UCLA
UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Place-Making at a Los Angeles High School: How Latina Student Leaders Make and Shape Their School

Permalink

Author

Diera, Claudia

Publication Date

2020

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Place-Making at a Los Angeles High School:

How Latina Student Leaders Make and Shape Their School

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

Claudia Diera

2020

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Place-Making at a Los Angeles High School:

How Latina Student Leaders Make and Shape Their School

by

Claudia Diera

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor John S. Rogers, Chair

In efforts to transform schools, federal- and state-driven agendas often disregard students as viable producers of meaningful educational space. Some scholars have centered the experiences, actions, and voices of students in transforming their unequal education, establishing that youth play an important role in the educational decisions that shape their lives. Other scholars have focused their research on the organized ways in which students create direct impact on educational and school change, such as through civic engagement, participatory action research programs, and organizing. Similar to the aims studied by these scholars, youths' everyday interaction with space and place may also reflect their agentive capabilities.

This study is about how four Latina student leaders at one small school in Los Angeles created and maintained spaces of social membership, meaning, and belonging. Through an ethnographic approach, I set out to answer the following research questions: How do Latina student leaders at one urban high school in Los Angeles create *place*? In what ways is their

place-making informed by their culture, identity, community context, or history? To what extent does their place-making shape school space?

Major findings from my work indicate that students' community context plays a role in the way they understand their actions within their meaningful school spaces. Democratic practices are created and enacted as students claim school spaces, though these spaces are more about membership, meaning, and belonging than political means and ends. Nevertheless, through the spaces they are involved in at school, Latina student leaders learn about themselves, what they can do as a collective, how to be role models, and how to gain affirmations from their interactions with other Latinas.

My research offers insights into the ways students shape school spaces and places in order to represent themselves and their communities. At both theoretical and practical levels, I provide recommendations that call on educational scholars, leaders, and educators to be attentive to issues of space and place as ways to build upon notions of democratic practices and visions occurring within schools.

The dissertation of Claudia Diera is approved.

Genevieve Gonzalez Carpio

David Gumaro Garcia

Lorena I. Guillen

Thomas Philip

John S. Rogers, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

DEDICATION

To all my students who taught me about working collectively, trusting one another, and making

and doing things to benefit the school. Thank you for showing me that schools can also be places

for belonging, hope, and joy if we "make" them that way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No one writes a dissertation alone, and I have many people to sincerely thank. The completion of this dissertation is in large part thanks to the special people in my life who both challenged and supported me along the way.

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my advisor and committee chair, Professor John S. Rogers, without whose guidance and persistent help these past six years this dissertation would not have been possible. Thank you for introducing me to the world of educational research and engaging me to explore its depths and possibilities alongside you. I admire your commitment to scholarship, and I could not have asked for a better advisor.

My appreciation also extends to my dissertation committee. David G. Garcia: thank you for providing me with extensive personal and professional guidance throughout this process. Your hard questions always pushed me to think deeply, and I will always be grateful for your mentorship. Genevieve Carpio: thank you for your enthusiasm for interdisciplinary scholarship. Your Racial Geographies Class and our discussions about my interests pushed me to think about education in new ways I never could have imagined. Thomas Philip: thank you for always supporting and encouraging my commitment to understanding education from the perspective of young people. Your insights always pushed me to remember the realities of everyday life at school, while also taught me to situate those experiences within bodies of scholarly literature to learn to speak to different audiences. Kathryn Anderson-Levitt: thank you for teaching me about having questions and answering them with ethnographic methods. I try to model my own research with your attention to care and detail. Lorena Guillen: thank you for your insightful comments and questions.

To Cindy, Bryant, Mariana, Eddie, Sid, Johnny, Marisol, Katherine, and Alejandra: thank you for making RAC a safe space where I could talk through and share incomplete thoughts and writings without judgment and for providing the critical feedback that helped get this project off the ground and to its end.

To Josephine, Bianca, Juliet, and Alan: thank you for being my home at UCLA. I could not have done this without you all. I am honored to not only call you my colleagues but also my friends.

To Rodriguez, Dong, Martinez, Alamo, Tiscareno, Norma, Puth, Quintanilla, Mr. C, Gosian, Chagoyan, Saucedo, and Yeung: thank you for always inspiring me to be the best teacher I could be and for sharing a passion for the students and schools we've worked in together.

To Dina, Nadia, Helen, Evette, Monica, Jeff, Edgar, Yaneli, Don, Danielle, Josy, Sofy, Maribel, Sonia, Niki, and Tatiana: you all know that my dissertation journey definitely had its ups and downs, but I am grateful for every one of you who formed the team I knew was always rooting for me. Thank you for the texts of motivation, Disney therapy, the "tia" hang outs, and the laughs that got me through this.

To my mom and Maribel: gracias por sus oraciones y sacrificios para educarme y prepararme para mi futuro. To my siblings, Saul, Mary, and Huero: thank you for being my unconditional supporters since elementary school. You have been and still are the first people there for me to celebrate any accomplishments, both big and small. To Tia Maria, Tio Jaime, Tia Esther, Lisa, Junior, Victoria, Julissa, Timothy, Hugo, Lyna, and the rest of my family: I thank you for being my village.

Last but not least, I want to thank my loved ones who will never get to celebrate this milestone with me but that are, and will continue to be, with me in spirit: my Lalo, Grandma, Uncle Rick, and Chapo.

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION
University of California, Irvine
2008   M.A. in Teaching
                   Single Subject Social Science Teaching Credential

University of California, Berkeley
2007   B.A. in Ethnic Studies, Honors
                   Minor in Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education & Access
2014 - 2020   Graduate Student Researcher

UCLA Cesar E. Chavez Department of Chicana & Chicano Studies
2015 - 2020   Teaching Assistant/Associate/Fellow

Los Angeles Unified School District
2008 - 2014   Social Studies Teacher

PUBLICATIONS
Rogers, J., Ishimoto, M., Kwako, A., Berryman, A., & **Diera, C.** (2019). *School and society in the age of Trump*. UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education & Access.

Kawasaki, J., Anderson-Levitt, K. A., Nenadal, L., Tanio, N., Pham, J., **Diera, C**., & Francois, A. F. (2018). From theory to practice: How pre-service teachers learn to become social justice educators. In J. Kay & R. Luckin (Eds.), *Rethinking learning in the Digital Age: Making the learning sciences count, 13th International Conference of the Learning Sciences, June 23rd – 27th, 2018,* (Vol. 3, pp. 713-720). ISLS.

Rogers, J., Franke, M. Yun, J. E., Ishimoto, M., **Diera, C**., Geller, R., Berryman, A., Brenes, & T. (2017). *Teaching and learning in the age of Trump: Increasing stress and hostility in America's high schools*. UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education & Access.

Diera, C. (2016). Democratic possibilities for student voice within schools undergoing reform: A student counterpublic case study. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 14(2), 217-235.

Diera, C. (2016). "It isn't the child who is culturally disadvantaged, it is the teacher": In-service for teachers of Mexican-American students during the 1970s. *Xchange: Publications and Resources for Public Schools Professionals*, https://ucla.app.box.com/v/Mexican-American-Students-1970

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS & AWARDS
2019   Alternate, Honorable Mention, Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship
2019   James and Sylvia Thayer Short-Term Research Fellowship
2017   Institute of American Cultures, Chicano Studies Research Center Research Grants
2016   UCLA Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship
2015   UCLA Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS
Diera, C. (April, 2019). *How Latinx youth use cultural expression to make and shape their school.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Toronto, Canada.

Diera, C. (November, 2018). *LAUSD and Mexican-American community engagement post-student walkouts, 1968-1978.* Paper presented at the History of Education Society Annual Meeting, Albuquerque, NM.

Diera, C. (April, 2017). *Digital space as discursive space: Students' articulations of their educational wants and needs.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, San Antonio, TX.

Anderson-Levitt, K., **Diera, C.**, Nenadal, L., Pham, J., & Tanio, N. (April, 2017). *From theory to practice: How apprentice teachers learn to become social justice educators.* Roundtable presentation at the American Educational Research Association Conference, San Antonio, TX.

Diera, C. (November, 2016). *Democratic possibilities for student voice within schools undergoing reform: A student counterpublic case study.* Poster presented at the American Anthropological Association Conference, Minnesota, MI.

Diera, C., Nenadal, L., Pham, J., & Tanio, N. (May, 2016). *The multiple meanings of social justice in an urban residency teacher education program.* Roundtable presentation at the UCLA Research & Inquiry Conference, Los Angeles, CA.

Diera, C., (April, 2016). *"It isn't the child who is culturally disadvantaged, it is the teacher": LAUSD and its Mexican-American Students, 1968-1978.* Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Washington D.C.

Diera, C., (April, 2016). *Democratic possibilities for student voice within schools undergoing reform: A student counterpublic case study.* Roundtable presentation at the American Educational Research Association Conference, Washington D.C.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I like organizing events so [Leadership class] was an opportunity to execute my own ideas and give more to the School.

-Azul[1] (interview)

I feel like students who are involved in Pride School extracurriculars make Pride School what it is. So, like, without people in the Music Department, we wouldn't have a music department in itself because we're the [small] school that has the Band. For example, if Olivia and her bandmates weren't at Band, then we wouldn't have the Pride School Band. Or Leadership – if the students weren't as involved and outgoing as we have in Leadership, we wouldn't have a lot of the events that makes Pride School us. So, within the three small schools, we're the only school that has pep rallies.

-Maribel (during focus group interview with Olivia)

I think these clubs are important for the School itself… I don't think the School would be a school without these organizations. If you walk here during the summer, or Saturdays, and you see the empty hallways and the empty classrooms, you realize it's just a building. It's the people that make it a school.

-Emily (interview)

These quotes from Emily, Maribel, Olivia, and Azul reveal students' perspectives about how they make sense of their world, attach meanings to their context, and give the tangible world significance. Throughout this dissertation I emphasize, as revealed through these quotes, that the importance of individuals and their perceptions of space beyond the physical is about attachments, social relations, and meanings that arise from engaging with that space. Azul, for example, speaks about her inherent desire to contribute to the good of her school, Pride School. As Associated Student Body (ASB) President, and through her involvement in the School's Leadership class, she interacts in particular school spaces that are about organizing and executing

---

[1] To respect the anonymity of research participants, all names are pseudonyms.

ideas in order to contribute to School. In these spaces, she finds meaning and a way to form belonging to her school.

Similarly, Maribel, who served as ASB Vice President and Key Club President during the time of this study, speaks about working within membership and around a shared meaning with peers. This was discussed by her and Olivia, a member of the School's Marching Band, in terms of how they "make Pride School what it is." As an example, she describes that Leadership students and members of the Band hold pep rallies throughout the school year to cultivate and increase school spirit. At these pep rallies, Leadership students lead the spirit-focused activities while the Band plays songs for student entertainment.

Emily also points to notions of school space as socially-embodied and produced by students. From her perspective, without the insertion of social actors (the students), her school is just a physical space – empty classrooms and buildings. Similar to that which Maribel expresses, what gives a school its character is the students who, like Emily, are involved in school spaces such as clubs and organization like Leadership and Band. All students speak of the social production of school space – a concept of the School that moves beyond looking at it as simply a building that students inhabit for a few hours a day.

In this dissertation, I seek to unpack how these student leaders created spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging at their school, and to explore how through their everyday interactions with school space, they contributed to "make Pride School what it is." Using spatial concepts and theories, and notions of gender and democracy, I explore the school experiences of four Latina-identifying students, Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel. My study reveals that: 1) community context informs how they understood their actions within school spaces; 2) everyday

interactions in school spaces illuminate the democratic visions and practices of place-making; and, 3) through these spaces, they learn about themselves, what they can do as a collective, how to be role models, and how to gain affirmations from their interactions with other Latinas. Taken together, these three findings provide an understanding about how these Latinas contributed to the production of school space at one small high school in Southeast Los Angeles.

Statement of the Problem

In efforts to transform schools, students – especially those who attend schools considered as "failing" and whose culture is a marker of difference – are often disregarded as producers of meaningful educational spaces. Under those neoliberal forces (Harvey, 2005) changing the landscape of schooling, youth are constructed as consumers of an education and treated as objects of federal- and state-driven agendas for education reform. While such reforms implement presumptive school change (Hess, 2008; Hursh, 2005; Lipman, 2011; Maxcy, 2011; McGuinn, 2011; Wong & Shen, 2005), they often constrain youths' ways of being, emphasizing academic markers of success and achievement as predetermined in these laws and thus limiting students' ability to shape school space in ways that represent or are meaningful to them as members of a group or community.

To speak of the agentive capabilities of youth within these educational conditions, some scholars have centered the experiences, actions, and voices of students in transforming their unequal education, and have established that youth play an important role in the educational decisions that shape their lives (Cook-Sather, 2006; Kirshner, 2014). Students, though stakeholders in the processes and outcomes of change efforts, are often left out of this conversation, and students' roles within the school as agents for or against reform is not

considered (Rubin & Silva, 2003), so much so that "embracing and empowering the voices of students is not a well-practiced approach to understanding or implementing school reform" (p . 1). Many scholars, though, use the term *student voice*, for example, to assert that students carry with them unique perspectives on various aspects of education, those which adults need to listen to and act upon (Cook-Sather, 2006; Fielding 2004; Mitra et al., 2014; Robinson & Taylor, 2007). Student voice allows students to embrace the idea of speaking out for themselves to enact change although they are usually left out of the debates and policies created to address their needs (Giroux, 2003).

Other work has focused on organized ways to engage student voice through decision-making in order to have a direct impact on educational and school change (Mirra et al., 2015; Terriquez, 2015). These scholars speak specifically of *youth civic engagement*, which emphasizes youth engaging in collective action and inserting their voices in spaces of-decision making (Rogers et al., 2012). Youth participatory action research (YPAR) programs, for example, involve youth working collaboratively, identifying experiences, and conducting research in order to transform the conditions of their lives (Mirra et al., 2015; Quijada Cerecer et al., 2011). Other organized spaces for youth civic engagement involve youth organizing groups that provide low-income youth of color with opportunities to insert their voices into the public sphere. Here, young people are supported in understanding the structural forces shaping their lives and are provided civic experiences that involve them in collectively addressing and acting on issues that affect their communities (Conner, 2011; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Kirshner, 2007; Rogers et al. 2012; Terriquez, 2015). Other scholars talk about how youth civic engagement increasingly occurs online, is expressive, and finds its identity in collective spaces

(Bennett, 2008). Youth engagement with political issues is enabled by technology and social connectivity as they engage with blogs, post comments, create online groups, and circulate news stories in a context that is shaped by peers (Constanza-Chock, 2014; Kahne et al. 2014).

The ways in which agency is discussed in educational research leads to questions about *other* ways Latina/o/x[2] students – in particular – make and shape their educational environments because their actions may not be overt acts that, in the traditional sense, are conceptualized as "political, collective, conscious, and motivated by a sense that individual and social change is possible" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 320). Although these political ways of action are important, people of color who have been historically excluded from official spaces of decision-making[3] have used other physical and discursive spaces to expend their cultural currency in order to be present, be seen, take action, and be in concert with others (Johnson, 2013). For example, in *Race Rebels*, historian Robin D. G. Kelley (1996) introduces aspects of Black working class life and politics that have been heretofore disregarded. He focuses on the everyday lives of Black workers and their expressive culture to illuminate the "inventive and diverse struggles waged by Black workers during the twentieth century and to understand what they mean for rethinking the way we construct the political, social, and cultural history of the United States" (p. 4). Kelley reflects on the ways in which he and his coworkers, as Black working-class teens, "stylized" their work uniforms by wearing their hats and sleeves a certain way or "turned work into performance" by engaging with one another in "verbal circus and

---

[2] I use "Latina/o/x" to account for all gender pronouns and as a pan-ethnic term because not all my student participants were of Mexican descent and did not identify in politicized ways, thus I do not use terms such as "Mexican-American" or "Chicana/o/x."

[3] Some scholars have talked about this in terms of *counterpublics* wherein subordinated groups, due to their exclusion from the more dominant public, create their own spaces – counterpublics – for deliberation and collective action (see Beltran, 2009; Dawson, 2006; Diera, 2016; and, Fraser, 1990, 1997).

collective dialogues" (1996, p. 3). While working in fast food restaurants, he and his coworkers sought ways to find enjoyment in and to compensate for low-wage employment:

> The employees at the central Pasadena McDonald's were constantly inventing new ways to rebel, ways rooted in our peculiar circumstances… But what we fought for is a crucial part of the overall story; the terrain was often cultural, centering on identity, dignity, and fun. We tried to turn work into pleasure, to turn our bodies into instruments of pleasure (p. 3).

In his youth, Kelley sought to "make meaning of these kinds of actions rather than dismiss them as manifestations of immaturity, false consciousness, or primitive rebellion" (1996, p. 3). He views these actions as enacting the cultural as political, and argues that we must dig "deep into the daily lives, cultures, and communities which make the working classes so much more than people who work" (p. 4). So, Kelley asks, "where do we place the vast majority of people who did not belong to wider 'working-class' organizations or Black political movements?" (1996, p. 4). Thus, the question that follows is what about the majority of students who do not engage in student voice, youth engagement initiatives, or more traditional forms of activism such as walkouts, sit-ins, etc.?

Similar to student voice, civic engagement, and student resistance, youths' everyday interactions with space and place, using the means available to them at school, may also reflect Latina/o/x students' agentive capabilities. To make *place* at school that is about membership, meaning, and belonging, students may draw from their culture, identity, community context, or history. However, for students of color, their social context, such as their communities and homes, has been framed as one of deficiency, poverty, and in need of deculturalization (Spring, 2016). While our public schools grow increasingly more diverse by enrolling students whose cultures and identities are different from those of middle-class White students, some of our

educational structures fail to recognize these various cultures in positive ways. Coming out of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1970s and 1980s, "multicultural education" referred to an array of educational efforts that made the teaching about race and cultural difference a content of and for study as a way of resolving tensions caused by the cultural differences increasingly seen and felt in schools and broader American society (Chen, 2005). This emphasis was also often a response to theories that framed the cultures of students of color as those of poverty and to blame for their educational shortcomings (Valencia, 2012). The idea of a *culture of poverty* has advanced such notions by emphasizing that students who experience problems in schools are "culturally deprived" (Gorski, 2008). For example, generations of social scientists have contributed to the labeling of Blacks as "dysfunctional" by focusing on constructing "ghetto inhabitants" as possessing negative cultural values, "the thing against which normality, whiteness, and functionality have been defined" (Kelley, 2001, p. 3). Blacks' homes, communities, families, and personal and social group characteristics were targets for interventions to make them more like the white middle-class, and their culture has been a target for intervention and compensatory education (Natriello et al., 1990; Valenzuela, 2010). Such "deficit thinking" in education blames the individual student of color and their culture – among other internal factors – as contributors to their educational failure, and have been looked at to explain why academic outcomes for students of color are lower than those for Whites because their culture does not carry sufficient capital to ensure social mobility and academic achievement (Valencia, 2012). In her book *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldua reflects on her schooling experience in the Southwest to illuminate such thinking:

> I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess – that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for "talking back" to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. If you want to be American, speak "American." If you don't like it, go back to Mexico where you belong (p. 53).

Language exclusion, or exclusion of one's ways of being, is a reality for Latina/o/x youth in schools. The reprimand Anzaldua faced when speaking Spanish at school shows that schools have had academic and cultural expectations that Latina/o/x youth continue to learn to navigate. Duncan-Andrade (2005) asserts, "Chicano students… may or may not understand their social positioning on the margins of dominant society and its institutions. But what becomes clear when they attend schools is that they must change or fail" (p. 588). While Latina/o/x youth have home discourses as their primary discourses, when they enter schools they are expected to adopt and learn an entirely new set of discourses that become secondary discourses. Gee (2002) defines *discourses* as "ways of being and doing that allow people to enact and/or recognize a specific and distinctive socially-situated identity" (p. 160). *Primary discourse* is learned from family and the community, such as speaking in Spanish; all subsequent discourses acquired are *secondary discourses*, such as those learned in school. Schooling, thus, requires Latina/o/x youth to learn a new set of social, political, and cultural expectations which then need to be fashioned in a way that allows youths to express themselves within the parameters of this secondary discourse. It becomes problematic when this secondary discourse clashes with the social, political, and cultural values of students' primary discourse. It is argued that acquiring these discourses is important to gaining access to disciplinary learning that itself comes with particular sets of knowledges and ways of being (Moje, 2007; Wineburg, 2001).

Nevertheless, research illuminates the various cultural assets Latina/o/x students gain from the home life and community they bring into educational settings and provide as a basis for their creation of meaningful space at school. *Funds of knowledge*, for example, refers to the strategic and cultural resources found in the homes and social environments of Mexican-American students (González et al., 2001; Moll et al., 1992; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 2005). This research recognizes that prior knowledge comes from particular familial and community systems of knowledge, and therefore validates household and community praxis as assets that students bring with them to school. Some Latina/ox youth, for example, develop *politicized funds of knowledge* from immigration experiences such as border crossings, family separations, and deportation practices that Gallo & Link (2015) argue may be recognized and incorporated in the classroom to increase student learning and engagement in school.

These frameworks prove that youth are influenced by their community context, history, culture, and identity even while confronted by structures and practices that seeks to constrain their ways of being within schools. From a Chicana feminist perspective, such teaching and learning that occurs in the home – *pedagogy of the home* – helps students survive and succeed in an oppressive educational context (Delgado Bernal, 2001). Similarly, a *community cultural wealth framework* (Yosso, 2005) illuminates that Latina/o students enter and navigate education with their own knowledge systems that constitute different forms of capital, and centers them as assets brought into schools.

It has also been argued that cultural assets enhance teaching and learning within the classroom. More generally, a push for culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies calls for teachers to increase learning opportunities within their classrooms by learning about and

centering the knowledge and cultures of their students (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings 2014; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014). More recently, a push for ethnic studies has argued for the need to center the experiences, identities, culture, and histories of students of color as a content of study within the classroom (Cabrera et al, 2013; Cuauhtin et al., 2019; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Romero & Cammarota, 2009; Sleeter, 2011; Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2014).

Thus, we cannot think of students as decontextualized from the world outside of schools. Their culture and identities are both geographically expressed and spatially constituted within schools. If scholars assert that students bring to school certain cultural experiences that impact their education, how does students' expression have an influence on school space? The literature that highlights the importance of youth as stakeholders in educational decisions and centers student voice and/or youth civic engagement points to the political impact students have on their schools and communities, and does not necessarily identify other ways that students may be enacting their voices and agency for school change. For youth of color – and Latina/o/x youth in particular – actions that are read as out of place in academic settings may not be considered for how they shape the school environment. However, youth come into schools enacting their own ways of being and knowing that are informed by their community context, history, culture, and identity and, in the process, shape the schools they attend, creating a school-specific aesthetic and sensibility of their making.

