I pulled demographic data from the United States Census Bureau about each participant's home town so that I could gain a better understanding of the broader communities in which they lived. As Cole and Knowles (2001) point out, artifacts have the power "to illuminate a life in unanticipated ways" (p. 88) that can lead the researcher to ask questions that he or she may not have anticipated. From my perspective, collecting these artifacts enabled me to better read my participants' life stories. This step not only added depth to my participants' narratives, but it also provided one level of verifying the validity and trustworthiness of this research. By making sure that I collected this data, I hope that my representation of each participant's narrative is more clear and accountable to the individuals involved in my study.

During the observation phase of my research, I collected artifacts that illustrate the work that each of my participants was doing in their field experience as well as their student teaching seminar. Field experience artifacts included lesson plans and assignments, reflection journals about teaching practice, and field instruction observation logs. Student teaching artifacts included class assignments and contextually relevant material such as the social studies program core themes and standards. My purpose for collecting these artifacts was to look for the following:

1. Information that may relate to the participant's autobiographical narrative.
2. Information that may relate to how each participant was conceptualizing social justice-oriented democracy.
3. Information that may help illustrate how each participant's autobiographical narrative relates to their conception of social justice-oriented democracy.
4. Information that may show how my participants' experiences with the social studies education program, the field experience, and the student teaching seminar related to their conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy.
5. Information that may help illuminate each participant's purpose for teaching social studies.

With these categories in mind, I worked to use these artifacts as support materials so that I could better connect each participant's autobiographical narrative to how they were conceptualizing social justice-oriented democracy and how they were learning to become social studies teachers.

Data Analysis

I conducted multiple levels of data analysis. First, I analyzed each data source using a descriptive coding approach (Saldaña, 2009). Using this process, I constructed initial codes and categories for the data that helped me understand what each participant had said when telling her story. As such, I visited the data with an eye toward what the data itself had to say. For example, consider the following excerpt from a conversation about Heidi's experiences with discussion that we had had in one of our F.I. breakout sessions in the student teaching seminar:

> Well, whenever we have a discussion, my cooperating teacher and I, we never try to put our opinion into the discussion. We try to play devil's advocate. So, it's not like my teacher's standing over the students going, "Barack Obama's great and conservatives are

terrible!" But, I feel like that when other people say things that are more liberal some of these kids just get so angry. One girl walked out of the classroom today. It's pretty intense. (Seminar, F.I. Breakout Session, 27 January 2010)

I coded the single underlined section of text HEIDI'S VIEW OF BAD TEACHING. For the bold underlined section, I coded HEIDI'S VIEW OF GOOD TEACHING. In these two cases, I had developed these codes by analyzing what Heidi had to say about teaching in other areas of the data. To take one example, Heidi had told me, regarding playing devil's advocate, that she thought that "that's what [social studies teachers] are supposed to do" (Post-Observation Conference, 28 January 2010). Regarding bad teaching, Heidi had mentioned several times that she thought that teachers should not share their opinions with their students. The double underlined section was coded STUDENT BEHAVIOR. Finally, the broken lined section of text was coded DESCRIPTION OF CLASSROOM. These codes were then placed under the descriptive category TEACHING PRACTICE. Therefore, through this procedure, I developing a descriptive coding schema that included the segment represented in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4: Coding Schema Segment

Teaching Practice
• Heidi's View of Bad Teaching • Heidi's View of Good Teaching • Student Behavior • Description of Classroom

I then used this coding and categories schema to derive an understanding for what this piece of data told me about how my participant was conceptualizing the work of teaching.

The descriptive coding process was an important initial step in my research. During this stage of data analysis, I simply wanted to account for what my participants were saying in their narratives. Accordingly, this step of the research process was critical in two specific ways. First,

my initial descriptive coding of the data helped me to better know my participants. One result of this analysis is the participant profiles found in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6. Second, this initial holistic look at the data helped remind me that this work must be grounded in my participants' voices and that, after all, I am only helping tell their stories.

After I completed my initial round of coding, I analyzed each data source using a theoretical coding approach so that I could align my analysis with the research questions and theoretical frames that guided this research (Saldaña, 2009). In this sense, my goal was to examine the data against the theoretical construct that forms the basis of this research – social justice-oriented democracy. Specifically, I employed theoretical coding as a heuristic tool so that I could lead "from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea" (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 137). Using this process, I constructed initial codes and categories for the data focusing on categorical headings that helped me interpret how each participant was conceptualizing social justice-oriented democracy. To develop my codes, I revisited the social studies teacher literature on social justice-oriented democracy (e.g., Arbowitz & Harnish, 2006; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004a,b). As such, I visited the data and looked through my participant's talk with broad coding categories such as DEMOCRACY and DIFFERENCE.

During this process, I began to see how these concepts were playing out in my participants' narratives. For example, consider the following excerpt from one of my life history interviews with Heidi:

> I had another teacher, my language arts teacher, who everyone hated. Everybody hated her. She was a bitch. She was this black lady and we always had to do stuff, you know, the way black people do it. But I ended-up, in the beginning I didn't like her, but I

ended-up getting along with her really well. We became good friends. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

The coding category that I had attached to this chunk of text was DIFFERENCE. Within this specific example, I have divided Heidi's talk into two sections. The first section, represented by the single underline marking, outlined Heidi's initial concern with her "black lady" teacher. The section of text highlighted with the double underline marking represents Heidi's move in her thinking about the "black lady" teacher. I have also emphasized Heidi's shift in thinking from "bitch" to "friend" (the adjectives that seemed to define the two sections of this text) with the squiggly marking. At the same time, I have bolded "black lady" and "black people" to identify that Heidi was talking about someone that was different from herself. Therefore, I labeled this specific chunk of text as HEIDI'S STRUGGLE WITH DIFFERENCE.

As I worked through my data, I began to see themes emerge in my participants' life history talk as well as how those themes seemed to help them make sense of social justice-oriented democracy. And even though a full understanding of the learning of these preservice social studies teachers would necessitate a thorough study of Southern University's teacher education program, my focus was on the relationship between their life histories and their conceptualization of social justice-oriented democracy. Furthermore, once I pulled and analyzed the data, the richest examples of how this relationship manifested itself in my research were from the life history interviews, the field instructor breakout sessions, field observations, and follow-up interviews. Therefore, my focus in my case study chapters is on these data sources.

Researcher Subjectivity

This section of my dissertation was arguably the hardest for me to write. And although I would be fooling myself if I were to think that writing my subjectivity would eliminate or

bracket it from this study, I do believe that researchers who expose their subjective selves can uphold one of the foundational tenets of excellence in qualitative research. As Cole and Knowles (2001) argue, "one of the standards of 'good' qualitative research is the visibility and acknowledged presence of the researcher in a research account" (p. 89). Further, following Monaghan's (2009) lead of presenting subjectivities in a brief life history, I present my own autobiographical narrative of the subjectivities that drive my thinking about the world, teacher education, and this study.

My Story

I grew up in an upper-middle class enclave in the suburbs of a medium-sized Southern city. Through most of my elementary, middle, and high school years, I lived in what now seems like a bubble. I attended a parochial school where the Bible was often misused as a convenient means of shutting down dissenting opinion. I remember that when Bill Clinton was impeached in 1998 my United States history teacher went through an on-the-spot bulleted point lecture about why Clinton's impeachment was necessary to save the United States Constitution. I remember that my teacher went on to explain why this event would help us move the nation back toward its "Christian" foundation. I remember that after he had finished the day's lesson he was talking to a group of students in the corner of the room. And as a notorious eavesdropper, I could not help but hear him say to them that those students whose families had supported Mr. Clinton should now be able to see why they should be ashamed of themselves. In a school that had voted 99 to 1 for Bush Sr. in our Kids Voting election, my history teacher's comments did not seem too radical. And at the time, I was unaware that the school that I had attended seemed to be structured in a way that discouraged dialogue and dissent.

For a long time, I felt like I was trapped inside a blissful naiveté about the world. Throughout my high school experience, I wanted to think differently than my peers. When my science teacher skipped the section on evolution in our science textbook, I asked why. She simply stated, "Evolution is not true. We don't believe in evolution. That's why we're not going to cover it." I remember that her answer was not good enough for me. I remember that I wanted to explore the evidence, but everyone else in my class seemed to agree with my teacher so I just went along. I could not figure out how to escape that bubble.

During those same years, I volunteered for the campaign of a local politician who was running for a seat in the United State House of Representatives. And although I enjoyed the buzz and excitement of the campaign process, I remember that I had been disturbed by the campaign's rhetoric. Individualism. Freedom. Capitalism. The American Way. Those were the buzzwords that had described that politician's stance and his platform for getting elected. I remember thinking to myself that my vision of the American Way (if there is just *one* way) was different – that it was described by words such as community, brotherhood, openness. My experience with that campaign proved to be a turning point for me. Because I was deeply disturbed by everyone's obsession with the individual as the highest good, I started to think that excessive individualism actually contributed to the social and economic problems that plague American society. I was starting to free myself from my bubble.

Social Justice Awakening. The day was ordinary. As I rode in the car down my hometown's awkward three-lane street, I remember staring out the passenger-side window at the houses that lined the road's shoulder. We were on our way to the weekly Wednesday night service at our church and I remember being excited that I would get to spend the entire evening with my new girlfriend. However, when we pulled up to traffic light that separated our car from

the parking lot and me from my girlfriend, the individual with whom I was riding ruined my naiveté. She looked at the Mercedes that was idling in the lane next to us and said, "Look at that Mercedes. Isn't it just like a N***** to ruin a nice car like that with their gold trim. They just don't know how to take care of stuff." I was appalled.

Quite honestly, I cannot explain why that specific phrase has resonated with me over the years. I had grown-up around friends and family who would wax poetic about their Southern heritage. I had heard that word numerous times, on numerous occasions, and in varied contexts. I had been raised in a city that was highly segregated, simmered with racial tension, and where phrases like the one mentioned above were commonplace. Yet, on that day and in that context, I had actually thought about the words that were being used, the meaning that was being spoken, and I had been disturbed. Maybe it was the irony that we were traveling to church (a place that is supposed to encompass love and brotherhood) or maybe it was simply my time to grow-up and take a critical look at the everyday injustices that were hovering around me.

I tell this story because that event has proven to be a critical turning point in my life. Not only did I begin to see the world differently, but I also began to feel like a fish out of water. I would go to my conservative school and I began to notice that everyone was the same. They looked the same, they talked the same, and they even seemed to think the same. I know that I began to see the world through a more complexly colored lens. I now see that individuals experience the world in different ways because the social contexts in which they live are different from one another.

Like in Chapter 2, my goal with writing this poem was to help express my thinking about the complex inequalities – the poverty and wealth – that I saw everyday on my way home from work. When I drove down College Street in my hometown, I could see the stately antebellum

mansions that had been built by the profits of those that had enslaved others. Behind College Street, I could see rows of shotgun houses. In my mind, I had imagined the following civil war legacy playing out in this present-day neighborhood:

Life.
Destroyed by war.
Destroyed by slavery.
Poverty remains.

Breath.
Entered by one.
Entered by the chosen.
Poverty still remains.

The street of cobblestone and spring fragrance,
....journeys toward an endless stream of knowledge,
....journeys nowhere.

Houses of the free,
....built out of defiant wood,
....built out of meaningless lives.

They are built out of bed rocked soil.
They are built out of nothing.
Houses of the free.

It journeys nowhere.
It journeys toward an unstoppable curse.
That street of remembrance and false joy.

Poverty still remains.
Exited by those left.
Exited by one.
Fear.

Poverty remains.
Destroyed by slavery.
Destroyed by war.
Death.[12]

[12] This poem is titled "College Street" and was written in 2009.

Yet, like my poem in Chapter 2, a friend (the same friend) pointed out to me that the language of my poem seems very assumptive. In my imagination, I have presumed that I know more than I do know about the lives of the residents of College Street. And even though these assumptions are problematic, my poem represents how I think about these complex topics as well as exposes the assumptions that I hold – troubling assumptions that I have to face, come to terms with, and overcome.

Becoming a Teacher of Teachers. At this point in my subjectivity statement, I must admit that my journey into the field of education was either accidental or the result of divine providence. I cannot remember a time in my childhood when I dreamed of becoming a teacher, much less a teacher of teachers. I never lined up dolls so that I could practice giving instruction and I most certainly did not like school. However, as I reflect back on how I got to where I am today, I have been able to piece together a few events that I believe have helped shape my thinking about the world and have pushed me into teacher education.

After I graduated from college, I remember that I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I had moved back home to live with my parents so that I could spend some time transitioning out of college and into the working world of real adults. Unfortunately, I did not have any direction. So, I simply began applying for jobs.

I had traveled to a small town in southwest part of my state for a job interview in corporate sales. After a morning of testing and interviewing for the position, the sales manager and I went to a lunch meeting with a couple of the sales associates that I would be hired to assist. Once the server had taken our orders, the sales manager turned to me and said, "Joseph, do you see that BMW in the parking lot"?

"Yes", I responded, "why do you ask"?

"It's mine. The great thing about this company is that it can provide you the opportunity to purchase one of those. And when you sell a lot of copiers you can have one as well".

I remember that I had immediately felt sick. I knew that I needed direction for my life and that that direction could not be simply to live to acquire BMWs. So, as I drove home that day, I decided to change my course. I decided that I needed more education and development. I had needed more time to explore ideas.

At that time, I decided that I had wanted to formally pursue what had been a long-time hobby of mine – the study of politics. Therefore, I enrolled in a MA program in Public Affairs (or political science) at the state's public liberal arts college. I remember that my time in this program impassioned me. As I immersed myself in texts such as Tocqueville's (1969) *Democracy in America*, José Ortega y Gasset's (1994) *The Revolt of the Masses*, and the writings of Karl Marx (1978), I worked to make sense of the world and society that surrounded me. Under the guidance of an experienced advisor, I was afforded the opportunity to discuss and develop a political philosophy that governs my work as well as life. It was in the halls of the political science department at this liberal arts college that I first learned about the socialization effects of schooling. Before studying political science at this college, I had not understood that American public schools could directly impact the direction of our democracy and the state of our society. This awareness caught fire in my mind. I knew that I wanted to participate in the process of schooling.

During my time at the Southern University, I explored various facets of teaching and learning. It was at Southern University that I was deeply impacted by Jones' (2004, 2006) work. She helped me think about how to structure my thoughts through the use of personal narrative and poetry – the impact of which is evident in this dissertation. While at Southern University, I

had also become interested in teacher education because I believe that teachers can impact the society in which we live in ways that will make it more democratic, equal, and just. However, as I note in Chapter 1, I am perplexed that some teacher candidates develop nuanced understandings about education and democracy and others do not. As such, I embarked on this research to answer one important question: Who are preservice social studies teachers? To do this work, I also thought that it was important to look at the question: Who am I?

"Who Am I"? After I had spent weeks pouring through the qualitative research literature, I came to the understanding that writing a subjectivity statement consists of nothing more than the researcher simply accounting for who he is, what he believes, and why he chose to pursue the study at hand. As I set out to write the statement that I have presented above, my thought was that I would quickly tell you, the reader, about me, the researcher, and what drove my thinking during this study. However, I found that writing this subjectivity statement was one of the most difficult components of this dissertation.

I spent months attempting to answer the question: "Who am I?" Not only did I discover that I needed to spend an enormous amount of time reflecting on why I came to be interested in this study at this time, but I also came to the conclusion, after this process, that I am not sure that I know who I am or can ever really answer that question. As Tatum (2010) points out, the act of defining oneself is complex, if not impossible:

> The concept of identity is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. Who am I? The answer depends in large part on who the world around me says I am. Who do my parents say I am? Who do my peers say I am? What message is reflected back to me in the faces and voices of my teachers, my neighbors, store clerks? What do I learn from the media about

myself? How am I represented in the cultural images around me? Or am I missing from the picture altogether (p. 5)?

Although I have presented a subjectivity statement that should provide you some insight into me, I want to caution that this statement can only represent what *I* was thinking at the time that *I* wrote this statement. I could not and cannot account for all the variables that go into making me, me. So, I now leave you to read my research through this window into my self. Like looking through all windows, you can only see so far.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined my data collection and analysis methods as well as my researcher subjectivity. The next chapters (4-7) will present profiles and case studies of my participants. In Chapter 4 and Chapter 6, I will provide the participant profiles for Rebekah and Heidi respectively. Chapter 5 and Chapter 7 will present two singular case studies. To do this work, I will follow Stake's (2008) guidelines that case study researchers are responsible for:

- Bounding the case, conceptualizing the object of study;
- Selecting phenomena, themes, or issues (i.e., the research questions to emphasize);
- Seeking patterns of data to develop the issues;
- Triangulating key observations and bases for interpretation;
- Selecting alternative interpretations to pursue; and
- Developing assertions of generalizations about the case (p. 141).

As such, these chapters are organized around the individual lives and contexts of each of my participants. I will also organize each case study around the topical issue of how each of my participant's life history has evidenced itself in her student teaching experience, her participation

in the student teaching seminar, and how this relationship has affected how she conceptualizes social justice-oriented democracy.

CHAPTER 4

REBEKAH'S PARTICIPANT PROFILE[13]

In this chapter, I present the data that were collected from the life story interviews that I conducted with Rebekah. I have been careful to organize this chapter as a re-representation[14] of what Rebekah told me about her life. However, I must caution that this re-representation can only account for the how Rebekah presented her self to me at the time of our interviews. Not only was Rebekah defining her self to her self through the narratives that she told, but she was also trying to define her self to me and our context. From a Bakhtinian (1936/1984) perspective, Rebekah's story is, therefore, unfinalized. It is not over. The world in which she and we live, according to this perspective, assumes that individuals' interpretations are bound to their sense of presentness.

In my attempt to outline this case, I have tried, to the extent possible, to let my participant's words and stories stand alone. As noted by Atkinson (1998):

> As a personal document, a life story is a text unlike any other document or story in any other field. It can stand on its own because, like a novel or poem, it automatically and immediately evokes certain individual responses based on the experience it describes or the perspective of the reader (p. 70).

[13] All the data in this chapter was collected from my life story interviews with Rebekah. Those interviews took place on December 10, 2009; January 13, 2010; and January 27, 2010.

[14] I chose the term "re-representation" because I believe that I cannot represent Rebekah's life for her. I can only recount and try to make sense of what she told me during our interviews. In this sense, my participant profile is a retelling of Rebekah's stories as I have interpreted them.

Therefore, in this chapter, I have indented and italicized Rebekah's words so that I can better present what *she* has to say about *her* life at the time of the interviews.

