Creating fertile grounds for two-way immersion: gentrification, immigration, & neoliberal school reforms

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Abstract

Bilingual Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs are becoming increasingly popular in the United States, especially amongst white, non-Hispanic, middle-class English speaking-parents (Valdez et al. in Urban Rev 44:601–627, 2016). While they are growing in numbers and popularity, researchers caution against the challenges and inequalities that they face (Cervantes-Soon et al. in Rev Res Educ 41:403–427, 2017) making it important to understand how and why these schooling options are coming about. Through the ethnographic study of one TWI program that was created within a Philadelphia public school in 2014, I show how it was neoliberal school reforms, a movement of gentrifying parents to improve schools, and a steady flow of Spanish-speaking immigrants to the area that created the fertile grounds for this TWI bilingual program to come about. I argue for the importance of understanding the processes that already create unequal positions for various social actors, and through this analysis problematize bottom-up language policy making when it is undertaken under the conditions of neoliberalism and competitiveness.

> … Bilingual is the way to go.[…] **I know our kids need to compete** and it's also something that I know is not available readily, so it does provide our school with a **huge point of pride to say, you know, we offer this and it's a competitive market out there**. **We gotta have programs that people want. People want that.**

Interview with Mr. Anthony Davis, Principal, Washington School

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I was telling Principal Davis, about the people who wouldn't join our group or weren't interested because **they didn't think Washington School was at all an option […] And he was like, well, what would make them come?** And I was like, using Washington's—the strengths of all the kids who speak different languages making it, like, a two-way immersion type […] and I was so surprised that **he was immediately like, yeah, let's do it.**

Interview with Rebecca, new neighborhood resident, mother of two

Both Principal Davis and Rebecca, quoted above, were key figures in the creation of a new bilingual Two-Way Immersion program within a Philadelphia public school- one that would bring together Spanish and English speakers with the goal of bilingualism and biliteracy for all. Mr. Anthony Davis was the recently hired principal of the K-8 public school in the neighborhood, a school with a poor reputation and decreasing enrollment. Rebecca, a white, college-educated and bilingual mother of two, was a new resident of this changing part of the city, looking for schooling options for her young children. Their meeting at the beginning of Principal Davis' first year sparked the idea for a Two-Way Immersion program that was begun the following year. In the quote above, Principal Davis conceptualizes schooling as a competitive market that in turn needs to prepare students for the competitive job market—illustrating the neoliberal dynamics already at play within the school district. Rebecca was one of many parents with young children in the city, white and college-educated, who like her, were looking for schooling options in the urban neighborhoods they had begun to call home. These excerpts, the assumptions behind them and the realities that they point to, illustrate the wider societal phenomena that were behind the creation of this program: gentrification and neoliberal school reform policies.

Research has documented the rise in number of TWI bilingual programs across the US and their increasing popularity among white middle-class parents (Valdez et al. 2016). This is concomitant to research that has illustrated the challenges and inequalities within these programs, especially between English-dominant, white middle-class children and their Latinx[1] working-class counterparts (Cervantes-Soon et al. 2017). Given these dynamics, this article addresses the following question: what factors are contributing to the demand of TWI bilingual programs, and what processes are creating the conditions for them? I sought to answer this question through the ethnographic study of one particular TWI program created within a public school, where more specifically I wanted to know, *why this program, why here, and why now?* In other words, why was this program created and how did it come

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[1] Throughout this paper I use the terms Latino, Latina and Latinx interchangeably. I do so for various reasons: one, labels that we ascribe to participants and/or groups of people are imprecise, as they do not necessarily point to a shared experience and encourage essentializing, yet they are often necessary as short-hand for our work. The term Latinx has been used recently to (1) avoid the masculine as the norm in "Latino" and (2) recognize those who do not identify with a gendered identity. While I agree with these aims, as a writer/reader, I find Latinx as a term clunky and as an ethnographer, I note that this is not a term that participants use themselves. Thus, I settle for what some may feel an unconventional use of all.

about in this specific context at this point in time? Through this ethnographic analysis, I argue that it was the simultaneous processes of gentrification, immigration, and neoliberal school reforms that created the fertile grounds for this TWI bilingual program to be both viable and desirable. More precisely stated, I argue that by migrating, Spanish-speaking Latino families made the TWI program viable, while English dominant middle-class families gentrifying the city found such a program desirable. And within neoliberal school policies that encourage competitiveness and tie funding to enrollment, schools needed to attract more families in order to survive. Significantly, it was the process of gentrification that was bringing these diverse groups of people together in the same social space. As others have noted, when these factors are the ones driving the implementation of TWI bilingual programs, they are less likely to be responsive to Latino families and communities, less likely to be social justice oriented, and more likely to be treated as a "boutique" program to attract non-Latino, middle-class families (Flores and García 2017). In this article, I make the case for understanding TWI programs from a wider socio-political and economic perspective so that we can better understand and address the inequalities that have been documented in the literature (Cervantes-Soon et al. 2017), and as part of a materialist, anti-racist stance in language activism and scholarship (Flores and Chaparro 2017).

I situate this work within critical ethnographic research of Two-Way Immersion programs while also drawing on research documenting the effects of gentrification on public schooling. This interdisciplinarity is significant in making connections across similar phenomena; specifically, understanding how gentrification has been impacting urban schools sheds light on similar dynamics that are present in many TWI programs. In what follows, I lay out the context of the city of Philadelphia and the state of schooling during the years of the study, followed by an analysis of how the TWI program came about, focusing on the role of a civic association in promoting the program. I examine the tensions that emerged as the civic association promoted the TWI program, as well as the role that Latino parents played in this effort. I conclude with a discussion on how these dynamics are important to consider both for new and existing TWI programs, and as a part and product of the landscape of diverse, mixed-income cities and schools.

Research on TWI programs

Two-Way Immersion is the term used to describe bilingual programs which serve children who are learning English as well as those who are learning a minoritized language, such as Spanish. Cervantes-Soon et al's (2017) review of research on TWI programs illustrates the inequalities that have been documented in the literature, organizing them around three categories: TWI classrooms, TWI teachers, and the larger socio-political contexts of TWI programs. At the classroom level, researchers have noted a tendency for curriculum, classroom practices, and discourse to favor English dominant students (Cervantes-Soon et al. 2017; Chaparro 2019; Fitts 2006; McCollum 1999; Palmer 2009; Volk and Angelova 2007). Some of this research has highlighted the higher social and symbolic status associated with the majority

language and its speakers. Studies that have examined classroom discourse dynamics have highlighted the greater accommodation to English-speakers by Spanish speakers (Volk and Angelova 2007); as well as the dominance in classroom talk by middle-class white students (Palmer 2009). Additionally, the strict separation of languages in TWI programs ignores the translanguaging of bilinguals and can easily promote deficit discourses of bilingual children for not adhering to monoglossic language norms (García 2009).