Explanation of the Study

This study is about how a group of Latina student leaders – Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel –make and shape their small Los Angeles school. The study engages the following interrelated research questions:

1. How do Latina student leaders at one urban high school in Los Angeles make place?

2. In what ways is this place-making informed by their culture, identity, community context, or history?

3. To what extent does their place-making shape school space?

Setting & Participants

This study explores the ways Latina[4] student leaders create spaces of social membership, meaning, and belonging at the Pride School[5] in Southeast Los Angeles, an area where each high school's enrollment is over 96% Latina/o/x. I particularly focused on the relationship between students' efforts at making *place – place-making –* and school space.

Given my interest in this relationship, I utilized ethnographic methods to gain a firsthand understanding of the dynamics at the School during the 2018-2019 academic year. First, I engaged with observations of the School during its first semester. I observed various school spaces (classrooms, the quad, hallways, etc.) during different times of the day in order to explore the activities students were engaged with in school spaces. It was through these observations and interactions with teachers and students that I was led to the four students who are central to this study: Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel. Although I had observed these students in the context of my observation of school spaces, I "officially" met them through an introduction by their teachers. My initial sampling was not guided by a strict criterion: I asked School educators to

---

[4] Although bound to one geographic area and one school, these four students represent a diversity that includes: coming from Catholic school, living in a single-parent household, having immigrant parents from Mexico and Central America, being both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking, having English as primary language, having English as second language, going on to attend a 4-year college, and going on to attend a 2-year college.

[5] To maintain the anonymity of my research site, I use "Pride School" as its pseudonym.

recommend students who contributed to and were invested in the life of the School. Along with my observations, I was drawn to my four focus students.

Since Pride School is small in terms of enrollment, I remember when I first noticed certain students. For example, I recall first observing Emily in her English class, and on other occasions, coming across her in the hallway before the beginning of lunch. Azul is the student who stood out the most during my observations of the School: she was in the quad setting up for lunchtime activities, decorating the hallways, running up to the Principal to ask him a question, etc. I often saw Olivia in the music room, bringing in "Breakfast in the Classroom" or helping tune guitars for the morning class as a service worker for in the Music Room. During one of my lunchtime chats with the Principal as he supervised the quad, he pointed out Maribel and shared that she was heavily involved in community service.

In the process of recruiting these students, I went on to discover that they all had prominent roles on campus. Emily was Vice President of the Humanitarians Club and a member of the Youth Action Club (YAC). Azul served as Associated Student Body (ASB) President and was enrolled in the school's Leadership class. Olivia was a drum major of the school's Marching Band and a member of the Jazz Band. And, Olivia was President of Key Club, ASB Vice President, and also enrolled in the Leadership class. The way in which this study became about Latina leaders occurred organically, through these observations and within the context of a classroom or adult presence.

Data Collection

The focus of my data collection during the second semester of the school year was conducting case study research with each of my study participants. Since they are the focus of this study, I will explain how I implemented my data collection strategies with them.

School Tour & Semi-Structured Interviews. I first relied on semi-structured interviews and school tours (via students' hand-drawn maps) to get to know the individual students and the school spaces they deemed important. In-depth interviewing, as a method, centers the experiences of people and the meaning they make out of their experiences, and it involves asking open-ended questions that allow for the participant to reconstruct experiences by having the participant (a) provide a general explanation of their experience, (b) provide details of their experience, and (c) reflect on the meaning they make of their experiences (Seidman, 2013). I drew from a list of possible questions, with a focus on each students': 1) involvement in school, 2) life history and family context, 3) identity and culture, and 4) community context. In these interviews, students spoke about themselves, the school, and community.

Since this research was also about school space, it was important to include a school tour component. Students walked me through school space via a hand-drawn map they created that represented their view of the School. In ethnography, *mapping* of communities and neighborhoods has been used as a way to engage students in representing a place and their lived experiences within it (Powell, 2010). Through these maps, my student participants described certain school spaces and how they saw themselves within those spaces. Although findings from this data will be discussed throughout the dissertation, particularly in Chapter 5, I explain how

the interview and school tours data revealed that students' personal, familial, and community context provided a basis for their place-making within the school spaces they frequented.

Student Observations. It was important that this study be "committed to going out and getting close to the activities and everyday experiences of other people… in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important" (Emerson et al., 2011, pp. 2-3). My ethnographic approach required me to spend time at a school site, develop a relationship with each participant, and be present in their everyday experiences. I shadowed students during second semester. They emailed me throughout the four months of my study about which classes, meetings, or events they thought would be good for me to observe. I also emailed them and suggested other times to observe them to get a grander picture of their life at school. I kept fieldnotes to document how their place-making activities played out within an everyday context, and began to make connections with their interview and school tour responses. In Chapter 6, I illuminate the democratic visions and practices involved in these students' everyday place-making at school and how my student participants engaged in constructive and creative actions for the greater good of the school and community.

Focus Group and Interviews. It was important for me to conclude my research activities with my students with a collaborative data analysis phase. My participants and I discussed preliminary themes I identified from the two steps explained above. The purpose of this was to have participants further reflect on their experiences and discuss the extent to which they believed their experiences aligned with or refuted my preliminary themes. This also served as a form of member-checking which involved discussing emerging findings with participants and was a source of providing credibility for my research assertions (Willis, 2007). Since I was

interested in how students conceptualized their place-making as an effort to make place at school, my student participants served as the main source of data for conceptualizing to what extent they believe this shaped school spaces to *their* place. A major focus that emerged in these interviews was a discussion about gender. Although the initial purpose of my research was not guided by a gender analysis, discussions about these students' leadership and their identity as Latinas was discussed with them. In Chapter 7, I discuss how, through the spaces they were involved in at school, these students learned about themselves, what they could do as a collective, how to be role models, and how they gained affirmations from their interactions with other Latinas.

At the conclusion of my research, I interviewed three educators during the summer of 2019: the School Principal, Mr. Perez, the Key Club advisor, Ms. Rojas (who was also a school counselor), and the Leadership advisor, Ms. Smith (also a science teacher). These interviews served to ask these educators about how they: 1) viewed the students' roles in shaping the school environment, 2) understood the students' life outside of school informed the students' involvement in school spaces, and 3) supported students' efforts in asserting the students' ways of being into school spaces to shape them. The educators' insights are scattered throughout this dissertation to further support and ground much of what Emily, Azul, Olivia and Maribel had to say about how they shaped school space, as well as added other perspectives on the same discussions.

Overview of Chapters

In the following chapters, I explain the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided my research, the methods I used to answer my research questions, and the findings from this study.

My research questions and methodology drew from geographical questions about space. In Chapter 2, I provide an explanation of my theoretical lens that positions space as socially produced by people acting within that space. I explain geographer Henri Lefebvre's (1991) triad of the production of space to demonstrate how schools are also produced by students through their imaginaries of and lived experiences within space. I define concepts used throughout my dissertation – *place*, *place-making*, and *in place/out of place* – to achieve a shared understanding of the concepts that center people as actors in making space about membership, meaning, and belonging. Together, these terms guide my epistemological assumptions about ways in which students enact agency and voice within their schools through everyday interactions with space and place.

In Chapter 3, I provide a literature review of humanities and educational research that focuses on how people make places about membership, meaning, and belonging. Humanities scholars have illuminated the ways in which people of color intervene in the spaces intended to subjugate them. This literature reveals how people engage with spatial practices to create a sense of place, shape space on their terms, and assert their right to exist in that space. Similarly, educational scholars have focused on how students and communities of color have created spaces for themselves and draw from their home and community knowledge to navigate and combat oppressive educational contexts. Central to this research is that students and communities

of color enact spatial responses to reimagine space in spite of the how power shapes those spaces.

In Chapter 4, I provide a deeper explanation of and rationale for my methodology. I begin with a statement of my positionality as both a researcher and an educator within the community where this study took place. I include a history and description of my research site, as well as its community context. Pride School is a small school located within a larger high school complex, Dolores Huerta High School, in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). It is also nestled within Southeast Los Angeles which, over the years, has become a hub of Latina/o/x regionalism and identity. Within this chapter I review each part of my research design, such as methods and the data analysis scheme I employed.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 delve into the findings from my data collection with my four student participants. These chapters present spatial, democratic, race, and gender analyses of Latina student leaders' place-making. Chapter 5 provides portraits of each of the four students, describing the personal and community context that provided a basis for their place-makings. Coupled with descriptions of the school spaces they were involved in and how students imagined school space, my analysis demonstrates that these students' community context played a role in the ways that they understood the world and their actions within it.

In Chapter 6, I capture the everyday experiences of Latina student leaders who enact place-making in school through shared interest, working collectively, and taking actions appropriate to their identity/group. Specifically, I discuss how their place-making includes instances of cooperation, communication, encouragement, and simply having fun, all for the greater good of the school and community. Democratic practices were created and enacted as

these students claimed school spaces. These practices were more about membership, meaning, and belonging than about political means and ends: these social relations were created in space, in membership with others, and around shared interests in order to make their school a better, more enjoyable place for everyone.

My original purpose in researching student place-making was not guided by a gender analysis. Given that my research participants were all Latina, Chapter 7 provides a racio-gendered analysis of student place-making. Drawing from my observations of and interviews with them, I discuss how Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel spoke of their school leadership in nebulous ways that encompassed perceived gender stereotypes and expectations, lessons from the home, and place-making within school space. While they held a strong sense of identity with their families, in which they learned empowering lessons about assertiveness, hard work, and responsibility to a collective, their home life also served as a contested site for women because of perceived gender stereotypes and expectations. Nevertheless, through the spaces they were involved in at school, they learned about themselves, what they could do as a collective, and how to be role models, as well as gained affirmations from their interactions with other Latinas.

As a conclusion, in Chapter 8 summarizes major findings, discuss the significance of the study to the field of education, present implications for educational theory and practice, and end with study limitations and avenues for future research.

Significance & Rationale

Latina/o/x students are the largest racial/ethnic group of high school students (22%) and elementary students (25%) in the United States (Santiago et al., 2015). These numbers are projected to increase by 2025 with almost one-third of U.S. children being Latina/o/x

(Hernandez-Nieto & Gutierrez, 2017). In California, Latina/o/x students represent more than half of K-12 enrollment (Santiago et al., 2015), and in the LAUSD they represent 74% of total enrolled students (California Department of Education, 2018); in fact, two-thirds of the state's Latina/o/x youth is concentrated in Southern California (The Education Trust-West, 2017).

As the Latina/o/x population disperses and increases in other parts of the U.S. such as the South (Brown & Lopez, 2013), majority-Latina/o/x states, districts, and schools provide a particularly useful lens to understand how Latina/o/x students will continue to impact the American education system, especially when their educational performance has been characterized as "crisis" (Gandara & Contreras, 2009) and "failure" (Valencia, 2010). About a quarter of all Latina/o/x people live in California and thus make up 38.6% of the state's population (Brown & Patten, 2014). A majority of public school enrollment is Latina/o/x, and although there has been an increase in the student population, their educational attainment and achievement remains low compared to White students. prompting researchers to assert that Latina/o/x students in California are "falling through the cracks" (Perez Huber, et al., 2015). As explained in The Education Trust -West's publication *The Majority Report: Supporting the Educational Success of Latino Students in California* (2017), Latina/o/x students face limited educational opportunity: they have inadequate access to early childhood education and college-preparatory classes, they attend segregated schools, and more than half feel disconnected from their schools.

Given the large presence of students of Mexican heritage in California (Santiago et al., 2015), it is also important to note that educational trends for Chicana/o/x students are similar to those experienced by the broader Latina/o/x student population in California. Valencia (2004)

defines Chicana/o/x school failure as "their persistently, pervasively, and disproportionately low academic achievement" (p. 4). Solorzano and Solorzano (1995) state that "data consistently show that Chicano high school students are disproportionately found in large, overcrowded, ethnically-segregated, and lower-financed schools" (p. 296). Latina/o/x students face inferior schooling conditions such as less college preparatory coursework, are tracked in general or vocational classes, are targets of language suppression and cultural exclusion from curriculum and textbooks, attend low-financed schools, experience low teacher expectations, are overrepresented in low-ability classes, and are underrepresentation in gifted education (Sólorzano & Solórzano, 1995; Valencia & Villarreal, 2011). These schooling conditions impact Latina/o/x's schooling outcomes. Latina/o/x students are underrepresented at every point of the educational pipeline, have lower academic achievement compared to their White peers, higher rates of grade retention, poor school holding power, low matriculation rates to college, face adverse impacts to high stakes testing, and suffer from school stress (Perez Huber, et al., 2015; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995 Solórzano, et al., 2005).

Latinas tend to fare slightly better than their male counterparts in terms of educational attainment (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). However, within families with limited resources, Latinas are often made to feel like they have to put their own aspirations aside to tend to housework such as staying at home and looking after siblings (Becerra, 1998; Ginorio & Huston, 2001). Latinas also often feel like they do not belong in school because of poverty factors (Osterman, 2000) and the stereotype that Latinas are academic underachievers (Gandara et al., 2004). Latinas are also less likely to participate in extracurricular activities that may increase senses of belonging at

school (Davalos et al., 1999; Flores-Gonzales, 2002; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Ream & Rumberger, 2008).

While such educational research presents a dire picture of Latina/o/x educational experiences, young people also exert agency to shape their learning environments. Through their leadership positions at school, students create spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging. Through these spaces, they draw from their culture, identity, community context, and history in order to "make" their schools. I place importance on Latina/o/x youth because, as schools become increasingly segregated, it is important to see the unique backgrounds with which youth come into schools and how they express these background at school. Within segregated schools attended by a majority-Latina/o/x youth, a particular sense of place is often created. Within an everyday context, youth negotiate school spaces and influence the dynamics that are played out within them. To think about the impact that Latina/o/x youth have – and will continue to have – on the American education system, it is important to focus on the actual places in which they do this, i.e., in actual school spaces and places.

CHAPTER TWO: FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES & CONCEPTS

In this project I set out to understand how students make and shape their schools. In one of the opening quotes from the previous chapter, Emily asserts that a school "is just a building" without the presence of students: "It's the people that make it a school." In fact, space can be conceived of as simply a container on which things happen (Fairbanks et al., 2003; Holloway et al., 2003). It is through the insertion of actors and users of space that space becomes a social space. Drawing from geographers (Cresswell, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991) who contend that space is a social product in that it can be produced and changed, I think of school space as also socially produced and as a social product made by students using and interacting within it.

In this chapter, I bring together several spatial theories and concepts that are foundational to both the design of this work and how I discuss my findings in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. I begin with geographer Henri Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the social production of space. I discuss the three moments he outlines in the production of space: *representations of space*, *representational space*, and *spatial practice*. While space may be produced by power and dominant interests, it is also produced by people on the ground and in an everyday context. Next, I define two spatial concepts used throughout this dissertation: *place* and *place-making* (Cresswell, 2004; Massey, 1994; Tuan 1977). Underlying both concepts is that space can be about forming membership, meaning, and belonging to space. Lastly, I explain geographer Tim Cresswell's (1996) "in place and out of place" framework to understand how people carry the potential to make a space *their* place.

The Social Production of Space

Lefebvre's (1991) attention to the everyday practices of life makes his work applicable to the discussion of urban schools where many day-to-day activities of young people occur. For students, these everyday practices happen for at least half of their day, at a school where they not only learn but also engage with other students in spaces that are created for them – and *by* them. To conceptualize this, I turn to Lefebvre's three moments in the production of space: *representations of space*, *representational space*, and *spatial practice*. While *representations of space* are the spaces created for students by educational planners, *representational space* and *spatial practice* are the spaces of students – those they imagine and experience as part of everyday life. I explain these three moments individually and end by stating that I will illuminate students' representational space and spatial practice in the Findings chapter of this dissertation.

Representations of Space

While writing about space under Western capitalism, Lefebvre (1991) asserts that every mode of production that is dominant at any given moment produces its own space and maintains its hegemony by ruling over space. Hegemony does not leave space untouched but, in fact, uses it and exercises its power over society at local scales, such as urban centers and through institutions such as schools. Representations of space are those spaces which are dominant in any given society, created by logic and expertise of urban planners, technocrats, etc., and often does not consider the real lived experiences of people within society. This definition of space asserts that space is not neutral; it is actively produced and is where hegemony affirms and reaffirms its dominance. Thus, space takes on political dimensions in the way it operates and has social implication for the people within it (i.e., racialization, segregation) (Neely & Samura, 2011).

Representations of space find their physical form in institutions such as schools. It is important to discuss how educational spaces are conceived of by power and dominant interests. For example, federal policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), Race to the Top (2009), Common Core State Standards (2010), A Blueprint for Reform (2010), and the Every Child Succeeds Act (2015) carry on the language, ideologies, and practices of a neoliberal education through competition, standardization, and accountability. For years, these federal policies have framed schools attended by students of color as in need of "program improvement," and illuminated the ways power has had implications for shaping school spaces. At the turn of this last century, the No Child Left Behind Act, for example, made public schools accountable for meeting a set achievement performance known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). If schools failed to meet AYP for more than two consecutive years, they were labeled as in need of "school improvement." Further corrective measures were taken by the local school district if a school continuously failed to meet AYP (Hamilton et al., 2013). Under the Obama Administration's Blueprint for Reform (2010), further interventions were geared toward the five percent of lowest performing schools based on academic growth and graduation rates (Maxcy, 2011). States under Race to the Top (2009), for example, developed school plans under a federally-driven vision of education to compete for much needed grants (McGuinn, 2011) with an emphasis on standardization and accountability (Hursh, 2005; Tienken & Zhao, 2013) that assume the educational wants and needs of public school youth.

Implications of such dominant interest on school spaces is that schools have been pushed to publish student test score data, focus on placing importance on high-stakes testing, and teach curriculum prescribed by private entities such as textbook companies, all to presumably increase

student learning and achievement (Tienken & Zhao, 2013). While the purported focus of these

federal policies is to ensure students a quality education, these laws also provide a way to

identify and label schools as "failing" and thus impose on them corrective sanctions (Hursh,

2005; Lipman, 2011; Rice & Croninger, 2005). This construct is especially detrimental to those

schools – largely attended by students of color – located in low-income communities because

they do not have the resources to satisfy the imposed sanctions, thus they are subject to closure,

charter takeover, and/or reconstitution as testing grounds for education reforms (Baltodano,

2012; Rice & Croninger, 2005).

In recent years, charter schools have become particularly popular because they provide

"choice" and prompt schools to compete for student enrollment, presumably driving up standards

and innovation (Knoester, 2011; Wells et al., 2002; Wright, 2012). Lipman (2011) argues that the

charter school concept made way for the privatization of Chicago's public schools, becoming

"the central vehicle to open up public education to the market, weaken teachers' unions, and

eliminate whatever democratic control of public education there is" (p. 121-122). Within Los

Angeles, entrepreneurial interest has had an eye on shaping the public school landscape of the

City, as revealed by the "Great Public Schools Now" initiative begun in 2015 by billionaire

philanthropist Eli Broad. This initiative aimed to invest private money in education with the goal

to enroll half of Los Angeles's public school children in charter schools by 2023.[6]

Privatization of schools frame students as *consumers* of an education, i.e., part of larger

market-driven ideology of choice, competition, and deregulation (Harvey, 2005; Lipman, 2011).

Not only does the neoliberal rhetoric around "choice" destabilize local schools by forcing them

---

[6] The Great Public Schools Now Initiative can be found at: https://documents.latimes.com/great-public-schools-now-initiative/

to compete for enrollment numbers and funding (Lipman, 2011), this rhetorical "choice" is detrimental to the students themselves (Harvey, 2005). Due to their high concentration in urban centers (Orfield & Ee, 2014), Latina/o/x youth are more likely to attend those schools that have been sanctioned or threatened with being turned over to the market.

The space of this capitalism and hegemony, i.e., representations of space – which Lefebvre (1991) terms "abstract space" – is dependent on an illusion of nonaggression and neutrality. Yet, educational policies that purport to benefit students and their community also create conflict. Although space is a tool of power, the powerful have failed to master it completely, giving way for users of space to change it and make it their own through spatial practice and representational space.

Representational Space & Spatial Practice

Lefebvre (1991) offers us a triad framework (representations of space, representational space, and spatial practice) for how space is made. i.e., how it is produced by "bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory" (p. 16). In the previous section I described how representations of space is planned and conceived by power and dominant interests. In my study, however, I was interested in the aspects of space that students create because school space is not just produced by political (state) forces. School space is also about how the users, i.e., those who occupy it, make it their own. I pay attention to two moments in the production of space: *representational space* and *spatial practice*. These other kinds of space make schools more than just about buildings and hallways but about the school social life created by students, space that is both mental and physical.

Representational Space is the space of the imagination. This is the mental ways users experience space, as well as their images and symbolism of it. Users of space hold visions, ideas, and meanings that they ascribed to space, revealing how they make sense of the world, how they attach meanings to their spatial context, and how they give the tangible world significance (Jackson, 1989). Users of space hold these mental ways of organizing important space because doing so opens up different ways to think about space (McCann, 1999). Through works of art, film, poetry, even mapping and stories about school spaces, users of space "draw on physical objects found in space in order to symbolize lived experience and to produce meaning" (McCann, 1999, p. 172). In other words, representational space is bestowed meaning by the social actors living within space. In Chapter 5, I present mental maps and data from interviews that reveal my students' representational space, and the meanings and visions they attach to particular school spaces.

Spatial Practice is the everyday life in particular localities. These are the places of work, routes of transportation, or even spaces for education such as schools. Spatial practice requires the use of the body to produce social relations in the physical reality of everyday urban life. According to Soja (1996) this is "both medium and outcome of human activity, behavior, and experience" (p. 68). Besides being socially produced, spatial practice is empirically and directly sensible, can be described, and is the location of things, activities, and sites. In this component of Lefebvre's (1991) triad, space is made through everyday life routines and rhythms, realized and deployed in space. In Chapter 6, I present the spatial practices that students engage in to enact democratic visions into their school spaces through place-making.

Spaces of Membership, Meaning & Belonging

Throughout my study I illuminate the ways students create and interact in spaces of social membership, meaning, and belonging. These spaces are important for Latina student leaders because they are places in which they interact with peers around issues that are important to them, and enact democratic visions and practices into school space. Further, since geographers such as Lefebvre have well established that space is produced and is a social product, in order to think about how youth make and shape their schools, I draw from the constructs of place and place-making in this tradition.