This chapter first presents the life history of Rebekah. I have included in Rebekah's participant profile her words about her family life; elementary, middle, and high school years; her time in college; her experience with work; words about Rebekah's spiritual life and her guiding beliefs; and how she viewed her orientation to politics. I then outline three themes that seem to have defined Rebekah's life. These three themes are Rebekah's philosophy of choice through knowledge, her commitment to כבוד (Kavod),[15] and her desire to live life with purpose. My goal with presenting these themes is to establish the foundation that I will use to discuss the relationship that may exist between Rebekah's life experiences and her thinking about social justice-oriented democracy in the student teaching seminar and her field experience. In this chapter, I use Rebekah's voice to present these themes; whereas, I will work to explain the above correlations in the next chapter

Participant Profile

Rebekah is a twenty-one year old college senior at Southern University. She grew-up in Lillyton – a medium-sized suburban town that is located within one of the region's largest metropolitan areas. According to the United States Census Bureau, the 2006 population for Lillyton was approximately 43,424. Table 4-1 presents a demographic snapshot of this community as it compares to the state.

[15] Rebekah told me during one of our life history interview sessions that כבוד (Kavod) is Hebrew for respect. She noted that this Jewish principle was taught to her by one of her Rabbis and that it includes respect for others as well as respect for self.

Table 4-1: Demographic Snapshot of Lillyton

Category	Lillyton	State
Racial Demographics		
White	83.6%	65.1%
Hispanic/Latino	5.5%	5.3%
Black	6.5%	28.7%
Asian	5.7%	2.1%
Nationhood/Language		
Foreign Born Persons	11.7%	7.1%
English Second Language	14.0%	9.9%
Education		
High School Graduates	95.2%	78.6%
Bachelors and Higher	57.1%	24.6%
Income		
Per Capita Income	$39,432	$21,154
Household Income	$71,207	$42,433
Median Home Value	$226,300	$111,200
Percent Below Poverty	5.2%	13%

As shown by Table 4-1, Rebekah, like most preservice teachers, is from a majority white, middle to upper-middle class community (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005, 2008).

Rebekah classified her life growing-up in Lillyton into two distinct periods. During the first period of her life, Rebekah's family lived in a "smaller" house. As she noted:

> *In Lillyton before I was in the sixth grade, we lived in a smaller house. And although my sister and I had our own rooms, the house itself was much smaller than where we live now. It was a nice smaller house but there were a lot of houses packed onto the street.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Rebekah described the next period of her childhood as "beautiful" and juxtaposed her life in the "beautiful" house to her life in the "smaller" one. She was quick to point out:

> *Now, we live in a neighborhood where you have to drive a mile-and-a-half to get to our house. We live in the very back and there's only three houses on the cul-de-sac. We live in a pretty nice house now. We have three garages because the guy who lived there before us built cars. So, we have a lot of room. We have a big basement and I had a big room growing-up in that house. I love that house – it's beautiful. And we live in the back of the woods so we always see wild turkeys and deer.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Throughout the remainder of our life history interview sessions, Rebekah's stories about her childhood focused on her life in the "beautiful" house. When I asked her to describe her life at home, she focused only on this stage of her life.

In this participant profile, I have used the information and stories that Rebekah told me during our life history interview sessions to craft a window into the who that Rebekah is. In the sections that follow, I have attempted to describe Rebekah's family life; elementary, middle, and high school years; her time at college; her experience with work; her spiritual life and guiding beliefs; and her orientation to politics.

Family Life

Family was an important component of Rebekah's life story. When I asked Rebekah about her family life, she was quick to talk about the differences between her mother's and father's side of the family:

> *My family is a big part of my life. My mom's dad is a hair dresser and her mom is a nail technician. So, they have worked at the same place for years. And they focus on making*

> *their house look nice, perfect, and very organized. When I would go to visit, I would always take their perfectly aligned clickers (remote controls) and move them sideways. We'd move chairs around so that everything would not be straight anymore... On my dad's side of the family, it's very different. It's very laid back. My grandfather is a fisherman and my grandmother volunteers for a service that trains dogs for people with physical disabilities. So, she has two dogs that stay with her that she uses to teach others about the organization. And their house is very hairy and really warm and cozy. It's really loving and then you go to my other grandparents house and it's like a museum. So, the two sides are totally opposite from one another.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Rebekah also noted that those differences were important to her in that she believes that they partially play out in how she views herself in relation to her parents. As she mentioned in one of our interview sessions:

> *My mother is the nicest woman in the world. I want to be just like her. She doesn't let my friends pay for their haircuts. And sometimes I wish I was more like my mother because she can hold a conversation with a wall. My dad, on the other hand, is a very structured person. He knows what he's going to eat for lunch every day. That's how I am – I eat the same thing for lunch every single day. I am very organized with how I do things. They definitely have different values from each other and I think that I have a combination of those values.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

For Rebekah, the differences that she described in her family were critical to her identity. Time and time again, Rebekah told me that she thought that she could see her mother and father as well as her maternal and paternal grandparents in herself.

I also asked Rebekah to describe what life was like during a typical day from her childhood. Rebekah used this opportunity to talk about her parents' relationship:

> *When my dad would come home from work, my mom would have dinner ready and we would sit down to eat as a family. My dad would then go watch TV. My mom was always the person that did all the cleaning and cooking. I guess my dad didn't participate in full partnership. But my dad really did work hard when we were growing-up. He worked very, very, very, hard at his business. He just opened a third store so now he'll eat dinner in front of the TV. It's just that he comes home and he is so exhausted.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

And even though Rebekah seemed to make excuses for her father's behavior, she was quick to note that that type of behavior is not what she wants from a husband:

> *I don't want to have to wait on my husband hand-and-foot like my mother does sometimes. I'd rather have an equal partnership. I saw my mom make dinner every single night after working a long hard day at the salon. And she would take care of me and my sisters. I mean, my dad worked a long hard day too, but he could put some dishes in the dishwasher.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

During our conversation, I became aware of Rebekah's contradictory talk about her father. On the one hand, she seemed to disapprove of his behavior towards her mother. On the other hand, she acknowledged his hard work and his contributions to his family.

Even though Rebekah described her family as quarrelsome and sometimes distant, she was also quick to point out that they would spend a lot of time with one another. For example, Rebekah and her family would take extensive vacations with one another. As she noted in one of our life history interviews:

> *I never went to summer camp because my parents wanted to take us on family vacations. I think that's how I really learned about our country. We'd start in [our Southeastern home state], drive to California, and then drive all the way back to [our Southeastern home state]. The next summer we'd drive from [our Southeastern home state] up the East coast. We'd see the roadside America stuff. I have been to almost every single state. I have been to almost every state and I have my parents to thank for that. So, that's really, really cool.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Rebekah credited these experiences with introducing her to the United States. Furthermore, Rebekah told me that she believes that those trips are what spurred her interest in history and social studies.

Elementary, Middle, and High School

When I asked Rebekah to describe her life in elementary, middle, and high school, she pointed out to me that she was very busy:

> *A typical week for me in middle and high school was busy. My religious school met on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Tuesdays. My youth group met on Thursdays. And then again on Fridays. I was at Temple almost every day of the week.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

However, Rebekah also noted that she felt awkward at school and that all of her friends were at her Temple. As she recalled:

> *I really did not like school very much. I didn't have a lot of friends in my high school... One semester I'd eat lunch with a girl who was in chorus with me. But she was always sick. So, there were a lot of days where I ate lunch by myself. And sometimes I would just go eat my lunch in the chorus room because I wouldn't feel awkward there. I would*

> *sometimes eat lunch as fast as I could so I could go sit in the library... All of my friends were in my religious school and my youth group at temple.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

This separation between Rebekah's school and Temple (or Non-Jewish and Jewish) would define her college years as well.

Even with Rebekah's compartmentalization of her social circles, she spoke about one friend that she did have in school. As she told me:

> *One of my best friends in middle school was Muslim. And she and I were like, "I just don't understand why our two religions don't get along." So, we asked her mom and she told us that we shouldn't talk about stuff like that. But we're not really that good of friends anymore.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

I must admit that I found Rebekah's relationship with her Muslim friend very fascinating. I also wondered why they were no longer friends. Therefore, I asked Rebekah what had happened to this friendship. Rebekah informed me that:

> *Her name was [Aara][16] and we were together in middle school. I remember in seventh grade that I went to her family's house for dinner and she introduced me as her Jewish friend. I was like, "Ok, that's a little weird." I remember one of her cousins saying that he didn't mind Jewish people but that he did not like Israelis. I just remember that that made me nervous.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

I also wanted to know how Rebekah thought her friendship with Aara affected her as a person. She noted:

[16] Aara is a pseudonym.

> *I think that my relationship with [Aara] has affected the way that I view Muslims. I have to constantly remind my friends who are very pro-Israel that not all Muslims are bad and that the Muslims who are terrorists are not considered Muslims by other Muslims. Like [Aara], she doesn't consider people who commit terrorist attacks Muslims – she considers them terrorists. So, I don't know. I guess I'm more defensive about the way that people talk about Muslims.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

At the same time, Rebekah told me about how one of her friends in her youth group at Temple also helped change her perspective toward people who are different from her. She recalled:

> *[Steve],*[17] *one of my closest friends in youth group, came out of the closet. It was one of those things that I just didn't see coming. It's been great, though. If someone says something that is offensive to gay people, he says, "You know that's really not cool." [Steve] definitely makes us watch the way we talk about people and he's a great person to have in my life.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Rebekah noted that her youth group in general helped her think about issues larger than herself. She told me:

> *I think that my youth group really had a big impact on the way that I feel about things. They taught me about things like what was going on in Darfur. I remember thinking that there was a lot of social issues that I did not really understand. So, I used to make little dolls that I could use to write letters and I called up Hillary Clinton the other day to let her know that Darfur still has problems that need to be solved. And I made a big video about it and everything. My goal was to at least tell people about what was going on.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

[17] Steve is a pseudonym.

As Rebekah's story makes clear, her youth group has had a profound impact on her life. Not only did her individual friendships affect how she views others, but Rebekah's participation in this group helped her begin to develop an active orientation to life. Youth group was what encouraged Rebekah to start to express her political voice and reach out to others.

Interestingly, my conversation with Rebekah about her elementary, middle, and high school years did not focus on her experiences as a student. While she talked extensively about her social networks and her youth group, Rebekah talked very little about her time in the classroom. Of the few times she did discuss these classroom experiences, Rebekah described what subjects she did and did not like in school. She recalled:

> *I remember really liking my US history class because I had one of those teachers that really makes things interesting. I really liked listening to his lectures and I really liked taking notes... I was good at it. So, I definitely enjoyed that part. And I was at the school every single morning at seven o'clock to get math help. So, I enjoyed math after I got it, but I hated science. That was the worst. I did not like being there. I couldn't dissect the frog. I just couldn't do it. I almost threw-up just from looking at it. I had to leave the room. I was like, "I'm sorry, but I'll take a zero." I didn't care. I was not touching that.*
>
> (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

In short, Rebekah's stories about her elementary, middle, and high school years show how she began to express the characteristics that define her life. It was during these years that she began to show empathy toward others as well as use that empathy to express her political voice.

College

I asked Rebekah to talk about her time in college. She began by telling me about how she came to Southern:

> *I started at [Mountain University],*[18] *but then I came to [Southern] and had a lot of fun the first semester. And the first semester that I came, I wanted to be a math education major. But I didn't like calculus at all. So, I withdrew from my calculus class and spent the whole semester trying to figure out what I wanted to do. And I realized that I had to take another history class. So, during the summer, I took it with this professor and I really liked the way he taught the course. So, I was like, "Maybe I can do history education because I really, really enjoy history."* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

To follow-up on a conversation that we had had about the courses that she had enjoyed while at Southern University, I asked Rebekah to discuss some of the courses that she had not enjoyed. She was quick to point out:

> *I did not like women's studies. My professor rubbed me the wrong way. She made me feel bad about a lot of things that I really like about my life. I mean – she was ultra feminist. She believed things like males should not hold doors open for females. And the way that she graded stuff was really, really subjective. The things that I thought were right for me, she did not consider right.* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

The last story that Rebekah told me about her time in college was about what she has learned about other people. She pointed out to me:

> *In college, I've learned that some people don't think about things like I do. For example, I like it when people clean-up their dishes when they eat something. I had to make a twenty-four hour rule at my place because my roommates weren't cleaning-up their mess.*

[18] Mountain University is a pseudonym.

So, I've learned that I have to not be so particular about the way that I want things because other people have their own ways. (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

Interestingly, Rebekah did not have much to say about her time in college. And although our conversation about her experience in college was brief, I was glad to have had a glimpse into Rebekah's life during this time.

Work

Rebekah's love for teaching originated during a work experience that she had had while at Mountain University. As she recalled:

[Mountain University] was not very far from my temple. So, I went-up to the principal of the religious school and asked him if I could teach at the religious school the next year. And he was like, "I don't know. You're so young and blah, blah, blah." But he still let me teach a third grade class and I was the youngest teacher there. So, I definitely threw myself in there and I was glad I did because I had so much fun. I learned so much about teaching at 18. It was then that I knew that I wanted to be a teacher and it was because this man let me teach. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

During our life story interviews, I became aware of Rebekah's focus on work and how she constantly talked about how her experiences had made her a better person. Therefore, during one of our sessions, I asked her what she thought she had learned while working in her father's jewelry store. She was quick to point out:

That you shouldn't prejudge people. I learned that at the jewelry store because this one time a man came in and I was like, "Oh, gosh. He's not going to buy anything." He had come in the store dressed in ratty overalls with greasy hair and no teeth. And none of the other girls wanted to wait on him. So, I just put on my good face and went over there. He

> *mentioned to me that his anniversary was coming-up and that he needed to get a gift. So, I went to the back of the store where we keep the diamonds and instinctively pulled out the biggest one. And he loved it. I think he ended-up spending $6000 on a ring. So, from then on, I was like, "I am not going to prejudge anyone that comes in this store." I'm always the one who gets the people in overalls.* (Life History Interview, 27 January 2010)

Overall, Rebekah noted that work had provided critical experiences such as the one mentioned above that have helped her develop an openness toward life and other people.

Spiritual Life and Guiding Beliefs

When I asked Rebekah about her spiritual life and guiding beliefs, she was quick to draw a distinction between religion and spirituality. As she pointed out:

> *I'm not very religious. I would say that I am more spiritual in the sense that I do believe that there is something else out there – that there has to be.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

I wanted to know what Rebekah had meant by "there is something else out there – that there has to be." So, I asked her why she believed that something larger than ourselves must exist. She told me a story about her little sister:

> *My mom had my sister [Gigi] when I was a senior in high school. Before [Gigi's] birth, I had been questioning everything that I had been taught to believe – you know, the existence of God. But I was in the room when [Gigi] was born and I got to see life being brought into this world. I was like, "There has to be something else out there." Seeing [Gigi's] birth has totally changed the way that I see things. I always think back to that time.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Therefore, I became aware of how a specific instance in Rebekah's life helped her define one of her core beliefs – belief in God. However, Rebekah's relationship with the institution of the church was complicated. She recalled:

> *Religion is really mostly with my mother and my sisters because my dad thinks that it's ridiculous to be a member of the temple. He's Jewish because that's how he was born, but he doesn't practice Judaism. So, my mother is listed as a single parent at temple... I would love to go do things at the temple and I'd want him to come to see me sometimes, but he just didn't want to go to the temple. So, that caused a lot of conflict. But he did come for my Bat Mitzvah. So, that was big.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Rebekah also noted that she did not attend a "regular temple." Instead, she pointed out that they were members of a more orthodox organization. As she told me:

> *We weren't members of a regular temple. So, instead of going to regular Hebrew and religious schools like all the other Jewish kids in my elementary school, I did Habad – it's like Orthodox Judaism. And I loved it because I learned so much there. I feel like that if I had attended regular religious school that I wouldn't have learned as much.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Finally, I wanted to ask Rebekah what beliefs she thought guided her everyday life and the work that she does. She was quick to point out:

> *Honesty. That's my guide to life and how I govern my life. So, honesty is a really big one.* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

And even though Rebekah's life is guided by other beliefs as well (e.g., choice through knowledge, כבוד (Kavod)), I will discuss these in the next major section as they formed themes that occurred and reoccurred throughout our life history interviews.

Orientation to Politics

During our life story interviews, Rebekah described her orientation to politics as middle-of-the-road. She told me:

> *I'm moderate on everything. You know, some people can explain one thing and I'll think that that's great. Then, other people can explain the other side to me and I'll think that that side is good. So, I'm very easily swayed. And I have a hard time deciding what I feel because I feel like both sides make really good points. I'm like, "Why do I have to pick? I'll just be moderate." So, it just depends on what issue. I think that I'm socially left and economically right most of the time.* (Life History Interview, 27 January 2010)

Rebekah was also careful to point out to me that her moderate nature meant that she did not consider herself right or left, liberal or conservative, or Republican or Democrat. As she noted:

> *I don't consider myself anything because I want to look at the issues. And I want to look at the candidates to see which ones match my issues. However, I would say that there are a few issues that aren't negotiable. For example, I don't know why I'm so pro-choice, but I don't want someone from the government telling me what I can't do. I guess I just don't like big government. I don't know. That's just why I would say that I'm not a republican or democrat.* (Life History Interview, 27 January 2010)

With Rebekah's view of herself as moderate in mind, I asked her what kinds of political conversations she has with her friends. She noted:

> *I like to talk with people who believe what I believe. It's nice to be around people who have the same viewpoint at you because normally I'm around my roommate, who's very liberal, and my dad, who's very much on the right. So, it's like being at a baseball game*

> *where you're the only Met's fan and everyone else is a Yankee. Sometimes it sucks, especially when your team loses.* (Life History Interivew, 27 January 2010)

At the same time, I also wanted know how Rebekah viewed her level of political engagement. She noted:

> *I feel that I'm pretty engaged, especially if it's an issue that I'm very passionate about. I'm very pro-choice and I'm very pro-Israel. I'm also very pro-stem cell research. I'll go to Israel rallies because of what's going on with Iran right now. And I don't know how I feel about healthcare reform because I see good and bad on both sides. I think that there needs to be some sort of middle ground.* (Life History Interview, 27 January 2010)

Accordingly, Rebekah told me that she tries to use her social network to help inform others about issues that concern her. She was quick to point out:

> *I'll send out emails to my friends. For example, I recently sent a group of my friends an article about the Prime Minister of Holland and the spread of Islam in Europe. I'll also call up [Secretary of State] Hillary Clinton to ask her to stop the problems in Sudan. I've done that a couple of times.* (Life History Interview, 27 January 2010)

In sum, Rebekah believes that her political orientation and awareness toward political issues partially define her identity.

In this section, I have presented Rebekah's participant profile. Because life histories are best told through the voice of the participant (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001), I have worked to let Rebekah speak for her self. My goal in this section was to open a window into Rebekah's life and provide one example of who enters into preservice social studies teacher education.

Themes From Rebekah's Life

As I read through the transcripts from my life history interviews with Rebekah, I began to notice themes that seemed to guide her life. Therefore, I coded each transcript and categorized those codes to help me make sense of Rebekah's identity. I have outlined three themes: (1) Rebekah's guiding principle of choice through knowledge, (2) Rebekah's focus on כבוד (Kavod), and (3) Rebekah's desire to live life with purpose. In this section, I will discuss each of these themes.