Beyond the classroom level, scholars have documented the greater power white middle-class parents can yield in policy-making and school settings, vis-à-vis their Latinx working class counter parts (Chaparro 2020a; Burns 2017; Cervantes-Soon 2014; Muro 2016; Shannon 2011). Additionally, the centering of white English-dominant interests in the creation and promotion of TWI programs and the simultaneous exclusion or erasure of the interest of Latinx children and families have been noted (Delavan et al. 2017; Dorner 2011; Freire et al. 2017; Martínez 2017). Indeed, Flores and García (2017) describe TWI programs as "boutique" programs that tend to serve the interests of the dominant students and families that attend them. Petrovic (2005) and Flores (2017) are among the various scholars who have critiqued the neoliberal orientations that characterize some TWI programs that serve students from the dominant majority. To understand this from a wider perspective, it's important to understand the impact of neoliberalism on both language and schools.

Neoliberalism, bilingual schooling & language policy making

Neoliberalism, a political economic theory that favors free market principles, individual freedom, and little state intervention, has become a hegemonic way to understand not only the economy, but also education and language (Harvey 2005). Under a neoliberalist frame, education is treated as a market, where parents are the consumers and schools compete in order to be chosen (Angus 2015). This competition among schools is assumed to motivate school improvement and quality (Betts 2009). Neoliberal reform efforts in schools include increasing competition, accountability and choice in an attempt to mimic the dynamics found in an economic market (Lipman and Hursh 2007).

Neoliberalist discourses have also re-structured the ways in which language and identity are understood. Heller and Duchene (2012) propose "pride" and "profit" as discursive frames in which to talk about language in late capitalism—where "pride" is associated with modernity and the nation-state, and "profit" associated with late capitalism and the accompanying changes in regimes of thought and action. In other words, discourses of "pride" are those associated with language and identity in relation to a nation-state, whereas discourses of "profit" are those that treat language as a commodifiable skill. As such, language has become a resource that is a desirable skill for employment and is treated as an exchangeable good.

As neoliberal thought becomes a commonplace way to understand our worlds, policies that create competitiveness and choice in education, *and* discourses that treat language as a skill detached from a national or cultural identity, have become normative. Thus, language, as an attractive "added value" for parent-consumers

from the dominant majority, has become a strategy that some schools, under the pressure of competitiveness, use to attract parents. In other words, under a framework of school choice, competitiveness is not only assumed to be a driver of quality, it is also a dynamic that pressures schools to become "attractive" to its consumers, and often that pressure is also about survival. In this way, language, in the form of bilingual education or language immersion programs, has become one of the potential "selling" points for schools.

Viewed from the perspective of the study of Language Policy and Planning (LPP), neoliberal reforms have become a driver in language policy making at the school, district, and state levels. In order to keep enrollments up, schools have created bilingual or language immersion programs to keep or attract new "customers" (i.e. families) (Flores and García 2017; Jabbar 2015; Heiman and Murakami 2019). Because language has become a highly desirable skill under neoliberalist thought, both parent desire for this skill as well as parental organizing to push for bilingual programs have become influential in language policy making at various levels (Bernstein, Alvarez, Chaparro and Henderson, this issue). These are instances of "bottom-up" language planning, yet one that is driven by neoliberal desires (Petrovic 2005). Another way to examine this difference is to turn to Ruiz' (1984) language orientations. Dominant groups' aspirations for language enrichment or bilingual programs are driven by a language-as-a-resource orientation with instrumentalist motivations; whereas movements such as those from indigenous communities to reclaim ancestral languages are driven by a language-as-a-right orientation (e.g. Hornberger 2012). While acknowledging that the language-as-resource orientation "was devised with the intention of empowering language minoritized populations," Flores (2017) argues that "it has become institutionalized in ways that adopt a very limited view of bilingualism that does little to challenge linguistic hierarchies that are the product of larger racial inequities" (pp. 76–77).

Indeed, "selling" bilingual education programs to parents, especially those from the dominant majority, becomes problematic as it can make the goals of a bilingual education further diverge from its original intended purpose and audience. Historically, Spanish–English bilingual education programs in the US came out of Latinx struggles for racial equality during the civil rights movement (Flores 2016). At its core, the framing of bilingual education as a resource and divorced from community struggles for racial equality lies at the center of neoliberalism (Flores 2017). Thus, as both schooling and language are understood under market-metaphors and governed under neoliberal policies, we see language policy-making being driven by both these discourses. This ethnographic study illustrates how one TWI bilingual program was created in part by these processes. Additionally, demographic shifts in cities—also known as gentrification, have added to this mix.

Gentrification and urban schooling

Gentrification has long been a concern of urban sociologists, and more recently gentrification scholars have been paying attention to how middle-class families with children impact urban schooling (Billingham and Kimelberg 2013).

Gentrification, and the displacement of low-income families that comes with it, impacts the composition of school populations. What this means is that as neighborhoods change, neighborhood schools will change with them (Butler and Robson 2003). Often it is particular schools that attract families to particular neighborhoods, making schooling an important factor how families choose homes to purchase (Cucchiara 2013; Lareau and Goyette 2014).

Indeed, the literature has demonstrated that schools, like neighborhoods, are a site of place-making, where White middle-class gentrifiers forge places that suit their values and interests (Billingham and Kimelberg 2013; Posey 2012; Roberts and Lakes 2014). Studies have found that greater white middle-class parent involvement in schools can have detrimental effects to the experiences of low-income families and families of color—at times excluding or displacing families (Cucchiara and Horvat 2009; Cucchiara 2013; Posey 2012). To be clear, this involvement goes beyond "stereotypical images of organizing bake sales" (Billingham and Kimelberg 2013, p.96) and instead includes activities with much more substantial impact, such as grant writing, participating in personnel hiring, curriculum development, and recruiting of families (Billingham and Kimelberg 2013).

Education is a driving and forceful influence in what and how urban spaces become gentrified (Butler and Robson 2003). In other words, the relationship of gentrification in a neighborhood becomes reciprocal to changes in the corresponding local public school. Schools can become "neighborhood anchors" (Billingham and Kimelberg 2013, p.99) and a space that enables middle-class parents to create and access social networks—key in the future transition to secondary education (Butler and Robson 2003). In fact, parents were found to be "key actors" in local school and neighborhood change and were often the ones driving that change (Cucchiara 2013; Posey 2012).

Given the key role that middle-class parents played in the inception and development of the TWI program at Washington Elementary, the focal school for the present study, this literature is key in understanding this process. With this study, I contribute to the aforementioned literature by showing how bilingual TWI programs are significant in the relationship of gentrification and schooling. As I will highlight in this analysis, bilingual programs can be particularly attractive to college-educated parents—who are also more likely to be the ones gentrifying urban spaces. Given the emergence of this new TWI program, at the crux of neoliberal school reforms and the gentrification of neighborhoods that are also receiving sites for immigrants, analyzing the ways in which the actual program came about, the attitudes and motivations of program planners and stakeholders towards language and its speakers, becomes paramount.