Place

Hegemonic space cannot be completely dominated and controlled (Lefebvre, 1991). People create place as a means to shape space and form "contestations to imposed power." Here, there is another layer to space –a social space, referred to here as "place" – and which geographer Tim Cresswell (2004) defines as space which is lived and meaningful to the people within it. Sociologist Roger Friendland (1992) explains that "place is the fusion of space and experience, a space filled with meanings, a source of identity" (p.14). In other words, places mean something to the people who inhabit and experience them, and they are also *created* by them (Halttunen, 2006). This construct of place allows us to see schools in Latina/o/x communities as much more than dominated spaces that power creates. Schools are also social spaces that are made meaningful, shaped, and reimagined by students because to have a place is to turn space into your place. Thus, to conceptualize space as socially produced is to recognize it as a place, and I am particularly interested in how students make place at school.

Making place can come from those who are subjugated by hegemonic space. To further explain the construct of place, the idea of *home* acts as its metaphor, i. e., "where you can be yourself" and "where people feel a sense of attachment and rootedness" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 24). For example, hooks (1990) speaks of her home located at the margins in relationship to systems of power, as "a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist" (p. 341). hooks reveals that while the margins and conditions within home may be imposed by the center, power, and dominant interests, "marginality [is] much more than a site of deprivation" (1990, p. 341). Instead, the margins offer the "possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds" (p. 341). Here, a "sense of place is being theorized, no longer passive, nor fixed, no longer undialectical" (Keith & Pile, 2004, p. 5) but, rather, cultivated and created from within. The margins are not passive or receptacles for power or dominant interests precisely because of the agentive capabilities of those living within them. hooks (1991) defines "an alternative spatiality" (p. 5) of "radical openness" (p. 149) wherein people conceptualize different ways of living that are not merely imposed by the center. Instead, these ways of living form and enact "counter-hegemonic cultural practice" (hooks, 1991, p. 145) to create a sense of place.

This space of radical openness is addressed by Soja (1996) as *Thirdspace* (capitalization original), a counterspace, a space where social struggle takes place. A Thirdspace perspective disrupts the center-periphery binary with a focus on oppositional practices as a means to disrupt hegemonic space (Soja, 1996). These oppositional practices become a way that people make place, and, here, difference is maintained by dominant interests through spatial divisions in, for example, ghettos and barrios. It is this very difference that creates oppositional practices that, in

turn, disrupt the center-periphery relationship and reveals new possibilities for a Thirdspace, a

counterspace. In this sense, schools located in marginalized communities, such as those that are

predominantly Latina/o/x, may be seen as containers of difference (Soja, 1996). Yet, a cultural

politics of difference embraces the heterogeneity, diversity, and difference attached to race, class,

gender, etc., as well as these expressions onto social spaces (Bhabha, 2012). Choosing the

periphery or marginality as a location of action, (hooks, 1991) recenters difference as a strength,

wherein people can be themselves and another space, in this process coming together in the

Thirdspace. This process allows for what Soja (1996) refers to as "thirding-as-Othering,"

wherein "the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process

of restructuring" (p. 5), as well as becomes a hybrid space and creates a particular sense of place.

Similarly, in her exploration of a Black sense of place, geographer Katherine McKittrick

(2011) discusses "urbicide," the killing of the city, as not simply creating an oppressed space

wherein certain communities are affected and prone to racial violence via displacement, but one

for liberation where people practice agency, i.e., sites wherein cooperative human efforts have a

voice and a place (McKittrick & Woods, 2007). Black people who experience racial violence via

certain spaces, such as the plantation, the city, or prison, may also experience liberation within

these spaces. Taking such a lens shifts the plantation, for example, from a conception of

placelessness, where people are made to not feel a connection or meaning within the spaces

created by power and dominant interests, to the creation of a *Black sense of place*, where

cooperative human efforts, bred out of life and lived experiences, create place. Places where

racism takes place can also be transformed to one with a collectivist, egalitarian, and democratic

spirit in what American Studies scholar George Lipsitz (2011) calls a *Black spatial imaginary*.

While Whites may use space for its exchange value as a means to exert individualism over property, a Black spatial imaginary looks at the ways Blacks use space for its *use* value, such as communal living or artistic expression. In these examples, to have a place is to turn space into *your* place by creating a sense of belonging and meaning to it. Such a lens is useful to de-center talking about student experiences within school spaces solely created and maintained by power and dominant interests. Instead, places that are created from within the realities of everyday life can tell us more about what life – rather than oppression – looks like and how students make life, i.e., places, at school, even within often dire spaces.

Place-Making

And so to have a place is to turn space into your place by creating a sense of belonging to space. Places mean something to the people that inhabit and experience them, and they are also created by people. Ways people actuate this creation is by adding things to a space to make it have personal meaning and to engage in other place-making activities – to wit, graffiti artists tagging subway cars (Cressswell, 1996) or Mexican immigrants placing religious statues as front yard accents (Arreola, 2012). Here there is an effort in creating place within a space that would otherwise – or perhaps – not have any personal meaning to the actors. Since places are created through a conscious construction by actors within them, I investigated the place-making processes of students within schools and, more specifically, how students drew from their cultures, identities, communities, and histories to do this.

Place-making encompasses all activities that make space meaningful to those who engage in those activities regardless of, or in spite of, the way power and dominant interest have structured those spaces, and is the effort and process by which people make place. Place-making

31

is "an ongoing and always contested process, and of the creative variety of cultural practices employed for place-making" (Halttunen, 2006, p. 4). A sense of place is created by people creating "a strong sense of the constructedness of place" (Halttunen, 2006, p. 4) through place-making. Geographers have defined a sense of place in terms of *topophilia,* defined by Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) as something that "significantly enhance the feeling of uniqueness and of identity" (p. 166) of a place. A sense of place is also referred to as place attachment and feelings of community sentiment (Cross, 2001). Implicit in the construct of place-making is that there is a constant making and remaking of place through experience and the everyday and on the ground. Schools are not static entities simply created by manifestations of power and dominant interests, but rather are places that are very much inhabited by students who, in turn, make and remake place through constructive and creative place-making.

"In Place"/"Out of Place"

Part of my conceptual lens for this project acknowledges that institutions such as schools are largely shaped by power and dominant interests. For example, Latina/o/x students have historically attended segregated, inferior schools, and today federal policies have solidified practices of individualism, competition, and accountability that impact how Latina/o/x experience schooling. However, I examined the agency that was enacted within these spaces and so used constructs such as place and place-making to talk about students' potential to make and shape school space. Youth belonging to Los Angeles's Latina/o/x communities enter their schools with their own realities, grounded in social relations, knowledges, and sensibilities (Diaz, 2005) that hold the potential to make and shape school spaces into places that represent and are

meaningful to students. In this section, I discuss Cresswell's (1996) *in place* and *out of place* constructs to further analyze students' capacity to make and shape school space.

In his book, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*, Cresswell (1996) discusses the rise in graffiti on New York City subway cars during the 1980s and the subsequent attempt by city officials to curb its appearance. Graffiti in such public space was seen as a threat to order, as deviant, and was described as "garbage" and "obscene"; it was seen as "out of place." Yet, this graffiti was accepted as by the SoHo art community, and many galleries hosted this form of art within their contained walls. Graffiti in a gallery was thus considered to be normal, or "in place." To the graffiti artists, however, their art form was intended to be public and mobile, and was a way that they inserted themselves into the formal spatial structure of the City. Cresswell (1996) discusses how the discourses of those in power – particularly New York City leaders – imposed and defined the meaning of those open and free spaces: subway cars were not a canvas for art. Instead, these leaders joined in the belief that SoHo art galleries were the appropriate place for graffiti despite graffiti artists' integral intention was for this art to be mobile, visible, and public. Cresswell (1996) calls these "out of place" behaviors "transgressions." Those who engage in transgressions (e.g., graffiti on subway cars) have the potential to shape space into their space. In what is to follow, I convey why an "in place"/"out of place" spatial analysis of youth place-making demonstrates how youth have the potential to turn school spaces into *their* space, using Cresswell's constructs of "in place" and "out of place" in turn.

"In Place"

There is a relationship between places and ideology in that power and dominant interests use ideology to define what is "in place" in particular spaces and places. Space and place create certain spatial structures that condition the ways in which they are used to maintain what Cresswell (1996) describes as a "normative landscape." This normative landscape is "the way in which ideas about what is right, just, and appropriate are transmitted through space and place" (p. 8). Something that may be appropriate in one place, such as speaking a non-dominant language at home, may be inappropriate somewhere else, such as speaking this non-dominant language at school (Valencia, 1991).

Here, place is both a physical and social space wherein certain behaviors are expected or deemed appropriate. Because spaces and places do not have inherent value and meaning, yet those "that are created by some people with more power than others… define what is and is not appropriate" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 27), they need to be created, maintained, and defended; thus, "the geographical setting of actions plays a central role in defining our judgement of whether actions are good or bad" (p. 9). These expectations can be ideological if they serve or are created by those in power (i.e., politicians, the upper class, etc.). Central to cultural studies, for example, are concepts of ideology and hegemony wherein dominant views become part of everyday common sense; Cresswell (1991) argues that "expectations about behavior 'in place' are important components in the construction, maintenance, and evolution of ideological values" (p. 4).

Ideology is an essential part of power in that hegemony entails the convincing of subordinate groups that the values and ideas of dominant interests benefit all; this domination

from above occurs through *common sense* (see Simon, 1982). When it comes to commonsensical notions of space and place, this means that "the meaning of a place is the subject of particular discourses of power, which express themselves as discourses of normality" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 60). Such discourses of power, and therefore of normality, give places *imposed* meaning so that "the question of who controls the discourse is an important one… because it says something about who gets to participate in the construction and dissemination of meanings for places and thus places themselves" (p. 60). Within school settings, this process often does not involve students – or they may have a "voice" in spaces such as committees that have already been created for them by people in power (i.e., administrators, district officials) who control these discourses (Mitra et al., 2014; Robinson & Taylor, 2007). Thus, the questions of who has power over whom and who can make these judgements of normality and commonsense exist, so "domination needs to be conceived of in relation to the story that is being told" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 15). i.e., what is deemed to be "in place" versus "out of place."

These discourses are important not only because they give spaces and places meaning, but also because they dictate what is appropriate or expected within them. Ideology and what become commonsensical notions of what is "in place" play a role in producing space, then dictates what is deemed as "out of place." Cresswell (1996) points out that "by acting in space in a particular way, the actor is inserted into a particular relation with ideology" (p. 17). So, while students are expected to follow the rules in school spaces and learn academic ways of being, these are not natural or inherent in space and place but created and defended by dominant interests. In other words, ideology "connects ideas of what exists, what is good, and what is possible to various forms of power relations" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 14) and place plays a major

role in the continuation of ideology and the power relations these ideologies uphold. Ideological judgments of what is "in place" (i.e., good, just, appropriate, etc.) varies according to the place of the action.

Seeing geography as having a role in producing, maintaining, and recreating meaning shows that spaces and places are not static entities but are struggled over and serve both on-going hegemonic power and counter-hegemonic struggles. In other words, space and place are not merely concrete entities; they are also ideological and are constantly being made and remade. Place is *produced* and *maintained* by our actions that abide by the ideological beliefs that judge what is the appropriate thing to do in that place. Place also *reproduces* these ideological beliefs and makes them appear as commonsense and natural to that setting. So, while place reproduces ideological beliefs of what is appropriate, it is also produced by those beliefs. When our actions in particular places warrant a red flag because they do not abide by ideological constructs, the reaction to these actions deem them as out of place, thus characterized by Cresswell (1996) as *transgressions*.

"Out of Place"

To reiterate, Cresswell (1996) talks about place as both a physical and a social space marked by ideological constructs that deem what is appropriate behavior, i.e., what is "in place." Actions taken out of place, or are inappropriate, Cresswell labels as *transgressions*. It is within this realm of transgression that students hold the capacity to shape school space. Their actions may be seen as "out of place" in public schools that have imposed certain ways of being on students (i.e., "No Spanish" laws, Americanization efforts, high-stakes testing, accountability, etc.), but because place plays a role in the "construction of ideological beliefs concerning order,

propriety, and normality" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 27), schools themselves are not free of this phenomena. Rather, they are subject to the same discourses of power that seek to define what is "in place" at schools. As such, schools can be conceived of as ideological places that are not neutral, and therefore certain acts that transgress what is expected to be "in place" can be deemed "out of place."

Through this study, I aimed to think about schools as spaces of possibility wherein students could express what they came in with and make new meanings and places at school. These expressions, however, could question and contest materialized meaning of ideological constructs while also allowing students to make new meanings and *their* place. I use this lens because transgressions are an intervention on space, so they are a type of place-making. Thus, the implications of transgressions, according to Cresswell (1996), are expressed thusly, in Figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1: Implications of transgressions, according to Cresswell

If the transgression continues: → the meaning of the place will change and the new meaning will be *their* meaning.

If the meaning of the place changes: → the place itself will change and become *their* place.
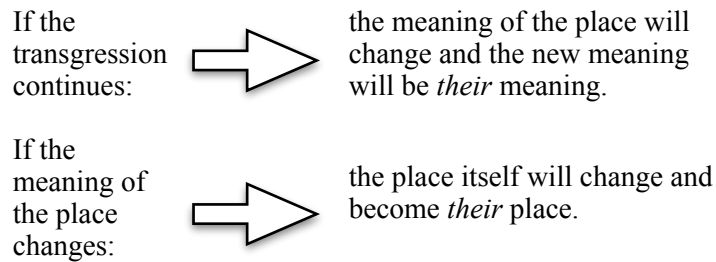
To explain this framework further, certain behaviors may transgress expectations of a place, and these are often enacted by oppositional individuals or groups deemed as different or by a culture of difference that has less influence in society. Cresswell (1996) explains:

> A particular set of places and spaces exist, an event occurs that is judged by some "authority" to be bad, and that authority connects a particular place with a particular meaning to strengthen an ideological position. These events are referred to here as transgressions (p. 8).

Thus, place is used to make ideological and political arguments that have implications for those enacting transgressions. Instead of drawing attention toward a social problem (i.e., racism, heteronormativity, etc.) or questioning the social and political context (i.e., majority-minority schools, high-poverty communities, etc.), "the apparently commonsensical notion 'out-of-place' plays a clear role in the interpretations of particular events" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 8) and serves to strengthen the ideological constructs enacted onto spaces by dominant interests. As discussed in the previous section, ideology dictates commonsense assumptions about place that become part of the normative landscape of place, and these are maintained, created, and recreated by ideological projects that interpret transgressions and their effects on place. When transgressions occur, people in power define normative geographies of space and place as a reaction, and these reactions show a relationship between place and ideology. These interpretations of transgressions become normative judgements of behavior.

I place importance in these "out of place" instances because, although transgressions invite a negative reaction and the word itself connotes something negative, Cresswell (1996) argues that transgressions have the ability to shape space and are a way to create a sense of place by those enacting them. Often, transgressions are enacted by those deemed as different or "other," and, given their historical marginalization, youth of color are the ones that carry with them these seeds to shape spaces that are often created by power and dominant interests. Transgressions are important because they serve to "foreground the mapping of ideology onto space and place, and thus the margins tell us something about 'normality'" (Cresswell, 1996, p.

38

9). These transgressions show that "social groups are capable of creating their own sense of place and contesting the constructs of others" (p. 47), thus making *their* own place.

Lefebvre's triad of the production of space, and concepts such as place, place-making, "in place," and "out of place" position individuals as spatial actors that imagine, live, make meaning and belonging about, and transgress expectations of space. I bring together these several spatial theories and concepts to conceptualize school space as socially produced by students using and interacting in space.

In the next chapter, I review literature in the humanities and educational research that engages with spatial ideas and themes. Research in the humanities and education contend that students and communities of color enact spatial responses to reimagine space in spite of how power shapes those spaces.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

As introduced in the first chapter, the aim of my research was to examine how students make and shape their schools. My research questions and methodology for this study were guided by the conceptual lenses of space, place, and place-making as drawn from geography and the broader humanities. These concepts afforded me the insights to understand how students make meaning, belonging, and membership in the spaces where they enact their leadership roles. In this chapter, I review the literature in both humanities and educational research that discusses the agency that people exert to make and shape space, i.e., their place-making. Scholars in the humanities reveal how people of color engage with spatial practices to create a sense of place, shape space on their terms, and assert their right to exist in space. Similarly, educational scholars have focused on how students and communities of color create spaces for themselves and draw from their home and community knowledge to navigate and combat oppressive educational contexts. Central to this research is that students and communities of color enact spatial responses to reimagine space in spite of the how power shapes those spaces.

Humanities: Place & Place-Making in Segregated Space

In the realm of humanities, the *spatial turn* refers to the study of human behavior in context, with a focus on space and place as the arena for action (Murphy, 2018). Within this turn, scholars have also focused attention on how race and space interact to form particular relations of power (Gomez, 2007; Kropp, 2001; Molina, 2010; Neely & Samura, 2011; Sagarena, 2002; Soja, 1996). Race is produced by space, and it "takes places for racism to take place" (Lipsitz, 2011, p. 5). This concept can be examined through the drawing of school boundaries which create segregated schools (Dhar & Ross, 2012), housing and lending practices that discriminate

40

against people of color (Lipsitz, 2006), policing strategies that criminalize youth of color (Muniz, 2015), and even the creation of a regional Southwest identity that constructs Mexicans as "citizens of the past" (Kropp, 2001). While schools are spaces where race is produced and racism is enacted, scholars outside the field of education (see Carpio et al., 2011; Lipsitz, 2011; McKittrick & Woods, 2007) have asserted that racialized individuals' and groups' capacity to act in space is often limited or constrained by laws that require people to "take space" (McCann, 1999, p. 168), becoming "oppositional groups" that "continually [have] to play a part in the production and reproduction of social space" (p. 171). Scholars have illuminated the ways in which people of color have enacted their presence onto spaces in order to intervene in space, create a sense of place, shape space, and assert their right to exist in space, even while those same spaces seek to subjugate them.

As introduced in the previous chapter, Lipstiz's (2011) concept of a Black spatial imaginary is about how Black people use space as a site of Black expressive culture that both resists and transforms the space in which racism takes place, as well as contributes to a collectivist, egalitarian, and democratic spirit. Within this imaginary, Black people draw upon their unique cultural strength to contest spaces marked by discrimination and segregation. Black musicians in South Central Los Angeles, for example, created their own groups that promoted community and learning because of restrictions on the movement of Black bodies on city streets and private music venues during the 1940s and 1950s. In Houston's Fourth Ward, as housing policies segregated Black residents to certain parts of the City, shotgun homes – one-bedroom dwellings initially built by emancipated Blacks after the Civil War – were used to promote community among residents as early as the 1930s. Having limited space and being in close

proximity to one another led to conversations, mutuality, and unity in these shared neighborhood

spaces. Residents decorated their front lawns with mirrors, wheels, and jars, while artists turned

empty lots into community parks by building benches and creating murals. In these examples,

Black people turned spaces of confinement into those of community and congregation.

Similarly, in *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial

Entitlement in los Angeles, Chicana/o/x studies scholar Gaye Theresa Johnson (2013) uses the

term *spatial entitlement* to describe the ways in which people from *aggrieved communities*, i.e.,

those living within constrained environments due to issues such as segregation, have utilized

their marginal positions in society to lay claim to the physical spaces they inhabit. By enacting a

sense of spatial entitlement – "occupying, inhabiting, and transforming physical places, but also

imagining, envisioning, and enacting discursive spaces" (p. 1) – cultural practices and discourses

are ways that both Black and Brown communities, particularly in Los Angeles, have exerted

resistance to form "new articulations, new sensibilities, and new visions about the place of black,

brown, and working-class people on the local and national landscape" (p. x).

These concepts of a Black spatial imaginary and spatial entitlement demonstrate that

people of color have drawn upon their "otherness" to contest "power-filled imposition" (Soja,

1996) onto space. These are useful analytic tools for thinking about how youth, within the

confines of urban schools that are also racialized and segregated, engage with space as a means

to create community and congregation, and to exert their right to exist, i.e., to make place. This

points to the agency that youth may enact to have a voice and a place within their schools. Other

scholars drawing from the humanities, ethnic studies in particular, have taken up similar concepts

to describe how people of color have used space, made space, made spatial claims, and/or have

engaged in place-making activities, and how these actions are executed across time and in urban and suburban spaces.

From a historical perspective, Isabela Seong-Leong Quintana (2015) illuminates the ways Chinese and Mexicans in early 20th century Los Angeles claimed neighborhood urban space for community survival by maintaining homes that were spatially and ideologically different from the single, nuclear family, what she refers to as "making do." As workers for the newly industrialized Los Angeles were relegated into the racially segregated geographies of Chinatown and Sonoratown, women practiced home-making and community-making in crowded headquarters, centered around house courts that facilitated resident interaction, collaborative work, and childcare. Neglect from housing authority and landlords led to bad living conditions that also pushed women to make do in these borderlands. They housed lodgers, made space for others (mostly men) in cramped living quarters, and created homes for both business (house lodgers) and family (Quintana, 2015).

Similarly, while witnessing their community of Boyle Heights being destroyed and divided by the construction of freeways under urban renewal plans of the 1950s and 1960s, a *folklore of the freeway* emerged in Los Angeles as a cultural response to the impact on Chicana/ o/x communities. While the freeway was seen as a symbol of progress, linking the urban to the suburban, Chicana/o/x artists used the freeway as an urban canvas on which to express their identities and experiences with its encroachment. Chicana/o/x studies scholar Eric Avila (2016) discusses Judith Baca's mural "The Great Wall of Los Angeles" as an expression of the oppressive effect, "as a serpentine, parasitic force," the freeway had on Chicana/o/x families. During the 1970s and 1980s, Los Angeles taggers used the freeway as a means of public self-

expression, and "a highly visible reminder of the Other – inner-city Chicano and Black

youth" (Avila, 2016, p. 531). As they sprayed freeway walls, they "articulate[d] presence,

convey[ed] identity, and personalize[d] the impersonal universe of the sprawling metropolis" (p.

531) and served as "counternarratives, counterstrategies, and counterexpressions that assert and

maintain humanity, even in a space as inhuman and alienating as the Los Angeles freeway" (p.

531).

To argue that restaurants are social spaces that shape neighborhoods, historian Natalia

Molina (2015) discusses Los Angeles's El Nayarit restaurant of Echo Park, owned by a Mexican

immigrant woman and where many Mexican immigrants from her home state of Nayarit found

employment during the 1950s and 1960s. The restaurant owner and workers were organic place-

makers who worked outside of official organizations, oppositional groups, and institutions to

inscribe themselves in the urban landscape:

> [Restaurant owner] Barraza and her employees created a social space where
> everyone – from recent Mexican immigrants to professional ballplayers to movie
> stars – wanted to be. She and her staff were place-makers. They enhanced the
> neighborhood's identity by running a business that drew people both from inside
> and outside the neighborhood, providing opportunities for all to forge bonds of
> understanding. The restaurant also served as an entry point that offered a ready-
> made social network for immigrants new to a dauntingly large, foreign city.
> Access to a space in which the language, food, and atmosphere were
> reassuringly familiar and helped to better position recent arrivals for success in
> their new lives (p. 72-73).