Choice Through Knowledge

A major guiding principle in Rebekah's life is choice through knowledge. According to Rebekah, this philosophy affords her the tools that she needs to make major and minor decisions. As she explained to me in one of our life history interviews:

> *When I was in youth group, they taught us about the idea of choice through knowledge. I can make decisions about my life based on my being educated about them. For example, I chose not to keep kosher. Although the Torah says that you should not mix milk and meat because you shouldn't bathe a calf in its mother's milk, I'm going to eat chicken and cheese. I don't see how that's bathing a calf in her mother's milk because chickens don't produce milk. Now, I might think twice about having a cheeseburger, but I'll probably eat it anyway. Back then the food wasn't clean and that's my choice through my knowledge of why I'm making those choices.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

For Rebekah, this philosophy not only allows her to interpret her Judaism in ways that she views are appropriate for her life, but it also drives to the core of her whole self. Rebekah noted that choice through knowledge permeates through her every day that she lives. Rebekah wanted me to know that every decision that she makes is grounded in the belief that you can only make a

choice through knowledge. As such, Rebekah talked about the need for people to be taught how to consistently and constantly search for the *right* kinds of knowledge.

כבוד (Kavod): Respect

Rebekah is also very concerned about the Jewish principle of *כבוד (Kavod)* or respect. She told me that:

> *I really get upset when people treat other people unkindly. Like, in my school, there was this little boy yesterday and he was making fun of this little girl because I had accidentally called her the wrong name. I felt so bad and I won't ever make that mistake again. But they started laughing at her and I know this girl's dad has leukemia right now. I know that she's going through so much and that this was the last thing that she needed. We also have this girl in our youth group who's homeschooled. And they make fun of her all the time because she's very awkward. So, I have to tell them, "Just because you have had a different life from her doesn't give you the right to make fun of her." That's my biggest pet peeve. Disrespect is something that I do not care for in other people.* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

Accordingly, Rebekah seems to work to separate her self from people who are disrespectful (e.g., "Disrespect is something that I do not care for in other people"). Rebekah told me that one of the core principles of her Judaism is to work to uphold *כבוד (Kavod)* and to disassociated her Self from those that do not. This separation, however, does not mean that:

> *You don't ignore disrespect. Of course you work to help change people and show them better ways to act. What it means is that you just don't let those people affect how you act.* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

In this sense, Rebekah's focus is on developing her self and using whatever tools she can to help develop others.

At the same time, Rebekah views the lack of כבוד *(Kavod)* to be a contributing factor to why there is so much suffering in the world. She told me:

> *I think that people are put in situations when they're born and I don't think anybody should be punished for how they were brought into this world. So, I don't know why there's so much suffering in the world. I don't think that there's a specific reason, but I think that a huge reason is people not respecting each other.* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

As such, Rebekah's concern for כבוד *(Kavod)* is something that she works to put in the center of her life. In the next subsection, I will discuss her desire to live life with purpose – a purpose that includes the principles of כבוד *(Kavod)*.

Live Life with Purpose

When I asked Rebekah to tell me about the purpose of life, she made clear to me that purposeful living is important to her. She told me:

> *I think the purpose of life is to live it to the fullest and have fun while you're doing it. I mean it would suck to go through life as a really sad person who works all the time. I like to work, don't get me wrong, but I think that, for myself, I should do something useful and contribute to society.* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

Rebekah also provided me of an example of someone that she thought was modeling how to live life with purpose. Rebekah recalled an event that had happened during her student teaching:

> *Today, I met with the guidance counselor, my cooperating teacher, and a student. And I was telling my boyfriend on the way home from school that I was really impressed with the way that she does her job. You could tell that she really cared and tried to really make life better for my student. So, I thought, "I could do that." I just know that I want to influence lives in positive ways which is why I got into teaching in the first place. So, I think that's my purpose – to influence people's lives for the better.* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

At the same time, Rebekah made clear that influencing people's lives for the better could be accomplished through any profession and any station in life. Talking about her mother, Rebekah noted:

> *I think that you have to live your life everyday for some sort of purpose. Like my mom. She loves what she does. She loves what she does every single day. She loves doing people's hair and making them feel good about themselves. I think that's cool.* (Life History Interview, 13 January 2010)

In my conversations with Rebekah, I became aware that she works to live a purposeful life and focuses on trying to better people's lives through everything that she does.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented Rebekah's life history as she told it to me during our life story interview sessions. I have also outlined the themes that I identified to be foundation to how Rebekah guides her life. I will use these themes – (1) Rebekah's guiding principle of choice through knowledge, (2) Rebekah's focus on כבוד (Kavod), and (3) Rebekah's desire to live life with purpose – in the next chapter to analyze the relationship between Rebekah's life history and her experiences during the student teaching semester.

CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY OF REBEKAH

In this chapter, I outline the case study of Rebekah. Using stories about her practice as well as data from my observations and follow-up interviews, I work to analyze the relationship between the themes from her life story interviews, her teaching in action, and her understanding of social justice-oriented democracy. To do this work, I first outline the school context for Rebekah's student teaching experience. Second, I look at how Rebekah's guiding principle of choice through knowledge evidenced itself in her teaching practice. In this section, I examine how this philosophy affected how Rebekah presented the content she was expected to teach to her students. Third, I discuss Rebekah's focus on כבוד (Kavod). In this section, I analyze how Rebekah's orientation of respect guided how she organized her classroom environment. Fourth, I outline how Rebekah's desire to live life with purpose permeated her philosophy of teaching. From this perspective, I examine how Rebekah talked about her teaching during the student teaching seminar. Finally, my goal is to utilize this information to outline Rebekah's definition of democracy and how she views social studies education contributing to this definition.

The School Context

Rebekah completed her student teaching at a school that is located in Fieldstone[19] – a small town in a medium-sized county with quick access to the state's major metropolitan area. The community is surrounded by farming. Driving to observe Rebekah's teaching practice, I

[19] Fieldstone is a pseudonym.

passed several fields. Some had cows, some had chicken houses, and others had freshly rolled hay bales. According to the United States Census Bureau and American Towns, the 2009 population estimate for Fieldstone was 3,825. Table 5-1 presents a demographic snapshot for Fieldstone, Brooks County,[20] and the state.

Table 5-1: Demographic Snapshot of Fieldstone and Surrounding Community

Category	**Fieldstone**	**Brooks County**	**State**
Population	3,825	63,544	9,829,211
Racial Demographics			
White	80.4%	89.4%	65.0%
Hispanic/Latino	4.2%	5.2%	8.3%
Black	16.1%	7.7%	30.2%
Asian	.01%	3.0%	3.0%
Nationhood/Language			
Foreign Born Persons	N/A	2.5%	7.1%
English Second Language	9.7%	5.0%	9.9%
Education			
High School Graduates	68.7%	68.1%	78.6%
Bachelors and Higher	18.9%	11.7%	24.3%
Income			
Per Capita Income	$18,456	$17,808	$21,154
Household Income	$41,146	$51,329	$50,834
Medium Home Value	N/A	$102,900	$111,200
Percent Below Poverty	12.5%	12.1%	14.7%

As shown in Table 5-1, Rebekah's field placement was in a community that is different from the one in which she grew-up. Lillyton, Rebekah's hometown, was a middle to upper-middle class suburb on the edge of a major metropolitan area; whereas, Fieldstone was mostly lower to

[20] Fieldstone is located in Brooks County. Brooks County is a pseudonym.

middle class and rural. Rebekah told me that she was excited about the opportunity to teach in Fieldstone.

The school system in Brooks County is divided into city and county schools that are self-governing and independent from one another. In this case, Fieldstone Middle School was part of the Fieldstone City School System. Table 5-2 illustrates the student demographics of Fieldstone Middle School as it compares to the other middle schools in the community and other state middle schools.

Table 5-2: Fieldstone Middle School Demographics[21]

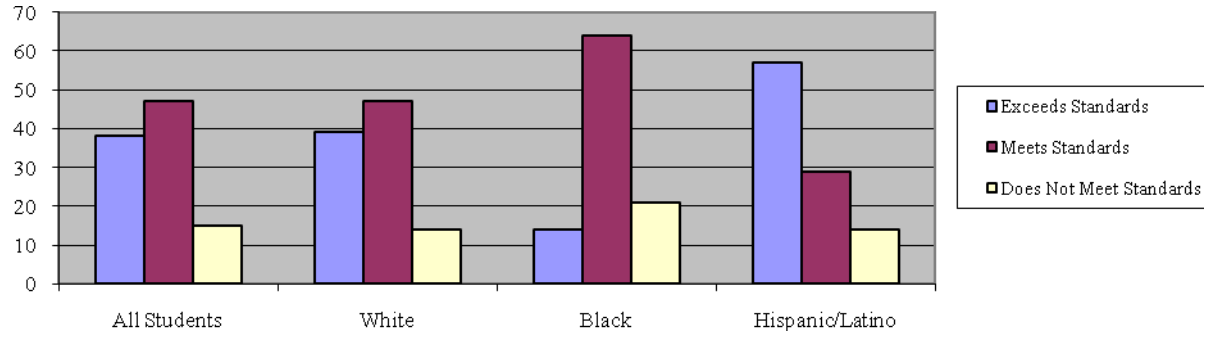
Category	**Fieldstone Middle School**	**Community Middle Schools**	**State Middle Schools**
Race/Ethnicity			
White	79%	81%	46%
Black	10%	5%	38%
Hispanic/Latino	6%	8%	10%
Asian	2%	3%	3%
Academic			
Students w/ Disabilities	8%	14%	11%
Limited English	1%	5%	6%
Socio-Economic			
Free/Reduced Lunch	32%	48%	53%

To provide additional contextual detail for Fieldstone Middle School, I have provided information about the students' performance on the state mandated social studies test. According to the Department of Education, the purpose of this test is to gauge student progress on the state

[21] This information was compiled from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement's 2008-2009 School Report Card.

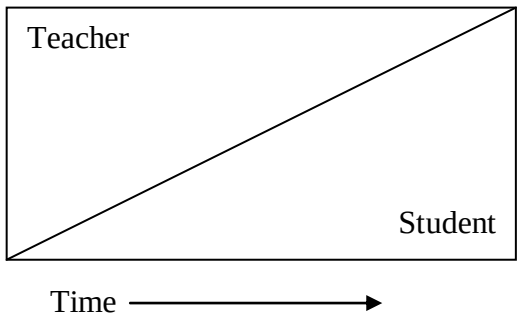
content standards. For middle school social studies, students are tested in their eighth grade year. Figure 5-1 illustrates Fieldstone Middle's students' scores by racial/ethnic subgroup.

Figure 5-1: Fieldstone Middle School Students' Performance on the State Mandated Social Studies Test (2008-2009) – Racial/Ethnic Subgroups



Within this school context, Rebekah taught a sixth grade geography class under the guidance of an experienced and knowledgeable cooperating teacher. Specifically, Rebekah's teaching focused on two units: Latin America and Australia. According to the materials that I gathered from Rebekah's student teaching experience, Rebekah had envisioned that she would organize her teaching so that it would become more student-centered as the semester moved forward. Figure 5-2 represents this vision.

Figure 5-2: Rebekah's Vision for Student/Teacher Centered Instruction[22]



[22] Rebekah had drawn her vision and this figure on one of her lesson plans.

Rebekah was able to put this vision into practice by designing activities that asked the students in her classes to do more than simply sit-and-listen. In this chapter, I will ground my discussion of the relationship between Rebekah's life history and her conceptualizations of social justice-oriented democracy in stories about some of these activities.

The curriculum that Rebekah taught for the Latin America and Australian units was guided by a set of essential questions. Table 5-3 outlines these questions.

Table 5-3: Essential Questions for Latin America and Australia Curriculum

UNIT QUESTIONS	LATIN AMERICA QUESTIONS	AUSTRALIA QUESTIONS
Culture: What are the major aspects of culture?	What are the various cultural elements found in Latin America today? What caused the tragic decline of the indigenous populations? What was the influence of the Spanish and Portuguese languages on Latin America?	What were the origins and culture of the Aborigines? What was the impact of the English colonization on the religion and language of Australia? How does the literacy rate in Australia affect the standard of living?
Governance: What are the major types of governments that are present in the world today?	How do Latin American governments distribute power? How do Latin American governments determine the role of citizens? What makes the Cuban government unique in Latin America?	What were the reasons for British colonization of Australia? Why did the British allow prisoners to move to Australia? How does Australia's federal parliamentary democracy work?
Interaction: How do humans utilize their environment to advance society and what are the consequences of this interaction?	What are the major physical features of Latin America? What are the major environmental concerns of Latin America today? How does Latin America's location, climate, and natural resources affect where people live and what they trade?	What are the major physical features of Australia? How does Australia's location, climate, and natural resources affect where people live and what they trade?

Production, Distribution, Consumption: How and why can the location that I live in affect my society's economy, culture, and development?	What are the basic types of economic systems in Latin America? What role do natural resources play in Latin American economies? What are the functions of the North American Free Trade Agreement?	What is the economic system of Australia? How does Australia benefit from voluntary trade from other countries? What factors allow Australia's economy to grow?
Movement/Migration: How do the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services differ from country to country?	What was the impact of the Columbian exchange on Latin America? What was the influence of African slaves on the development of Latin America?	How did the British come about colonizing Australia?
Conflict and Change: Why does conflict bring change in human lives and societies?	What was the encounter and consequences of the conflict between the Spaniards and the Aztecs? What was the encounter and consequences of the conflict between the Spanish and the Incas?	What impact did British colonization of Australia have on the Aborigine people?
Time, Change, Continuity: What are the basic elements of society that have stood the test of time?	N/A	What impact did British colonization of Australia have on the Aborigine people?

Because Fieldstone Middle is a standards based school, Rebekah was required to follow the curricular format outlined by these essential questions. This focus was evidenced in a story that Rebekah had told me about her lesson planning for the Latin American unit. While teaching about Latin American cultural issues, Rebekah told me that her cooperating teacher had reminded her about Fieldstone Middle School's push to promote standards based classrooms:

> I have to teach the standards right now. I had come-up with all this history stuff and [my cooperating teacher] told me that I should probably change it to more culture stuff because the standard says Latin America today. So, I had to change all my lessons for that week. (Post-Observation Conference, 24 March 2010)

After listening to Rebekah's conversation about standards, I asked her to tell me what she thought about standards and their use in social studies classrooms. She noted:

> I'm not anti-standard. I'm anti-the-way that some people use them. Right now, I'm not doing an exact standard, but [what I'm teaching] falls under a standard. So, kids in other schools may not be learning this material like I'm teaching it. But I think that my students are getting more out of it. They're still learning. They're still going to know how to answer a question about the ethnic groups in Latin America. (Post-Observation Conference, 24 March 2010)

Accordingly, Rebekah viewed the curricular standards as a guide – not a prescriptive curriculum. Rebekah seemed to work to interpret these social studies standards in ways that she thought would be beneficial to her students. I now turn to discuss specific examples of how Rebekah accomplished this work in her teaching practice. I will also use these examples to analyze the relationship between Rebekah's life history and her understanding of social justice-oriented democracy.

Choice Through Knowledge and *The Lorax*

The bell rang as herds of middle school students pushed and shoved their way around me. I was immediately surrounded by throngs of twelve, thirteen, and fourteen year olds rushing to their classes. For a moment, my life flashed before my eyes. I had hoped that I could find an escape from the mad wave coming toward me. When I rounded the corner at the end of the hall, I saw a couple of kids sauntering slowly to class. I saw a group of boys laughing and pushing one another. I saw teachers trying their best to convince their students to hurry into their classrooms before the late bell rang.

Once I had navigated through this sea of adolescence, I settled quickly into my seat in the corner of Rebekah's sixth grade geography class. As the students were filing into the room, Rebekah asked that they begin to prepare for the day's activities. She noted that today they would be focusing on Dr. Seuss' book *The Lorax* (1971) to help illustrate connections that may exist between human behavior and the physical environment. In this book, Seuss writes about the Lorax's fight to save his environment from the Once-ler's factory. Seuss describes the beautiful environment that the Once-ler saw when he arrived in the Lorax's land:

> way back in the days when the grass was still green
>
> and the pond was still wet
>
> and the clouds were still green
>
> and the song of the Swomee-Swans rang out in space...
>
> one morning, I came to this glorious place
>
> And I first saw the trees!
>
> The Truffula Trees!
>
> The bright-colored tufts of the Truffula Trees!
>
> Mile after mile in the fresh morning breeze (p. 12)

Yet, as the story progresses, the Once-ler cuts down and uses Truffula trees to make Thneeds which are products that everyone needs. And, at the end of the story, the Once-ler has cut down all the trees, chased-off the wildlife, and has left a barren landscape.

Rebekah's goal was to use this story to talk about human interaction with the environment. When the bell rang and the students turned quite, Rebekah provided their instructions:

> Take your sheet of paper and fold it hotdog style. On one side of your sheet of paper, write cause. One the other side, you need to write effect. And at the top, I want everyone to write *The Lorax*. (Classroom Observation, 25 February 2010)

Rebekah went on to note that:

> The Once-ler is going to do things to the environment. So, I want you to write what he does to the environment under the cause side of the sheet of paper. Under the effect side of the sheet of paper, I want you to write what you think will happen to the environment as a result of that cause. (Classroom Observation, 25 February 2010)

For the day's lesson, each student had crafted a note sheet such as the one outlined in Figure 5-3a. While Rebekah read *The Lorax* to her students, they filled-out their sheets and took notes similar to those evidenced in Figure 5-3b.

Figure 5-3: The Lorax Note Sheet

A.

The Lorax

Cause	Effect

B.

The Lorax

Cause	Effect
chopping down truffula trees uses trees to make Thneeds invented machinery to chop more trees	not enough truffula fruit to eat Bar-ba-loots (birds) forced to leave
factory grew bigger factory makes smog	Swoome Swans lose their ability to sing
factory produces glupity glup factory produces slopity slop dumps glup and slop into pond	Humming fish lose their ability to hum

After the students listened to Rebekah read the story, she asked that they take their note sheet and divide into groups to discuss the following questions:

- Did you like the story? Why or why not?
- What was the message of the story?

- Why did the Once-ler want to cut down the Truffula trees?
- What happened to the Once-ler when there were no more Truffula trees? What happened to the Lorax?
- A "Thneed" is defined as a thing that everyone thinks that they need. What are some examples of Thneeds-things that you think you need?
- If you were the Once-ler, what would you have done differently to protect the environment?
- What do you think the Lorax's message of UNLESS means?[23]

The students worked with one another on these questions for about fifteen minutes. Rebekah then asked the students to share their thoughts and opinions. Most students were concerned with the Once-ler's destruction of the environment and they felt sorry for the Lorax. At the same time, several students were proposing solutions such as making the Once-ler replant the trees that he cut down and placing filtration systems on his factories. The discussion seemed to focus on actions and consequences. With the final message that everyone should work to take care of the environment, Rebekah wrapped up the discussion and moved to other tasks.