Methodology, Participants & Positionality

The data presented in this article come from an 18-month ethnographic study that examined the social processes that impacted how this TWI program came about as well as the experiences of children and families in the first two years of its existence.

I spent the majority of my time at the school, specifically in the Kindergarten and 1st grade TWI classrooms as a participant-observer. I also attended parent-nights, meetings and community events inside and outside the school. For the present analysis, the questions guiding my inquiry were: how did this TWI program come about? who were the "main players" and what was happening in the neighborhood and city-wide at the time that made it happen? To investigate these, I interviewed various stakeholders in the creation of the program (see table), and I became involved with the Education Committee of the local organization of neighbors that I call the Neighborhood Civic Association (NCA). I interviewed members of the Education Committee, the chair, as well as the president of the NCA to get a sense of the organization's role in the neighborhood and its history.

Interviews with participants	
Alice Bergman[a]	Chair of education committee of NCA
Anthony Davis	Principal
Kimberly Rossi	Washington "pre-parent",[b] active in NCA, eventually became parent
Layla Ramos	Washington parent, involved in the early planning efforts of the TWI
Mary Johnson	Washington Parent, active in NCA Education Committee, public school advocate
Rebecca Smith	Member of NCA, resident, neighborhood parent, key figure in creation of TWI program
Robert Cottone	Neighborhood Civic Association (NCA) President
Rosalinda González	Washington parent, involved in the early planning efforts of the TWI

[a]All names are pseudonyms

[b]"Pre-parent" was a common way to refer to individuals who were interested in enrolling their young children at the school sometime in the future

The meetings of the Education Committee of the Neighborhood Civic Association were key to this analysis, as they allowed me insight into what was happening city-wide in terms of education support groups, and what the motivation for many of its members were in supporting the local school and particularly the TWI program. The committee was composed of mostly white women, between the ages of 30-40, who lived in the neighborhood and had young children, not yet school aged. I began attending the monthly meetings of the education committee in September of 2014, jotting notes during the meeting and writing extended field notes after. I attended 11 education committee meetings, as well as several other meetings related to the broader NCA and one city-wide summit of neighborhood civic associations.

In addition to the meetings, local news and social media sites were critical in getting a sense for the broader context beyond the Education Committee. I collected 46 articles from local newspapers and media sites, some of which circulated in the Education Committee listserv, that addressed Philadelphia schools and gentrification during this time. Initial analysis included a logging of all documents, where I noted the information source and where that information circulated (i.e. if it was mentioned in person, in a meeting, or in an email listserv). I also tagged the articles with initial labels such as "gentrification", "pre-parents", and "Philadelphia School District" to indicate the general topic of the document. The transcripts of

the interviews, my jottings and field notes from meetings, the media articles and the collected documents became the corpus of data I worked with. I coded inductively, writing research memos and triangulating through an iterative process of writing and analysis (Saldaña 2015). In particular, iteratively reading through research literature was generative in comparing and contrasting to similar processes occurring in other cities across the world.

Given that ethnography is an ontological, embodied enterprise (Rosaldo 1986; Warren and Hackney 2000); who we are and how people perceive us shape the kind of information that is gathered, analyzed, and inscribed in the final write up. Being a Mexican–American, middle-class, Spanish–English bilingual woman were important factors in whom I had access to and who felt comfortable with me. My identity as a graduate student from an ivy-league institution and as a former TWI teacher were important in gaining access, building rapport, and earning credibility with Principal Davis as well as the teachers in this setting. Many Latino parents saw me as a school-actor with whom they could communicate in Spanish, similar to Ms. Olea, their children's Kindergarten teacher. This allowed me to form relationships with them. While we shared a common language, many Latino parents treated me with the deference and respect accorded to teaching professionals in rural Mexico and Central America. English-speaking parents (or those interested in becoming Washington school parents) also felt comfortable talking to me and this was evident during interviews and conversations.

At the NCA's Education Committee, I introduced myself as a graduate student involved with, and supporting the newly-formed TWI program. Over the course of 18 months I got to know the members of the committee and they became accustomed to my presence. I volunteered to help during events and as the only Spanish–English bilingual (and Latina) in the group, I offered my translation services. Many of the 'pre-parents' in the group usually felt relieved to know that a "researcher" was working with the TWI program, given the poor reputation of many Philadelphia Public schools, so knowing an ivy-league institution was supporting their local neighborhood school helped assuage their preoccupations.

Washington school and its surrounding area in Philadelphia

Washington School was located in a diverse part of the city undergoing change. This area was historically where many Italian immigrants settled in the mid-twentieth century, making this zone home to the second largest Italian-American community in the United States (Singer et al. 2008). Before then, however, the area had already been home to different groups of immigrants, including Irish immigrants in the 1800s, as well as Russian Jews, Slovaks, Greeks, and a small Lebanese community. In the last half of the 20th century, refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam have settled in the neighborhood, as well as a growing number of Mexican immigrants (Singer et al. 2008). In the past decade, these same areas are now popular among (mostly white) young professionals. The landscape of the neighborhoods was changing, with a growth in new and re-modeled properties in the area.

Washington school historically did not have a good reputation—I found that parents, both English and Spanish speaking, along with some of the school staff, would tell me this. Several people mentioned frequent fights and conflicts with students from the recently closed high school across the street. Moreover, the school had been a revolving door for school leaders. Before Principal Davis came along, there had been a different principal each year. In contrast, there were staff members who had been at the school for 15, 20 and even 30 years.

Washington School had a very diverse student population. In school year 2013–2014, there were 564 students enrolled—in subsequent years, that number steadily increased. Of the students enrolled in the year 2013–2014, 42% were officially labeled English Language Learners, with many different languages spoken by families, including Mandarin, Nepali, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Spanish, and many more cultural backgrounds. The majority of the student population was considered economically disadvantaged. The TWI program began in 2014 with one kindergarten cohort of 24 students, with a new cohort added each year. At the time of its creation, there was a district-approved five-year plan to expand the TWI program.

The TWI program at Washington was only one of several initiatives Principal Davis undertook early on in his tenure, which garnered him recognition from the Superintendent. The TWI program was recognized as a successful example of the district's bilingual efforts, and that same year the school was recognized by Philadelphia's Mayor during one of his "innovative and effective" schools tour. Principal Davis was open and collaborative with multiple community organizations, of which the Education Committee of the NCA was just one. He strengthened the school's STEM program and hired a STEM teacher; he acquired new technology for the school, including iPads and SMART boards for the younger grades; and he partnered with one of the city's hospitals to provide support for students with mental and behavioral health needs—a connection that was facilitated by Rebecca. He had one of the largest after-school programs in the city, with four organizations providing after-school programming. He was also invested in ensuring that all of his different immigrant populations had a voice: he had seven Bilingual Counseling Assistants (BCA's) who spent part time in the school and helped translate for families who spoke Mandarin, Vietnamese, Burmese, Nepali, Spanish, Khmer and Indonesian. Furthermore, he collaborated with the BCA's to form language-based SACs—School Advisory Councils—so that each language-based group could meet on its own and then have a representative at the English SAC meetings. Principal Davis had an ambitious vision for the school, and he thrived under the competitive pressure of the district. Because of Mr. Davis' leadership and accessibility, many white professional parents were drawn to the school, specifically the TWI program, and became "convinced" that this public school could work for their family. In the next section, I examine how various factors came together to ensure the success of the TWI program.