In short, these place-makers enacted community from the bottom up by creating a social and

recreational space for both their multicultural clientele and Mexican immigrants. Through the

everyday, they created community, formed familial bonds, and created a sense of belonging in

shared space.

While women in Chinatown used the spaces they had access to for community-making, Chicana/o/x people used the freeway as a canvas for expressive culture, and Mexican immigrants created social and recreation space at restaurants, Johnson (2013) illustrates how the youth of these ethnicities laid claim to the physical spaces they were denied access to during the second half of the 20th century. As policing on behalf of merchants on Whittier Boulevard constrained possibilities for congregation, cruisers turned the street into a festive display of car culture and music. Through appropriating the streets of Los Angeles, Mexican American youth enacted sonic and spatial articulations onto commercial spaces as they "moved themselves through space, shaped the spaces where they congregated, and asserted entitlements with the cultural currency they created" (Johnson, 2013, p. 65).

Other scholars discuss how Latina/o/x people make claims to suburban spaces in Los Angeles. Barraclough (2012) illuminates how ethnic Mexican *charros* claim public space and practice cultural citizenship by holding *charreadas* (similar to a rodeo) in suburban spaces. Through such cultural practice, *charros* challenge historically exclusionary suburban spaces and seek to have, as Carpio, Irazábal, and Pulido (2011) say, "a right to the suburb." By making citizenship claims through their activist mobilization, Latina/o/x immigrants contest and question who has a right to exist in suburban space and who gets to define and enforce this existence. While their work focuses on the suburbs as a context, it points to the ways Latina/o/x people enact and create meaningful spaces as "a radical affirmation of the right to exist, to take up space, and to make new spaces of freedom" (Johnson, 2013, p. 58) in regions where, due to residential segregation, they have been excluded.

Education: Place & Place-Making in Educational Space

Scholars have talked about the impact of ideological projects on urban space and schools and the subsequent educational experiences of communities of color. From a historical perspective, Solorzano and Velez (2016) use a critical race spatial analysis to think about educational colorlines and their impact on communities of color in Los Angeles. Drawing from W. E. B. Du Bois's conception of the color line as space conceived by a racist society, the authors look at the ways racially restrictive covenants in Los Angeles were used as tools of white supremacy to shape, maintain, and reinforce relations of dominance and subordination through racially and economically homogenous neighborhoods. As an example, they define the Alameda Corridor, a street that connects downtown Los Angeles to the San Pedro ports, as an educational colorline that underscores "the relationship between race, racism, history, and space, its intersection with other forms of subordination, and its material and perceived impact on the daily lives of Students of Color, their families, and their communities" (Solorzano & Velez, 2016, p. 430). Lipman (2011) expands this concept by highlighting that "Urban space in the United States (and elsewhere) is racialized and White supremacy is central to the production of an urban landscape of inflated property values and private ownership" (Lipman, 2011, p. 161). The spatial restructuring of urban cities today, largely driven by capital accumulation, has created an urban schooling environment that has rearticulated educational equity as individualistic, competitive, and market-driven. Urban space as a site for investment also creates spaces of exclusion that impact students of color, and prompts parents to be "desperate to find a 'good school' for their children" (Lipman, 2011, p. 161).

Such ideological projects impacting the educational landscape has prompted students and communities of color to also implement spatial practices to make spaces for themselves, i.e., make place. Where they experience feelings of alienation and marginalization, students have created *counterspaces* to validate and support their racial and ethnic identities. Other students have drawn on their cultural knowledge to both learn in and navigate educational contexts; and to combat oppressive policies shaping their communities and schools, students have engaged in activist spaces to bring about social change.

Some educational researchers have talked about the creation of spaces within school campuses by students, which they term *counterspaces*, as a reaction to marginalization within the educational context. For example, Case and Hunter (2012) describe counterspaces as sites that facilitate the promotion of a positive self-concept and as places that challenge deficit-oriented notions of a marginalized individuals' identities. Counterspace literature also focuses on how students that face oppressive structures often create counterspaces to contest their marginal status on campus in order to show how space is given meaning and becomes a place. Several scholars discuss that while students of color confront racial microaggressions on college campuses, the counterspaces they create serve as places where deficit notions of people of color are challenged, their experiences are validated and seen as important, and they can share similar experiences; thus, creation of these counterspaces is a strategy of survival and response to students' marginal status on their campuses (Solorzano et al., 2000; Villalpando, 2003).

While Latina/o/x students often have feelings of alienation and marginalization on college campuses, peer groups found in counterspaces are important for college students to challenge their marginal status. Villalpando (2003) examines the racial Balkanization, i.e., the

47

perceived tendency of students of color to self-segregate and form peer group enclaves, that occurs as a result of the racially oppressive environments Latina/o/x students encounter in college. Students seek out such peer groups because of the white supremacy that permeates college campuses. The peer groups these students create empower Latina/o/x student success despite the racially oppressive environment they experience.

Likewise, when examining the racial microaggressions confronted by African American students at three college campuses, Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) discovered that academic and social counterspaces are created by students to challenge microaggressions. They note that these counterspaces serve as places where deficit notions of people of color are challenged, where these students' experiences are validated and seen as important, and where students can share similar experiences.

In a study on identity-affirming counterspaces at a predominantly White high school, Carter (2007) found that many Black students claimed "the Stairs" as a social gathering place to enact fictive kinship based on their shared collective social identity and enjoy "self-initiated racial spotlighting" to maintain a strong sense of their racial identity and academic achievement. Similarly, while "making space" at school using sociospatial, performative, and political/ institutional strategies, Venzant Chambers & McCready (2011) found that students affirmed their multiple social identities by, for example, enrolling in the same classes as their peers or interrupting the dominant heteronormative dress code by wearing clothing deemed inappropriate for one's gender.

Others have explored spaces of student activism. Some scholars speak of this in terms of *youth civic engagement*, occurring within various student groups. Youth civic engagement

involves youth learning about an issue that concerns them, collectively addressing the problem through decision-making with peers, and organizing action to address the issue (Rogers, et al., 2012). Other scholars focus on more overt forms of activism. *Transformation resistance* refers to activism that critiques oppressive structures (i.e., schooling) and is motivated by social justice (i.e., wanting to change oppressive educational structures). The focus in these spaces is students as civic and politicized actors seeking to shape their schools by engaging within these activist and resistant spaces.

For example, some youth organizing groups were created so to insert the voices of low-income youth of color into the public sphere, by providing members with "a meeting place, stable staff, and capacity to secure more resources and develop longer-term strategies" (Rogers & Terriquez 2013, p. 3). The focus of youth organizing is to support young peoples' understanding of the structural forces shaping their lives and provide adolescents with opportunities for civic experiences that involve them in collectively addressing and acting on issues that affect their communities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Terriquez, 2015). Youth organizing spaces are also conceived of as learning environments wherein members take part in academic skill and sociopolitical identity development (Kirshner, 2007). In their examination of three youth organizing campaigns, Rogers et al. (2012) asserted that involvement in youth organizing leads to a "transformative" civic engagement in which students "reexamine their lived experience through the lens of power" (p. 56). These spaces help youth take on civic identities as agents of change and actors in their communities.

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) programs have also been conceptualized as spaces where youth learn and utilize tools for educational and social change. Students utilize

their own local knowledge, cooperative human efforts, and agency to take on an identity as producers of knowledge who have a role in transforming not only research and education, but also society. Students "from communities being negatively impacted by inequality" (Mirra et al., 2015, p. 32) develop a critical voice by speaking on their own behalf in dominant spaces of decision-making. For example, in their examination of one year within UCLA's Council of Youth Research, Mirra and colleagues (2015) found that as students reflected on the impact of their involvement in the Council, they explained that through the Council they were not only exposed to issues of inequality, but were also given the vocabulary and tools to speak back to inequities. Quijada Cerecer, et al. (2011) explain that youth working collaboratively identify experiences and conduct research in order to transform the conditions of their lives. For example, responding to xenophobic comments posted on the comment board of an article by the *Salt Lake Tribune*, students of the Mestizo Arts & Activism Collective responded by creating a photograph entitled "Caution" as part of their YPAR project, thus using art as a means to process and address the racism confronted by their community.

Other scholars have asserted that youth civic engagement increasingly occurs online, is expressive, and finds its identity in collective spaces (Bennett, 2008). Youth engagement with political issues is enabled by technology and social connectivity as they engage with blogs and post comments, create online groups, and circulate news stories in a context shaped by peers (Kahne, et al., 2014). This allows youth "to create 'spaces of representation' through which they can represent themselves to the wider public and insert themselves in the discourses of the bourgeois public sphere" (McCann, 1999, p. 169).

Kahne, et al. (2014) suggest that participatory politics involving informal groups that share a common political or social concern are enabled by the digital age via technology and social connectivity. The authors define participatory politics as spaces of political engagement and practices, such as investigation, dialogue, circulation, production, and mobilization, in a context that is shaped by peers instead of institutions. In other words, these spaces act outside of institutional politics such as political parties, news organizations, etc., that are driven by institutional gatekeepers and often relegate youth participation to the margins.

Similar to Kahne, et al. (2014), Constanza-Chock (2014) argues that "networked communication" that occurs online creates a sense of autonomy separate from dominant forms of communication such as mass media (which has traditionally served as the arena of public discourse), and thus shifts communication to civil society, leading to the assertion that the digital space expands discursive space. For example, to highlight the role of social networking sites (SNS) in media practices for mobilization, Constanza-Chock (2014) examined the role of MySpace as a digital public during a 2006 student walkout against the Sensenbrenner Immigration Bill and found that students engaged in this political protest by posting flyers created by peers, debating the issue, organizing tactics for collective action, and talking about their experiences after the walkout. Similarly, during their observation of a student-led walkout against an Arizona bill designed to ban the teaching of ethnic studies at schools, Otero and Cammarota (2011) saw examples of technological "cultural citizenship." Students created a cultural community around a perceived injustice by using social media and texting. Through these observations, Otero and Cammarota (2011) noted that students understood their role as citizens, and sought to contest and critique (via technology) a system that was depriving them of

51

their rights as citizens and a just education. These spaces (youth organizing groups, YPAR, and the digital sphere) highlight forms of student activism and examine how students combat oppressive policies affecting their schools and communities, potentially shaping their schools. Meanwhile, counterspaces show how youth either make space within schools or intervene in school spaces to form spaces of self-assertion and belonging.

Other scholars point to the ways in which youth enact their cultural knowledge in school spaces. Soja's (1986) Thirdspace theory in educational research has been conceptualized as occurring within the classroom space for disciplinary learning (Gutierrez, 2008; Gutierrez et al., 1999; Moje et al. 2004). The classroom design of Thirdspace includes a discussion of official space, unofficial space, and hybrid space. While official space involves the script of the teacher, contains the cultural values of dominant groups, and utilizes school texts and content-specific discourse practices, unofficial space includes home, local practices and knowledge, and students' own counterscripts. The use of both spaces interacts in the Thirdspace, a hybrid space that uses difference as a resource and wherein varied activities may be oppositional but transformative in creating new learning spaces (Moje, 2007). What is important in Thirdspace is what students bring with them into the classroom, which some scholars have termed as *funds of knowledge*, i.e., the strategic and cultural resources found in the homes and social environments of Mexican-American students (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, 2005). Thirdspace recognizes that prior knowledge comes from particular familial and community systems of knowledge, and therefore validates household and community praxis as assets students bring with them to school and into classroom spaces.

Similarly, humanities scholars have illuminated how Latina/o/x communities interrogate the cultural to intervene in space. Blackwell (2011), for instance, discusses how during the Chicano Movement Chicanas implemented a *retrofitted memory* to assert their existence within *machista* activist spaces on university campuses. By exerting a Chicana political agency, they brought to the forefront a new political feminist subjectivity, grounded within narratives of the past. Chicana student activists used images and print media to bring about a feminist historical agency by reworking female figures from the Mexican Revolution as a political strategy of remembrance, building a new framework of a Chicana counterpublic through print community that centered women (Blackwell, 2011). Similarly, Chicana/o/x studies scholar Genevieve Carpio (2016) asserts that "where communities without authoritative representation have lacked access to brick and mortar, they have adapted song, paint, and their own bodies to invoke claims to place" (p. 6). Carpio (2016) examined the ways Latina/o/x undergraduates at Yale used digital installation pop-ups about Latina/o/x histories as a form of spatial intervention in spaces historically denied to people of color in order to make place-based claims. By focusing on activism in the built environment, Carpio (2016) views digital pop-ups as a way to combat spatial inequality with forms of cultural expression by "drawing from traditions of guerrilla projection, by casting images generated by and about people of color onto courtyards and administration buildings" (p. 7-8). These digital projections, in turn, create community and center social struggle as a means to make place. These examples point to the way youth may assert their right to exist in school spaces, and open up space for community as a locus of youth activity to one of social and cultural belonging, a cultural congregation of sorts, that serves as a type of counter-hegemonic cultural practice.

In the next chapter, I provide a description of my methodology to understand how a group of four Latina student leaders at one urban high school in Los Angeles made place at their school.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

This study is about how a group of Latina student leaders – Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel – created spaces of social membership, meaning, and belonging. I conducted this study during the 2018-2019 school year at a small school in Southeast Los Angeles, an area wherein each high school enrolls over 96% Latina/o/x students. I was interested in how these students brought their culture, identity, community context, or history to make and shape these spaces. I particularly focused on the relationship between students' efforts at making place, i.e., place-making, and school space. I designed this as an ethnographic study that sought to understand:

1. How do Latina student leaders at one urban high school in Los Angeles make place?

2. In what ways is this place-making informed by their culture, identity, community context or history?

3. To what extent does their place-making shape school space?

In this chapter, I provide an explanation of my methodology. I begin with a statement of my positionality as both a researcher and educator in the community where this study took place. I then include a history and description of my research site, as well as its community context (which I also expand on in the next chapter). Lastly, I go over each part of my ethnographic research design, such as the methods I employed, and my data analysis scheme.

Positionality

Prior to engaging in this research, I was a high school history teacher and student activities director in the community where I conducted this study. As Activities Director, I worked closely with leadership students to plan school dances, lunchtime games, assemblies,

class competitions, etc., in order to provide the student body with opportunities for enjoyment at school. At a policy level, my interest in this project was also influenced by what I saw occurring inside schools between the years 2008 and 2014. Those years were the height of the No Child Left Behind Era when schools were subject to increased stress due to accountability. I worked as a teacher at a recently reconstituted high school in Southeast Los Angeles, a predominantly Latina/o/x, working class community. In spite of the stress created by LAUSD efforts to "transform" the school because of its history of not meeting accountability sanctions, I quickly learned to understand that school transformation meant to increase test scores, attendance rates, and graduation rates while decreasing truancy rates; in other words, the term meant changing things that could be quantified through data about the school. Transformation also assumed that educators were central leaders in this endeavor. New staff was hired to increase school performance and take it out of its history of "failure." Transformation did not mean changing the life, environment, or sense of belonging or place at the school, nor did it mean centering students as actors within their school. It became about performance, and performance the school could show through numbers.

My prior knowledge with youth place-making drew heavily on these experiences as well as my identity as a first-generation Latina. I related to my Latina/o/x students on a personal level because of our similar knowledges, practices, and sensibilities from being raised in similar households and communities. However, it was not until graduate school that I began to think systematically about how these students were drawing from their local contexts to create and shape their school spaces to ones of belonging, membership, and meaning.

I therefore do not come to this research completely neutral nor as an outsider to the community context of my study. As a former educator in this part of Los Angeles, I am known by former students, parents, and educators. During my data collection, I often felt like this brought up issues of power in terms of the adult-student relationship between myself and my research participants. The students in my study saw me interacting with their teachers as colleagues, and often brought up questions about how I knew their teachers. I addressed my participants' questions by emphasizing that I was conducting this study to learn from *their* experiences and therefore, *they* were the experts in this project.

My background in ethnic studies as an undergraduate, a teacher for six years, a director of student activities, and as a doctoral student in education also surely affected how I carried out my research activities. My conceptual background (in both ethnic studies and education) has made me sensitive to categories related to school space, culture and identity, place-making, and place. My teacher identity in a majority-Latina/o/x school, as well as my personal identity as a Latina, lead me to carefully consider the resources students draw upon for their place-making. My various experiences thus have fueled my aim of constructing a better understanding and description of these students' impact on school spaces and places.

At a ground level and in an everyday context, students' educational experiences and their presence within schools is so much more than a story of being, one acted upon by educational policies. It is also one of agency, hope, and reimagining what schools are and can be for youth. Thus, I asked myself in what ways can education think of students as central to making and shaping their schools instead of the other way around? The large Latina/o/x student population in Los Angeles and their rising numbers in school districts across the country makes LAUSD

schools particularly significant sites to explore and center what Latina/o/x youth bring with them into schools – their multiple identities and ways of being that are bred out of particular social and cultural contexts which impact the environment at the school – in spite of broader processes (such as reforms) already shaping schools.

<div align="center">**Site & Context**</div>

While roughly three-fourths of all students in LAUSD are Latina/o/x, in some schools almost all students are Latina/o/x. This context provides a particularly useful lens to understand how Latina/o/x youth bring their culture, identity, community context, and history into school spaces to make places of meaning and belonging. I conducted this study at one high school in Los Angeles during the 2018-2019 school year. Since the focus of my study was Latina/o/x youth place-making and school space, the sampling of the school was purposeful. The majority-Latina/o/x make-up of the school's student body was important to this study because Latina/o/x youth are the primary users of school spaces.

Pride School

Pride High School (pseudonym), located in Southeast Los Angeles, served as the site for my study. It is one of three small pilot schools co-located at the Dolores Huerta High School (DHHS) complex. According to data about the school, in the 2018-2019 school year there were 700 students enrolled. Out of this student population, 99% (693) identified as "Hispanic or Latino" and 93% (651) were considered "socioeconomically disadvantaged."[7]

DHHS first opened during the 2012-2013 academic year. It was one of several educational complexes built during the early 2000s as part of LAUSD's $19.5 billion New

---

[7] These statistics were obtained from the California Department of Education DataQuest: https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/

School Construction and Modernization Program. The construction and opening of DHHS

promised students and families the opportunity to attend a "safe and healthy neighborhood

school operating on a traditional, two-semester calendar" (LAUSD Board of Education, 2018).

To offset overcrowding at the local traditional public high school that enrolled 5,000 students and

operated on a year-round track schedule, DHHS became another neighborhood school option for

students and parents living in the community. Within DHHS, there are three autonomous pilot

schools: Justice School, Liberty School, and Pride School.[8]

Pilot schools provide a layer of "choice" for students and parents within school districts

as they act as semi-deregulated schools in districts. In 1993, the Boston School Committee and

the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) negotiated the creation of "pilot schools," also known as

"deregulated schools" and "smarter charters," that would act as in-district charter schools

(Knoester, 2011). These pilot schools received funding from Boston Public School (BPS) and

their teachers were members of the BTU, receiving the same salary and benefits as non-pilot

school teachers. A key difference, however, between regular public schools and pilot schools in

BPS was that pilot schools were granted some aspects of deregulation from District guidelines

via autonomy over their budgets, the hiring of teachers, curriculum development, and school-

level governance. They held the promise of local autonomy and the potential to effectively

improve teaching and learning, as well as allow for a teacher-driven atmosphere (Payne, 2013).

BPS pilot schools became a model of autonomy for other school districts across the country,

including LAUSD. What is unique about pilot schools is the autonomy they have over school-

based issues such as curriculum, staffing, and governance. These are also schools that provide

---

[8] All school names are pseudonyms.

students and parents with choice (Knoester, 2011) when they would otherwise have to attend their assigned local school.

Pilot schools began in LAUSD in 2007 with the ratification of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between LAUSD and the teachers union, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), to establish a Belmont Zone of Choice (Teacher Powered Schools, 2020). This MOU allowed for the creation of teacher-led schools to operate in a given geographical area alongside traditional and charter schools, and students and families would then be allowed a choice among them all. This move was seen as "representing a powerful community-based, teacher-driven reform movement within the nation's second largest school district" (UCLA Center for Community Schooling, 2018).

The MOU capped the number of pilot schools at ten, but since the time of the original Belmont Zone of Choice, other Zones emerged. In 2009, the Public School Choice initiative grew strength during the anticipated openings of new school buildings, thus UTLA ratified another MOU – for additional pilot schools – in 2011 (Oltman, 2013). Twenty-two (22) new pilot schools opened in eight new buildings during the 2010-2012 academic years. Pride School, along with two other co-located pilots in DHHS, was one of these schools.

"New," "innovative," "small," and "autonomous" were descriptors Pride School and other pilot schools were ascribed. During the ribbon cutting event of DHHS, a District press release described Pride School as "a small college-prep school committed to providing students with opportunities to explore health related careers and professions." (LAUSD Board of Education, 2018). Today, one in 18 LAUSD students attend a pilot school (UCLA Center for

60

Community Schooling, 2018). According to Pride School's Principal, Mr. Perez, the small school model affords him the opportunity to know each of his students are:

> I know all my students. It is an anomaly for a principal, but I think that it's a possibility in these small school models. I think that it's unforgivable if you're at a small school and you do not know your students. It lends itself to it. In fairness, if I had a school with 4,000 kids, it's really hard to know 4,000 kids. We sell relationships [here] all the time. (interview)

Pilot schools are an important model of schooling for low-income students because, in comparison to traditional schools, they have higher graduation and college enrollment rates. Students are also more likely to "feel safe, happy, supported, and respected" in a positive school culture (UCLA Center for Community Schooling, 2018).

The three pilots schools at DHHS are co-located. They share common areas such as the Welcome Center, a library, the cafeteria, sports teams, and afterschool activities, yet each remains autonomous from the other in several ways. They have their own classes, staffs, budgets, rules, and regulations (e.g., bell schedules, course requirements, mascots), and each school has a designated hallway wherein their classrooms are housed.

Different from the collective bargaining agreement set by UTLA for non-pilot teachers, pilot school teachers have their own Elect-to-Work Agreements (ETWA) that the staff co-write (Teacher Powered Schools, 2020). Teachers outline the conditions they agree to for working at the school. Mr. Perez explained that through Pride School's ETWA, teachers agree to be central to the student life at the school:

> When you think of a high school, everyone always kind of naturally gravitates to athletics, and athletics is but portion of what a school does for kids in terms of extracurricular activities. So, our goal here, especially when we wrote the Elect-to-Work Agreement, and I wrote the original Elect-to-Work Agreement with basically certain things that I had in mind for opportunities for kids. So, one of

the things that our teachers are required to do is that they're required to sponsor
some sort of other organization. So, you could be an athletic coach. You can be a
sponsor for leadership. You can be a sponsor for the Bible Club. You can be the
Marching Band instructor. We wanted every teacher who has a unique
perspective on life and also some unique interests that they could pass on or share
with students. So, the idea was that if it's something that you really love to do
like, let's say hiking, that you would start a hiking club because you want to
expose kids that. (interview)

The set-up of these teacher-inspired activities, i.e., clubs, Band, etc., and the spaces in which they

occurred were central to my study.