The Lorax: Making Sense of the Lesson

In Chapter 2, I presented Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a,b) framework for democracy – personally responsible, participatory, and social justice-oriented. Rebekah's lesson on *The Lorax* seemed to promote the personally responsible and participatory level of understanding. In this lesson, Rebekah seemed to want her students to not only grasp the content that she was trying to teach, but she also wanted her students to use this experience to think about how they could change the community in which they live. As she noted in our post-observation conference:

[23] Rebekah had outlined these questions on a worksheet that she had given to each group. I collected this worksheet during my observation of Rebekah on February 25, 2010.

> *The Lorax* goes perfectly with our unit because on the standards it says that I am supposed to teach air pollution, oil spills, and deforestation – all of which are covered in this book. And I think that the book helps the kids to totally get everything. If they can understand *The Lorax*, then hopefully it's going to help them understand the bigger issues that we're going to be talking about and then can go do something about them. (Post-Observation Conference, 25 February 2010)

From this perspective, Rebekah had hoped that this lesson would provide her students the ability to make choices through knowledge. In a conversation about this lesson, Rebekah told me that she wanted to organize her teaching so that her students would leave her class with the knowledge necessary to make choices that will better their communities.

The philosophy of choice through knowledge grounded not only *The Lorax* lesson, but everything that Rebekah tried to do in the classroom. As she told me in one of our follow-up interviews:

> If the kids are going to make a decision about something, they need to know why they are making that decision. And I don't think that I told my students that directly, but the way that I talk in general makes that philosophy pretty evident. If they are going to have an opinion on a certain subject like the Amazon rain forest and deforestation, they need to know what is going on. They can't just take it for face value. (Follow-Up Interview, Individual, 6 May 2010)

At the same time, Rebekah's focus on choice through knowledge meant that she viewed her teaching as a platform for helping her students make decisions for themselves. However, Rebekah seemed to limit democratic decision making to Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a,b) category of personally responsible and participatory citizenship. In her rationale, Rebekah notes

that if "people want to utilize their right to vote for officials and participate in our American democracy, it is imperative that they understand how the system works and that citizens have the ability to make a change in the country (Eportfolio, Rationale)." And even though Rebekah talked about democratic participation in this way, she was clear to point out that these decisions should be made as choices through knowledge. Rebekah, however, did not ask that her students explore the root causes of pollution. Does society's free-market fetish create pollution problems that would not otherwise exist? Instead of asking her students to explore why the Once-ler would want to carelessly cut down all of the Truffula Trees, Rebekah stopped at asking her students to individually think about what could be done to solve such problems. As Westheimer and Kahne (2004b) make clear, students should be faced with exploring root causes if social justice perspectives are to be implemented in the classroom and structural changes are to be made in society.

Living Life with Purpose, כבוד (Kavod), and Social Studies Teaching

Many scholars have noted that an important component of social justice education is action against injustice (e.g., Ayers, Quinn, & Stovall, 2008; Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). Accordingly, social justice-oriented teachers should use their teaching practice and influence to help their students work toward a better society. In the social studies, I believe that this work means that teachers should focus on questions critical to democracy. Questions such as: (1) What is justice? (2) What is equality?; and (3) What prevents justice and equality? From this perspective, social studies teachers who are focused on promoting democratically-minded students should be concerned with creating classroom environments that enable their students to discuss what democratic principles are, how those principles are enacted in democratic citizenship, and what it means to implement and model those principles in their own lives. At the

same time, social studies teachers who want to pursue social justice should also use these environments to critique issues of injustice and promote student action that will effect change. For Westheimer and Kahne (2004b), this work means that teachers will help their students examine root causes of issues and work to change the root causes rather than the symptoms of a problem. In this section, I discuss Rebekah's concern for living life with purpose and how that concern positioned her teaching. This theme of Rebekah's life had helped her implement the kinds of learning experiences that are described by Westheimer and Kahne (2004a,b).

As I listened to Rebekah's life history, I was excited that she was concerned with living life with purpose. Not only had Rebekah expressed deep concern for the injustice that she had experienced in her own life, but she had also worried that a lack of כבוד (Kavod) in people's lives could lead to more suffering in the world. As she told me in one of our life history interviews: "I think that people not respecting each other is probably a huge reason why there is so much suffering in the world" (Life History Interview, 27 January 2010). As such, I had believed that Rebekah's desire to live life with purpose might have been related to her focus on כבוד (Kavod).

Simultaneously, we had had several informal as well as formal conversations about this purpose and what she wanted to accomplish in her teaching. When I asked Rebekah about the specific role of social studies in school, she pointed out that "it's the one subject where they [the students] can talk about important life issues" (Follow-Up Interview, 6 May 2010). As a result, I was careful to look for whether or not Rebekah's focus on living life with purpose evidenced itself in her teaching practice.

Early in Rebekah's student teaching semester, I had a chance to see how she integrated these components – living life with purpose and כבוד (Kavod) – into the social studies curricula.

On January 12, 2010, Haiti sustained a massive earthquake that devastated the country. Not only was the country in ruins, but the already fragile Haitian government was also left without any response capabilities. Because Rebekah had been teaching a unit on Latin America and the Caribbean, she wanted to help her students learn about this event and talk about how they could help the Haitian people.

On a cold day in early February, I drove from Southern University to Fieldstone Middle School to observe Rebekah's teaching. As I traveled down the blacktop that lay in front of me, I could only imagine what Rebekah had planned for her students. She had told me the night before that the whole day was to be dedicated to what had happened in Haiti. So, as I put the pedal-to-the-metal, I could not wait to see Rebekah put this plan into action.

I must have squealed into the parking lot. I was so excited about the day's lesson that when my car finally came to a stop, I had barely pulled my parking brake and disengaged the clutch before jumping out into the cold air. I raced inside the building, checked in at the front desk, and ran to take my seat in Rebekah's geography class.

To start, Rebekah showed the class the "We are the World" video that had been developed for the Haitian relief efforts. I sat in the dark and simply listened…

Send them your heart

So they'll know that someone cares

So their cries for help will not be in vain

We can't let them suffer

No, we cannot turn away

Right now they need a helping hand

Nou se la mond

We are the children

We are the ones who make a brighter day

So let's start giving

There's a choice we're making

We're saving our own lives

It's true we'll make a better day

Just you and me.[24]

As I listed to the song and watched the students, I remember that I could feel the powerful message of purpose disseminating throughout the classroom. Once Rebekah had finished showing this video, she asked that the students participate in various activities to encourage them to think about how they could help the Haitian people. Rebekah described the rest of her lesson as follows:

> I had the students think of ways that they could help Haiti. I showed the students before and after shots of the devastated areas in Haiti while teaching them that Haiti is the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere. I gave the students articles about some of the victims of the earthquake in Haiti and the students made posters of courage for the victims. On their posters, the students listed both ways that they could help the victims and some adjectives describing their situation. Some kids did not know how devastating the earthquake was to the country and the exercise shed a completely new light on the situation there (Eportfolio, Content & Curriculum Synthesis Paper).

During these activities, I walked around the room and listened to groups of students as they shared their perspectives on the Haitian situation with one another. Not only were the students

[24] I transcribed these lyrics while listening and watching the "We are the World" music video which can be found at http://wearetheworldfoundation.org/.

working with one another to figure out how they could help Haiti, but they were also asking questions about the Haitian people, culture, and geographic location. The students were busy sharing their posters with one another when the bell rang. In a wave of middle school bodies, I walked down the hall toward my car.

Later, when I asked Rebekah about the theme of living life with purpose and her social studies teaching, she told me that "I don't think I did that very much. I think I was trying to stick with what they needed to know" (Follow-Up Interview, Individual, 6 May 2010). Rebekah noted that she did not think about how she could use her teaching to help her students live a life with purpose. To use the lesson on Haiti as an example, Rebekah did not organize her students to take action to help the Haitian people. Instead, she simply had them identify how they could help. As such, Rebekah's teaching seemed to remain academic and did not necessarily create transformative action. Discussing this same point, Nieto and Bode (2006) provide additional perspective on this issue.

> Let us say that students and their teacher have decided to review the textbook to determine whether it fairly represents the voices and perspectives of a number of groups. Finding that it does not is in itself a valuable learning experience. But if nothing more is done with this analysis, it remains academic; it becomes more meaningful if used as a basis for further action (p. 242)

Like the students and teacher in Nieto and Bode's example, Rebekah's lesson on Haiti was an important learning experience. However, for Rebekah to have fully enacted her vision of purpose and social justice, I believe that she would have had to help her students explore why there has been and is so much poverty in Haiti. Why and how could a natural disaster such as the

earthquake cripple the country to the extent that it did? What kinds of solutions can be implemented so that the poverty in Haiti can be eliminated?

Rebekah and Education for Democracy

Teachers who teach for democracy should have a nuanced understanding of what democracy means and how it should look in schools. However, in most cases, preservice social studies teachers have not yet had the experiences necessary to develop complex definitions for democracy, especially as it relates to schooling (Rubin & Justice, 2005). Nevertheless, some preservice social studies teachers have had the opportunity to begin to define democracy in complex ways. In this section, I will discuss how Rebekah defines democracy, how she views how that definition guides her practice as a social studies teacher, and how she believes her definition relates to her life history.

Rebekah's Definition of Democracy

Like many preservice social studies teachers, Rebekah has not yet developed a definition of democracy that includes the social justice-orientation described by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). Instead, Rebekah's definition seems to be more focused on notions of democratic citizenship that are concerned with the nature of liberty and individual freedom. As Arbowitz and Harnish (2006) point out, "one of the most prominent and most debated values associated with political liberal discourses of citizenship is autonomy" (p. 662). From this perspective, democracy should allow citizens the power to negotiate difference in an attempt to govern their own lives. For Rebekah, this point means that: "Unless you have people participating in the democracy, it doesn't run very well" (Follow-Up Interview, Democracy, 6 May 2010). Accordingly, Rebekah used her philosophy of choice through knowledge to help her focus her teaching in this area. Because Rebekah was concerned that her students should be able to make

informed decisions and participate in society, she seemed to organize her teaching in such a way as to only provide her students knowledge.

In this sense, Rebekah believes that social studies classrooms can help promote democracy by providing students knowledge. As she mentioned in one of our follow-up interviews:

> Even just having the knowledge of knowing that there are problems in our society can help the kids to change it. For example, with my classes this semester, I really wanted to teach about Haiti because a lot of kids had heard about it but they didn't know the extent of the devastation. So, maybe that will spark them to one day help out and make changes. (Follow-Up Interview, Individual, 6 May 2010)

Rebekah, therefore, viewed her teaching as a means to prepare her students for the future – not the present. Conklin (2009) has also found that preservice teachers prepared in secondary teacher education programs often have this attitude toward middle school students. Like the participants in Conklin's study, Rebekah had been prepared in a secondary social studies teacher education program and had been placed in a middle school (sixth grade) geography class to fulfill her student teaching.

At the same time, Rebekah believed that "the more knowledge that people have the more that people can talk about a specific issue and change can occur" (Follow-Up Interview, Individual, 6 May 2010). After listening to Rebekah talk about her teaching and democracy, I wanted to know if she believed that she was working to create change agents. She responded:

> Not directly. I hope that I can provide my students information so that they can one day work for change. You never know what kind of impact you can have on people when you

> get the information out to them. I can put out the knowledge and they can take it from there. (Follow-Up Interview, Democracy, 6 May 2010)

Accordingly, Rebekah viewed social studies teaching to be limited in scope. Although Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that social studies for social justice-oriented democracy should be action-oriented, Rebekah's view of action seemed to be too distant to fall within Westheimer and Kahne's definition. Instead, Rebekah's focus on implementing her philosophy of choice through knowledge in her teaching practice gave the impression that she taught from a personal responsibility perspective. In this sense, Rebekah provided the students knowledge and it was their responsibility to use that knowledge however they saw fit.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how Rebekah used the themes in her life history to position her teaching practice. Rebekah's life philosophy of choice through knowledge worked to help ground how she taught during the student teaching semester. As I have mentioned above, Rebekah focused her teaching to give her students knowledge so that they could make choices about society and their lives. However, Rebekah's teaching stopped at knowledge giving and did not seem to focus on action. As a result, I wondered if she had seriously pursued social justice-oriented democracy. I am therefore left with several questions. Can teacher educators use knowledge of students' life themes to better scaffold their learning about social justice-oriented democracy and teaching? If teachers draw from their personal theories to teach, how can teacher educators better understand what those theories are and how teachers are using them?

At the same time, Rebekah's concern for living life with purpose barely evidenced itself in her teaching practice. Even though Rebekah had expressed concern for purpose, I could not figure out what purposes were behind her teaching. Furthermore, I was surprised to find that she

had told me that she had not really taught her students to live life with purpose or help them define their purposes. Accordingly, I am left questioning how Rebekah – who was so focused on living her life with purpose – could have not implemented this concern into her teaching.

Finally, Rebekah's definition of democracy and education seems to stop at the personally responsible criteria outlined by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). My hope had been that Rebekah would have used her life experiences with injustice and her concern for כבוד (Kavod) to orient herself toward social justice. And although I believe that Rebekah does want to pursue social justice in her teaching, I do not believe that she knew how to put such views into practice. Furthermore, Rebekah's definition of democracy focused on knowledge giving rather than on what to do with that knowledge. As such, this case study illustrates that much work is to be done in social studies teacher education. How can social studies teacher educators work to help our students connect their life experiences to teaching for social justice-oriented democracy? I have outlined several questions in this section that I will return to in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 6

HEIDI'S PARTICIPANT PROFILE[25]

In this chapter, I first present the participant profile of Heidi. Like Rebekah's participant profile, my re-representation of Heidi's life story can only be interpreted within the context of this dissertation. Furthermore, this re-representation can only account for what Heidi told me during our interviews as well as how she seemed to be defining her self in the narratives that she chose to tell at that time. Therefore, I must caution that this profile does not represent a final, defined version of Heidi as she (as we all are) is in a continual state of becoming.

Like Rebekah's profile, I have attempted to use as much of Heidi's voice as possible. Because one of the purposes of life history work is to allow participants the opportunity to share their stories about their life (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001), my focus in this profile is to let Heidi speak for herself. Therefore, I have offset and italicized Heidi's words so that she can tell her own story.

I then outline four themes that seem to have defined Heidi's life history. These four themes are Heidi's focus on the social, her philosophy of Karma and life cycles, and her goal of happiness, helping, and advising, and her struggles with diversity. My goal with presenting these themes is to establish the foundation that I will use to discuss the relationship that may exist between Heidi's life experiences and her thinking about social justice-oriented democracy in the

[25] All the data in this chapter was collected from my life story interviews with Heidi. Those interviews took place on December 10, 2009; January 15, 2010; and January 28, 2010.

student teaching seminar and her field experience. In this chapter, I will use Heidi's voice to present these themes; whereas, I will work to explain the above correlations in the next chapter.

Participant Profile

Sunny Grove,[26] the town where Heidi grew-up, is a suburb of a major metropolitan area that is located about 30 minutes from the central business district. Furthermore, Sunny Grove is located near some of the region's most wealthy suburban areas. According to the United States Census Bureau, the 2006 population for Sunny Grove was approximately 87,802. Table 2-1 presents a demographic snapshot of this community as it compares to the state.

Table 6-1: Demographic Snapshot of Sunny Grove

Category	**Sunny Grove**	**State**
Racial Demographics		
White	81.5%	65.1%
Hispanic/Latino	10.6%	5.3%
Black	8.5%	28.7%
Asian	3.7%	2.1%
Nationhood/Language		
Foreign Born Persons	15.7%	7.1%
English Second Language	19.1%	9.9%
Education		
High School Graduates	92.8%	78.6%
Bachelors and Higher	52.6%	24.6%

[26] Sunny Grove is a pseudonym.

Income		
Per Capita Income	$36,012	$21,154
Household Income	$71,726	$42,433
Median Home Value	$207,700	$111,200
Percent Below Poverty	5.0%	13%

As shown by Table 6-1, Heidi, like most preservice teachers, is from a majority white, middle to upper-middle class community (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005, 2008).

Heidi grew-up and lived in the same house in Sunny Grove until she left to attend Southern University. She was quick to describe what life was like in Sunny Grove and the neighborhood where she lived:

> *Everyone in [Sunny Grove] is really rich and all of my friends have million dollar homes that are really huge. Ours is just, you know, not. Ours is just average. We have a basement, a main story, and then four bedrooms upstairs. It's nothing extravagant, just normal. And there's like two main neighborhoods where everyone lives. So, everyone lives kind of close. Everything is just really close. It takes me like five seconds to get to high school and five seconds to get wherever. There really isn't a whole lot to do.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Intrigued by Heidi's mentioning of just two neighborhoods in a town that has almost 90,000 people, I asked her where she lived relative to those two. She noted:

> *I don't live in one of those two. I live in a really small neighborhood. But it's like right across the street from one of the neighborhoods that everybody lives in.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

As I was listening to her talk, I began to think that Heidi's view of her community was limited to the small circle in which she lived, worked, and went to school.

Family Life

Heidi has had an interesting familial experience that seems to have been dominated by her immediate family. When I asked Heidi about her family life, she was quick to talk about how she views her relationships with her brother, dad, and mother:

> *I have an older brother. He went to [Southern University] and he's two-and-a-half years older than me. Growing-up, we really weren't that close because he was weird and quiet. But now, we're really close. And we talk a lot and he comes up to [Southern] and he'll stay with me and go out and stuff. So, we're pretty close now. He's the complete opposite of me. He's really quiet and really intellectual. And my Dad and I are really, really close. He's the coolest person alive. He's really fun and outgoing and just a riot. And he's really involved with [Sunny Grove]. It's an everybody knows him kind of thing. And we're really close. He was never really strict with me and he kind of let me do whatever I want. My mom, on the other hand, was the strict one and the one that was always on me. Growing-up, we weren't that close cause we always fought. But now we are pretty close, I would say. But I'm still way closer to my dad, way closer. And that's my immediate family.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

With regards to her brother, I found that Heidi tended to juxtapose her personality and her self against how she viewed her brother. As she noted in our first life history interview:

> *My brother is so eccentric and just weird, but in a really cool way. I think that I just now realized that and it's in a really cool way. He plays the guitar, he's really, really artsy, really, really smart on a level that no one really gets. And in high school, we would have the same teachers and when a teacher would get me they'd be like you're related? And*

I'm like yeah. And they're like you're nothing like your brother. And I'm like I know. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Heidi was also quick to point out that she and her dad shared personalities. At the same time, Heidi would talk about how she was not like her mother. During our conversations, I began to notice that whenever Heidi talked about how she and her dad were really close that she would always compare this relationship to her relationship with her mother. For example, she noted:

> *Me and my dad are just alike. We are both extremely loud, outgoing, funny, really nice to everybody and we both do everything for everybody. I get that from him. And then my mom is kind of not as outgoing, she can be a bitch a lot. She's very OCD. That's how she is. She is like that.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

This juxtaposition appeared to be a critical element of how Heidi talked about and defined her family life.