Findings

The questions I sought to answer in this study were: What factors set the stage for a TWI program to be started? Who was involved in this effort? Why did it occur in this particular place, at this particular time? Below I tease out the interwoven factors that created the fertile grounds for a TWI program to be successfully created. I begin by describing the reform efforts already underway in the district, which created competitive pressure for schools to "compete or close" (McWilliams 2019). This was occurring at the same time as the city was changing—and various neighborhoods were being gentrified. I then describe the "Friends of" movement, where professional families who had decided to stay in the city and opt for public schooling become advocates for improving the system, as well as aggressive fundraisers to directly help their local school. I turn my attention on one such group that became involved in the creation and promotion of the bilingual TWI program; and in the remaining sections explain how this group and its activities highlight the ways in which gentrification and education are dialectically connected. I examine the role of the Latinx parents in this effort and the disconnect between the Latinx parents and the white middle-class parents, and conclude by discussing the tensions around equity that were evident in the process of creating the TWI.

Neoliberal school reforms and competitive pressure

During the time of this study, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) began implementing a neoliberal, market-based reform strategy that included contentious school closings, charter expansion, and drastic cuts in the budget as ways to address a serious fiscal crisis (Jack and Sludden 2013). One of the key restructuring strategies was a move towards a portfolio-based management system—that is, towards a system where a district manages a variety of high-quality schooling options, including charters and semi-autonomous operators along with district schools (Boston Consulting Group 2012). The "doomsday budget," as it was referred to, eliminated after-school services and programs such as music and art as well as the reduction of personnel such as school counselors and nurses (Shamlin 2013). These cuts, along with the closure of 24 schools, were met with much resistance from activist and advocacy groups.

The impacts of this competitive pressure are assumed to be what drives school improvement (Betts 2009); yet, both the literature and the case of Philadelphia prove otherwise. The pressure to keep enrollment up at all costs can drive schools to create a "niche" market and brand themselves in particular ways (e.g. Jabbar 2015), as was the case with the high school McWilliams (2019) studied, where Asian American students became the "desirable" students and the school sought to market themselves as an "ELL campus". In the case of Washington school, providing a bilingual TWI program was just what it needed as a "competitive edge," especially to attract middle-class residents in the area.

Gentrification and the Friends of movement

During this time, groups of young professional parents and city residents began getting together with the goal of supporting their local neighborhood school (Good and Nelson 2020). Many of these groups named themselves "Friends of [name of neighborhood school]". The year after the doomsday budget was passed, "Friends of" groups started gaining more traction. In fact, in at least one of the 'Friends of' groups website, the link between the district's funding crisis and the forming of the group is made directly:

> The [name of organization], a 501c3 nonprofit organization, was formed in 2013 in response to the continued resource crisis facing our city's public schools, and in particular, our neighborhood school. We are made up of future and current parents of [name of school] students and other interested community members and public school supporters. We are open to all who care about public education and want to positively impact [name of school]'s present and future!

These organizations formed in response to the funding crisis and with the goal of creating quality schooling options for professional parents (who did not wish to leave their urban environment for the suburbs in search of better schooling for their children). Importantly, Friends groups were being created exclusively in gentrifying areas of the city: indeed, they were composed of "future and current" parents, who were in their majority white and college-educated. The anxiety over schooling options for the children of professional parents that I interviewed was very evident: choosing a school in the city of Philadelphia was very stressful, given the budget crisis and the condition of public schools; the limited number of seats at charters; and the high prices of private education that many professional parents couldn't afford. By 2016, an article in *The Philadelphia Notebook*, a local newsletter focused on education, called this "the Friends of movement" (Carlson 2016). By then, the 'Friends of' groups had organized their second annual summit. The larger organization Friends of Neighborhood Education (FONE) was a result of the first annual summit in 2015, which I attended.

Indeed, many "Friends" groups formed as spin offs, or with some connection to, the local civic associations already in existence. Although the history of the city's numerous civic associations vary, this particular Neighborhood Civic Association was the product of the city's changing demographic make-up. This part of Philadelphia was traditionally organized by the churches, which were the de-facto political and social organizations of the city, according to my informants. Yet, as Catholic residents began moving out of the city, or began aging and passing away, the newer generation of residents were no longer affiliated to the parishes in the same way. Robert Cottone, the head of the Neighborhood Civic Association, explains it in the following way:

> Before there were civic associations, Philadelphia was all a neighborhood of Catholic parishes. You would say, where do you live, and they would say, St. Monica's or Epiphany or St. Nicholas. No one ever said, you know, no

one ever said I live in Newbold or Lomo. They do now, but no one ever said that when I was a child 40 years ago. They said I lived in Stella Maris parish, so as the parishes diminished and the civic associations came along, we tried, we at least, tried to use the markings of the old parish parameters to get an idea of what our boundaries should look like. (INT 2016.04.25).

Alice Bergman, the education committee chair and a resident of this area for about 10 years, also described it in similar terms:

…[Y]ou know, this neighborhood, all of the social and kind of political stuff used to be done more through the parishes, through your ward leader, that kind of thing, and as that sort of fell away and people began to move into the neighborhood who weren't Catholic, who didn't join a parish, that system kind of dissolved a bit, and what, what happened starting in the past maybe 10 to 15 years is that civic associations started to form a lot along the lines of the old parishes. (INT 2015.12.15)

It was this Neighborhood Civic Association that Rebecca first went to in order to begin learning about her local public school. When Rebecca first went to the NCA, there was no Education Committee. Yet, given her interest and that of other residents, Rebecca and Alice formed the Education Committee of the NCA, and this is where the idea for a Two-Way Immersion program first began. Importantly, this Education Committee later on went on to become its own non-profit organization and officially changed its name to "Friends of Washington School.".

The education committee and the promotion of the TWI program

The activities of the NCA Education Committee illustrate how neoliberal logics of school reform seep down to affect all local actors, where the discourse of marketing and "selling" became one of the main foci of the group, with the goal of staying competitive. There was pressure to keep up with other "Friends" groups in order to be more competitive and attract more parents, and at the same time, to be more "professional" to attract more grant money. The majority of its members were "pre-parents": individuals who had young children or were planning on it, and who were also considering Washington school as an educational option. A commitment to supporting public education, in the face of the lack of funding from the state, as well as a commitment to equity and diversity were often expressed at the meetings, along with laments at the lack of the latter: the group was made up of mostly white middle-class professional individuals, something which Alice often recognized.