In order to recruit the Pride School to serve as the site for my study, I approached the Mr.

Perez to explain the nature of the project and its aims. After UCLA's internal review board and

LAUSD's Committee for External Research Review granted assurance that the study adhered to

all regulations regarding research with human subjects, I confirmed the School sites agreement to

participate, and commenced research activities, including recruitment of student participants, in

October 2018.

Participants

Although I had observed Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel in the context of my own

previous observation of the School's spaces, I "officially" met them through an introduction by

their teachers. My initial sampling was not guided by strict criteria: I asked educators at the

School to suggest students who contributed to and were invested in the life of the School and

these teachers, along with my own observations, drew me to these four focus students. Since

Pride School is small in enrollment, I remember distinctly when I first noticed these particular

students. For example, I recall first observing Emily in her English class and coming across her

in the hallway before the beginning of lunch on other occasions. Azul was the student that stood

out the most from my observations of the School: I had seen her in the Quad setting up for a lunchtime activity, decorating the hallways, running up to Mr. Perez to ask a question, etc. I often saw Olivia in the Music Room, delivering for Breakfast in the Classroom or helping tune guitars for the morning class for which she was a service worker. During one of my lunchtime chats with Mr. Perez as he supervised the Quad, he pointed out Maribel and shared that she was heavily involved in community service.

In the process of recruiting these students, I discovered they all had prominent roles on campus. Emily was Vice President of the Humanitarians Club and a member of the Youth Action Club. Azul served as Associated Student Body (ASB) president and was enrolled in the School's Leadership class. Olivia was a drum major in Pride School's Marching Band and a member of the Jazz Band. Olivia was President of Key Club, ASB Vice President, and was also enrolled in the Leadership class. So, the way that this study became about Latina leaders occurred organically, through my observations, within the context of the classroom, and via adult presence.

A signed and dated consent form was obtained from all participants before starting research activities. Student assent was obtained before a parent or guardian was approached for permission so to ensure that the student had an independent opportunity to consider participation. Letters explaining the study and appropriate consent/assent forms were given to all participants prior to commencement of research activities to provide them with sufficient time to consider participation, consult with others, and review the forms. Students were informed about the purpose of the study and reminded that their participation was voluntary, and they were ensured that their identities would remain confidential. I met with each prospective participant to review

the consent form, provide an oral explanation of the study, and answer any questions. All written material sent to the parents of students were available in Spanish in case that was the preferred language of the parents or guardians. All participants were given a copy of the consent form to keep for their records. The participants and their guardians had one week to decide if they wished to participate. All participants were also asked if they had additional questions or requests for clarification prior to data collection.

I transcribed interviews, and the data was coded so that only I knew the identities of the research subjects. Confidentiality was maintained by means of keeping all recorded interviews anonymous and password protected. I assigned a code to each participants' interview, and the coded recordings did not have any personal identifying information.

While my study aimed to gather substantial data to think about how Latina/o/x youth shape school spaces, it also sought to minimize disruptions to instruction and not burden participants' personal time. The number of participants represents a sample that was large enough to give insights into the range of experiences with place-making at the School while also limiting the commitment to this study to a small percentage of individuals at the School. All participants received a $40 amazon gift card for their participation. After completing all phases of the study, student participants were given the gift card at the conclusion of the focus group.

Research Design

I designed this study as an ethnographic case study (Bassey, 2003; Yin, 2013) that used an interpretive approach to understand (a) place-making, (b) what informed this place-making, and (c) the extent to which students utilized place-making to shape school space. Ethnographic research has traditionally been the method for studying a culture in an authentic context

(Anderson-Levitt, 2006) and requires a researcher to directly engage with participants through observation and interviews (Willis, 2007). "Ethnographers are committed to going out and getting close to the activities and everyday experiences of other people… in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important" (Emerson et al., 2011, pp. 2-3). This approach required me to spend time at the school site, develop a relationship with each participant, and be present in the subjects' everyday experiences.

Meanwhile, case study research focuses on the examination of a particular context, process, person, etc., and the real contexts in which they occur (Willis, 2007). For this study, I focused on four students as case studies at one school. Several advantages of the case study approach is that it allowed me to gather rich, detailed data of my participants within one school setting, center their lived experiences within the school, and have tentative ideas of what I observed though be open to reformulation as the study moved forward.

My aim was not to generalize but instead understand a particular context; therefore, my interpretive approach to this research study was situated in the understandings of the youths, their experiences, and their actions at one school while bounded to one school year. This phenomenological (Merriam, 2009) approach to research was intended to develop a full and rich understanding of the everyday life of the school of my case study participants, as well as that of other students whom I observed within the larger school context.

The research design was separated into three parts over two school semesters during the 2018-2019 academic year. During the academic year, I interacted with students during the fall semester and the spring semester; over the summer, I interviewed three School educators.

Fall Semester (October - December)

During the fall semester, research activities involved whole-school observations where I: 1) began to explore the various components of my research questions (and was open to their limitations, reformulations, etc.); 2) started to get a sense of and familiarize myself with the overall school environment; 3) maintained fieldnotes of what I observed in various school spaces; and, 3) began to identify potential student participants for the second part of my study. This first component took a macro, school-level view of youth place-making, while the second part of my study involved a more in-depth understanding of this through focus student participants.

Spring Semester (January - June)

I shifted to a more individualized understanding of youth place-making at the start of the spring semester by focusing on the experiences of my four case study students, Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel. Given the ethnographic approach to this study, I also interacted with and observed nonparticipants such as friends and teachers of my study participants. I recruited these ancillary students at the beginning of second semester. This data collection component involved the following: 1) a school tour via a hand-drawn map by the four case students, followed by an individual semi-structured interviews; 2) observations of individual students throughout their school day (attendance at classes, club meetings, etc.); and, 3) a focus group interview with all student participants. The aim was to situate the study in a more in-depth look at the experiences of a focused sample of students.

Summer (June-July)

After I concluded my research activities with focus students, I interviewed three

educators during the months of June and July. The school Principal, Key Club Advisor, and

Leadership Advisor were these educators I interviewed with the aim to get a more nuanced

understanding of student place-making at the Pride School. The activities involved with each

research timeframe are shown in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Summary of three sets of research activities

Fall Semester (October - December)	Spring Semester (January - June)	Summer (June-July)
Secure research site School-level observations	With each of the 4 student participants: • School tour • Interview • Observations • Focus group or interview	Interview with educators

Methods

I conducted my study at one school, Pride High School, where five data collection

methods were carried out:

1) School observations

2) Student school tour & semi-structured interview

3) Student observations

4) Student focus group or interview

5) Structured interview with educators

The timeline for these research methods are shown in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: Timeline of research methods

October - December	January - February	February - May	May - June	June - July
School Observations	Student Tour & Interview	Student Observations	Student Focus Group or interview	Interview with educators

School Observations

The first set of observations took place in the School's main level – the quad, the hallways, classrooms, etc. In order to get a sense of the general landscape of the School, observe students in their everyday environment, and record events as they were happening, I engaged in school observations during the fall semester (October-December) for six weeks. I was flexible in my schedule for these observations but sought to attend two to four different sites each week so to observe a variety of activities, events, participants, behaviors of individuals and groups, conversations, and interactions in these specific school spaces.

While ethnographic observations involve entering a social setting, getting to know it and the people within it, and the various activities taking place, the ethnographer also "writes down in regular, systematic ways what she observes and learns while participating in the daily rounds of the lives of others" and creates "an accumulating written record of these observations and experiences" (Emerson et al., 2011, p.1). In my fieldnotes, I documented preliminary interpretations of how students were engaging in place-making at their school, how these places were informed by their community context, history, culture, and identity, and how the students were potentially shaping school space. I made sure to (a) describe the setting of what was being observed, (b) details what activities were taking place, (c) document what was being said or done, and (d) connect observations to my research questions. These fieldnotes were studied and reviewed during data analysis and served as a preliminary method for thinking about my three

research aims: Latina/o/x youth place-making; how these activities were informed by students' community context, history, culture, and identity; and, how we could conceptualize youth place-making as shaping school spaces.

Student School Tour, Semi-Structured Interview, Observations & Focus Group

Drawing from my fall semester observations and interactions, I recruited four students to be case studies for my research. In order to gather a more in-depth understanding of youth place-making within an everyday school context, I got to know these students and observed them throughout their school day during the spring semester (January - June). With each participant I 1) "went on a tour" of the School, followed by a semi-structured, in-depth interview, 2) observed each on five to ten occasions, and 3) conducted a focus group or exit interview with all participants.

School Tour. The aim of the school tours was to get a sense of what areas of the School each student participant was drawn to, how she conceived of those spaces, and how she viewed herself in those spaces. Students drew a mental map of "their" school which included spaces were meaningful to them, to which they could attach a story, where they spent most of their time, etc. Each student brought her maps when we met for the interview. We "went on a tour" of their school via their school map while they explained and described the spaces they had included on their maps. In ethnography, *mapping* of communities and neighborhoods has been used as a way to engage students in representing a place and their lived experiences within it (Powell, 2010; Lynch, 1960). *Photo mapping* – giving participants cameras to take photos of neighborhood spaces – is another strategy of mapping (Richardson et al., 2017). I used these approaches as the aim of the school tours. However, since I was also interested in the language my students used to

describe particular spaces at the school, my strategy was to ask for a description of each student's map during the interview portion of the study.

Semi-Structured In-Depth Interview. In-depth interviewing, as a method, puts at the center the experiences of people and the meaning they make out of their experiences. It likewise involves asking open-ended questions that allow for the participant to reconstruct experiences by having the participant provide (a) a general explanation of their experience, (b) details of their experience, and (c) reflections on the meaning they make of their experiences (Seidman, 1991). The interviews I conducted with students were semi-structured, so guided by a list of open-ended questions (Merriam, 2009) that focused on: 1) involvement in school, 2) life history and family context, 3) identity and culture, and 4) community context. The interviews were intended to get a sense of the nature of the students' involvement within school and how their life outside of school might influence their involvement at school.

Observation. I shadowed and observed each student on between five and ten different occasions. Most of my communication and scheduling of observations took place over email. The students emailed me particular classes, meetings, and events they thought would be good times for me to observe them. I also emailed them to suggest other observation times in order to get a larger picture of their life at school. I kept fieldnotes of these observations to document how their place-making activities played out within an everyday context, and soon began to make connections with their interview responses. In the fieldnotes I (a) described the setting of what was being observed, (b) described what activities were taking place, (c) documented what was being said or done, and (d) connected observations to preliminary themes emerging in interviews.

Focus Group. As a method, a focus group involves an interview on a topic with a group of people who are knowledgeable about the topic (Merriam, 2009). Although my initial aim was to have all four student participants take part in one focus group interview, scheduling did not completely allow for this. I conducted one focus group interview with two students, Olivia and Maribel, and individual interviews with Emily and Azul using the same discussion prompts. The focus of these discussion was to define their place-making activities and their own impact on the school by drawing on their individual experience to collectively identify core domains for linking their assertion of place-making to shaping school space.

I presented six preliminary analysis themes which emerged from the school observations, student tours, interviews, and student observations.

1. All of you in in this room contribute to the creation of various spaces at the school: various clubs such as Key Club, Humanitarians, Youth Action, and other school programs such as Leadership, the music program, and yearbook. You are involved in these because they are meaningful spaces to you wherein you feel like you belong and are in some way connected to the school.

2. You were initially drawn to these spaces as opportunities to be social, meet people, or be with friends.

3. In your interview, you described your community as a place where people go through hardship, but there is also resiliency, unity, and hard work that happens here. What you have seen happen in your community has impacted or motivated you to be a part of these spaces.

71

4. You are all student leaders on campus in one way or another. You identify strongly with the experiences of your family, both here in the U.S. and in the countries where your family is from, and have learned how to be a leader at school because of these experiences.

5. In the places where you play a leadership role, you do what you do for others, to benefit them and the school.

6. One aspect I did not expect to explore was gender, but all of you identify as Latinas so I would like to ask: Is there something you can say about being a Latina and the role you play in these spaces?

Student participants were prompted to engage in collaborative data analysis. The following questions served as guides for the discussion:

1. Do you believe your experiences align with this theme? Explain.

2. Do you believe your experiences are the opposite of this theme? Explain.

3. Is there an alternative framing, suggestion, or comment you have about this theme?

Structured Interviews with Educators

At the end of my study, I interviewed three educators at the school: the Principal (Mr. Perez), Key Club Advisor (Ms. Rojas), and the Leadership Advisor (Ms. Smith). These educators were purposely selected because they were the adults I had observed working with youth in spaces that were meaningful to my research participants. The purpose of these interviews was to get a sense of how these adults viewed students' role in shaping the school environment. The structured interview questions were pre-determined (Merriam, 2009). The first set of questions

72

dealt more generally with understanding the School and its students, the next set of questions dealt with the School spaces that these adults were a part of and how they viewed youth involvement in these spaces, and the last set of questions dealt with the structures put in place to involve youth at the School. A summary of the methods I used to answer the research questions is illustrated in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3*: Summary of methods utilized to answer research questions*

Research Question	Methods
1. How do Latina student leaders at one urban high school in Los Angeles make place?	• School observations • Student tours • Student observations
2. In what ways is place-making informed by students' culture, identity, community context or history?	• Student interviews • Student observations
3. To what extent does their place-making shape school space?	• School observations • Student focus groups • Interview with educators

Methods Rationale

To address the first research question, I engaged in school observations, took a school tour by way of students' maps, and observed individual students throughout their day. Part of what I sought to gauge from the school observations was which place-making activities were taking place at the School to form spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging. The school tours shed light on places in the School that were meaningful and important to the student and were spaces in which they made place. The student observations illuminated how students' place-making occurred in an everyday context and I began to make connections of what I observed with students' interview responses.

73

To address the second question, I conducted student interviews, and observed individual students throughout their day. The purpose of the semi-structured, in depth interviews was to get to know the student's life history and family context, identity and culture, and community context so to use this information to interpret their place-making. I shadowed and observed each student on five to ten separate occasions and maintained ethnographic fieldnotes that documented how student place-making occurred in an everyday context. I also began to make connections with their interview responses to see to what extent they drew on their culture, identity, community context, and history to make these spaces at the school.

To address the third question, I engaged in school observations, conducted a focus group/ interview with students, and interviewed educators at the school. The school observations served as an initial lens through which I, as the researcher, made my own interpretations as to how youth were shaping school space. Since I was interested in how students themselves conceptualized their place-making as an effort to make place at school, the focus group served as the main source of data for conceptualizing to what extent they believed they shaped school spaces to their place. To get a more nuanced understanding of the role of students in shaping school space, I asked three educators who work with these students to provide their insights.

Data Analysis

Throughout my analysis of the data, I largely used inductive reasoning which allowed for "generalizations, concepts, or hypotheses [to] emerge from the examination of data – data grounded in the context itself" (Willis, 2007, p. 239). As Spradley (1980) states, "analysis is a search for *patterns*" (p. 85). Throughout my research analysis process, I maintained analytic memos of the various stages of data analysis, both during data collection and after.

Analytic Memos

Part of my data analysis throughout and after collection involved writing periodic analytic memos. Analytic memos serve as generative reflections during the research project and create a narrative of the analysis process to find relationships between various stages of the research process (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). Saldaña (2009) describes memos as "a place to 'dump your brain' about the participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation by thinking and thus writing and thus thinking even more about them" (p. 32). Saldaña (2009, p. 32) outlines the following points to consider and reflect on when writing analytic memos:

- how you personally relate to the participants and/or the phenomenon

- your study's research questions

- your code choices and their operational definitions

- the emergent patterns, categories, themes, and concepts

- the possible networks (links, connections, overlaps, flows) among the codes, patterns, categories, themes, and concepts

- an emergent or related existent theory

- any problems with the study

- any personal or ethical dilemmas with the study

- future directions for the study

- the analytic memos generated thus far

- the final report for the study

Analysis took place during and after data collection via these analytic memos wherein I basically had a conversation with myself about what I was thinking, what I saw emerge in relation to my research questions, etc.

I also treated each of my research questions as the various points of my data analysis cycle (Table 4.4):

Figure 4.4: *Summary of methods and analysis utilized to answer research questions*

Research Question	Methods	Analysis
1. How do Latina student leaders at one urban high school in Los Angeles make place?	• School observations • Student tours • Student observations	Place Diagram — look for indicators Bazeley's (2013) parent codes
2. In what ways is place-making informed by students' culture, identity, community context or history?	• Student interviews • Student observations	Grounded theory
3. To what extent does their place-making shape school space?	• School observations • Student focus groups • Interview with educators	Collaborative data analysis Grounded theory

RQ1 Data. My handling of the data to address my first research question (observations and tours) involved coding for instances of youth place-making. To identify youth place-making activities, I coded the student tours, my whole-school, and student observations differently.

Observations. Bazeley (2013) suggests that, "For research projects which deal with the lives and interactions of people, the kinds of labels that most appropriately act as parent codes tend to be general terms that are often quite predictable from the start of the coding process" (p. 182). To begin my analysis of how youth were making place at their school, I used Bazeley's suggested parent codes to get an overall picture of the dynamics taking place at the school. These were the parent codes I used to code my fieldnotes:

- People/Actors/Players

- Events

- Actions

- Context (situation)

- Strategies

- Issues

- Attitudes

- Beliefs/Ideological position/Frameworks

- Emotional responses or states

- Personal characteristics

- Impact/Outcome

School Tours. To code the student tours, I used the The Place Diagram[9] by Project for Public Spaces, a nonprofit planning and design organization, as a guide to code for language and other indicators of how youth create place and engage in place-making activities. Student activities fell into four identified domains:

- Sociability (i.e., interactive, cooperative, welcoming)

- Uses and Activities (i.e. ,fun, useful, special)

- Comfort and Image (i.e., safe, historic, spiritual)

- Access and Linkages (i.e., continuity, connected, convenient)

RQ2 Data. Once place-making activities had been identified, I employed a grounded theory method (Glaser & Strauss, 2017), which allowed for themes to emerge from the interview

---

[9] Retrieved from: https://www.pps.org/article/grplacefeat

data to illuminate how students' place-making activities were informed by their community context, history, culture, and identity. First, I listened and read through the interviews to get a general sense of responses such as how the students spoke about their community context, history, culture, and identity influenced the ways they were in school. I then made links to the observations and school tours, and these became preliminary themes for the next phase of data analysis, the focus group interview. I listed and described these themes as they emerged.

RQ3 Data. This master list of all coded preliminary themes was examined in greater detail during the focus group interview, a collaborative data analysis phase with student participants. The student participants and I discussed preliminary themes I identified from the two steps explained above. The purpose of this was to have participants further reflect on their experiences and discuss the extent to which they believed their experiences refuted or aligned with each preliminary theme. This process also served as a form of member-checking, which involved discussing emerging findings with participants and was a source of providing credibility for research assertions (Willis, 2007).

Validity & Reliability

Besides member-checking during the focus group interview in which I presented my preliminary analysis themes to participants (Merriam, 2009), there were other ways I approached the validity and reliability of my findings. Once all sources were coded, the final phase of data analysis involved the use of a comparative approach to list recurring themes across all data sources. Large conceptual themes emerged from preliminary analysis and guided the coding scheme, and I later reconfigured these to capture the meanings that emerged from the data. I utilized concept mapping to link the recurring themes and to identify shared experiences as

revealed through the four data sources of tours, interviews, observations, and focus groups. As

Maxwell (2005) states, these maps can "help you see unexpected connections or identify holes or

contradictions in your theory and help you figure out ways to resolve these" (p. 47). I

triangulated my analysis from all four sources to corroborate my findings (Merriam, 2009). In

the three chapters that follow, I present my findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: PLACE-MAKING AS PLACE-BASED SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel were leaders on their campus. When I first met them, they each talked about the school spaces they were a part of. They shared what they did in those spaces, and it became clear early on in my meeting them that they felt these spaces were meaningful and were about belonging. When I asked them why these spaces were meaningful, they each shared that place – i.e., their community context of Southeast Los Angeles – played a role in the ways they understood school spaces and their actions within them. Official maps of the school, along with those each student's mental mapping, proved revealing in understanding how these students viewed their place-making within Pride School, and how these views connected to other spatial scales of analysis such as the community context of their school.

I begin this chapter by providing a broad background of Los Angeles and a description of Southeast Los Angeles, the community of my student participants. Since the meanings students made out of school space are important to this study, I discuss Lefebvre's (1991) conception of *representational space* as that which is imagined by users of that space (in this case, my four student participants). I also discuss *representations of space* and how school official maps, as entities created by power, order the small school spatial arrangement of Pride School within the grander DHHS complex. My major discussion in this chapter delves into two pieces of information gathered from the school tours and student interviews: 1) students' descriptions of the school spaces they were involved in and how they imagined and made meaning of those spaces, and 2) students' descriptions of their personal and community context and how these informed what they did in the school spaces they described. Together, these two scales, the school and community contexts, suggest that a place-based approach to school leadership helps

80

illuminate why Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel strongly identified as "makers" of the school, illustrating that the interconnections between local leadership at schools and the community context of a school's location are important to student place-making. By engaging with a geographical perspective of student leadership, I end with a discussion of a place-based approach to school leadership. Specifically, I discuss how students' articulations of school space afford insight into understanding how their identities as makers of Pride School are tied to its community context.

Community Context: Southeast Los Angeles

Southeast Los Angeles, or "The Greater Eastside" of Los Angeles (Valle & Torres, 2000), encompasses the communities of Bell, Cudahy, Huntington Park, Maywood, and South Gate, the areas where Latina/o/x people have transformed the area's demographics and culture to one with a distinct Latina/o/x identity, one born out of a Los Angeles context and a transnational migrant experience (Kun, 2004). This "mini-megapolis of Latina/o regionalism" is dependent on Latina/o/x people as the primary users of space (Diaz, 2005), wherein "community, household, cultural practices, our bodies—[are] all sites for identity and for action" (Sassen 2000, p. xi) and are used to create particular places. These *barrios* have been defined as symbolic and cultural spaces that are "an increasingly essential resource of cultural memory, identity and pride" (Diaz, 2005, p. 348).