Not only did Heidi constantly acknowledge her great relationship with her father, but Heidi also discussed how this relationship impacted the relationship between her father and mother as well as the way that her mother viewed her. She was quick to point out:

> *My dad and my mom never got along. Now, they like to save face, but they really don't like each other at all. I actually don't think they've slept in the same bed since I was two. They always argue because my mom is sometimes a huge bitch and my dad is so chilled and nice. I mean there were a couple of different times where my mom would always blame me on my parents going to get a divorce on me because I was really close to my Dad. My mom was always like, it's your fault that I always yell and stuff... My mom's kind of crazy and she was like, I'm just going to take all the rest of my medicine and kill*

myself because your daughter is blah, blah, blah and is causing all of this. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

The fractured nature of these relationships also permeated how the family interacted with one another on a daily basis. Heidi mentioned that:

I would go home, eat dinner with them real quick, and then we all had our own TVs. We'd all go watch our own TVs. So, there was no family shows or things of that nature. We all just went to our own rooms... There was this phase where we always ate dinner together, but a lot of times it would be like me and my dad were stuck. My mom used to get mad, but we'd still suffer through eating together. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

During my interview with Heidi about her family life, I became aware that Heidi had developed fractured relationships with different family members. In this area, Heidi seemed to partner with her father and use his example as her guide.

Elementary, Middle, and High School

Heidi's talk about elementary, middle, and high school mostly focused on her athletic abilities and the classes that she took during her junior and senior years. She told me that:

Elementary school was awesome, I guess. Well, I can't really remember, although I was a tomboy and I was really cool with the boys because I was good at kickball. I really didn't like middle school. I was really awkward. I was going through a phase where I had really long bangs, braces, and glasses. But then, starting in eighth grade, I was becoming friends with the cool people. And then in high school, I can't remember freshman and sophomore year. Junior year, though, was really hard for me because I played two sports. I was taking a ton of APs and I was trying to get ready for the SAT. So, junior

year I would go from school to basketball or volleyball and then to work and get home late at night and then do all of my homework. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

While we were discussing Heidi's time in school, I wanted to know what she had thought about her social studies courses. She told me:

One of the reasons I wanted to go into social studies was that I loved my social studies teachers. They were all men. They were all lecturers and I was captivated by that. They were all awesome and funny and fantastic and I got along with them really well...I'll always remember my one teacher that I thought was just awesome. It wasn't even anything he did [in the classroom] because all he did was lecture me. He was just our friend and was kind of like a mentor and would just give us advice on life. And just like him, I would love to just make kids appreciate learning and want to become educated and want to become successful and go to college and actually get a job. (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

During this conversation about social studies, Heidi also talked about how her school had treated the students during September 11. As she recollected:

When September 11 happened, I was in my eighth grade social studies class and they would not tell us what had happened. And I knew that something had happened because people were being checked out of school and our teachers were like, something's happened but were not going to talk about it. They wouldn't show us anything and I had no idea what the heck was going on and now that makes me mad. I feel like our teachers should have told us and we could've talked about it. (Life History Interview, 15 January 2009)

In short, this section of our life history interviews helped me begin to understand Heidi's focus on the social. In other words, I began to realize that Heidi wanted to be liked by everyone and that friendships and relationships were very important to her. This section of our interview also helped me uncover some of her thoughts about the social studies.

College

In one of our life history interview sessions, I asked Heidi to talk to me about her experience in college. She told me:

> *Freshman year was all about being on my own, partying, and having fun, not really caring. Sophomore year I lived in the sorority house and that was really good because we were like a tight knit family. I made a lot of friends. Fall junior year is when me and my boyfriend started dating and I became best friends with all of his friends. And that's when I found my new home-away-from-home family. And senior year, first semester was tough and my classes were pretty hard so it was challenging. And then this semester [the student teaching semester] has been good, challenging, hard, confusing, and everything. This semester is like a big question mark.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

To follow-up on Heidi's chronological discussion about college, I asked her to tell me about some of the classes that she has taken while at Southern University. She talked about both her negative and positive experiences:

> <u>Negative</u>
>
> *I had this history of Brazil class. First off, someone told me that this class was easy. So, I was like, I should take this. And I was all about getting As and thought that this was one of my histories that I would just take get an A even though I was not interested in it. I did not like the teacher. She just lectured, but her lectures were random as hell and did not*

make any sense. She was also sarcastic which I thought was just rude. So, I was mad at myself because I could have taken a class, like a U.S. history, that would have been relevant stuff that I could potentially teach. I'm never really going to teach anything that I learned in the Brazil history class. (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

Positive

One of the most important classes that I have taken while in college was the Cold War class because I learned a whole lot and the teacher was awesome. We read a lot of primary sources. And other courses would be two classes, one antebellum South and one civil war, from this one professor although it was just straight lecture and there was nothing exciting about it. But these two courses reaffirmed the fact that I like history. So, that was good. (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

At this point in our conversation, I had become concerned that Heidi had not mentioned a single education course. As a preservice teacher, I had thought that Heidi would have at least acknowledged the education work that she had done. So, I asked about her experiences with her education coursework. Once again, Heidi told me about both the negatives and positives:

Negative

I had this one education class that I took about how to teach U.S. history. I feel like that type of class could have been really beneficial, but the teacher that taught us was in his last semester. And he, like everyone else, didn't really care. We had this one assignment that asked us to find a source that we would use to teach a multicultural thing. So, our group was assigned Muslim culture. We had to go to the library and just look-up what sources we could use if we were doing a Muslim unit. Everyone was like, let's just go to the library, look-up sources, and write the first four down. I don't think we even had to do

an annotated bibliography. We just had to find sources. (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

Positive

I think that yours and [John's][27] were ones that I am going to compliment and we did a lot of reading and all that... and I had never read any type of material on education with different theories and different views. I didn't agree with everything that was being taught, but it was interesting to get to understand the different educational philosophies. And some of the stuff I really did like and I thought, ok, I want to do this in my classroom. And in that semester, those two classes made me really excited and want to be a teacher. (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

And even though these excerpts seem to only critique and compliment the instructors that Heidi has had in her college career, I thought that they might help illustrate how she was thinking about her coursework. For example, Heidi told me that she thought that the education courses that had impacted her perspectives on teaching where the ones that made her think about what she could do in her classroom. As such, Heidi seemed to be energized by courses that asked her to think about educational concepts relative to how she might think about the social studies.

In conjunction with Heidi's talk about the courses that she has taken at Southern University, I was also interested in what she thought she had learned while in college. She pointed to two things:

I thought that I was a procrastinator in high school, but I've learned that I'm actually pretty organized and pretty on top of my game. I get stuff done and most people I know are like, I'm doing this the night before. So, I've learned that that is one skill that I can

[27] John is a pseudonym for an instructor that taught one of Heidi's classes in the same block as me.

> *say I have. Another thing I've learned through college is that you have to leave your comfort zone. The world is not going to end that I left my friends in high school. And, like I said, I've made all these new great friends. So, that's big.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

Heidi's stories about her experiences in college helped me develop an understanding for how she views herself, how she views others, as well as what kinds of courses she believes have impacted her perspectives about the social studies.

Work

Work has been an important aspect of Heidi's life. From the moment that she could legally obtain a job, Heidi has worked in some capacity or another. She explained to me:

> *When I was 15, I worked at a recreation camp and I taught gymnastics to three year olds. So, it was basically glorified babysitting... Then I worked as a hostess at Outback Steak House for a while when I was in high school. And that was cool because I made a lot of friends and it taught me a lot. Most of the people were older and I was only about 16, but I felt much older and more mature when I worked there. They would always talk about adult things and I would just pretend that I was one of them. But, at that job, I learned how to schmooze people... Then I worked at another daycare in high school. And I learned patience from that job because I was in a room with about 20 one year olds.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

While in college, Heidi worked at a small clothing boutique that had recently gone out of business. She had her own thoughts about why this had occurred:

> *That job was the easiest job of all time. I'm so lucky to have gotten that job. I mean eight dollars an hour is pretty good. And I basically sat and did my homework... Our manager*

> *was never there... And, in that job, I learned that you could take advantage of the owners. Because they were never there, people would come in late and if two people were working we would take turns leaving to go run errands and things. And some people would even borrow the jewelry for a day and some of them borrowed stuff and never brought it back.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

As evidenced in Heidi's stories, her work experiences have molded how she views people and their behavior. For example, she told me that she did not approve of the other gift store employees' behavior. Heidi stated that she had learned that some people are selfish and that they will not think about the consequences of their actions. Further, Heidi's enjoyment of work has helped her develop the view that work is an important component necessary for productive life.

Spiritual Life and Guiding Beliefs

In our life story interviews, Heidi also talked about her spiritual life and guiding beliefs. As she told me:

> *I'm Catholic. I was confirmed and everything, but my dad never went to church with us. He's not religious at all. So, my mom would take me and my brother to church, but after we got confirmed she never really made us go that often. So, I've never really grown-up being that religious, which I kind-of regret and I wish that I had that. When I see people who do have it, I'm like, that's pretty cool... But when someone goes and quotes the Bible and religion, I know nothing. I just don't know anything.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

Nevertheless, Heidi pointed out that she does believe in God. While talking about this issue, she further expressed her wish to be more religious. She noted:

> *I believe in God and I wish I were more religious. I do believe in God. I pray every night, but I was never brought up religious. And my friends are, well I have some friends that are pretty religious. I do wish I was more religious because I see people that are religious and that's such a big part of their lives. And I'm like, they are very happy with that part of their life.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

During our conversation, I became aware that Heidi's focus on religion was not the central guiding force in her life. Although she did express regret in this area, Heidi did not seem interested in continuing to talk beyond the stories re-represented here.

Orientation to Politics

Another topic that Heidi and I discussed during our life story interview sessions regarded her orientation to politics. She started the conversation by talking about her indecisiveness about political issues. She began:

> *I feel like I was one of those people who was like, I'm conservative because that's what my dad is. But now, it's funny, I had a teacher, my favorite teacher, and he is very liberal, very liberal. And ever since I had him I was kind of like, I'm liberal too. But I still don't really know. And then I got to college and I would say that I'm socially very liberal. Economically, I don't feel like I know enough about the economy, but socially I'm very liberal and that's come out in the last couple of years.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Heidi believed that her disengagement with political issues partially contributed to this indecisiveness. As she noted:

> *I never kept up and I never watched the news. I never kept up with stuff because government and politics isn't really my thing.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

However, while in college, Heidi feels that she has been able to better connect to political issues by talking with others. She told me:

> *Just getting to know other people in college and stuff like that and becoming more educated on issues. But you know, I don't know. I don't know where I stand.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

One example of this transformation is represented by Heidi's relationship with her boyfriend. When I asked her what she meant by "getting to know other people," Heidi responded with the following:

> *If you would have asked me my freshman year if I would be talking with my boyfriend about the State of the Union, I would have been like, no. But he asked, what'd you think, and I told him that I liked it. And I said, what about you, and he said that President Obama was more away from his leftist views. But he was like, I still think it's all crap and that he's not going to do anything, he's very conservative. But we're both pretty, we're both pretty open-minded. He's very conservative economically, but most guys especially in the South are racist, hate gay people, and stuff like that. But he's not like that at all. He's very open.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

Heidi also told me that her boyfriend's willingness to talk with her about political issues has helped her develop a better awareness for what she believes.

In conjunction with our conversation about how Heidi views her orientation to politics, I asked her about her political experiences. She was quick to point out her time in high school:

> *I remember in high school, for some reason, I was really into helping. That was one of my activist moments. At Outback, when I used to work there, we did a car wash and I helped organize it. Because Outback was right next to [Sunny Grove High School], he got me to get a bunch of my high school friends. And we raised money and we sent that money to Hurricane Katrina victims.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

At the same time, Heidi felt that her experiences with politics was limited. Talking about a simulation that she was required to do in class, Heidi noted:

> *We were put into cities and we had to run things and then we were in the house or senate. We had to make-up bills and pass them and we eventually elected a governor. And then there was campaigning and speeches and stuff. I think that was the only time I really saw anything that dealt with the government or politics.* (Life History Interview, 28 January 2010)

Finally, Heidi explained to me that she tries to distance herself from politics because she views it as "dirty." As she pointed out to me in one of our interview sessions:

> *I just think politics is so dirty and just corrupt and everyone is just so heated when they debate and discuss it and everyone just gets into a yelling match. I don't know. I just try to stay away from it. Until collegish, I was pretty apathetic.* (Life History Interview, 28 January 2010)

Throughout my life history interviews with Heidi, I became aware that she still struggled with how to make sense of politics.

In this section, I have presented Heidi's participant profile. Using Cole and Knowles (2001) as well as Goodson and Sikes (2001) recommendation that life histories are best expressed through the participant's voice, I have worked to let Heidi speak for herself. My goal

in this section was to open a window into Heidi's life and provide one example of who enters into preservice social studies teacher education programs.

Themes From Heidi's Life

Using my interview transcripts, I analyzed Heidi's life history by looking for themes and categories that seemed to provide a foundation her life. And even though dissecting a life can be problematic, I have outlined four themes: (1) Heidi's focus on the social, (2) Heidi's belief in Karma and the life cycle, (3) Heidi's focus on happiness and her orientation toward helping others, and (4) Heidi's struggles with diversity. In this section, I will discuss each of these themes.

The Social Butterfly

For Heidi, the social aspects of life are very important. In this sense, Heidi works hard to please everyone. As she noted in one of our life story interviews:

> *I care a lot about what other people think of me... I'm just always trying to be a really good friend and I care about what my friends and everyone thinks. So, I just try to always please everyone. I should probably sometimes do things for myself and be like, I don't care what you think. I definitely always try to please everybody.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

In our conversation about pleasing, I became aware that Heidi was so concerned about pleasing others that she positioned her self below that of others' selves. As we talked in our life story interview session, Heidi also expressed to me that she focuses on pleasing so much so that she almost forgets that her self exists in her relationships with others (e.g., "I should probably sometimes do things for myself"). Heidi made this forgetting about her self clear to me in a story about one of her former friends. She recalled:

> *My freshman year I had this friend and she was always with her boyfriend and being annoying and she just turned into like, I'm too cool for school. And she was kind-of a bitch. So, we just grew apart. I have had so many friends and that was the first one I had ever lost. I was just like, wow. I'm not used to this. But I just got so annoyed with her and I kept it in and I never talked to her about it. We could have worked it out. So, that kind of sucks because I lost her.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Heidi told me that by not talking to her friend out of fear of displeasing the girl that she ended up losing her friendship. In later conversations, Heidi made clear to me that this loss was devastating and represented the first time one of her social relationships had fallen apart. She also noted this that experience had taught her that she would have to work harder to please some people.

Karma and the Life Cycle

One major philosophical belief that Heidi said drives her approach to life and the actions that she takes is her understanding of karma and the life cycle. For example, Heidi believes that karma provides her a roadmap for her actions and their rewards and consequences. As she noted in our life history interview:

> *I believe in karma. That's another huge belief that I have. I believe in karma and if you're talking [bad] about someone and something bad happens to you, that's just karma. And another thing with karma, like this is weird, if I drop a piece of trash on the ground or something like that, I'll start to walk away or something, but I'm like, no, no, no, and I have to pick it up. If I don't pick this up and throw it out or recycle it or whatever then something bad is going to happen to me.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

For Heidi, karma seemed to be an important guiding principle in her life. Throughout my interviews with her, Heidi would reference karma as a way to help her make sense of the good and bad things that had happened in her life.

In conjunction with her belief in karma, Heidi also noted that she views life as a series of cycles that fluctuate back and forth between positives and negatives. For example, she explained to me that:

> *I believe that life is in cycles. You're going to have a lot of cycles. And if something really good happens to you then there's, to me, a cycle or point when something or everything is really good. But then you're going to go through a time or cycle when things are really bad. And then it just goes back and forth between cycles. And it can even be something small, like, last week I had one really bad day student teaching, but then the next day was amazing.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

However, Heidi had a hard time explaining how her philosophy of karma and the life cycle correlates with why suffering exist in the world. When I asked her about her views about suffering, she seemed confused and responded:

> *Oh gosh! Ok. I guess my cycles don't work for that. My life cycles, they really don't work for that. That's a great question and I have no idea why there's so much suffering in the world. I mean, people that honest-to-God don't deserve that type of thing, I don't know.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

Heidi also seemed confused about what can be done to alleviate suffering. And although she acknowledged that people can help those who are suffering, Heidi seemed concerned that that help could only marginally solve the problem. She pointed out:

> *You can help to a certain degree. So, we go in and we help Haiti out completely and they're fine, but then somewhere else in the world there's going to be suffering. I mean there's always going to be suffering. I just feel like you're never going to have this perfect world. And then, you know, even if there was this perfect world, a lot of people aren't good people. I mean some people are really shitty people. So, I think there's always going to be suffering.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

As I listened to Heidi talk about her thoughts about suffering, I wondered about how cohesively she had developed her philosophy of karma and the life cycle.

In the specific case of Haiti, Heidi seems to have had a limited understanding of the crises. At the time of our interview, I was not sure how to reconcile Heidi's comments that "there are some really shitty people" with her understanding of suffering and karma and the life cycle. According to Heidi's earlier comments, karma and the life cycle cause bad things to happen to people. At the same time, Heidi's comments here seem to indicate to me that suffering happens because people are shitty. So, why have some groups of people, like the Haitians in this example, experienced more suffering than other groups? I do not believe that Heidi would think that it's because they are shitty people. As she had mentioned, "my life cycles don't really work for that." When I asked Heidi why suffering happens to people who do not seem to deserve it, she told me that she did not know. At the same time, Heidi made it clear that she believed that karma was what worked for her life.

Happiness, Helping, and Advising: Life's Purposes

Another theme that guides Heidi's life is her focus on happiness, helping, and advising. When I interviewed Heidi, I listened to her talk about these concepts and I thought that she had outlined three distinct guide posts that drive her life. However, as I had worked to make sense of

her life, I came to view Heidi's talk about happiness, helping, and advising as one unified theme that grounds her view of life's purpose. My shift in thinking had occurred because I had found it difficult to separate out Heidi's talk about these three themes. For example, when I asked her about life's purpose, Heidi commented that she thought that the most important thing was:

> *Finding things in life that you like. Being around people that you like and then just trying to have fun and enjoy life because God or whoever wouldn't have made life if he wanted it to suck.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

Yet, when I asked her to clarify this statement by explaining her life's purpose, she said that she thought that it was to:

> *...be a really good friend. Everyone says that I should be a psychologist or whatever because I am really good at listening to my friends or listening to people and I really like helping people. And I think that I've always been the center of my friends or my family, I'm good at bringing people together... I think, though, that I'm going to know my real purpose in life once I finally have a career. So, I guess the verdict is still out on that. But, for right now, I'm fun. Me and my friends and my family we always like to have fun.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

I also asked Heidi to take this talk one step further and explain what she thinks is humanity's highest ideal. She stated:

> *It's giving back. Some people do so much for the world and that is just amazing to me because everyone is so boxed in their own life and they... some people are just so interested in themselves. So, people that actually give back and do things for others, I mean, that's about as good as you can get.* (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

Finally, Heidi brought the concepts of happiness, helping, and advising together in our discussion of what matters most to her, what she thinks it means to be successful, and which ways of life are best. As she explained in our interview:

What Matters Most

I guess what matters most to me is to have a good... I guess I really care about what other people think of me so I guess it would be for everyone to really respect me. I really mean, I don't want to be a waste of space. I would like to be successful in something and I would like to help people. (Life History Interview, 28 January 2010)

Definition of Success

When I mean successful, I mean that I actually want to do something that matters. Actually impact people or the world or the environment or something. And although a dumpster guy or a trash man helps society and that is great, I would like to do something where there's some kind of social status. (Life History Interview, 28 January 2010)

Which Ways of Life Are Best

I'm not going to lie, life is a lot better, not better, a lot easier when you have money. And you can do something where you can make a lot of money so that you're life is easier. But another part would be people that are good people and go to bed at night knowing that they don't lie, they don't cheat, and that they are good, honest people and that they're trying and that they're helping others. You know, I should have been a doctor. I have a friend who is going to be an orthopedic surgeon, but I think that he's going to be helping cancer patients and I'm like, that's perfect. You're helping people and you're making a lot of money and you're doing really good things for the world. I think that that is the easiest or best route. But then there are a lot of people who make a lot of money who are

a piece of shit. That's going to catch-up to them at some point. Like karma. That's going to get them at some point. (Life History Interview, 28 January 2010)

Interestingly, Heidi's talk about what matters most to her, what she thinks it means to be successful, and which ways of life are best seemed to center on money and social status. Heidi's discussion about the "dumpster guy" and "trash man" demonstrates that she conceptualizes two distinct versions of success. Heidi views the success of the "dumpster guy" or "trash man" as one form and the success that she hopes to achieve (the kind with "social status") to be another form.