By the time I began attending the monthly meetings, two years after it had formed, it seemed that there was a constant stream of newcomers (like me), so one of the 'original' members of the group decided to summarize the mission and history of the group in a handout, parts of which I have reproduced below:

We are a group of parents and community members from the [Neighborhood Civic Association] focused on providing support to [Washington] School, located at […]and to […] Catholic Regional School, located at […].

Since March 2012 we have: (at Washington School)

- Created a list of educational resources for the community
- Held a happy hour school supply drive at […]
- Participated in the New Principal Selection Committee
- Held a happy hour for Washington teachers and community members to mingle at [neighborhood bar]
- In collaboration with several parents from the school, we facilitated the creation of a School Advisory Committee; we now serve on the committee.
- Held online and "gift registry" school supply drives
- Conducted an art supply donation day
- Applied for and received a grant to work with an internationally recognized design firm, to create a master plan for Washington's school yard during the fall of 2014
- Held a fundraising event at [local restaurant] to raise the administrative fee for the grant design

In the two years that they had been officially a committee, the group had managed to do various supply drives and provide donations to the school, as well as apply for and receive a grant to fund the plans for a re-design of the schoolyard—a large achievement in and of itself. Importantly, the group was also able to leverage a say in important decisions that affected the school: a voice in the principal selection committee, and a voice in the newly formed School Advisory Council. Four out of the six women who were responsible for these, the women who were the "original" members of the group, were all 'pre-parents'.

In the same handout quoted above, a subsequent section outlined the "current work" of the committee, and listed five major projects at Washington: a teacher/staff appreciation breakfast, developing a "Marketing/PR/Social Media strategy for Committee", discussing fundraising and a supply drive, the library project, and the schoolyard project.

What was evident at that meeting, and the many that followed throughout the year, was the impressive knowledge in the room in terms of marketing strategies, fundraising, and grant-writing. Many of the women (since the committee was made up mostly by women) had professional experience in precisely these areas and lent their expertise to advancing the mission of the group. The conversation in the October and November meetings, which focused on the marketing strategy, made it clear that in order to attract more grants and more funders, the group needed to look more professional, it needed to stand out, it needed a logo, and a larger 'social media' presence. The woman in charge of the Marketing/PR/Social Media presented the following points:

Open houses- when is it? How is the word getting out? What is NCA's role, how can/should we help?
Think about creative ways to engage young parents.
How are we conveying the story? How much of it do we want to go out?

- STEM School
- Dual Immersion
- Give suggestions to update school website as a vehicle for telling its story.

Partnerships—what can we get going with local businesses (this may belong in the Education committee line?)

The first three points, about hosting Open Houses and "getting the word out," about "creative ways to engage young parents," and about conveying a "story" about the school all have to do with attracting middle-class parents into this particular public school. In other words, the assumption was that there were young parents that needed to be "engaged" with a particular "story" about this school in order to be convinced that this may be a good choice for their family. Several other projects were undertaken during those years: Open houses and a happy hour for prospective parents were organized (mostly geared towards the TWI program), a "Little Friends" group of 'pre-parents' and their young children/toddlers, and a supply drive and paper 'happy hour'. Many of these initiatives centered on "changing the narrative" about Philadelphia public schools, which already had a "bad rep". Ultimately, the audience for these initiatives were middle-class parents who had educational options, those who could actually make a choice between a public, a charter, or the ability to re-locate to a different district.

The members of the NCA Education Committee were aware of the inequalities surrounding gentrification and school improvement and attempted to avoid this pitfall by reaching out trying to involve a more diverse group of parents in their initiatives. Yet, this did not always succeed. For example, even when flyers for events were translated, such as the "Paper happy hour" event, whose purpose was to collect rims of paper to donate to the school, or the Happy Hour for prospective parents, these events catered to the interests and anxieties of middle-class parents considering public schools in Philadelphia. In other words, immigrant parents, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, may not have the time or resources to attend them. More importantly, spending time in a local, predominantly white and English speaking establishment might not fall under the kinds of activities immigrant families would find welcoming.

In one of the meetings where the Open House monthly initiative was being discussed, several interesting points came up. First, the fact that many other schools, both a popular neighborhood school as well as a charter, had open houses very frequently, was a sign that Washington should have them as well—and Principal Davis, present at the meeting, reiterated energetically that they would do whatever it takes to be competitive. During the discussion, Alice mentioned her excitement for being a tour guide, and then said that "people have this view that Philly Public Schools are crappy," followed by "not enough people in the city have been in the schools". She then added that public schools are not that scary, and it's not like

kids are fighting all the time. Jokingly, a pre-parent and former health teacher in the school said, "just don't go to the 3rd floor". The 3rd floor of the school was the middle school, where frequent fights would erupt between the middle school students. After joking and chatting a bit more seriously about the initiatives in the school, and Principal Davis chiming in about the character education program he was very proud of, Alice added that the stance of the group, as "community members choosing to get involved," is that the school is doing great things, and that "people shouldn't judge without taking a look first" (FN2014.10.15). Many shared this view—but also acknowledged that as a Philadelphia public school, it still had its challenges.

As the discussion of the Open House continued, one of the women in the group mentioned that there were about 10 homes being sold within the school zone each month, and that targeting the new residents would be a good idea to spread the word about the school. Many seemed enthusiastic about this idea. Eventually, the idea of a Realtor Tour began to take shape—this would become an initiative of multiple schools and was modeled after successful tours and walk-thrus that had been arranged by other Friends groups in a different section of the city. The idea behind this was simple: if realtors themselves tour the schools, and see all the great things happening, then they will be more likely to talk about the school to prospective buyers. Both of these activities, the Realtor Tour and Open Houses, speak directly to the interdependent relationship between education and gentrification in this city.

The TWI program puts Washington on the "map"

You know, it's like a double-edged sword. The immersion program has allowed the Friends of Washington group to attract people and attract families. It's allowed Washington to hit the ground running in a much more quick way than many other neighborhood schools…Without that program… Washington wouldn't be on the map, right?

In this excerpt, Alice, the Education Committee chair, points towards the impact of the TWI on the school and on the newly-named Friends of Washington group (formerly the Education Committee of the NCA), and describes it as "putting Washington on the map," for those who had the privilege of choice, that is. It was a symbiotic relationship: the TWI program had attracted families in part because the Education Committee spread the word about it throughout the right channels. Like Principal Davis' predicted, it quickly sparked interest among other professional parents. This was attested by the well-attended open houses that Mary, a TWI parent very active in the school and the Education Committee, organized starting in the fall. These open houses were advertised on several popular parent listservs. In my interview with Rebecca, she remarks how a woman had heard about the school:

Rebecca: There's a reporter, on, like, one of my listservs, Mom Listservs for [my daughter's] age, and she e-mailed me the other day, and, like, oh,

I'm trying to remem—"re-locating from the [this] area to [another area of the city] and I want to know more about this two-way immersion program because I think I'm going to try to find a rental in that area so my kid can go there."