Los Angeles has long been a city marked by social spaces where people and cultures meet, interact, clash, and grapple with one another (Pratt, 1991). This often occurs through relations of domination and subordination. This is especially true in the racialized geographies of Los Angeles where, as Lipsitz (2006) has more generally revealed in *The Possessive Investment*

81

in Whiteness, race determines one's ability to purchase a home, live in a clean neighborhood, and/or have access to community resources such as banks and grocery stores. Race, thus, has clear spatial implications and plays an integral role in the production of space, such as in how Los Angeles was segregated and demarcated unequally after World War II via the *barrio*, the ghetto, and Chinatown, that are still divided today, and even in urban schools. To fully understand Southeast Los Angeles today, it is important to briefly review some of this history because it brought about this highly segregated, majority-Latina/o/x community.

Historical Context

As an industrial hub, Los Angeles drew people of color and immigrants into the city during and after World War II (Vargas, 2011). However, racially restrictive housing covenants, discriminatory lending policies, and other housing policies increased residential segregation and ensured that Whites remained spatially separate from people of color (Nicolaides, 2002). Major government agencies made home-ownership available almost exclusively to Whites with discriminatory lending policies (Hise, 2004; Lipsitz, 2006). Racially restrictive housing covenants were created to maintain white property values and redlined communities of color from receiving loans. These practices greatly impacted Mexican communities in Los Angeles. The Home Owners Loan Corporation, for example, described Boyle Heights as "hopelessly heterogeneous" and made up of "subversive racial éléments," making the area "unfit" for federal loans to potential homebuyers (Sanchez, 2010). Although these housing covenants were outlawed in 1948 (Sides, 2003), the *barrio* emerged in East Los Angeles as Latina/o/x people were still not afforded access to home loans and were still subject to redlining (Avila, 2004), while newly-racialized Whites, such as Jewish residents, moved to other areas of Los Angeles

82

(Sanchez, 2004). Thus, these federally-funded, racialized housing practices simultaneously limited spatial freedom for people of color while facilitating mobility for Whites (Ethington, 2000). As García (2018) highlights regarding the city of Oxnard, such housing restrictions "established an inextricable link between residential and school segregation" (p. 5).

In terms of education, the U. S. Supreme Court's 1955 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* threatened the segregation that Whites had strategically tried to maintain in Los Angeles. The threat of school integration, which had been avoided through residential segregation, became more prominent as the 1960s progressed. A school desegregation lawsuit filed against the Pasadena School District in 1963 applied *Brown* to California for the first time (Wollenberg, 1978); the California Supreme Court ruled that the Pasadena School District needed to correct racial imbalance in its schools regardless of residential segregation. Also in 1963, *Crawford v. Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles* (see Santos, 2016 for a discussion of the case) sought to desegregate Jordan High, a majority Black school, and South Gate High, a neighboring majority White school in Southeast Los Angeles (Nicolaides, 2002). Although a ruling was not given until 1970, California Superior Court Judge Alfred Gitelson found that in the seven years since the Pasadena ruling, schools in Los Angeles were still largely segregated with no attempted integration on the part of the District (Caughey & Caughey, 1973); as a result, Gitelson ordered the District to begin an integration program. Throughout the extended legal fight of this court case, full desegregation of Los Angeles schools never materialized. Nevertheless, *Crawford* had a lasting impact on the shifting demographics of the District. Historian Jack Schneider (2008) argues that those who feared integration acted upon this threat by leaving public schools– and Los Angeles itself. Thus, "white flight" from Los Angeles

83

gave way to struggling schools post-*Brown*: struggling, under-resourced, low-achieving – and non-white.

In 1960, most Los Angeles Latina/o/x people lived in East Los Angeles and residential concentration made it easier to enact relations of domination onto subordinated communities. Housing policies had cemented residential segregation and ensured that students of color attended segregated and inferior schools, thus excluding Black and Latina/o/x youth from the educational opportunities afforded to White children in other parts of the District. In 1968, approximately 10,000 Chicano students from East Los Angeles high schools walked out of their schools in a public display of student activism that came to be known as the "Blowouts"; this was an effort to bring attention to the second-class education Chicanos were receiving and to advocate for better schooling conditions (Kafka 2008). Specifically, the students in East Los Angeles high schools had low reading scores, low graduation and student retention rates, and culturally insensitive teachers (Rosen, 1974). Besides bringing attention to academic statistics, the Blowouts also combated English-only, and White middle-class norms and practices imposed on their schools by calling for more bilingual classes, the teaching of Chicano history, and the hiring of teachers who shared their racial background (MacDonald, 2004).

These student actions can be placed in context with other forms of domination that happened in the City and impacting communities of color. Urban renewal efforts located and identified "blighted" areas available for projects of redevelopment (Acuna, 1984). For communities of color in Los Angeles, these projects often meant dispossession and continued segregation in the Post-War Era. The U.S. Housing Acts of 1937 and 1949 allocated federal money for the removal of slums to build new public housing (Von Hoffman, 2000). One such

case involved Chavez Ravine, home to 1,100 Mexicans in 1957. Identified as a blighted area available for urban renewal, the Mexican families of Chavez Ravine were evicted from their homes under eminent domain to make way for the construction of the Elysian Park Heights housing project[10] (Hines, 1982). Freeway development – a symbol of progress supporting suburbanization – and White migration to the newly-built suburban communities, was also part of urban renewal (Avila, 2016). Throughout the 1950s and 60s, these freeways were constructed on and across parcels of land most affordable to the City. Neighborhoods in the Mexican community of Boyle Heights were physically divided by the construction of Freeways 10, 5 and 60, and people were dispossessed of their homes. As freeways made way for the connection of the urban to the suburban, Latina/o/x people living in East Los Angeles had little access to the housing market of the newly-constructed communities of the greater Los Angeles and suburbia, further solidifying racial segregation in Los Angeles (Avila, 2004).

Present Context

In the 1960s, deindustrialization impacted the job market in east, south, and southeast Los Angeles. Major factory closures such as Goodyear Tire, U.S. Steel, and General Motors along the Alameda Corridor – an industrial strip that runs from downtown Los Angeles to the harbor – eliminated unionized jobs for many working class Whites (Rocco, 1999; Solorzano & Velez, 2016), leaving a depressed job and housing market particularly in Southeast Los Angeles. As Whites moved out of the area, Latina/o/x people moved into areas east of the Corridor that were once denied to people of color (Hise, 2004). The city of Huntington Park, located in Southeast Los Angeles, is illuminative of these demographic changes. As Table 5.1 demonstrates, while in

---

[10] This construction of this housing project never happened. Instead, the clearing of Chavez Ravine made way for the construction of Dodger Stadium.

1970 the Latina/o/x population was 35.9% of the total population, ten years later it had more than doubled to 80.76%. Most recent data about the city states that Latina/o/x people make up 97.1 percent of the total population today.[11] Latina/o/x dominance in this area is likewise seen through student enrollment at local high schools, with most having student populations of 96% (see Table 5.2).[12]

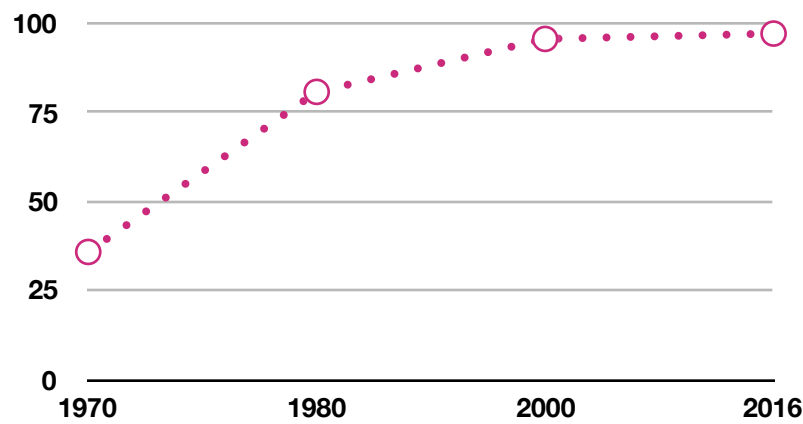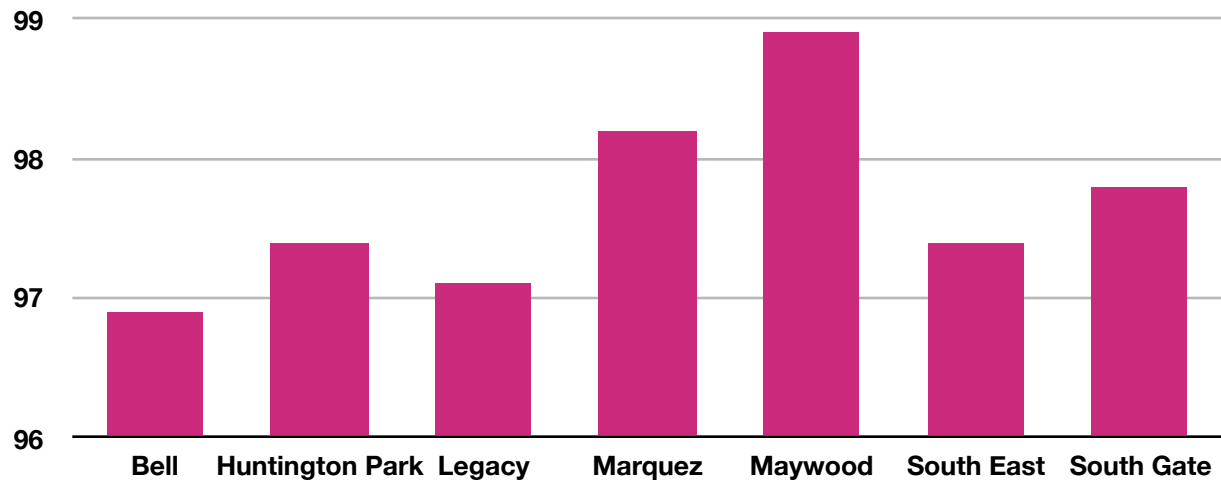*Table 5.1*: *Huntington Park Latina/o/x Population (%), 1970 - 2016*

Table 5.2: *High School Latina/o/x Population (%), 2015-2016*

---

[11] Figures are calculated using the following U.S. Census data sources: County and City Data Book, 1977, 1988, & 2000; Population Survey, 2016.

[12] Figures based on California Department of Education School Accountability Report Card, 2015-2016.

The time period after the 1960s also marked the diversification of the Los Angeles Latina/o/x population. U.S. policies in Latin American, U.S. immigration laws, and the restructuring of the economy "led to geographically, racially, and economically diverse populations" (Ochoa & Ochoa, 2005, p. 13) settling in Los Angeles. Cold War refugees from Central America, fleeing political conflict and violence, settled in Los Angeles (Abrego, 2014; Popkin, 2003). During the 1990s, this wave continued, coupled with increased immigration from rural Mexico as the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement was enacted and militarization of the U.S. border increased (Bacon, 2008). More recently, unaccompanied minors from various Central American countries have added to the flow of people crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, settling in Los Angeles (Park, 2014; Rosenblum & Ball, 2016). This heterogenous population, made up of Mexicans and Central Americans, is also a "singular, racialized group that faces many forms of subjugation and exploitation" in Los Angeles (Osuna, 2015, p. 241). More recently, in January 2020 Southeast Los Angeles made national news when a Delta Airlines plane dumped jet fuel over children on their school's playground (Shalby et al., 2020). Southeast Los Angeles communities have long dealt with similar environmental justice impacting their health, such as the presence of cancer-causing arsenic and lead emitted by plants and factories located in the nearby industrial city of Vernon (Barboza, 2015).

Although space has shaped Latina/o/x history and lived experiences, race and space also combine to make new narratives. As East Los Angeles remains a historic hub of Latina/o/x people, the rising presence of Latina/o/x people in Southeast Los Angeles since the 1970s has made it another hub of Latina/o/x regionalism, identity, and culture. Latina/o/x extension from East Los Angeles to the Greater Eastside (Torres & Valle, 2000) has spread the social and

cultural spaces in which Latina/o/x people are the primary users of space, including urban schools (Diaz, 2005).

In this chapter, I discuss how this place – that Latina/o/x community context – influences their place-making to shape school space. The above description of Southeast Los Angeles provides a snapshot of where Pride School is located and puts into context some of the comments my student participants made about how growing up in this community informs what they do in the school spaces they describe. More importantly, the context further helps illuminate how students imagine and make meaning of the school spaces they are a part of.

<h2 align="center">The Production of School Space</h2>

The school and community context are important scales of analysis to understand the social production of school space. I opened this dissertation with comments by Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel in which they each spoke of the social production of school space and, in particular, their belief that they "make Pride School what it is." Lefebvre (1991) points out that the space that is described, envisioned, and/or imagined by the users of space who in turn contribute to its overall production, i.e., *representational space*. Students drawing maps of their school and attaching meaning to certain spaces within it is an example of representational space because these maps are physical depictions of how *they* imagine space. Schools, as entities of the state, are produced by more powerful actors than the actual users – i.e., the students – of that space. *Representations of space* is the space conceived by those who plan and design educational spaces, meaning those who act on behalf of the state. For example, educational leaders plan the physical layout of a school through maps of the buildings, walkways, and open areas.

The production of school space relies on both these components. In the remainder of this chapter I explain how Pride School is produced by 1) representations of space as revealed through official school maps that order the physical space of the school, and 2) representational space by students who make meaning of school space through mental maps and articulation of the connection between their uses and their community context. How students themselves, as the users of school space, construct space for place-making reveals their feelings about membership, meaning, and belonging in their schools.

Representations of Space: Official School Maps & the Ordering of School Space

A glimpse inside DHHS, its layout, and organization, can be gleaned by an "official" map of the campus, a map designed by school officials. Maps provide spatial markers for rules of movement, indicate location of the built environment, and demark spaces where people belong or do not belong. As such, "maps are active producers of space that require deconstruction" (Carpio, 2019, p. 32). In his discussion of representations of space, Lefebvre (1991) asserts that space is created is by logic and design, and thus takes on the interests of those who have the power over that space. As entities of the state, schools are spaces where regulations and guidelines are imposed onto the uses of lived space by dominant interests and carried out by school officials. Being attentive to issues of space requires acknowledging that school maps are created to both serve and convey this purpose, as well as to institutionalize (or make official) space created by the logic and design of larger interests.

Pride School was initially built and opened to offset overcrowding at a local high school and to provide students and parents with choice about in which neighborhood school to enroll. The school is one of three small schools in a newly built complex, DHHS, and these co-located

schools' designs were originally agreed upon through an MOU between the LAUSD and the

UTLA to be three autonomous small schools within the shared space of DHHS. Under the MOU,

each small school has the power to decide its curricular focus (for Pride School this is health),

staffing, bell schedule, work agreement, etc. As such, a review of the maps of both DHHS and

the Pride School deconstructs both the shared and autonomous spaces (see Figs. 5.1 and 5.2).

Figure 5.1: *Map of Dolores Huerta High School (DHHS)*
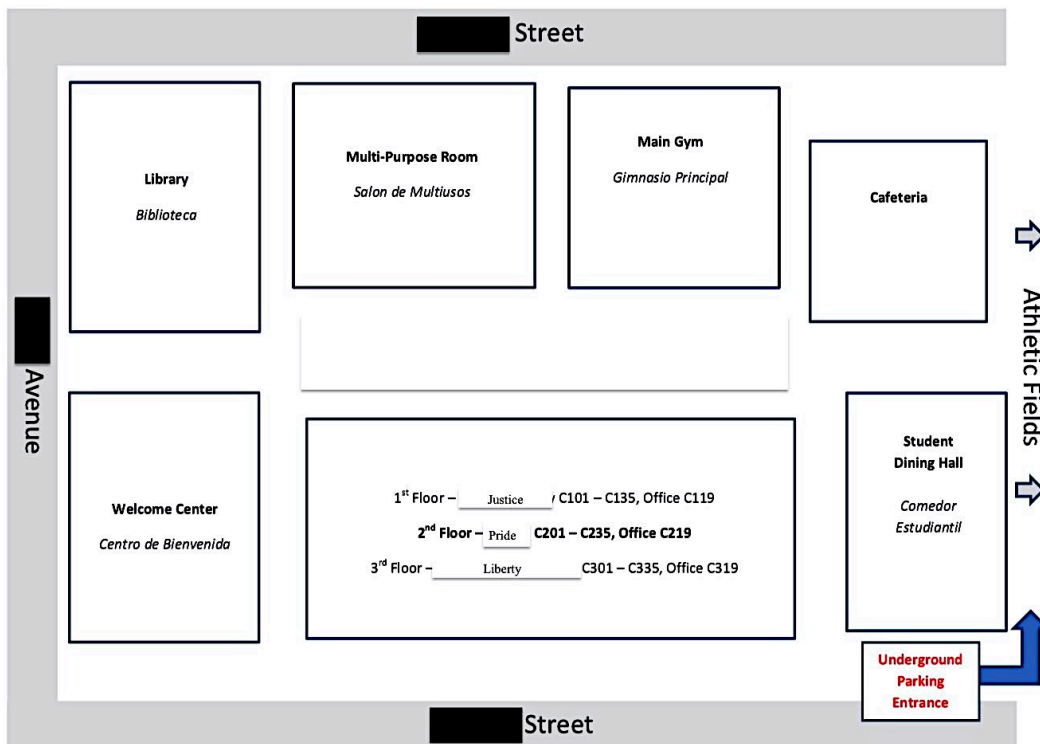
Figure 5.2: *Map of Pride School*
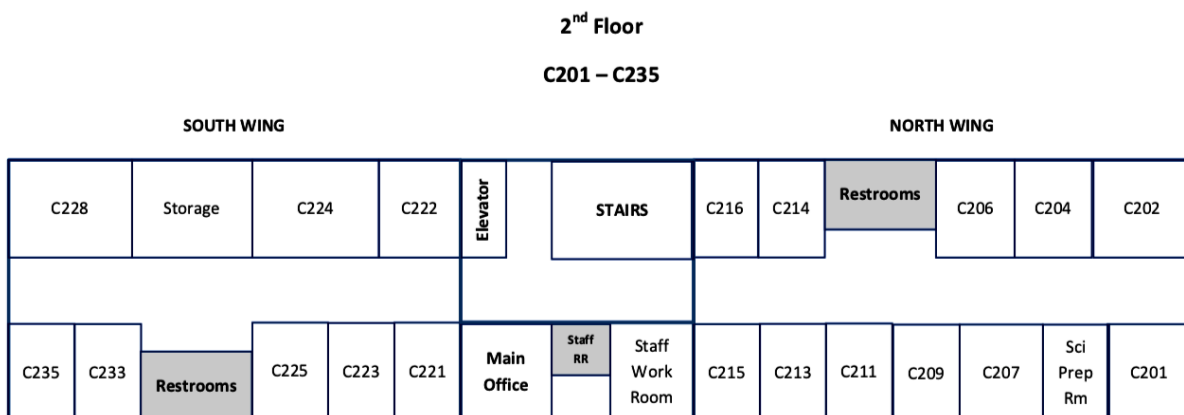
Figure 5.1 shows the overall layout of DHHS and provides a glimpse into the individual and shared arrangements of three independent schools, on being Pride School. First, the map reveals that seven main buildings make up its built environment. DHHS's main building is arranged so that each of three small schools span an entire floor and are thus separate from each other. The Justice School is located on the first floor (rooms C101-C135), Pride School is on the second floor (rooms C201-C235) and Liberty School is on the third floor (rooms C301-C335). From this arrangement, all three schools remain autonomous within the separate floors of the main building but they share the common areas in the other six surrounding buildings. For example, the Library, Multi-Purpose Room, Main Gym, Cafeteria, and Student Dining Hall are standalone buildings that can be used by all three schools. In order to not overlap use of these common spaces, the schools coordinate and establish a time schedule that accommodates their individual use throughout the school day and calendar year. Aside from before and after school, school space and time is conceived so that the three schools and its students do not interact.

When it comes to co-located schools, these maps also reveal the spaces that students may or may not traverse. While DHHS includes three separate schools, I focused on Pride School, so students attending this school are, for the most part, restricted to the second floor of the main building (see Figure 5.2). Here, classrooms C201-C235, the restrooms, hallways, and office spaces are used only by students, teachers, and staff affiliated with Pride School. Course offerings, available teachers, and most extracurriculars are also exclusive to each particular school. Any shared events occur in a common area of the school (e.g. Library, Multipurpose Room). Since all three schools have their own bell schedules with different class schedules (e.g.,

blocks or a 6-period day) and times for passing breaks, nutrition, and lunch, the division of schools by floors is secured.

As a reform effort, such small school models were originally intended to bring "innovation" and "creative energy" through their power to make autonomous decisions over teaching, learning, and what occurs on-site (Knoester, 2011; Payne, 2013). Through a careful choreography of time and space that is both separate and shared, the design of small schools as autonomous is secured at co-located complexes such as DHHS, as are each school's ability to fulfill its autonomy, choice, locally-driven decisions, and innovation in teaching and learning.

Taken together, these two official maps show representations of space that is intended to order the everyday lives who attend Pride School through shared and separate space and time. While these maps use the built environment as markers for ordered space, they reveal nothing about the social life at the school. Who goes to this school? How do people interact in these spaces? How are these spaces created by them? Who uses these spaces in ways that are intended by these maps? In other words, these official maps say nothing about the space of students and student life.

Representational Space: Student Mental Maps & Meanings of School Space

Interested in notions of culture and geography, Peter Jackson (1989) described "maps of meaning" as the ways that individuals make sense of the world, attach meanings to geographical context, and give the tangible world significance, similar to Lefebvre's (1991) notion of representational space. Users of space have mental ways of organizing space that is different from the ways representations of that space was conceived. In other words, people also attach meaning to and imagine space differently than how it was first intended.

Students' representational space of schools speaks how they attach meaning and imagine school space. During their school tours and interviews, my student participants shared their ways of knowing, ordering, and seeing their lived social spaces of the School. As part of their tours, they described the spaces of the School meaningful to them through drawing – and later describing during their interview – a mental map (Lynch, 1960; Gould & White, 1986) of the School that highlighted these spaces. How they wished to draw their school, or how creative or literal they wanted to be, was up to them. My only emphasis was to ask them to include spaces they deemed meaningful, could attach a story to, or spent most of their time.

Mental maps offer countermaps to the official school maps because of their inherent perspectives from students whose experiences produce those spaces on the ground in an everyday context through place-making. These experienced perspectives of space are often referred to as "imaginary geographies" (Gregory, 1994). These geographies point to the importance of individuals and their perceptions of space, and can be about attachments and emotions that arise from making meanings of space (Tuan, 1977) and the social relations that create place as people engage with space. More so, students' mental maps and the imaginary geographies they reveal offer insights into students' spaces for place-making.

Within an everyday context, youth negotiate school space and influence the dynamics that are played out within schools. More specifically, my students' community context influenced their involvement in and creation of meaningful space at Pride School. In relation to each study participant, I discuss: 1) their articulations of the school spaces they were involved in and how they imagined and made meaning of those spaces, and 2) their descriptions of their personal and community context and how these informed what they did in the school spaces they described.