Struggles with Diversity and Difference

Although I have discussed Heidi's struggles with diversity and difference in Chapter 3 by analyzing her talk about her Black teacher, I found that these struggles extended into other areas of her life as well. For example, Heidi told me about a Muslim friend:

One of my best friends is Muslim and she's from Iran. It's funny because I literally, I didn't know anyone that was really Muslim or anything. I knew nothing about the culture. I thought that she was Spanish for the longest time. Sophomore year, I was like, you're not Mexican. She was like, no. Of course, that was probably ignorance on my part. But you know, it's funny, because she's completely normal. (Life History Interview, 15 January 2010)

During this conversation, Heidi seemed to indicate that she was surprised that her Iranian friend could be "completely normal." Listening to Heidi talk, I got the sense that she seemed to have a distinctly defined view of normality. This view kept surfacing and resurfacing during our life story interviews. As she told me:

There was this one girl in one of my classes and she was in a wheelchair and she was very... I'm not sure. Something. She was extremely intelligent and in the class she would

> *always make hundreds on tests. And I kind of realized she's not, you know, mentally. I don't know, I'm like... she's a normal person and she is extremely intelligent. So, I was like, you know what, it's awesome that she's in the class. Like you know that she can... they don't keep her in some special education room.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

And:

> *I have a friend [Kaylee[28]], who's one of my roommates and she's made me realize that I have absolutely nothing to complain about. She has to literally pay for everything. So, when she's not in class, she's working, and she works constantly. And the other day, she was talking about how she had to take out another student loan and is going to come out with a lot of debt. She's also not doing a major that... like a doctor... that will make money quickly. And she was crying the other day because her mom can't help and she was like, my mom has $6.00 in her bank account. I guess I never really realized how bad it was because she looks like any one of us.* (Life History Interview, 10 December 2009)

Because Heidi's talk in this area kept surfacing during our life story interviews, I have outlined struggles with diversity and difference as one theme that guides her life. Though Heidi told me that she respected everyone regardless of their station in life, her interactional positioning in her talk about people who are different from her has made me question this premise. By calling her Muslim friend "completely normal" (e.g., white, middle class, Christian background) Heidi had indicated that she had assumed that she would have been otherwise. Like my struggles with my poem about the homeless man, I feel that Heidi's talk was also bounded by her assumptions about other people's lives.

[28] Kaylee is a pseudonym.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented Heidi's life history as she told it to me during our life story interview sessions. I have also outlined the themes that I have identified to be guiding themes in Heidi's life. I will use these themes – (1) Heidi's focus on the social, (2) Heidi's philosophy of Karma and the life cyle, (3) Heidi's focus on happiness and her orientation towards helping others, and (4) Heidi's struggles with diversity and difference – in the next chapter to analyze the relationship between Heidi's life history and her during the student teaching semester.

CHAPTER 7

CASE STUDY OF HEIDI

In this chapter, I present a case study of how the themes from Heidi's life history relate to her experiences during the student teaching semester as well as her conceptualizations of democracy. My purpose will be to use storytelling as well as data from my observations of Heidi' teaching, my observations of her participation in the student teaching seminar, and our follow-up interviews to analyze this relationship. First, I outline how Heidi's focus on the social impacted how she approached her work in student teaching. In this sense, I look at how she attempted to organize her classroom and develop her relationships with students. Second, I analyze how Heidi's focus on happiness and her orientation towards helping others positioned how she interacted with her students in the classroom. From this perspective, I discuss Heidi's concerns with not only how her teaching had been interpreted by her students, but also how that teaching had been received by their parents. Therefore, like my case study of Rebekah, I have designed this case study to illustrate who preservice teachers in social studies are, delineate how that who plays into their student teaching semester, and analyze how their life histories may relate to their conceptualizations of social justice-oriented democracy.

The School Context

Heidi completed her student teaching at a school that is located in Riverton[29] - a small town just outside the state's major metropolitan area. The community is surrounded by

[29] Riverton is a pseudonym.

increasingly dense subdivisions on one-side and less-dense subdivisions on the other. According to the United States Census Bureau and American Towns, the last population estimate for Riverton was 10,201. Table 7-1 presents a demographic snapshot for Riverton, Rivers County,[30] and the state.

Table 7-1: Demographic Snapshot of Riverton and Surrounding Community

Category	**Riverton**	**Rivers County**	**State**
Population	10,201	72,158	9,829,2911
Racial Demographics			
White	76.9%	83.7%	65.0%
Hispanic/Latino	3.8%	8.1%	8.3%
Black	18.0%	11.7%	30.2%
Asian	.01%	3.1%	3.0%
Nationhood/Language			
Foreign Born Persons	N/A	3.6%	7.1%
English Second Language	4.7%	5.8%	9.9%
Education			
High School Graduates	70.1%	73.3%	78.6%
Bachelors and Higher	13.7%	10.9%	24.3%
Income			
Per Capita Income	$17,108	$18,350	$21,154
Household Income	$35,924	$51,318	$50,834
Medium Home Value	$94,700	$103,400	$111,200
Percent Below Poverty	13.1%	11.3%	14.7%

Like Rebekah, Heidi's field placement was located in a community that was different from the one in which she grew-up. Sunny Grove, where Heidi grew-up, was a very populated suburb of

[30] Riverton is located in Rivers County. Rivers County is a pseudonym.

one of the region's largest metropolitan areas; whereas, Riverton was in a transition area between the suburbs of that same metropolitan area and the surrounding countryside.

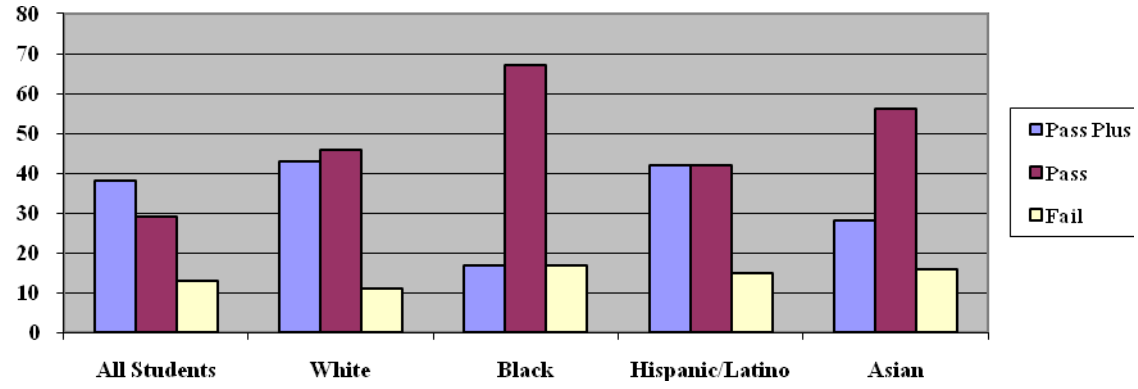
Heidi was assigned to student teach twelfth grade American Government at Riverside High School. Table 7-2 illustrates the student demographics of Riverside High School as it compares to the Rivers County School System and other state high schools.

Table 7-2: Riverside High School Demographics

Category	**Riverside High School**	**Rivers County High Schools**	**State High Schools**
Race/Ethnicity			
White	66%	65%	46%
Black	15%	13%	38%
Hispanic/Latino	10%	11%	10%
Asian	7%	6%	3%
Academic			
Students w/ Disabilities	12%	11%	11%
Limited English	5%	8%	6%
Socio-Economic			
Free/Reduced Lunch	47%	51%	53%

To provide additional contextual detail for Riverside High School, I have provided information about the students' performance on the social studies portion of the state mandated high school graduation test. According to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, this test is generally given for the first time during the eleventh grade year. The data that I have provided in Figure 7-1 only accounts for first time test takers. Furthermore, Figure 7-1 illustrates Riverside High's students' performance by racial/ethnic group.

Figure 7-1: Riverside High School Students' Performance on the Social Studies Portion of the State Mandated Graduation Test (2008-2009) – Racial/Ethnic Subgroups



Within this school context, Heidi taught twelfth grade American Government under the guidance of Mr. Reeves.[31] Because of Riverside High School's schedule, Heidi had the opportunity to teach the complete course which included such topics as the study of American political foundations as well as the three branches of government. And even though the American Government course has a state mandated curriculum framework, American Government does not have a required end of course test to gauge student/teacher performance on that curriculum. Therefore, Heidi could have organized the course and assessments as she saw fit – without the pressure of state testing.[32] For Heidi, the absence of a state mandated test meant that she could focus more of her instruction on discussion and dialogue. In the examples that follow, I will analyze how Heidi's life history themes played out in her attempts to foster discussion in her classroom.

[31] Mr. Reeves is a pseudonym.

[32] Grant (2001) provides a case study that compares instruction in social studies classes with and without state mandated testing.

Heidi's cooperating teacher, Mr. Reeves, also shared Heidi's vision for discussion. However, according to Heidi, Mr. Reeves did not set-up a structured classroom environment. As she told me:

> So, basically he'll just come in and start talking about something random. And the class gets really heated. Then yesterday it got so heated that one of the girls toward the end of class said that she had to leave because the conversation was upsetting her. So, I came in today and they were like we don't want to talk because it gets so heated. (Post-Observation Conference, 28 January 2010)

At the same time, Mr. Reeves believed that social studies teachers should not talk about their opinions on public policy issues with their students. And even though Heidi agreed with this perspective, I could tell that she was working to figure out what this stance means for teaching social studies. In one of our post-observation conferences, we discussed this issue:

> Heidi: Like Mr. Reeves said the first day, and I agree with him, that we don't want to put our opinions on the kids. We want them to open-up and say whatever they want. We don't tell them where we stand. So, that's what both of our policies are.
>
> Joseph: At the same time, should you be un-opinionated about everything or are there certain things where you say, "You know what, this is how we talk about people in this classroom." I mean I really want you to talk about this whole idea of being un-opinionated.
>
> Heidi: Don't you try to not tell your opinions for the most part? Aren't we supposed to play devil's advocate in our discussions?
>
> Joseph: Well...
>
> Heidi: I thought that that was what we were supposed to do.

Joseph: I think that there's a difference...

Heidi: Well, we've had really good, intense discussions up until yesterday when it got to the point where people were like, "We've had enough of this." Now, I feel like we cannot have any discussion because everyone is getting upset. Like one girl said, "I don't want to talk anymore." She was like, "I'm sick of it." So, I don't know. (Post-Observation Conference, 28 January 2010)

I have outlined this excerpt because Heidi worked to organize her teaching around discussion. Heidi's vision was to lead discussion without interfering in her students' conversations. From this perspective, Heidi wanted to give the students the opportunity to feel like they could say whatever they wanted. Yet, as my conversation with her illustrates, Heidi struggled with this concept. Because discussion proved to be a centerpiece of Heidi's teaching, my goal with this excerpt is to provide context for how Heidi had thought about her role in the discussion process. In the next sections, I analyze the relationship between Heidi's life history and her conceptualization of social justice-oriented democracy. To do this work, I provide examples from Heidi's teaching which will include examples of her attempts to lead discussion in her classroom.

The Social in Social Studies

I heard laughter as I walked down the hall of the school. When I entered Heidi's classroom, I was surprised to see that a group of girls had surrounded her desk. They were sharing stories, photos, and swapping make-up. Each girl seemed more excited than the next to talk with Heidi about what they had done over the weekend. They were so engaged in the conversation that when the bell rang a guy who had been sitting in the back row said, "Hey, isn't

it time for class to start?" In response, Heidi turned from the group, the girls took their seats, and class began.

The scene that I have painted above was not uncommon in Heidi's classroom. Every time I traveled to Riverside High School for my observations, Heidi would be surrounded by several students – girls and boys. Furthermore, in our conversations about her teaching practice, Heidi was always quick to talk about her relationships with her students. As she noted one evening in seminar, " I think that your relationship with your students matters. If you ever develop a relationship with them and respect them, you can get them to do anything" (Seminar, F.I. Breakout Session, 10 February 2010). From this perspective, Heidi's desire to develop relationships with her students proved to be a central component of her teaching.

Heidi's focus on the relational components of teaching was critical to what she had been trying to accomplish in the classroom. After the semester had ended, Heidi told me:

> Everything was about building my relationships with my students. If your kids like you and respect you, you can get them to do anything. The content is second. You have to work on creating a certain kind of classroom environment and then get the students to interact with one another. (Follow-Up Interview, Individual, 5 May 2010)

In one of the student teaching seminar sessions, Heidi shared this philosophy and how she was building relationships with the other preservice teachers. As she noted:

> I have this one girl who keeps asking that I attend one of her basketball games. So, yesterday I attended a game. And it was really fun. I went by myself and afterwards she came-up to me and was like, "Oh, my God, you came, I didn't think you would actually come." And she kept going on and on about how important that was and how good that made her feel. Then today in class I noticed that she was taking notes. So, that was good.

> I know that she is only one person, but I know that my relationship with her will help her learn. (Seminar, F.I. Breakout Session, 2 February 2010)

From this perspective, Heidi had hoped to use her relationship with her students to help her accomplish her goals in the classroom. For Heidi, a big component of the social studies was the how of teaching. In this sense, Heidi's concern was that her students should learn to interact with one another in ways that would promote democratic ends. She was concerned that: "When people live in isolation, democracy crumbles" (Eportfolio, Teaching Rationale). As she wrote in her portfolio:

> Communication breaks down barriers and false stereotypes; interaction teaches us to appreciate all... By creating group work, partner activities, and student-led discussions, students learn to interact with one another on an intimate level. Students even begin forming a community of peers. The benefits of group interaction in schools directly correlate to group interaction in our democratic society (Eportfolio, Teaching Rationale).

Heidi's goal was to teach the social in social studies by developing relationships with her students and among her students and then by organizing those relationships into meaningful discussions about content.

During one of my observation visits, I had an opportunity to see Heidi put this teaching philosophy into practice. The day's lesson was organized around President Barack Obama's State of the Union Address. After watching the address, Heidi attempted to lead a discussion on what President Obama had discussed in his speech. And even though Heidi had her students talk about several issues, I have provided a summary from my field notes about the class's discussion on the military's *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* policy.

Heidi started the discussion by asking the students: "Bill Clinton initiated don't ask, don't tell. If you are in the military, the policy is that if you are gay, you can't tell anybody. President Obama would like to change this policy, does anyone agree" (Classroom Observation, 28 January 2010)? After this question was posed, I watched a firestorm erupt in the room. The immediate reaction of most of the students was that homosexuals should not be allowed into the military in the first place. Therefore, according to these students, *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* would become unnecessary. At the same time, other students pointed out that they thought that a person's gayness could be controlled. These students called for society to figure out a way to help gay people cure their homosexuality. The conversation ended with most of the class laughing in agreement, people nodding their head yes, and others sharing similar thoughts about gay people.

As evidenced in this summary, Heidi's attempts to lead this discussion did not seem to accomplish what she said discussion should accomplish. Instead of promoting democracy, the students' conversation seemed to be very homophobic. This point was not lost to Heidi. During our post-observation conference, she told me:

> Sometimes I just want to be like, "You are so close minded" and "You really think that about gay people." Because, in that respect, I am very liberal and I think that gay people should be equal to everyone else. Part of me wants to go, "Ugh!" But I can't say that. So, I try to let everyone have their opinions (Post-Observation Conference, 28 January 2010).

Accordingly, I found that Heidi had been struggling to foster relationships that would lead to productive discussion and keep everyone happy at the same time. For example, Heidi told me that "one girl does not want to talk anymore. She's sick of it because nobody listens to anybody else" (Post-Observation Conference, 28 January 2010). Although Heidi said that she wanted to

focus on building relationships in her teaching, she found that actually organizing those relationships into productive discussions can be difficult.

Parker and Hess (2001) acknowledge the complexity of teaching about discussion. In their work, Parker and Hess note that:

> Discussion is important to understand, both as a way of knowing and a way of being together. Participation in sustained discussions of powerful questions can be both a mind-expanding and community-building endeavor… Accordingly, discussion is relevant to the broad social aims of democracy and solidarity in a diverse society and to the pedagogical aim of creating vigorous communities of inquiry (p. 273).

Within this context, discussion should not only expand students' understanding of content, but discussion should also help students learn how to communicate with one another. In this sense, discussion should help promote more just ways of being together. At the same time, Parker and Hess outline differences between teaching *with* discussion and teaching *for* discussion. On the one hand, teaching *with* discussion is to use discussion as an instructional method – a way to disseminate content. Teaching *for* discussion, on the other hand, is to use discussion as content. From this perspective, "Teaching *for* discussion has discussion itself as the subject matter – its worth, purposes, types, and procedures – in which case discussion is not an instructional strategy but a curricular outcome" (p. 274). In this sense, social studies teachers can use discussion to help promote democracy. However, Parker and Hess caution that teachers should attune to the *with* and *for* components if they are to accomplish these goals.