For Rebecca, this conversation meant that word had been spreading about the program, and that at least for this woman she refers to (the reporter), the school was a draw into that area of the city, as opposed to the "big three" center city schools that were already popular among middle and upper middle-class white parents in the city (Cucchiara 2013). Not only that, Rebecca was very frank about how the TWI program was the *only* reason why some middle-class parents would even consider Washington, including herself:

Rebecca:…the only way that I could get even my husband or, you know, even *myself* to feel comfortable going to Washington was this program.

S: Really?

Rebecca: Yeah, and I know that (1.0) that's the same reason why, like, there are other people going there, is it's the program, it's not the scho:ol and (1.0) **there are people who literally have not been to the suburbs because of this program**. Like it's, this program, […] **I bet it's going, it's going to be driving up the property values.**

For Rebecca, as she makes clear, it was only because of the bilingual program that she would consider Washington an option. Given Rebecca's admission above, it seems that Alice was correct in her assertion that middle-class families would probably only consider Washington if they got a spot in the bilingual immersion program.

Another important idea Rebecca expresses at the end of the excerpt above is the belief that a "good" school, one that becomes an "option" for middle-class and upper middle-class professional parents, will drive up property values. Indeed, in the city of Philadelphia, the perception of school quality has been a major factor in increasing property values, as the case of Penn Alexander school showed (Steif 2013; 2014), and this was precisely part of the motivation for organizing a Realtor Tour. This connection between a good school and a good neighborhood is made explicit in multiple places. In the article which covered the Realtor Tour event, the reporter stated that, "*For homebuyers (and the realtors selling to them), an improving school is a win–win: Even if they don't send their children there, good schools help raise property values and make neighborhoods more livable*".

The logic behind some of the activities of the Education Committee and the "Friends of" groups was about getting more middle-class parents into public schools as a strategy for improvement. In an op-ed article written by Jeff Hornstein, a major public figure in the FONE organization, Hornstein cites research that shows how socioeconomically integrated schools are better for all children (Hornstein 2015), and this is something I heard at least one other leader within the "Friends of" movement state on multiple occasions. And yet, just like there is a tension between the 'improvements' that gentrification brings, so

too there was a tension in attracting more middle-class families as a strategy for improvement to public schools—whether indirectly through 'changing the narrative' or directly through events catered to this audience. Principal Davis touches upon this tension when I ask him about his relationship to the NCA:

> Mr. D: It's great. I mean, I find it, I like that it's very informal, and, I mean, Alice was the first person that contacted me after I got the job, literally, so there's trust there, there's respect, there's a unified vision that, you know, **we want to be the best, and we want to be a great school for the community. You know, we want people's hous—you know, I guess their housing prices to go up. I mean, after all, isn't that what people want?**

> S: Yeah.

> Mr. D: Although that has implications that trouble me, you know, in terms of our immigrant population, but, you know, they've been wonderful.

> S: Yeah, like the potential for prices to go too much or too high.

> Mr. D: Yeah, and then, it prices out our immigrant families, you know, so it's, it's tough, and I do know colleagues that like it that way, that their neighborhoods become more and more gentrified and then they have a certain kind of kid, and I'm not thinking that way, not at all. I mean, I think, I think what I love about the area is you have all of that, you know, you have all the diversity and I think that's, that's the best, the best.

Principal Davis describes his relationship to Alice and the NCA as great because they share the same vision for a "great school for the community", and automatically, he makes the connection between a good school and rising property values. Yet, almost in the same line, Principal Davis hedges when he says, "we want people's hous- you know, I guess their housing prices to go up" and immediately follows that with how that is concerning because of his immigrant families, and how they might get priced out. And although some principals might find a "certain kind of kid" more desirable, Principal Davis states that he loves the diversity of the area and his school.

Both Alice and Principal Davis bring up this tension that was widely felt and talked about–the relationship between equity, diversity, and gentrification, which often, seemed like an inverse one: the more a neighborhood is gentrified, the less diverse it becomes, the more questions around equity that arise. When Alice described the immersion program as getting Washington on the "map", she added that it was a "double-edged sword," meaning that the immersion program was getting on the "map" for those people who already had the privilege of choice, and two, that it might be to the detriment of others. Many people expressed to me, and at several meetings it was acknowledged, that not everyone had the privilege of choice, and because of that, their group efforts were about improving the school for *all* children—and not just those in the TWI program. Yet there was still the underlying logic that if more middle-class (mostly white) parents invested in the school (through the TWI program), they would have the ability to

bring in more resources to the school, either directly through personal resources or through grant-writing and advocacy in the district. Thus, the efforts at gaining recognition were still aimed at a mostly white, middle-class public—who would only be enrolling at Washington if they were able to secure a spot in the TWI program.

The role of Latinx parents

From the beginning, both Rebecca and Principal Davis sought to include Latino parents in the early efforts of advocating for and creating a TWI bilingual program. Rebecca reached out to Lizeth, a Spanish-speaking Mexican woman and mother of a current Washington student with whom she maintained a friendly relationship. Along with Lizeth, María, a Mexican woman and current parent of a Washington student, also became involved in the planning committee for the TWI. Both women became active in supporting the bilingual TWI program and were enthusiastic about it. Moreover, both women believed in the importance of maintaining their children's first language, and in supporting their children's school, and were grateful to Principal Davis for taking their voices into consideration in contrast to previous administrators who seemed to simply brush them off (INT Lizeth; INT María).

Even though the "Latina moms" (as several of my interviewees referred to them) were included throughout the process of planning the TWI, it was the white middle-class parents who were the "agents of change" —in other words, they were the ones who suggested the program, the ones making it happen, and ultimately, the ones who would be attracted to the school because of it. An event illustrative of the discrepancy and disconnect between the efforts of the white parents on the one hand, and the experiences of the Latino parents on the other, was collecting and documenting support for the bilingual program. All community members involved in the TWI planning committee were tasked with collecting letters of support for the program from neighbors and residents of the area. Rebecca was able to get some of her friends and neighbors to write letters, even when many of them decided not to attend Washington and move to the suburbs (INT Rebecca). Lizeth and María, on their part, decided to collect signatures from the Spanish-speaking parents to show support from the 'Mexican community' for this bilingual program. When I interviewed Lizeth and María, both told me about their efforts at collecting signatures from parents at the school, and the resistance they encountered in doing so. In the following excerpt, Lizeth tells me how not all parents she approached were necessarily enthusiastic:

> Lizeth: …recuerdo que el principal me comentó sobre que querían que aquí en la escuela tuvieran el programa bilingüe. Entonces a mí me emocionó mucho…Entonces… pero dijo que iba a necesitar la ayuda de nosotros para que firmáramos para que el programa fuera aprobado. Entonces pues si, como a mí no me gusta… Yo anduve pues sí, viendo a padres, ¿verdad? Para que… o sea am… explicarles de lo que iba a tratar para que ellos nos apoyaran con su firma y si em… si recaudamos varias firmas pero pues, como siempre, **hubo**

padres que nos contestaron mal, que porque… a pesar que eran hispanos nos dijeron que….que sus hijos no iban a necesitar el español. Que porque, cuando ellos regresaran a su país iban a poder estudiar como maestros de inglés, pero yo como les dije, yo les decía "¿cómo ellos van a ser maestros si no van a poder traducir al español?"… Entonces pues así surgió… bueno así me involucre un poco más sobre el programa bilingüe.