Together, these two scales of analysis, school and community context, demonstrate that their leadership at school is place-based. That is, school space is not decontextualized from the community context. While they are constructing space for place-making that is about membership, meaning, and belonging, they are doing so within a particular community context of Los Angeles.

Emily: Humanitarians Club & Youth Action Club.

School Space. I first met Emily through her 12th grade English teacher. She had seen me around the School as I engaged in classroom observations, and she expressed interest in sharing her educational experiences with me. To commence our conversations about who she was and what she did at the school, I asked her to share a mental map of school space (see Figure 5.3). Emily's use of color in her drawing is indicative of how she made sense of school space and to which spaces socially inhabited by her she attached meaning. For example, she used orange lines to indicate spaces that were communal at DHHS (e.g., the hallway, Dining Hall, Library, etc.), and even though she inhabited these spaces regularly, she did not indicate any special connection to them. On the other hand, she used the color red to indicate important spaces, such as the School's swimming pool and the College Center which held particular meaning for her. During the 11th grade, she was a member of the School's swim team, so she spent a lot of time at the swimming pool after school for both practices and competitions. As a 12th grader who was preparing for college and applying for scholarships, she spent a lot of time at the College Center. She shared:

> That's where I found support. I believe every Friday they had us come to
> workshops where we would work on our college apps. And then now I'm still at
> the College Center, reviewing financial aid, working on our school portals and
> stuff like that. (interview)

94

For Emily, the College Center was a meaningful space because, as a college-bound DACA[13] student, that was where she found support and needed resources to navigate what she referred to as a "chaotic time." Emily acknowledged the spaces which served a certain function in her educational experience and were meaningful for the resources they provided her.

Figure 5.3: *Emily's mental map of the school*
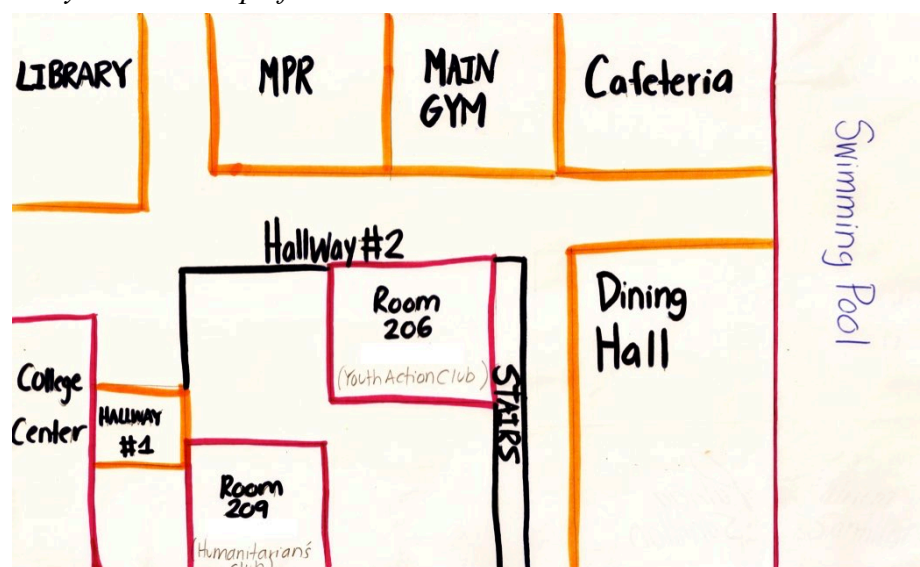
Through her map and during her interview, Emily paid particular attention to two classrooms, revealing the connection between her place-making and school space. Outlined in red as well as given enlarged proportion to emphasize importance, were Room 206 and Room 209, both located in the Pride School hallway. In the official school map, these classrooms are simply identified as C206 and C209, and during the regular school day they are where math and science classes are held. However, in Emily's map, these rooms are identified as classrooms that hold the Humanitarians Club and Youth Action Club respectively, spaces where she found a community of peers who wanted to learn more about and get involved in the community. Emily

---

[13] DACA refers to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program allowing the children of undocumented parents to receive deferred deportation action in order to obtain work permits and attend institutes of higher learning.

served as Vice President of the Humanitarians Club and here she, along with a group of peers, engaged in opportunities in the community such as volunteering for food banks and participating in beach cleanup. In Youth Action, she worked with peers to understand more specifically about environmental issues and how they impacted their own low-income, communities of color. When I asked Emily what initially drew her to these two spaces, she stated that she wanted to join clubs, meet new people, and engage in a form of community involvement with peers around community issues. For Emily, these two classrooms became spaces to collaborate with peers around issues in the community both for volunteer service and activism.

The School and Community Context. Emily narrated particular school spaces as places to combat the conditions in her community. Seeing and valuing the hardships imposed on people in her community served as motivation and inspiration for her school place-making in the places. As indicated on her map as Room 206, the Youth Action Club was central to Emily's place-making at Pride School. There she received trainings, such as a Toxic Tour, from a local nonprofit called Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), a group that partners with local youth to learn about and explore critical issues in environmental justice and the impacts of local industries on their communities in Southeast and Greater Los Angeles. One focus of groups like CBE is to support young peoples' understanding of the structural forces that shape their lives, as well as their participation in the political process via collective action to address community concerns (Rogers et al., 2012; Terriquez, 2015). Emily initially connected with CBE during the summer before she entered 11th grade. She explained that in her community, and in the city of Vernon in particular, there were a concentrated number of industries, such as Farmer John's and Baker's Commodities, and rendering plants that were poisoning the people living near them. As

part of the CBE Toxic Tour, she visited these sites and other sites that spanned Wilmington to the

San Pedro ports. Emily shared why understanding environmental issues in her community was

important to her:

> And [the Toxic Tour] got me interested. So, I was like, you know what? I want to
> bring this knowledge to my own Youth Action Club. So I participated in that and
> from there we did a presentation at Walnut Park Middle School and to the
> environmental science class talking about what our experience was with the Toxic
> Tour, what have we been learning, and how we hoped to get the community
> involved… most people don't really know about the issues that are occurring in
> their communities, so being able to spread that awareness kind of was important
> to helping out and kind of opening up the community's mentality about the issues
> that are occurring. (interview)

Emily's involvement in Youth Action was done in membership with peers and around a shared

meaning. It was important for Emily to understand information about her community that she

could take back to her peers at school. Making sense of this information and engaging with it

through both the Toxic Tour and deliberating during Youth Action meetings better equipped her

and her peers to present such topics to other audiences such as middle school students. Talking

about her experiences and the knowledge she gained from the Toxic Tour was her attempt to

engage other groups in understanding issues that affected them. Through deliberation with peers

about toxicity in their city and how this impacted the community, school space became a place

for action, a springboard for community action to "spread that awareness" to the community"

> I guess I just wanted to be part of something. Kind of like community
> involvement because prior to any of these clubs I had no idea what was happening
> [in my community] and then after seeing what I saw during the Toxic Tour and
> what I learned that was kind of like one of the reasons why I'm still in it.
> (interview)

Emily described both the school spaces she was a part of and her community context. Her place-

making within Pride School came from her desire "to spread knowledge" because she "just

want[s] people to be aware of what's happening in their communities." For Emily, the community context, which she initially described as a low-income community of color, informed her involvement within school spaces, such as Youth Action and Humanitarians Club, that were about service and activism in the community.

Despite her community being marked by environmental racism, Emily found motivation from growing up in Southeast Los Angeles and this largely informed her place-making within the two spaces she emphasized in her map:

> You kind of see the hardships and you learn to value them. I guess you see how people, despite people struggling – like financially and stuff like that… they still always have, like, some optimism and... that's like, you start to see, like… even people struggling, I guess they kind of see the good side of things… It's kind of like if they can do it, then I could do it. So, it's kind of inspiring. (interview)

Emily's role in producing places within the School for deliberation with peers around community issues was largely informed by her community context and the motivations it provided her. She narrated particular school spaces in ways that animated them as places for action and community involvement. Her motivation and inspiration for action was seeing and valuing the hardships she witnessed in her community by the people living there. What made Youth Action and Humanitarians Club important to her was her desire – driven by the social conditions of her community – to bring justice to her community by spreading knowledge about environmental issues to her peers so that they could be better informed and take action. Together with peers, this collective made Pride School a base to engage in the community around issues of a shared concern such as environmental racism.

Azul: Leadership.

School Space. During my school observations in the first semester, Azul quickly became one of the most visible students to me. She was everywhere – in the Quad setting up for a lunchtime activity, decorating the hallways, running up to the principal to ask him a question. Even in classrooms, she was very vocal, talking with those around her and participating in classroom activities. I officially met Azul during one of these classroom observations through her Spanish teacher. Given her role as the Pride School ASB President, her map (Figure 5.4) reflects my initial impression that she had a reach all over and across the campus. While Emily focused her attention on indicating a handful of meaningful spaces on her map, Azul included many more details and a much more comprehensive map of school spaces. However, during her explanation of her map, she elaborated on only some of these spaces as being meaningful to her.

Figure 5.4: *Azul's mental map of the school*

Azul's mental map of Pride School reflects my observation of seeing her often across campus – she presented both an aerial view of the School and included many details. When Azul first sat down with me to talk about her map, she expressed some anxiety about her representation of the School and immediately shared that she had done her map twice – she felt

things were not aligned or were a bit off. She laughed and said, "[those] little things bother me."

She wanted everything to fit and be aligned, and to present a literal representation of where

everything was located within the School. Thus she did not increase intensity or draw attention to

any one space, as Emily had with her indication of the Youth Action and Humanitarians

classrooms. Vis-à-vis Emily's map, nothing in Azul's map was centered, highlighted, or enlarged

to show emphasis. In her verbal explanation of the map, Azul revealed many aspects of the

School's built environment that were included in the official DHHS and Pride School maps (the

entrance through the Welcome Center, the second floor of Pride School in the main building, the

Multipurpose Room, the big gym, the Cafeteria, and the Dining Hall) and omitted from one or

both of them (restrooms, locker rooms, fitness and weight rooms, the Student Store, seating

areas, gates, track and courts, the pool and football field). While she included elements of the

built and physical environment such as bushes and other greenery, her narration about these

spaces revealed their uses to students. For example, she shared that during lunchtime the

Cafeteria could get a bit hectic with long lines, but once she got her food, she could enjoy it in

the indoor dining hall or outdoor quad area where there was greenery, benches, and some shaded

areas next to trees.

While Azul's map included all spaces of the school, some of which had no personal

meaning, it was through her interview that she brought her map to life. Azul focused most of her

narration of school space on one classroom of the Pride School hall that she labeled "Science

Leadership," which the official school map simply labels C228. As Azul's label suggests, this

was a science classroom but also the location of the Leadership class. Important to her role as

ASB President, this classroom had a storage room that served as a space where she and her peers

100

could hold meetings to make decisions about student activities. This school space was meaningful to her because it was a place where she could have serious conversations, mostly regarding activities related to her role as a school leader. The Leadership classroom was also her go-to place, where she felt safe, and, overall, a positive place filled with "good energy and vibes," mostly because of the other students who also frequented this classroom.

School and Community Context. Like Emily, Azul's narration and creation of place within school spaces was one for action. She sought to get students involved in enjoyable spaces at school. Her motivation for this was seeing the conditions of families living in her community.

Azul's place-making, through her role as ASB President was to represent the student body and plan activities and events for the Pride School. She worked with about 40 other peers enrolled in the Leadership class. For example, one activity Azul planned for the student body was Club Circuit. This event took place at the Quad during lunch once each semester. Leadership students created banners with the names of the various campus clubs and set up tables and chairs so that each club could have a space to set up an informational booth. Student officers represented their clubs and tried to recruit new members while distributing more information to those students who wanted to learn more about them. This was what Azul said about Club Circuits as it related to school space and place-making:

> In Leadership you get the opportunity to make sure that the kids get something
> out of it […] "Hey, get involved in school. Maybe you don't like the fitness group,
> you don't want to work out, okay then, look there's an anime club or if you don't
> like anime, then hey look, there's an anatomy club, or there's a rap club, or there's
> a tea club if you want to spill the tea like *chismeando*." There's a club for
> everything and it's a good feeling to be able to have such a great diversity for all
> students to be able to say, "Hey, I was involved in that." It's something that you
> like and you want to try, and you want to continue and maybe when that senior or
> that junior leaves, you're able to take a stand and say, like, "Hey, I know what's

going on. I like it and I want to continue it. I don't want it to stop." So then that's when they're able to be like, "Can I be the president? Can I be the vice president? Can I continue this club?" and then they just re-fill out the paperwork and they continue it. (interview)

Collectively, Azul, her leadership peers, and club officers/representatives added to the communal life of the School. To Azul it was important for students to get involved. Events she planned, such as Club Circuit, introduced students to these possibilities, to find something that fit their interests, got them involved, and helped them have a good experience in high school. She hoped that in participating in clubs, her peers would feel compelled to continue these clubs for future students by taking on roles of leadership. While she acknowledged that school may not be a place of comfort and home for everyone, as it was for her, she set up opportunities for students to see what the School offered in order to get involved and "control the way they remember school."

School was a place that Azul sought to make enjoyable and memorable within a community context that faces the social effects of being an impoverished community, as Emily also expressed. For instance, when I asked Azul what motivated her to be involved in creating these spaces, she said:

> I feel like anything that I've been involved in usually starts because I'm a very emotional person. Even though most of the time I don't like showing it because then it's like, "*estas bien chillona*" [you are a crybaby]. Like, I don't like crying in front of people, but I see students and I see a family situation that's not the best and I'm like *pobrecitos* [poor things]. *Me da cosa* [it makes me feel emotions]. I don't know, I just think about it and my family situation and stuff, I kind of remember... I want to make a difference. I want to be able to get out there and do something for them. I feel like that's one of my things and especially in this community. Like when you see people and little kids, *de* [from], like, *cinco años avece con su* [five years old sometimes with their] older sister or older sibling *y alla handan caminandolos para la escuela o a veces cuando miras* [and there they

102

are walking them to school or sometimes when you see] 10-year-olds and they're just walking to school in the rain. (interview)

Like Emily, Azul's narration and creation of place within school spaces, such as the Leadership class, was also one for action, i.e., to address the conditions she witnessed living in Southeast Los Angeles. Even though she jokingly stated that she was an emotional person and did not want to be a *chillona*, it was important to her to try to make a difference in people's experiences that made her feel emotion. Being a member of a working class community and learning from the social conditions she observed within an everyday context, even just simply walking to and from school, was at the core of Azul's identity and her motivations for her school place-making. Making a difference and getting out there and doing something for her peers and the people in her community was being a leader within Pride School. As such, Azul's place-making as ASB President, such as working alongside fellow Leadership students within their classroom, was informed by this community context. Azul did not critique simply these conditions, she took action within school spaces to make Pride School an enjoyable place to be.

Olivia: Music Program.

School Space. During my first semester observations of the school, I spent a lot of time in the Music Room. Listening to students learning to play the guitar or more advanced students in Orchestra or Jazz class playing mariachi or Spanish rock songs made for a pleasant start to a day of fieldwork. It was within this classroom space that I first met Olivia through the School's Music Director. As drum major of the School's marching band, trombone player of the Jazz Band, and teaching assistant for the Music Director during the beginners guitar class, Olivia quickly became a student I noticed within this classroom space; half of her school day was spent in this space of campus. When we first sat down to talk about her mental map (Figure 5.5). she

103

immediately drew my attention to the spaces she marked with a pink asterisk, indicating that

Olivia's student identity was largely concentrated in one location of the School – the Music

Building – and this served as the base of our interview discussion.

Figure 5.5: *Olivia's mental map of the school*
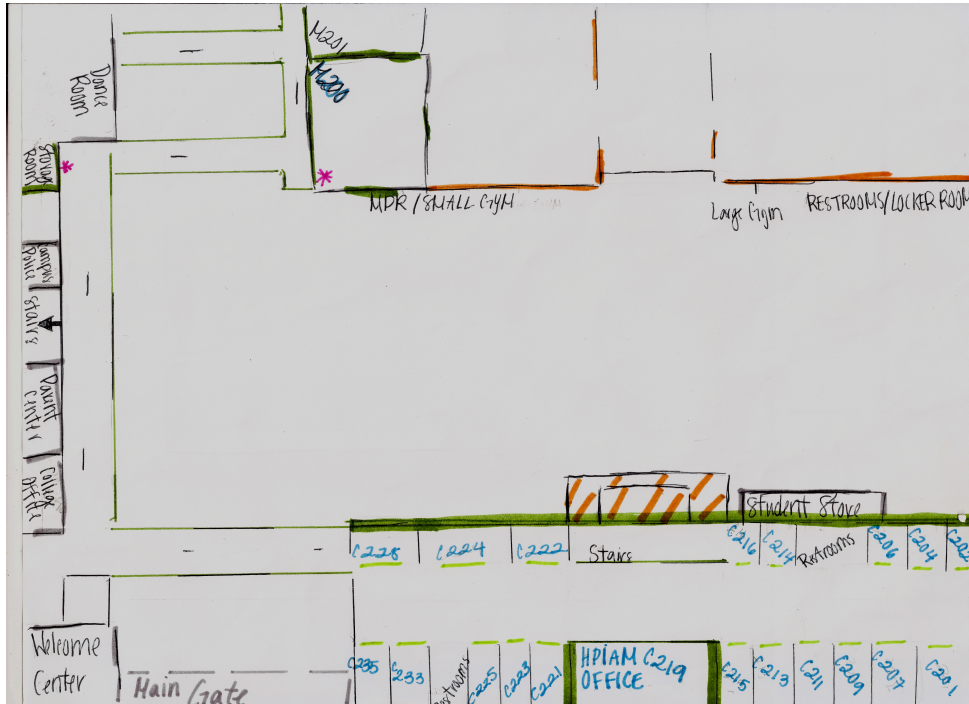
Although her social imaginary of school space emanated from one area of the School,

Olivia did indicate other parts of the School that were not as meaningful but where she navigated

and engaged with school space. Like Emily, Olivia outlined in gray the areas of Pride School that

belonged to the wider DHHS campus – the Welcome Center, various offices such as the College

Office, Parent Center, and the Campus Police Office. Spaces she outlined in green were those

that belonged specifically to Pride School, such as all the classrooms on the second floor of the

main building. In orange, however, she outlined the areas of the school that were used

specifically by students like her for student events. These included the small and large gyms, the

Multipurpose Room, and the stairway area underneath the Main Building (where all the

classrooms were located). Given her involvement in the School's marching band, it made sense

that she marked these areas in a different color from those that were communal because, for her,

these were spaces that were both communal and for performance. For example, her annual

Christmas concert was held in the Small Gym and pep rallies took place in the Large Gym.

Together, Olivia's use of gray, orange, and green to demarcate levels of space revealed their uses

and relation to her place-making, some being more relevant than others.

Olivia starred in pink the spaces she most frequented and that "matter[ed] more": the

Music Room (M200) and the storage room that held larger instruments such as the bass drum she

played. Out of the seven classes Olivia took during the semester I shadowed her, three took place

in the Music Room. She liked the environment of the classroom because it was always filled

with students, which made her feel like "you're not really isolated." During our interview, Olivia

expressed that she did not enjoy silence, so she liked that students were always really loud in this

classroom because it made her feel comfortable (this was also perhaps why I enjoyed doing

school observations in this classroom early on in my fieldwork). The communal and collective

nature of the Music Room was what made being a member of the marching band meaningful to

Olivia.

School and Community Context. Being a part of the music program allowed Olivia to

connect music and the cultural needs of students in this classroom. She joined Pride School's

music program her freshman year, first enrolling in the orchestra class which taught students how

to play instruments (i.e., guitar, trumpet, etc.) and songs typical of mariachi music. She learned

to play songs from her community, that her parents and her peers' parents enjoyed. She also

learned how to play as part of a group and perform in front of an audience at the School's

105

Christmas and end-of-year concerts. This class served as her motivation to join the School's

marching band, as was, given her talents, the encouragement to do so by the Music Director.

Olivia and her sister, who was a year older, joined the marching band together, and Olivia was

assigned to learn how to play the bass drum. By her senior year, her grade during my study, she

served as the section leader for the drumline. During one of the practices I observed, the Music

Director jokingly said, "she bosses everyone around" and pointed at the drummers standing in

the back of the classroom aside their drums, waiting to begin practice. Olivia's place-making

within the music program was tied to making Pride School a more enjoyable place to be, for the

students and teachers.

Together with a group of about 40 band members, Olivia took what she learned inside the

Music Room into other communal school spaces:

> For Marching Band we actually raise school spirit. And in some forms we just
> bring energy to the School because when we perform there would mostly be some
> surprise performances for students or there would be some days when we would
> have concerts during the day and those concerts would sort of help teachers, in a
> sense, also for them to enjoy a day at school to actually be exposed to the music…
> We show energy because the group is not big, it's pretty small. We actually have
> chants for the school or we play what we call "pre-game"… energetic songs.
> (interview)

Olivia's performances took place in the quad area, the Multipurpose Room, and the gyms –

spaces she highlighted in orange on her map. In these spaces collectively, Olivia and her

bandmates raise school spirit by bringing energy to their performances during Christmas and

end-of-year concerts, as well as through pep rallies. It was important for Olivia to expose her

peers and teachers to the music that this small but tightknit group of marching band students

practiced and created. They chanted "Go Pride School" and by playing songs before big sports

106

game events, known as "pre-game," to get students motivated to cheer on the school teams. In this way, Olivia and the Band contributed to the collective life of the School.

Olivia believed the efforts of her bandmates were important at the School because they provided a different avenue for students to express themselves within a school that focused primarily on health and science:

> I can see how [the Band] sort of makes the School because our school is the only school with a music program, like with the music classes. I feel like in some ways it sort of adds a bit more creativity or a bit more innovation to our school because our school is medical-based. It's mainly focused on medicine and sciences, so with the music I feel like it sort of helps to de-stress or it may help other students who are focused, because most of our projects or most of our assignments are based on research and medical knowledge and having tests. (interview)

Within DHHS, only Pride School has a music program and requires its students to learn how to play an instrument, even though the School's emphasis is on health and science. According to the Principal, Mr. Perez, all students take beginner's guitar during their freshmen year, so the requirement is built into students' course schedules:

> I saw the power of music from my own daughter, that I said, "You know what? I have to start a music program here." I think there's a lot of benefit to having music. So Year 2 [of opening the school] I was obviously able to get a teacher to come over here, and that program in particular is very well funded… I devote a lot of resources to it because I see that kids have a genuine love for that. I think sometimes in academia we tend to focus on English and math because we're being judged on Smarter Balanced scores. So, you try to devote your resources to where you look successful in those certain metrics, then the District will leave you alone. But for me, I think that the music program is a place for our kids to obviously express their creative sides. I think it's a stress reliever. Basically, every one of our students that comes to Pride School will eventually learn how to play the guitar. It's our art requirement to graduate. To take music. And, so whether or not they become more than guitarist or very novice guitarist, the idea was that they would just be exposed to something that's different than the math, English, history and science every day. That program has grown now. We have mariachi, we have jazz, we have a School of Rock Club. (interview)

For Olivia, these music opportunities set Pride School apart from the other two of DHHS; Pride School was unique in the sense that it allowed and encouraged students musical ways to express themselves. What made the School more creative and innovative was that students had an avenue to destress from the more traditional focus of schooling on academics and testing. As a leader of the drumline, Olivia had been invested in sustaining this program within the Music Room space, for the School.