In her student teaching portfolio, Heidi recognized the democratic value of discussion. She wrote that:

> True democracy is about communicating via experiences in order to balance human interest. Democracy can only flourish through brotherhood, cooperation, self-sacrifice, equality, and activism. It is our job as social studies teachers to mold students into citizens who are capable of possessing these qualities… We must dialogue through current events as much as possible. Teaching government made this extremely easy; we discussed topics ranging from Haiti, healthcare reform, Scott Brown's election, the death penalty, President Obama's State of the Union, to the economic crises. Discussing important matters in our country directly correlates to a knowledgeable, active polity (EPortfolio, Content & Curriculum Synthesis Paper)

At the same time, Heidi pointed out that teachers should use discussion to help create democratic community in the classroom. As she noted in her teaching portfolio:

> In a truly democratic community, its inhabitants work together, interact respectfully, and support one another while working towards a common good. When teachers allow zero interaction in the classroom, students lose out on valuable moments to improve socialization skills. Students who learn to communicate and work together are more successful interacting outside the classroom. It is imperative that teachers foster a safe environment by emphasizing that every student's opinion matters and that difference in opinion actually makes for the utmost worthwhile learning. We are trying to create critical thinkers, not stationary robots. This is why students must be encouraged to listen and internalize what their peers say. Only then will discussion, group work, and simulations succeed. (EPortfolio, Learning Environments Synthesis Paper)

Yet, as evidenced by the *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* discussion example, teaching discussion is difficult work. And even though Heidi's life history theme of relationships focused her teaching

around discussion, Heidi's desire to stay absent from her students discussions seemed to work against fostering relationships.

As evidenced in this example, Heidi could have better focused on using discussion as content so that her students could have learned how to act with one another. From this perspective, Heidi's teaching could have better accomplished her social justice goals. Parker (2008) makes this point clear by noting that "democratic citizens need both to *know* democratic things and to *do* democratic things" (p. 65, emphasis in original). By following Parker and Hess' (2001) advice for teaching both *with* and *for* discussion, social studies teachers can help their students know as well as do democratic things. Because without doing democratic things, I believe that it will be difficult to enact social justice. Nevertheless, Heidi's focus on the relational aspects of teaching was an important first step in her desire to promote social justice in education.

Mr. Smith's Office, Happiness, and Helping

I was seated next to the door of Heidi's classroom when her students clamored into the room and sat down at their desks. As I waited on the bell to ring and the lesson to start, I could hear the nervous energy of teenagers who seemed ready to skip class and head straight to lunch. At the front of the room, Heidi was fielding a group of students abuzz with the most recent drama – the Senior prom was approaching. For a moment, I began to remember my high school days. Then, the bell rang...

As the teenaged flurry began to settle, Heidi started the day's lesson by announcing to the students that they would be "practicing" citizenship. She was excited to tell them that today they would learn how to contact their governmental representatives and how they could express their

voice and opinions to those leaders. Heidi then turned to her cooperating teacher, Mr. Reeves, who instructed the students that they were actually going to call Representative Smith.[33]

An aide picked up the phone and spoke clearly into the receiver, "Hello, Representative Smith's office, how can I help you today?"

"Yes, this is Mr. Reeves from Oak Grove High School. I am calling you today with my American Government class."

"OK. How can we help you Mr. Reeves," the aide asked.

Mr. Reeves continued, "Well, I just wanted to let you know that we will be sending Representative Smith some letters from our class. We hope that he reads these letters and that he will take what our class has to say into consideration when doing his job."

"OK. I'll make sure Mr. Smith looks for your letters as we read everything that comes to our office."

Mr. Reeves seemed satisfied and said, "Thank you, I hope you have a good day. Bye now."

After this phone conversation, Heidi turned to the students and began the day's lesson. She asked each student to get out a sheet of paper and told them that they were going to write Representative Smith. During this part of the lesson, Heidi had wanted every student to pick an issue so that they could inform Representative Smith of their opinions. She told the class: "This is important because when Mr. Smith makes decisions he'll know your thoughts on the issue" (Classroom Observation, 10 February 2010). Heidi wanted her students to see and experience how easy it is to contact their elected officials. And although this activity proved to be a salient learning example for Heidi's students, social justice-oriented democracy in social studies

[33] Representative Smith was Riverton's United States Congressional Representative and Representative Smith is a pseudonym.

teaching would also provide students the tools to make informed decisions about how to directly effect change in their own communities to solve problems of injustice.

In Chapter 6, I noted that Heidi is concerned with happiness and helping. From this perspective, Heidi wants to use her life in ways that will help other people and provide them more happiness than they might have previously had. Therefore, she had organized some of her teaching experiences to connect these themes to the social studies. Yet, as Heidi discovered, social studies teaching can be political. Reflecting on what she was trying to accomplish in her teaching practice, Heidi told her seminar class:

> It's very interesting because [Riverside] is pretty conservative to the point where it's just ridiculous. This one girl came up to me and wanted to check out one of our textbooks. She said that her dad was yelling at her because he wanted to know what I was teaching in the class. She said that he wanted to make sure that everything is fine and that we're not teaching anything bad. (Seminar, F.I. Breakout Session, 10 February 2010)

And although I believe that Heidi wanted to teach her children about controversial issues and issues of justice, she seemed to be caught off guard by this assertion from one of her student's parents.

Like Rebekah, Heidi's teaching seemed to stop at the personally responsible view of citizenship that is described by Westheimer and Kahne (2004 a,b). Whereas Heidi's lesson about Mr. Smith's office was an important learning experience for her students, Heidi could have helped her students develop action plans so that they could implement their own change. Instead, in this example, Heidi's lesson seemed to focus on informing her students that they can and should express their opinions to the nation's decision-makers – not that the students are decision makers themselves. As Mouffe (2000) has made clear, "radical and plural democracy rejects the

very possibility of a non-exclusive public sphere" (p. 33). Therefore, social studies teachers who focus on education for democracy should include issues of social justice in their curricula in ways that will allow their students to explore those issues within the classroom community.

Heidi and Education for Democracy

I must admit that the term democracy is difficult to define. As George Orwell (1946) once noted, "In the case of a word like *democracy*, not only is there no agreed definition, but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides" (p. 4, emphasis in original). Therefore, it is not surprising that preservice social studies teachers struggle to define democracy in consistent and complex ways. Yet, the civic mission of social studies seems to necessitate that social studies teacher educators work to help their preservice social studies teachers explore democracy, especially as it relates to schooling.

In this case, Heidi's definition of democracy seems to derive from Lummis' (1996) understanding that "democracy is not the name of any particular arrangement of political or economic institutions" (p. 22). As Heidi told me when I asked her to define democracy:

> I think about everyday life. I really don't think about government. Everything that we do works towards or works against promoting our democracy and helping our society... It's really like the people. We are the democracy. So, it's based on what our interactions are and what we're doing. I feel like the government and the Constitution are our rule books, but we are the ones who put everything into practice. So, it's really about what we do. (Follow-Up Interview, Democracy, 7 May 2010)

At the same time, I wanted to know how Heidi thought that this definition had played out in her student teaching experience. Therefore, I asked Heidi to tell me how social studies classrooms can help achieve democracy. She pointed out:

> I think school can get kids to like to learn. If you get kids interested in learning and make them realize that education is valuable, you should be able to get them to go to college and become productive members of society. (Follow-Up Interview, Democracy, 7 May 2010)

From this perspective, schooling helps promote democracy because it can enable kids to be "productive" members of society. For Heidi, the relationship between schooling and democracy seemed to be connected to going to college so that the students could get great jobs.

The focus that Heidi placed on success and college did not seem to correlate with her definition of democracy. Even though I do believe that going to college is good for some students, I am left wondering how Heidi's focus on that component of teaching could help her implement her definition of democracy. Nevertheless, Heidi did acknowledge that social studies classrooms could have the potential to do more than prepare students for college. When I asked her what she wanted to accomplish in the activities that she had taught, Heidi told me that she wanted her students "to talk with people and form relationships... to interact with people in a civil way" (Follow-Up Interview, Individual, 7 May 2010). Yet, as I reflect on this conversation about Heidi's understanding of democracy and education, I am left wondering how much progress she made enacting her vision for social justice-oriented democracy.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the case study of Heidi. I have discussed how her life history theme of focusing on relationships encouraged her to organize her social studies teaching around relational ideas. I have also discussed how Heidi's orientation toward happiness and helping made themselves evident in her classroom. I then used this information to analyze Heidi's life history related how she was thinking about education for democracy.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The research that I have presented in this dissertation is important in several distinct areas. First, I believe that this research can contribute to the teacher education literature on preparing teachers to teach for democracy. As mentioned earlier, Dinkelman (1999) notes in his study on preservice social studies teachers and democracy that his participants' exposure to democracy as the foundation for teaching social studies in his methods course was the first time that they had heard of the concept. However, a question that Dinkelman has left unanswered is what kinds of life experiences preservice social studies teachers have had and how those experiences relate to their conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy. In their lived experiences, had any of Dinkelman's participants lived their lives with orientations toward Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a,b) social justice-oriented democracy? What kinds of experiences do preservice social studies teachers have with democracy? How do those life experiences relate to their conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy and their ability to teach for democracy? In this study, I have worked to answer these questions.

Second, this study can have implications for how research is conducted within social studies teacher education. In her account of the state of social studies teacher education, Adler (2008) points out that: "Research tells us little about the demographics of those who choose to enter social studies teacher preparation programs or about those who are actually hired" (p. 334). I will argue in the next section that life history research methods can be employed by social

studies teacher educators as one means for confronting this gap in the literature. As such, this study can provide a beginning point and foundation for opening new avenues for research that will enable social studies teacher educators to answer Adler's (2008) call and work toward developing a picture for how preservice social studies teachers conceptualize democracy.

Finally, my research was designed to help facilitate the work of teacher educators by broadening their view of what it means to be a teacher of teachers. Accordingly, this research can provide an example for how social studies teacher educators can:

1. Use life history methods to explore how preservice teachers use their life histories to make sense of what they are experiencing in their teacher education programs.
2. Use life history methods to explore how preservice teachers develop their conceptualizations of social justice-oriented democracy and what it might mean to be a teacher that teaches for democracy.

While conducting this research, I worked to answer questions associated with the issues listed here. At the same time, I hope that my research will provide a model for how similar research can be conducted in social studies teacher education. In this chapter, I therefore outline these implications by organizing my discussion specifically around social justice-oriented democracy.

Social Justice-Oriented Democracy

One powerful goal of the social studies should be to help move society toward a more just, equitable, and democratic organization. However, to accomplish this goal, I believe that social studies teachers should not only be concerned with social justice-oriented democracy, but that they should also work to develop a critical and justice-oriented perspective toward democratic citizenship. As mentioned in the previous section, I will discuss the implications of my study by focusing on the idea of social justice-oriented democracy. In my explanation, I

focus on three distinct areas. First, I outline how this study is important for helping social studies teacher educators develop critical and social justice-oriented democratic citizenship perspectives among their students. Second, I note that this study is important for helping contribute to our understanding of social justice-oriented democracy in the social studies teacher education literature. Finally, I argue that life history as a method of research can help social studies teacher education researchers better understand how preservice social studies teachers conceptualize social justice-oriented democracy.

Critical and Social Justice-Oriented Democratic Citizenship

Critical citizenship in social studies education can be traced back to the reconstructionist movement of the 1930s. Prominent social educator George Counts (1932), leading the critical charge and writing during the Great Depression, called for educators to use their influence to reshape the social order. Pointing out the special status that the profession afforded educators, Counts noted:

> Representing as they do, not the interests of the moment or of any special class, but rather the common and abiding interests of the people, teachers are under heavy social obligation to protect and further those interests. In this they occupy a relatively unique position in society (p. 26).

Of course, social studies teachers do not have to endorse the Marxist philosophy that was propagated by Counts and other reconstructionist educators (e.g., Stanley, 1981), but social studies teachers should recognize that social education and public schooling can provide a foundation for examining the root causes of social problems. In this sense, issues of social justice should be pursued if democratic living is to be a serious goal of social studies education (Ochoa-Becker, 2007).

Based on this premise, social studies teachers should work to help their students develop a mindfulness for informed social criticism (Vinson & Ross, 2001). Therefore, social justice-oriented conceptions of democratic citizenship in the social studies should ask that teachers find ways to help their student citizens utilize their agency to explicitly confront and question the dynamics of power and privilege as well as the political institutions and social relationships that perpetuate injustice. In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963), this work is necessary in that "we know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed" (para. 11). Therefore, by organizing social studies curricula so that students can "consider collective strategies for change that challenge injustice and, when possible, address root causes of problems" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 243), social educators can connect the social studies to the components that are necessary for democratic living. By making this connection, social studies teachers can provide their students tools to make decisions about the structure of society. Unlike teachers who stop at personally responsible notions of democracy, social justice educators ask questions about how society is organized, get their students to ask those same questions, and help their students start to work toward change.

In both cases, Rebekah and Heidi used their life history themes to work toward implementing this critical and social justice-orientation to democracy into their teaching practice. In Rebekah's case, her focus on living life with purpose helped her organize the sixth grade geography curricula around current events (Haiti) that she thought would help them think about what they could do as citizens in the world. However, as I noted in Chapter 5, Rebekah did not connect her students' experiences with the curricula to explicit explorations of social structures and injustice. At the same time, this goal was one that Rebekah had mentioned that she had wanted to pursue in her teaching. What would have happened during her student teaching had I

been able to scaffold the teacher education experiences that she had had with me with her autobiographical narrative? How can social studies teacher educators participate in the personal and professional identity creation processes that preservice social studies teachers go through with their narratives?

At the same time, Heidi had also expressed to me that she had wanted to pursue these critical and social justice issues in her teaching practice. Yet, like Rebekah, Heidi seemed to stop short of Westheimer and Kahne's (2004a,b) vision for social justice-oriented democracy. As I outlined in Chapter 7, Heidi's life theme of relationships enabled her to teach discussion and dialogue. However, Heidi did not seem to be able to connect those experiences and the relationships that she formed with her students to social justice. Once again, could knowledge of these life themes have helped Heidi's teacher educators organize their classrooms to better help Heidi implement social justice-oriented democracy in her classroom? Would the social justice-orientation of Heidi's teacher education program have made more sense to her had these themes been incorporated in her teacher education classroom experiences? And what about those preservice teachers that do not hold ideas about and are resistant to ideas of social justice? Not only do I believe that social studies teacher educators should explore how life history work can help change their practice, but I also argue that we should explore how this work might help us shape admissions into our programs.

Because "the role of citizens in a liberal democracy requires the ability to engage in multiple practices through which citizens co-determine the goods they will pursue together as citizens and negotiate the differences that divide them" (Robertson, 2008, p. 29), I believe that democratic educators must include issues of social justice in their curricula. However, as this study illustrates, the work of social justice social studies education is not easy. Even though both

Rebekah and Heidi had expressed concern for social justice-oriented democracy in our screening interviews, my case studies of their life histories and experiences during the student teaching semester point out that preservice social studies teachers' conceptualizations of social justice-oriented democracy can be nebulous. In both cases, my participants seemed to define democracy in a range from personally responsible to justice-oriented. Because my participants were still developing their definitions of democracy, I was not surprised that they had implemented their life themes relative to democracy in contradictory ways. However, I wonder what my participants will accomplish in their teaching when they take control of their own classrooms. Will they teach in ways that lead to a more equitable, just, and democratic society? To me, this question is one of the most troubling questions of teacher education. It is difficult to know what our students will do when they leave our teacher education programs.

At the same time, my participants used their life history and the themes that guide their lives to make sense of their definitions of democracy. For Rebekah, כבוד (Kavod) appeared to provide one central organizing force for how she views democracy. As an individual who has personally experienced injustice, Rebekah believes that more כבוד (Kavod) in the world toward people who are different from oneself could provide avenues for a more just society. Therefore, according to Rebekah, כבוד (Kavod) is foundational to social justice-oriented democracy. This guiding belief which was derived from her life experiences helped her define democracy.

Like Rebekah, Heidi also relied on her life history to define democracy. Heidi believes that karma and the life cycle afford the kinds of living that we experience. In this sense, social justice-oriented democracy can be implemented only if individuals believe that they will reap what they sow. According to Heidi, humanity would be better off if everyone lived expecting

that they would be treated as they treat others. Karma and the life cycle, therefore, forms a foundation for how Heidi sees how social justice-oriented democracy can be enacted in society.

The importance of this research is that it helps illustrate that preservice social studies teachers use their life histories to make sense of the concepts that they come across in their teacher education programs. As my former students, Rebekah and Heidi studied social justice-oriented democracy in their social studies teacher education coursework. However, as I now know, they interpreted this concept through a prism of guiding beliefs that they had developed before they entered into the program at Southern University. Like Feiman-Nemser (2001, 2008) and Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1995) have pointed out, preservice teachers are not blank slates when they enter into their teacher education programs. And, as Chant (2002) has made clear, preservice social studies teachers use their personal theories to make sense of their student teaching experiences. As such, it is not surprising that Rebekah and Heidi left Southern University's social studies education program with different conceptualizations of what social justice-oriented democracy means.

Social Justice-Oriented Democracy in Social Studies Teacher Education

If social justice-oriented democracy is to be the foundation for secondary social studies, social studies teacher educators should employ practices that will help their preservice students better understand the work that will be necessary to achieve this goal. As Michelli (2005) makes clear: "we [teacher educators] must consider our curricula and be certain that we attend the goal of promoting democracy and not simply list it as an outcome we don't seriously pursue" (p. 28). In this sense, I believe that by better focusing on who our preservice teachers are and the experiences that they have had, we can work to provide more effective teacher education programs. For example, if I had known about Rebekah's philosophy of choice through

knowledge while she was taking my social studies curriculum course, I could have worked to help her figure out how that philosophy could be used to pursue social justice in the social studies classroom. At the same time, if I had better explored Heidi's life history while she was one of my students, I could have helped her see how her guiding belief of karma and the life cycle could be integrated into an understanding of social justice-oriented democracy.

Even though this study helps reiterate that who preservice teachers are matters and that their life histories will evidence themselves during the student teaching semester, I believe that a more important finding is that my participants consciously connected their life experiences to their talk about democracy in our interviews. At the same time, Boyle-Baise (2003) points out that when she informally surveyed her preservice social studies student teachers she found that: "Democratic involvement was limited for many pre-service teachers, and quite a few desired deeper understandings of democracy education" (p. 55). Boyle-Baise also notes that her findings are similar to those of Ross and Yeager (1999) who found that preservice elementary teachers lacked a complex understanding of democracy. Nevertheless, preservice social studies teachers are beginning to create definitions of democracy and likely expand on those definitions in their teacher education programs. And, as this research shows, preservice definitions of democracy are built upon experiences that our preservice teachers have had in their lives.

Because this relationship exists, my argument is that social studies teacher educators should work to better integrate our students' life histories into the work that we do. By connecting our students' life histories to the way that we teach about social justice-oriented democracy, I believe that we can scaffold how our students develop their definitions of this concept. This work is especially important because:

> Students of teaching live a different reality in learning to teach than do their professors who observe their students' situations, and so, students of teaching are rightly the experts in relation to understanding *their* context, *their* position and the expectations *they* feel, face, and create for themselves and/or have imposed on them by others (Loughran, 2006, p. 139, emphasis in original).

In this case, my participants used "*their* context, *their* position and the expectations *they* feel, face, and create for themselves" to make sense of social justice-oriented democracy. Chant (2002), in his study of the experiences of three social studies teachers, found that his participants also used their personal theories to guide how they approached teaching the social studies. At the same time, Biesta (2007) reminds us that teachers' teaching about democracy is dependent on their view of the democratic person.