[L: I remember that the principal told me that they wanted to start a bilingual program here in the school. So, that made me very excited, so…but he said he would need our help to sign so that the program would be approved. So then, well, yes, I don't really like to…well yes I went to see parents, right? So that… um like…to explain what the program was going to be about so that they could support us with their signature, and yes, um, we did get some signatures, but as always, **there were parents that answered us negatively, because, even though they were Hispanic they told us that, that their children wouldn't need Spanish. That because, when they would return to their country they would be able to study to become English teachers, but I said, I would tell them, "how are they going to be teachers if they won't be able to translate to Spanish?"** So that's how it got started…well that's how I became more involved in the bilingual program.

Lizeth describes how they had parents who were not necessarily supportive of the idea, and that they weren't interested because they felt they already knew Spanish, that they spoke Spanish with their children at home, so they didn't need Spanish at school as well. In the end, María ended up getting signatures from her friends and family, who weren't necessarily parents at the school. Elsewhere (Chaparro 2020b) I analyze in more depth how Latino parents encountered this discourse of English-only, which made many of them unsure of the benefits of a bilingual program. This was something which Principal Davis and the white parents involved in planning for the TWI were oblivious to; in fact, at one meeting one parent commented on the efficiency of collecting signatures as opposed to letters and lauded María and Lizeth's work. Moreover, the major stakeholders in this process seemed to know little about the realities of Latinx immigrant parents' experiences (Chaparro 2020b).

While there were several Latinx individuals involved in the planning meetings (myself included), there were few, if any, Washington parents. By the time I became involved, Lizeth and María were no longer attending meetings. One non-profit who ran an after-school program for Latino children, *Enlaces*, was often seen as an advocate and representative of the "Latino community," but as an after-school program, they weren't really involved in what happened during the school-day. Latino parents had very few advocates and bilingual supports within the school itself at the start of the TWI: the Kindergarten teacher who became the only Spanish–English bilingual Latina at the time; and the Spanish–English Bilingual Counseling Assistant, who was at the school three days a week. In fact, Ms. Olea, the Kindergarten teacher, took it upon herself to support her non-English speaking Latinx parents: she would help parents by translating forms, by navigating bureaucratic and institutional processes, by communicating often, and by organizing family potlucks at least twice a year (Chaparro 2020a).

Understanding the process of immigration from a sociopolitical and humanizing perspective allows us to make sense of the smaller role Latino parents played in the creation of the TWI. From a sociopolitical and economic perspective, immigration from Mexico and Central America and the Caribbean to the US has a long history, and a critical factor of this south-north flow is that "it unfolds in the context of dependency, domination, disparity, and attraction exercised by one country in particular: the United States" (Durand and Massey 2010, p. 32). This process is one that is already unequal; Latino immigrant parents already have been part of the dynamics produced by a global neoliberalized economy that has adversely impacted Latin American economies (Suárez-Orozco 2001). Not only that, Latin America has been subject to political and economic interventionism from the U.S., which has directly impacted migration flows (Durand and Massey 2010; Bedolla 2009). Stark inequality characterizes Mexico and much of Central and Latin America; and the constant need for low-wage labor in the U.S. means there is always a demand for workers. Moreover, Mexican and Central American immigrants to the US, in particular, tend to have lower levels of formal education (Durand and Massey 2010). As such, the formal educational levels of the Spanish-speaking Latinx parents, the majority of whom were recent immigrants, were in stark contrast to the white college-educated parents.

Yet, regardless of educational level, migration is one of the most significant, life-altering experiences families can live through, that impacts every facet of life. From a humanizing perspective, understanding this is key to understanding the positionality of Latinx immigrant parents, especially mothers, who had to navigate the experience of motherhood through foreign institutions and through a foreign tongue. Elsewhere I examine Latina mothers' experiences of discrimination, of encountering English-only discourses, of the sadness of their children's language loss and their resolve to regain it through the bilingual program (Chaparro 2020b). Suffice it to say here that, given that Latinx parents were busy surviving in their new country, both economically and psychologically, where not only the language but the institutions and how to do school are different, their realities were a stark contrast to the agentive ways in which English speaking professional families sought to influence school policy during this time. While many middle-class white parents sought to be inclusive and were equity-minded, as I show below, overall there was a stark disconnect to Latinx families and their realties.

Tensions: equity, gentrification & avoiding past mistakes

Because of examples of what not to do, from schools such as Penn Alexander or the "big three" Center City schools (Cucchiara 2013), where working class families and families of color were displaced from neighborhoods and slowly from schools, the individuals of the Education Committee were aware of the complicated entanglements between gentrification, school improvement, and displacement. Emphasizing equity for all children—not just for people's own children, was one of the "lessons learned". Like Alice expressed firmly at one of the committee meetings, their efforts were not "about making this school for white upper

middle-class kids and families" since the school serves a diverse group of children (FN2015.1.28). This was a shared sentiment. Indeed, a major draw for many of these parents to stay in the city and send their children to public school was the experience of 'diversity,' and, for some individuals in the NCA and some parents and "pre-parents," there was that creeping fear that if they did a bit *too* well—then, like it had happened at other schools, little by little the school would become a white middle-class school. Thus, many often emphasized that the goal was to diversify schools, not gentrify them.

However, how to do this wasn't always clear. For example, Mary, one of the white middle-class parents from the first cohort of students, stated that she didn't think Washington would experience the same dynamics of it slowly becoming a white middle-class school, first, because of the structure of the TWI program, where at least half the students needed to be Spanish speakers, and second, because the "neighborhood I think will not allow that to happen" (INT2 2015.06.26). By "that", Mary is presumably referring to displacement, yet it's unclear how the "neighborhood" would prevent that kind of change.