At the same time, this research is important in that it uncovers that one's life experiences may or may not play out in her teaching practice. For example, Rebekah's focus on living life with purpose did not explicitly evidence itself in her teaching practice. And, as I referenced in Chapter 5, she told me that she had not even thought about how to incorporate that theme into her teaching. For teacher education, this disconnect between life themes and classroom teaching practice calls for teacher educators to use autobiographical narratives in their teacher education coursework.[34] Preservice teachers have experiences that need to be tapped into so that teacher educators can connect those experiences to the broader purposes of school. In the case of Rebekah and Heidi, I wish that I could have helped them connect their life themes to the social justice purpose of schooling that I want my preservice teachers to enact in their teaching practice.

[34] In their book *Becoming a Student of Teaching: Linking Knowledge Production and Practice*, Bullough and Gitlin (2001) provide a nice explanation for how teacher educators can use life writing and personal teaching metaphors to do this work.

My Personal Journey with This Research. The week before my dissertation defense I had scheduled a lunch meeting with one of my newly minted Ph.D. colleagues. My goal had been to ask her about her experiences during the dissertation defense process. However, after we ordered our food, my colleague wanted to know how this research has helped with the work that I am doing as a teacher educator. During the course of this research, I became aware of the contradictory and unfinalized nature of human lives. Through looking at Rebekah and Heidi's lives, I was also able to look at my life in ways that I had not previously done before this research. I have become aware that my own beliefs and life themes do not always play out in the teacher education classes that I teach. I have become aware that my life is shaped by contradictions that I do not always recognize much less understand.

This research, therefore, has shaped my teacher education practice in two powerful ways. First, I believe that teacher education that aims for social justice-oriented democracy requires that teacher educators take an introspective look into their own lives. For me, one of the most powerful findings of this research is what I discovered about myself and my teaching. I found that I am just like my students. Even though I have more experience and formal education in the social studies, my life is equally as contradictory and problematic as my preservice teachers. I have learned that I cannot question their assumptions and beliefs about democracy, democratic citizenship, and what those concepts mean in the social studies without also questioning my assumptions and beliefs.

Second, this research has helped to be more empathetic and understanding toward my preservice social studies teachers. Because I am more acutely aware of my own contradictions, I am more likely to treat my students' contradictions in a more just manner. We are all trapped by social discourses that uphold certain views of life as being more acceptable than others. We are

all trapped within a capitalistic system that does not reward some socially just actions. And we are all immersed within a capitalistic and sometimes militaristic discourse of schooling that does not often seem to provide teachers the room to implement visions of social justice.[35] Therefore, I have learned that I should not judge the contradictions that emerge from being trapped within these systems. Instead, I have learned that my work must help myself, my preservice teachers, and other teacher educators better understand how these contradictions occur so that we can move toward a more socially just society.

Limitations and Calls for Future Work

Although I have worked to answer my research questions, I must point out that qualitative researchers should proceed with caution in the representation of their participants and their work. Holliday (2007) notes that a key characteristic to consider when writing up one's research findings is to ensure that each participant's words are properly represented. Misrepresentation, according to Holliday, can "serve to reduce, rather than enhance, the humanity of the participant" (p. 171). This consideration is especially true in life history studies. Because of the intimate nature of life history research, it can be difficult for researchers to properly emote in the representations of their work (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). However, as Munro (1998) points out, one of the "greatest strengths of life history is in its penetration of the subjective reality of the individual; it allows the subject to speak for him or herself" (p. 9). Nevertheless, as in all qualitative research, the researcher is charged with interpreting the data so that he can make sense of the contexts under study. In a like manner, one limitation associated with life history studies is that there can never be one "definitive story about a life or an aspect of a life" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 42). As Robinson and Hawpe

[35] Giroux (2005) provides an excellent discussion of the purpose of schooling and the struggle for democracy.

(1986) note, "Stories are a means for interpreting or reinterpreting events by constructing a causal pattern which integrates that which is known about an event as well as that which is conjectural but relevant to interpretation" (p. 112). From a Bakhtinian perspective, this concept of interpreting and reinterpreting is referred to as unfinalizability. This characteristic of life, according to Bakhtin (1936/1984), means that:

> *nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future* (p. 166, emphasis in original).

Because of unfinalizability, the self is always open to interpretation and reinterpretation. Morson and Emerson (1990) make this point clear by noting that Bakhtin meant for unfinalizability to be applied to everyday individual human life. As such, an unfinalized world is one in which "the activity of writing and reading is shaped by presentness" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 428). Therefore, the research that I have presented in this dissertation can only provide a snapshot of an individual life at a particular time, in a particular context, and is told through the participant's way of seeing herself during the moment of that telling. What this study cannot do is account for anything other than the unfinalized window into my participant's selves. Accordingly, the following questions are examples of those that still remain open:

1. How do social studies teachers' autobiographical narratives change over time and how do those changes relate to their interpretation and reinterpretation of their professional and personal selves?
2. How do social studies teachers' relate their autobiographical narratives to their understandings of social justice-oriented democracy when they are not ensconced within their participation in a teacher education program?

3. Does the relationship between social studies teachers' autobiographical narratives, their teaching practice, and their understandings of social justice-oriented democracy change as they move further and further away from their time in teacher education programs?
4. How is the relationship between social studies teachers' life histories and their conceptions of social justice-oriented democracy defined at different moments in their teaching careers?
5. What comparisons can be made between different cases of research on social studies teachers (preservice and in-service) life histories and their understandings of social justice-oriented democracy?

Even though I have left these questions open, my hope is that this study has worked to develop a foundation for social studies teacher education researchers to begin to answer these questions about who social studies teachers are.

At the same time, I must admit that a full accounting of how Rebekah and Heidi in specific and preservice social studies teachers in general conceptualize social justice-oriented democracy would include a fuller analysis of concepts such as gender and social class. And even though I did not see the complex interactions that these concepts had made with my data during my analysis, I have since become aware that gender and social class (among other concepts) must be taken into account for a full understanding of this work. However, as I have mentioned in a number of places, my own assumptions and my own position in the world had blinded constrained my analysis of this data in ways that I did not always fully recognize. For example, even though I am concerned with injustice in society, my own advantageous position in the patriarchy in which we live helped me to assume that gender was not an issue in this research.

Once again, I was expressing a contradiction in my own life. On the one hand, I was talking about social justice. On the other hand, I had ignored a central problem that social justice must confront – my participants' gendering of their worlds. In sum, future life history studies in the social studies must include this work.

Conclusion

As I drive in my car through town, I am constantly reminded that much work is to be done if we are to reach a truly just, equitable, and democratic society. On American Boulevard in my hometown, I can imagine the "American Dream." Before traveling past American Boulevard in the car, I imagined white-picket fences, well manicured lawns, 2.5 kids playing on their swing sets, and the family lab chasing squirrels up the tree. From my affluent, white position in society, the scene that I paint here is what I had been taught was the "American Dream." Yet, on my way to the shopping mall one day, I looked down American Boulevard. And what I saw did not fit into the vision of the "American Dream" that I had always painted in my mind. I saw the following poem:

On American Boulevard, the houses are small
packed in rows. Neat, clean, laundry hangs
on lines above dogs in grassless yards. Little
boys chase each other across the Boulevard
throwing sticks, calling names.

Mom, in her bathrobe, sits on her front porch
packing cigarettes, comforted by the Boulevard
as men in Lexuses float by never turning
down what they believe to be a dirty street.
Mom calls little boys in for dinner at night.[36]

Unlike the other poems in this dissertation, this poem combines what I actually saw and experienced as well as what I imagined as I rode past the boulevard. On my way to the shopping

[36] This poem is title "American Boulevard" and was written in 2010.

mall that day, I had been riding in my friend's Lexus. When I pointed out American Boulevard and my thoughts on the "American Dream," he told me, "I don't know what you're talking about. I would never go down that street." At the time, I had not thought anything of his response. I had not thought about how my version of the "American Dream" did not include those boys and everything that was wonderful about playing on American Boulevard. Who in America lives on American Boulevard? Why had and have they been invisible to me?

As a social studies teacher educator, I believe that social studies education can be taught in ways that will help our society and ourselves work to make scenes like the one I saw when passing American Boulevard less invisible. However, in order to complete this work, social studies teacher educators should help their preservice social studies teachers develop social justice-oriented perspectives of democratic citizenship. And, as evidenced by the case studies that I have presented in this dissertation, this work must be grounded in each preservice teacher's life, especially the life history themes that guide their living. We should then help our students connect their understandings of social justice-oriented democracy to the classrooms in which they will teach. And even though much work is to be done, I hope that this research can provide another path for social studies teacher educators and researchers to explore the relationships that exist between who our students are and how those whos can be used to effect change in our society. In short, I hope that this research will help us include our American Boulevards.

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APPENDICES

A – Southern University's Social Studies Education Program Standards

B – Life History Interview Protocol

C – Follow-up Interview Protocol (Democracy)

D – Follow-Up Interview Protocol (Rebekah)

E – Follow-Up Interview Protocol (Heidi)

APPENDIX A

Southern University's Social Studies Education Program Standards

Content and Curriculum — Accomplished preservice social studies student teachers...

- 1(a) – Demonstrate understanding of foundations, aims, and practices of social studies education and their relationship to democracy.
- 1(b) – Demonstrate knowledge of content and modes of inquiry that are central to the subjects they teach.
- 1(c) – Help students to make interdisciplinary connections.
- 1(d) – Interpret and create curriculum that reflects state, local, and national content standards.

Knowledge of Studies and Their Learning — Accomplished preservice social studies student teachers...

- 2(a) – Demonstrate that all students can learn at high levels by providing supportive and challenging learning experiences for all students.
- 2(b) – Demonstrate understanding of how students learn.
- 2(c) – Respect and are responsive to students as whole people.
- 2(d) – Design instruction that adapts to students' development, learning styles, and areas of exceptionality.

Learning Environments — Accomplished preservice social studies student teachers...

- 3(a) – Use knowledge of social, linguistic, and cultural diversity to create an equitable and culturally responsive classroom.**
- 3(b) – Create democratic learning communities characterized by collaboration, mutual support, and shared decision-making.
- 3(c) – Organize classroom experiences to promote active student engagement in the pursuit of worthwhile learning.**
- 3(d) – Manage classrooms effectively to promote student learning and safety.
- 3(e) – Draw on parent, school, district, and community resources to foster students' learning and well-being.

Assessment Accomplished preservice social studies student teachers...

- 5(a) – Articulate clear and defensible rationales for curricular and instructional decision-making.**
- 5(b) – Develop and implement short and long term instructional plans that progress coherently towards learning goals.
- 5(c) – Vary their instructional roles (e.g., instructor, facilitator, audience), instructional strategies and materials to support active student engagement in worthwhile learning for all students.
- 5(d) – Adjust instruction appropriately according to student response.

Professionalism Accomplished preservice social studies student teachers...

- 6(a) – Systematically reflect on their own practice to improve teaching and learning.**
- 6(b) – Engage in collaborative inquiry.**
- 6(c) – Advocate for teaching and learning that support equity and high expectations for all students.
- 6(d) – Examine and further their knowledge of the history, ethics, social conditions, and practices of social studies and schooling more broadly.
- 6(e) – Adhere to appropriate professional expectations, codes of conduct, and laws related to rights and responsibilities of students, educators, and families in support of student learning.

** Southern University has set aside these standards as core themes and focus points for its social studies education program.

APPENDIX B

Life History Interview Protocol

* This life history interview protocol was derived from examples given by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), Atkinson (1998), and Johnson (2005).

Personal Information

1. Name, address (permanent), year of birth, marital status (year of marriage), birthplace, locations of living (where, when, why, for how long).

2. Immediate family. Birth order and spacing.

3. Hobbies, Interests.

4. What stands out in your life over the past few years? What kinds of things have been important? What has stayed with you?

5. Can you tell me something about what your life is like right now? What do you care about, think about?

Family and Life at Home

1. Describe family.

2. Describe the environment of your home life. What was growing up in your house or neighborhood like?

Cultural Factors and Traditions

1. Can you describe the community where you grew up?

2. What cultural values were passed on to you?

3. Describe the role religion plays in your family? In your life?

4. What special people have you known in your life? How have they shaped who you have become?

Childhood Activities

1. Can you describe your childhood?

2. What would you say was the most significant event in your life during your childhood? Why? How has this event impacted your life?

3. Describe your childhood friends.

4. What was the most significant event of your teenage years? How do you think that event has impacted your life?

School

1. Describe your school and your experience with school (elementary, middle, and high).

2. What do you remember about how you were taught in school? What do you think about this style of instruction?

3. Describe your extracurricular life at school.

4. What did you do after school?

College

1. Describe what life has been like for you at college.

2. What kinds of classes have you taken?

    a. What has been the most important course that you have taken? Why?
    b. What has been the least important course that you have taken? Why?

3. What have you learned about yourself through college?

4. What have you learned about other people because of college?

5. How has being in college changed the way you think about the world? Have your beliefs changed or have they been reassured?

Work

1. Describe your work situation.

2. What have you learned about people through your work?

Historical Events and Periods

1. What is the most important historical event you have experienced?

    a. What did you do?
    b. How did you feel during this event?
    c. What are your perspectives of other people that were also involved in this event?

2. Do you remember what you were doing during:

    a. September 11?
    b. When the United States invaded Iraq?
    c. When Barack Obama was elected president?
    d. Hurricane Katrina?
    e. What are your thoughts on each of these events?
    f. How did you feel during these events?
    g. How have each of these events impacted your life?

Inner Life and Spiritual Awareness

1. What primary beliefs guide your life?

2. What values would you not want to compromise?

3. What do you see as the purpose of life? What do you see as the purpose of your life?

4. What do you see as the highest ideal we can strive for?

5. What is your view on why there is suffering in the world?

Major Life Themes

1. What crucial decisions have you made in your life? How have these decisions affected you?

2. How have you overcome or learned from your difficulties?

3. Is there anything in your experience that gives your life unity, meaning, or purpose?

4. In what ways are you changing?

5. What has been the greatest challenge in your life? How and why?

6. What has been the most inspiring experience that you have had? How and why?

7. What matters the most to you? Why?

Ways of Knowing

1. Describe your worldview.
2. When learning about something you want to know, what do you do?
3. How do you know what is right/true?
4. Are some ideas and ways of life better than others? If so, what makes them better?

Description of Selves

1. Describe yourself.
2. What is the most important book you have read? Why?
3. What has been the most important lesson in your life?
4. What is your view of the role of education in a person's life?
5. Is the way you see yourself now significantly different than it was in the past? Why?
6. What three things would you like said about your life when you die?

Politics and Political Participation

1. How would you characterize your overall orientation to politics?
2. Have you participated in any activities that you consider to be political? If so, what?
3. Can you describe a particular scene in your life that involves politics in some way? This description can be of an event in which you learned about politics, developed political views, participated in the political process, etc.

Teaching

1. When and why did you decide to become a teacher?
2. Describe your philosophy of teaching?
3. Describe your view of social studies?

APPENDIX C

Follow-Up Interview Protocol (Democracy)

Democracy, Democratic Citizenship, and Social Studies Education

1. What do you think are the biggest problems currently facing society?
2. How can schools in general, and social studies classrooms in particular, help work toward solving the problems that you have just mentioned?
    a. How do you think your teaching in your field experience got at this issue?
3. What do you think when I say the term "DEMOCRACY"?
    a. How do you think your definition of democracy played out in your student teaching experience?
4. What would you say is the one, most important thing that makes democracy work? Why?
    a. How do you think your teaching helped your students fulfill this criteria?
5. What would you say is the one, biggest problem that prevents democracy from fully working?
    a. How do you think your teaching in your field experience helped your students work against this problem?
6. Give a few examples of how someone can participate in a democratic society.
7. What does it mean for students to reach their full potential as citizens in a democratic society?
8. What does education for democracy or democratic education mean to you?
9. What is necessary for people to live justly with one another?
10. How do you think social justice, democracy, and democratic citizenship relate to one another?
    a. How do these things relate to the social studies?

Hypothetical Democratic Dilemmas

1. One group of people say, "We want to pursue policy X. It's the best solution." Another group of people say, "We want to pursue policy Z. It's the best solution." Assuming that both policies are effective means for solving the problem at hand, how do we decide which policy to implement?

2. Imagine that you are in a position of power. Problem A arises and needs to be solved. Explain how you would go about solving it.

APPENDIX D

Follow-Up Interview Protocol (Rebekah)

1. How did you use your social studies teaching rationale while student teaching?

    a. You mention in your rationale: "The social studies classroom is the best place to prepare students for democratic society." What does this statement mean to you? How did you do this work in your student teaching classroom?
    b. You mention in your rationale: "A democracy only works if there is an engaged citizenry." What does engaged citizenry mean? How did your teaching help prepare students to do what you have described?

2. In your life story interview, you mentioned that the philosophy of "choice through knowledge" plays a big role in your life.

    a. How did this philosophy guide your teaching practice during your field experience?
    b. How did this philosophy guide your participation in your student teaching seminar?
    c. How did this philosophy guide how you learned about social studies teaching and its purpose?

3. You have talked extensively about the need for people to live life with a specific purpose.

    a. Do you think the way that you taught during your student teaching got this point across to your students? What kinds of life purposes do you think your teaching conveyed to your students?
    b. Do you think that your focus on living life with purpose affected how you learned about teaching in seminar?
    c. How do you think that this focus has helped you think about social studies teaching and its purpose?

4. Reflecting back on your experience in seminar, do you think you learned anything that helps you understand or think differently about democracy, democratic citizenship, and the social studies?

5. How do you think that your life history, experience student teaching, experience in seminar, and your understanding of democracy, democratic citizenship, and the social studies tie together?

    a. Do you see any connections between these areas? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

APPENDIX E

Follow-Up Interview Protocol (Heidi)

1. How did you use your social studies teaching rationale while student teaching?

    a. You mention in your rationale: "Through social studies, students learn the true nature of democracy." What does this statement mean to you? How did you do this work in your student teaching classroom?
    b. You mention in your rationale: "I want to teach against the grain by preparing my students for perpetual success." What does teaching against the grain mean? How did your teaching help prepare your students for perpetual success?

2. In your life story interview, you mentioned that the philosophy of "karma and the life cycle" plays a big role in your life.

    a. How did this philosophy guide your teaching practice during your field experience?
    b. How did this philosophy guide your participation in your student teaching seminar?
    c. How did this philosophy guide how you learned about social studies teaching and its purpose?

3. You have talked extensively about the purpose of life being a combination of happiness and helping.

    a. Do you think the way that you taught during your student teaching got this point across to your students? What kinds of life purposes do you think your teaching conveyed to your students?
    b. Do you think that your life focus on happiness and helping affected how you learned about teaching in seminar?
    c. How do you think that this focus has helped you think about social studies teaching and its purpose?

4. Reflecting back on your experience in seminar, do you think you learned anything that helps you understand or think differently about democracy, democratic citizenship, and the social studies?

5. How do you think that your life history, experience student teaching, experience in seminar, and your understanding of democracy, democratic citizenship, and the social studies tie together?

    a. Do you see any connections between these areas? If so, what are they? If not, why not?