In fact, Mary's advocacy efforts for the TWI program and public schools in general highlight the tensions inherent in the theory of change under which the "Friends of" groups operated, including the Education Committee. In the first year of the program's existence, Mary became a critical advocate and important "spokesperson" not only for the TWI program, but for public schools in a year of contentious hearings over school funding. Mary testified at school hearings against approving charter schools, testified at City Hall to advocate for increased city funding for schools, advocated for a soda tax to be passed in the city in order to fund pre-Kindergarten program, and many more. In our interview, she talks about being able to help the school more strategically, yet how in part it is due to her being a white college-educated mother that she may have been able to be so effective:

> …so I spend a lot of time on the, on the phone, and you know, I use my blog to, to talk about Washington and to talk about public schools […] and honestly the program and the school I think it sells itself, but you do NEED-and this is, on so many levels, is kinda frustrating, you do need some-**in order to bring more resources and more people back into our public schools you need someone who looks like me, to to to start, and then you get your critical mass** (INT2)

As she's reflecting on the role she has played, Mary uncomfortably shares her perception that it is necessary to have a white, middle-class person advocating for the school in order to get that "critical mass" of other white middle-class parents and supporters who might have a greater impact in other school and city-wide advocacy efforts. She realizes the class and race connotations of privilege, and not only laments this fact, but actively tries to change it. Immediately after the former statement, she adds:

> unfortunat-I really I have tried not to-tried for this not to-**I've wanted for that not to be totally true,** but it's, you know, and the reason I want it so badly for

Laura and Salvador and you guys to be at that council hearing was because I don't want it to be that way always. You know? So, I mean it's probably generations before that's you know, totally changed but…(INT 2)

Mary is referring to the occasion where two Mexican parents, Laura and Salvador, were able to testify along with her at City Hall advocating for a greater contribution from the city to the public-school budget, a meeting for which I acted as a translator. Thus, Mary often tried reaching out to Latino parents to share some of the advocacy efforts and represent the school. To do this, she would call on me and Ms. Olea to invite Latino parents to also share their voice whenever she was attending an event representing Washington as a parent.

Mary often thought about the implications for equity and diversity that this line of reasoning would have on the school. She acknowledged her race and class privilege, and at the same time used it strategically to advocate for the school and other public education causes. This did not mean, however, that she was not uncomfortable with the situation. Mary was aware of the problematic logic of the efforts that many were so passionately involved in – and that in a very real sense she embodied. She acknowledged that both the efforts of her group, and her own efforts at "changing the narrative," were geared towards a specific segment of the population, one that had class and race privilege.

The TWI program and creating "good" schools in Philadelphia

While there is no doubt that the improvement efforts that Principal Davis spearheaded were beneficial in improving the school as a whole, the idea that a school was "good," and for whom, is one that was produced by a combination of factors. In the city of Philadelphia, several public schools became "high quality" public schools as attested by rising property values, waiting lists, and day-long lines of anxious parents on registration day. The schools that became "good options" (for professional parents) also had a rising population of white middle- and upper middle-class students, and a decreasing enrollment of students of color and students on the free and reduced price lunch program. This change is directly tied to the change in the school's surrounding neighborhood. That is, schools that were becoming options for middle-class parents were located in neighborhoods that were being gentrified enough so that a critical mass of other (mostly white) middle-class parents took an interest in the school. This line of reasoning was what inspired many of the activities of the NCA's Education Committee and other Friends groups. The TWI bilingual program played a critical role for the Education Committee and for putting Washington "on the map". The more white and/or middle-class parents that could become involved and advocate for the school, the more resources they could garner.

These dynamics are consistent with the research that has documented the effects of gentrification in diverse public schools. In particular, what is most evident is the idea of middle-class white parents exerting control over decisions at the school and even district level (Billingham and Kimelberg 2013; Cucchiara 2013; Roberts and Lakes 2014). The NCA Education Committee not only had a voice in the Principal

selection committee, it pushed for and publicized the TWI bilingual program, ultimately attracting more white middle-class parents to the school. Parents, through the NCA Education Committee, which eventually officially became the Friends of Washington group, became involved in strategic improvements for the school, similar to what others have found (Billingham and Kimelberg 2013). Similar to other research in TWI settings, white parents seemed to have a greater voice in policy-making (Cervantes-Soon 2014; Dorner 2011; Muro 2016; Shannon 2011). And in this case, white parents were the driving force in the language policy making of the school.

At that time that this study took place, the difference in educational and financial resources from middle-class families, in their majority white, was a stark contrast to the educational background and experiences of the Latinx immigrant families (Chaparro 2020a, 2020b). This particular program had little structural support for Latinx families, with only a part-time Spanish–English bilingual Counseling Assistant. While Principal Davis was perceived as accessible and willing to listen to parents' concerns (by both Latinx and white parents), his inability to communicate directly with Spanish-speakers created a disconnect from Latinx families, and moreover, the TWI program was only one part of the school-thus his attention was divided among multiple initiatives and various immigrant groups. While making this program happen in the middle of a very economically precarious time in the district was a great feat in and of itself, Principal Davis' goal in creating the TWI bilingual program wasn't necessarily to center Latinx families, their histories and their experiences -in fact, it was simply a matter of numbers that the program was a Spanish–English TWI program, as Latinx Spanish-speaking families were the most numerous linguistic minority in the school. Creating the TWI was a strategic move that would benefit both Latinx Spanish-speaking families and English-speaking families interested in bilingualism, and would ensure the school's survival by attracting more students, especially students whose parents could advocate for the school and organize to bring in more resources.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper I've provided an analysis of the dynamics and greater processes that provided the fertile grounds for one TWI program to arise and grow successfully in such a short period of time. First, an increasingly worrisome fiscal crisis in the school district spurred a neoliberal reform strategy that pushed a discourse of choice and a competitive environment where schools had to keep enrollment up or face the possibility of closure. At the same time the growing demand for better educational options from young professional parents—in their majority white and college-educated—spurred groups of people to come together to join "Friends of" groups. It was one of these groups that suggested the idea of the TWI, helped it become a reality, and promoted it through its social networks. The TWI program became a way for Principal Davis to attract more families and thus keep enrollment not only steady but increasing. Moreover, this new demographic of parents meant the ability to obtain greater resources and advocacy for the school. The district paid

attention when white college-educated parents put pressure and used their networks and influences to get things done.

At the same time, both Principal Davis and others interested in the program wanted to be inclusive and make sure the "Mexican community" had a voice. *Enlaces* was usually seen as a representative of Mexican families, and two Mexican moms were involved from the start, Lizeth and María. Yet, inclusion was not always successful, and Latinx families didn't always have an advocate in the school nor teachers that were bilingual or supportive. In fact, Ms. Olea often felt like she was the only voice for Latino parents, given that the school did not have a community liaison that could effectively connect the school to the Latinx families and communities they served.

This analysis highlights how TWI programs can come about as products of neoliberalism, which impacts both schools and the need to compete in order to survive, as well as desires for bilingualism in the face of a globalized market. These processes, along with that of south-north migration that has existed for the past decade, make bilingual programs feasible, and I argue are responsible for the growth in TWI programs in the U.S (and bilingual programs globally). The data I have illustrated here show how this came about for one specific program.

Given this growth, it is imperative to understand that the processes that create the ideal conditions for TWI programs to flourish—that is, immigration, neoliberalism, and gentrification—have also and already created unequal positions for Latinx families. Part of this understanding involves critically analyzing the conditions and discourses under which bottom-up language policy-making activities are undertaken, especially when, as illustrated in this case, competitiveness overshadows the centering of Latinx experiences. While the benefit of a bilingual education to Spanish-speaking Latinx families is undeniable, as a bilingual education scholar who is interested in social justice and equity, it is paramount to advocate for a materialist, anti-racist approach to language policy making. As such, and as others have noted, bilingual programs must work to center Latinx students and to provide a culturally sustaining bilingual education.

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