While Emily and Azul's place-making was tied to the social conditions of their community (low-income and suffering from the environmental effects of living within an industrial corridor), Olivia's place-making was informed by the culture and history of her community. Olivia stated that "kids actually acknowledge their heritage" of "our Hispanic community." She recalled that growing up she listened to genres of music different from the mainstream because of her parents. Her father, from Mexico, listened to Spanish pop music, and her mother, from El Salvador and who immigrated to Los Angeles at a young age, listened to classic rock. For her, engaging in the music program and playing songs were collectively "nostalgic," reminding her of the music she grew up listening to. Given her parent's immigrant backgrounds, they shared with Olivia a part of their identity, music; this was especially true for her mother who, like Olivia, went through the American schooling experience, though as an immigrant student:

> My freshman year [my mom] would tell me that students at her school wouldn't speak to her whatsoever in Spanish, that they wouldn't help her… she would try to speak English but it would just be gibberish to English speakers. So, it sort of made me notice that after that, I do try to help students now who speak Spanish. I speak with them in Spanish as much as I can. I'm not fully fluent, but I try to help as much as I can students who speak Spanish in classrooms. (interview)

108

Being an active member of the school's music program since her freshman year opened opportunities for Olivia to be an advanced music student and use what she had learned to take a leadership role within the various music classes. For example, she was a teaching assistant for the Music Director during a beginners guitar class made up of underclassmen. Here, she directly interacted with students by making sure their guitars were appropriately tuned, provided individual assistance to struggling students, and made sure that they had the appropriate music printed and displayed in front of them.

Understanding her parents' experiences and her own from growing up in an immigrant household informed how Olivia approached her engagement within the music classroom. She used what she had learned to assist other students in their learning of songs that were not only memorable for her but also in a way that was accepting of their language needs. Even though she did not speak Spanish fluently, Olivia helped students in their learning of music because doing so tied her to feelings of nostalgia as well as to her mother because she had been ignored by her school peers. Olivia's narration and creation of school space was about taking an active role within a communal space for learning. Her place-making as a member of the school's music program was about creating an enjoyable school culture by raising school spirit and connecting to aspects of her community context through music and considering her peers' cultural needs.

Maribel: Key Club & Leadership.

School Space. The Principal directed my attention to Maribel one day during my fieldwork. He mentioned that she was heavily involved in the community through her capacity as President of Key Club, a community service group; she was also the school's ASB Vice President. I approached Maribel and told her I was interested in learning more about her role

within the School, in particular within the school spaces she was a part of. Immediately she expressed interest and we began to schedule times to meet during the school day for the interview and observations.

Figure 5.6: *Maribel's mental map of the school*
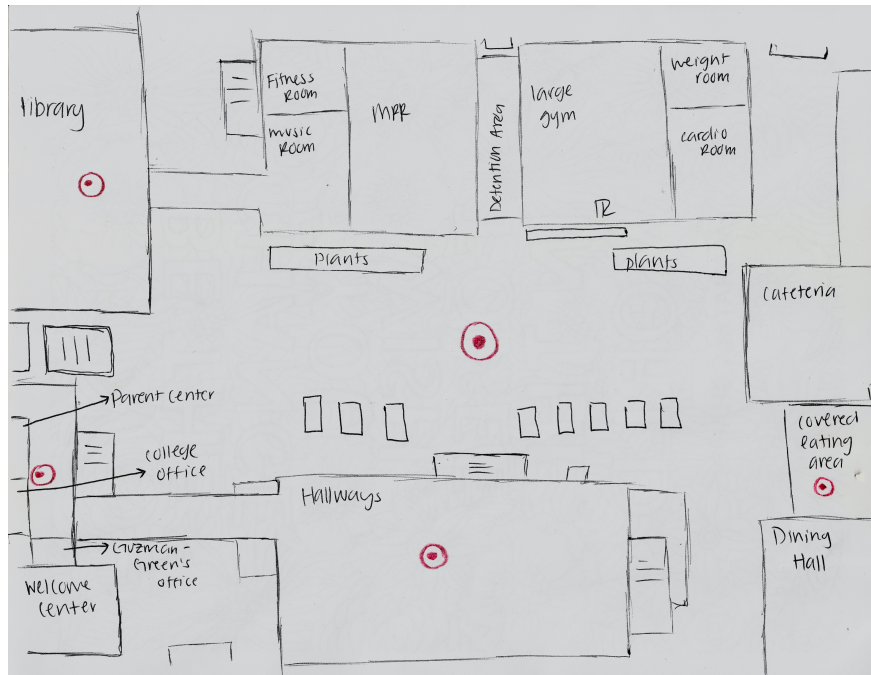
As we sat down to talk about her mental map (Figure 5.6), Maribel confessed she had some reservations about her map because she had forgotten the original map she drew at home. Nevertheless, she began to walk me through the spaces of the School portrayed in her new map; similar to the official school map – as well as the other participants maps – Maribel's map presented an "aerial view" of the campus. She included certain spaces, such as the Welcome Center, Library, Multipurpose Room, Large Gym, Cafeteria, Dining Hall, and hallways, that the official school map also showed. However, she was more particular about certain spaces that the official map did not label, such as pathways for getting from one place to another, i.e., stairways

for getting from the ground floor to a second floor and bridges connecting one building to another, pointing to her embodied experience of school space and where she moved through it.

Most important to this study, she included red bullseye symbols to indicate places of personal importance, placing herself and her experiences within the map. These included the College Office and Parent Center where she spent a lot of time to take a college class or holding Key Club meetings. These were common spaces where she could meet up with different students because it was a space shared by all three schools. Having a shared space was important to Maribel because, as the Key Club Advisor, Ms. Rojas, described, this was the only club at DHHS open to students from all three schools:

> Key Club is actually the only club on campus that allows students from all three floors and that's because we're sponsored by Kiwanis. And so, in the community, people don't see Dolores Huerta High School as [Liberty, Justice, and Pride]… I think it's a culture within a culture. In our school we see it as three different schools, but in the community they see it as one. And that's specifically because sports are played together. They're, the Bears [mascot]… like that, it's all unified. So, we have three different schools in there, but in reality it's one school for the community. My role is to provide opportunities to all the kids. When we established Key Club at Dolores Huerta High, Kiwanis was like, "What do you mean there's three schools? We just want to establish a club for all of them." So the only way we could do that was to hold meetings after school because all their lunches are separate. (interview)

Thus, spaces like the Parent Center and the School Library were good meeting spaces because, as Maribel said, "my club has a lot to do with the three schools" because its members were from all three schools. Conveniently, these spaces were also located close to her club advisor's office where there was a conference room where she met with the Key Club Board. The Library was indicated with a red bullseye too because this was common space where Maribel held the majority of afterschool Key Club meetings. In all, Maribel's map placed emphasis on "common

111

areas" such as the Welcome Center and the Library because, as president of Key Club which

involved students from all three schools, she focused on spaces where all students could go to

and meet.

Although the College Office, Parent Center, and Library represented major spaces in her

"afterschool life," in the mornings and in between classes, Maribel spent most of her time in

Pride School's hallway, also marked by a red-bullseye symbol and labelled "Hallways" on her

mental map. When I asked Maribel if there was one place on her map that she would remember

ten years from now, she responded:

> Definitely the Leadership Room. Every day in the morning we meet up there and
> then we go to our class or we just stay there during our TA block working on stuff
> or just any free time that we have because we are always busy. We use that time
> and we're always in there. Sometimes when we're cleaning it's like cleaning our
> room because we're like "Oh, I forgot I left this here. I forgot we have this and we
> needed it a week ago." So that's kind of where I spend a lot of my time at school.
> (interview)

Located within what she labelled "Hallways" was the Pride School Leadership Room. Here,

together with peers such as Azul, Maribel planned events for the School (while she planned more

community-oriented events in Key Club). She described this place as similar to being in her

bedroom at home. This showed that this space was one of meaning and belonging to Maribel.

Azul and Maribel helped each another plan and lead events for the School in the Leadership

Room, yet Maribel also described this was a space which was about working collectively with

peers to ensure that they were able to take care of one another as they executed school activities:

> It's not just being a leader but also being there for people. The more you work
> with the people around you the more you become friends with them. So, you
> begin to notice their everyday struggles and you guys have that connection and
> the jobs you do, so it's kind of like "oh yeah I understand." You just help each
> other. I would say mental health. It's a lot of stress and stuff that goes into it, but

it's helping each other stay in the right path… My friend [Azul] and I are both ASBs and we're just so overwhelmed with a lot of the stuff that we do. It's a lot of "Oh, did you do it?" "No I didn't" "Okay, just do it." So, it's a lot of [us working] together to get things done. We rely on one another… It's just that we know we got each other's back. It's kind of like we're helping each other, we're okay. (interview)

Maribel's place-making within the Leadership Room and Key Club, the two student groups she was a part of, was about working with others to connect with them in ways that were about supporting one another and also making sure that tasks were accomplished collectively. As ASB Vice President, Maribel worked very closely with Azul, the ASB president. During my observations, they were always together, making sure they were there to support each other in any way. This peer group formed within leadership was one about Maribel and Azul making Pride School a supportive place not only for one another, but for getting things done for the student body at large.

School and Community Context. Maribel's place-making within the School came from her desire to take an active role in helping people. Like Olivia, Maribel shared that even though the focus of her small school was health and science, she found other outlets through which to develop as a school and community leader. While Olivia liked that the music program allowed students to be creative, Maribel found Key Club and Leadership to be opportunities to be community-engaged in order to "help people":

> It's a lot of what I do and who I am now. I think it's always been something I wanted – to help people – but I always grew up thinking that I wanted to be a doctor and that was it. So by being a doctor I thought that would be all I wanted to do, but as I joined Key Club, more student-led clubs, I realized that that was the route I wanted to take… I feel really good with people and just talking to them and just hanging out, so I found it to be really fun and easy for me. I chose [to enroll at] Pride School because of the medical pathways… In Pride School there's a link crew and student council, which I also do. That's not as big as Key Club

and Leadership, but that's where I flourished because it's not just being a doctor anymore. It's being a doctor but knowing what you like. (interview)

Initially, Maribel believed that becoming a doctor would provide her with a pathway to help people, but through student-led clubs she was introduced to the possibility of engaging in public service. Joining student activities helped Maribel develop her sense of self as giving to others in ways that were about service, such as networking with community members, making decisions about school activities with peers, and bridging community resources with the School:

> Apart from growing as a leader, it was also networking with people. It wasn't new but it was definitely harder communicating with City Council or business people from the community and just asking, going into stores and asking the managers if they would like to donate something for an event or something. It's just being out there and actually talking to professionals. (interview)

By speaking with city council members and local community businesses, what was central to Maribel's school leadership was that doing so was also about engaging her community context. Her place-making was driven by her desire to help people and she did this inside the School by organizing her peers, planning and executing students activities and connecting community resources with the school. She narrated school spaces such as Key Club and Leadership as those where she felt at home and could work with peers to hold each other accountable and support each other, and fulfill her desire to give to others and be of service.

Translating Student Place-Making as Place-Based School Leadership

In this chapter, I discussed how representational space at Pride School demonstrates how a group of student leaders were imagining and making use of the school spaces they were a part of. Their four mental maps redrew the school in the image they each had of the school, with emphases on their individual place-making because, although representations of space, such as

official school maps, shape the experiences of students, space is also shaped by them through their representational space (Lefebvre, 1991). Mental maps reveal the mental constructs of the way space is organized, not merely from geographical or physical settings, but also from human action and sense of belonging to spaces and places (Gould & White, 1986; Gregory, 1994; Lynch, 1960). Collectively, these students' mental maps showed a similar sensibility in that classrooms, buildings, and walkways (derived from the School's official map) directed how they drew school space. None of their maps included any indication of Liberty School or Justice School as their imaginaries of Pride School appropriately revolved around the second floor of the main building. For example, Olivia explained that she "listed all the classrooms from only our hallway because there's three." Similarly, Maribel described this part of DHHS by saying, "Then this is the actual hallway where we actually learn. Then I just drew it as one school even though there's three mainly in one floor." The research participants used particular colors to outline areas of the school that were communal, such as the Welcome Center, Cafeteria, and Library. More importantly, the mental maps showed where students used and created place, and were indicative of students' perceptions of the relationship between themselves and school space.

Although the small school spatial arrangement of DHHS limited their mapping to one hallway in the main building, it did not limit my student participants' designation of meaningful space both inside and outside of Pride School. The lines, colors, and demarcations of certain spaces revealed spaces of import that they later explained as the interview went on. In red, Emily labeled two classrooms where she attended Humanitarians (Room 209) and Youth Action (Room 206) clubs. She also included two communal areas of DHHS that were used after school in opportunities that involved all three schools: the Swimming Pool, where she spent a lot of time

115

while on the swim team, and the College Center, where she was able to get help on her college and scholarship applications. As a member of Pride School's Marching Band since her freshman year, Olivia added pink asterisks in two places on her map, the Music Room and the instrument storage room. In Maribel's map we see several bullseye marks that indicated her social world at Pride School: the covered eating area where she'd hang out with her friends during lunch, the quad area where she and her Leadership peers lead lunchtime activities. She also marked communal areas of DHHS like the library and Welcome Center which, in order to accommodate the autonomy of the three small schools yet involve students from all three into Key Club, she considered important spaces. In regard to their drawings, the four participants drew maps similar to the official school maps with the same buildings and orientations (e.g., entrance, north/south) but with symbols or colors demarcating particular regions of the campus that were most important to each of them. In their interviews, they continued to label their maps with experiences, i.e., where their memories were concentrated.

More importantly, these student leaders revealed the meanings they attached to particular school spaces and how these meanings were connected to their community context. Students' mental mapping and their articulations about one or two spaces of the School revealed their ways of knowing, ordering, and seeing the lived social world of the School and their positioning within it as place-makers aimed at creating belonging to school space while living in the community of Southeast Los Angeles.

Through my interviews and informal conversations with Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel – as well as some of their peers and teachers – they each articulated a particular form of student identity, one tied to the community context. Emily described Humanitarians Club and Youth

116

Action as school spaces where she could learn about environmental justice with a group of peers. Seeing both the hardships and resiliency of people in her community served as motivation to be involved in spreading awareness to address the conditions in her community. Similarly, Azul described Leadership as a school space where she could plan activities to get students involved and enjoy school. She wanted to have a positive impact on students' educational experiences because she felt she could offer them a momentary get-away from the everyday conditions they faced from living in a working-class community. For Olivia, the Music Room was also a space to create an enjoyable school culture by raising school spirit. She was able to take music from her community and relate to a group of student musicians. Maribel saw Key Club and Leadership as spaces in which to work with others in order to accomplish goals, and collectively work with young people and community leaders to help bridge the two in her community. These insights show how each student participant's attachments to her community context influenced her leadership within school spaces. As such, place also played a role in *what* they each did at school, *how* they thought about what they did, and *why* they articulated their identities as makers of the school.

These students insights illustrate how a place-based approach to school and student leadership may build leadership capacity and positions students as important actors in efforts to expand schools as centers of community life. Deliberating about community concerns, planning school activities/events, raising school spirit, working with and understanding other students – these all occurred within the School and created places of membership, meaning, and belonging. An added layer to analysis of the school's scale is that the community context informed each student's place-making. Emily spoke of this in terms of the toxicity that emanates from factories

117

in Vernon; Azul described family conditions she observed walking to and from school; Olivia shared educational experiences her mother faced as a student; and, Maribel engaged with local resources in her Leadership class to help students and the community.

In their spatial articulations of schools, the students tied their place-making activities to the School's local context. In other words, place played a role in the ways these students understood the world and their actions within it. By examining youth leadership in this way, scholars can look beyond traditional ways of conceptualizing educational leadership as the role solely of adults and turn attention to how students are constructing space for place-making that is about membership, meaning, and belonging within a particular community context. Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel were active producers of school space. They were school- and community-engaged in their school leadership roles, which tied into the two themes of thinking of themselves as student leaders on campus and as makers of Pride School.

In the next chapter, I discuss another moment in the production of school space, *spatial practice*. I capture the everyday experiences of Latina student leaders who enact place-making in schools through shared interest, working collectively, and taking action appropriate to their identity/group. Specifically, I discuss how their place-making includes instances of cooperation, communication, encouragement, and simply having fun, all for the greater good of the school and community. Democratic practices are created and enacted as students claim school spaces. These practices are more about membership, meaning, and belonging than political means and ends – they are social relations that are created in space, in membership with others, and around shared interest to make their schools a better, more enjoyable place for everyone.

CHAPTER SIX: PLACE & DEMOCRACY

As discussed in the previous chapter, spaces become meaningful sites of belonging when students enact individual as well as collective identities as members of a group. In sharing their experiences and motivations for engaging in place-making, what emerges is a sense of the values they commit to their actions and which they ascribe to particular spaces within the school. By bringing in their values and shared experiences, they create spaces that represent themselves and their communities. In this chapter, I capture a third moment in the production of space – what Lefebvre (1991) calls *spatial practice.* This is everyday and on-the-ground work, routines, and experiences promulgated as Latina student leaders come together with peers to shape the ebb and flow of their school. They enact place-making through shared interest, working collectively, and taking action appropriate to their identity/group. Place-making points to the ways students work together with peers to better the school environment. Thus, there are democratic possibilities embedded in students' efforts to "make" the school, and these possibilities illuminate a broadened conception of what constitutes the civic.

I begin this chapter with a discussion that ties place and place-making to several ideas about schools and democracy, largely drawing from education philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952). Next, I discuss how place-making encompasses democratic practices such as coming together around shared interest, forming a collective from a peer group, engaging in activities appropriate for the group, and working towards the greater good. In the school spaces my student participants engaged in, Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel took creative and constructive action that pushed the School toward its potential as the democratic, embryonic society that Dewey (1939) envisions. I draw examples from their everyday interactions in school

spaces and with peers to illuminate the democratic visions and practices involved in their place-making. Specifically, I discuss how their place-making includes instances of cooperation, communication, encouragement, and simply having fun, all for the greater good of the school and community.

Place, Place-Making & Democracy

In Chapters 2 and 5, I discussed representations of space and representational space as two moments in the production of space according to Lefebvre (1991). Representations of space is space that is created by power. As discussed in Chapter 2, schools are subject to federally-driven agendas such as The Every Child Succeeds Act or The No Child Left Behind Act, and even by entrepreneurial interests as outlined in the "Great Public Schools Now" initiative. In Chapter 5, I discuss representations of space at the scale of a school in terms of how space is ordered by official school maps that dictate who and what belongs where. Although representations of space are hegemonic spaces, such conceived and designed space is not the only aspect of space. Lefebvre (1991) also accounts for the space that is produced by the people living within space (Fairbanks, 2003).

Social actors also make space through two other moments in its production: their own representational space and their spatial practice. Representational space is given meaning by the social actors living within it. In the previous chapter, students articulated and mapped belonging to particular school spaces and their reasons for their place-making within them. While representational space is about visions, ideas, and meanings ascribed to space, spatial practice is the physical space of urban life (places of education, play, work) and where social relations about

membership with others takes place. In this component of Lefebvre's (1991) triad, place is made through everyday life routines and rhythms realized and deployed in space.

Since place is not fixed and determined, it is always becoming, being fashioned, and made through users interacting, embodying, mastering, and appropriating space – this place-making can be an individual as well as a collective endeavor wherein space is shared by a group that brings its members together in associated living (Cresswell, 2004). This points to the democratic possibilities of place-making. Scholars of democracy and education, namely Dewey (1916), speak of this relationship by emphasizing: 1) space as a requirement for democracy to take place; 2) the importance of meaning and membership to democracy; and, 3) democracy as created, maintained and recreated by people acting and interacting in space.

Space & Democracy

Space is a necessary context for the practice of democratic ideals. Place and place-making both require an "embodied relationship with the world" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 37). They are about "being-in-the world" because "humans cannot construct anything without being first in place" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 32). Similarly, Dewey (1899) believed in this embodied relationship to school space and the creation of a democratic way of life. In *The School and Society* (1899), he asserted that schools must be transformed into embryonic communities where students practice being members of a community and are reflective of the work done in broader society. In his speech, "The School as Social Centre" (1902), Dewey describes schools as a central space in a community for "social meetings for social purposes" (Boydston, 2008/1976, p. 91). Like Dewey, Fairbanks (2003) asserts that spaces evoke particular social relations that can be about democratic action. Space is "not merely a container in which social life unfolds," it is also "a

121

medium through which social relations are produced and reproduced" and these can be democratic social relations. Even in *"The Bearings of Pragmatism on Education"* (1909), which discusses the social aim, uses, and application of education, Dewey describes the need for space to ensure democratic learning in an embryonic community of learners:

> There comes a time when a richer, fuller and more carefully selected and arranged environment is required to afford the stimuli and conditions of the most educative activity – an environment more varied than that of the ordinary home, and yet one not so varied, disorderly, overpowering and overspecialized as that of social life in general… Teachers would be present… but they would be present as fellow workers and fellow-players – comrades in carrying on the scheme of play and work activities, and in building up, along with the children, a miniature world as the obvious result and reward of their doing activities (Boydston, 2008/1977, p. 186).

As embryonic spaces, schools are conceptualized as outside the home and social life occurring in the larger society. The social actors within space, in this case students, work with one another in conjoint activities for learning, in membership and around a shared purpose. Dewey (1899) talks about this social cooperation and community life occurring in school space. The school, as a "miniature community, an embryonic society" (Dewey, 1899, p. 12), is a space where students are "held together because they are working along common lines, in a common spirit, and with reference to common aims" (p.10). Starting at the local level and emulating a democratic society within a space of schooling, individual and collective growth in acquiring a democratic ethos will allow individuals to operate within a democratic society, in membership and around shared meaning (Dewey, 1899).

Meaning & Membership in a Democracy

Democracy needs place, membership, and a shared meaning or purpose. In various ways, Dewey (1899, 1916) references both place, membership, and meaning – the space and conditions

of student place-making. In his essay, "The Public and Its Problems," Dewey (1927) argues that democracy is community life itself but we are not naturally members of a community (see Boydston, 2008/1984). Rather, young people need to be oriented toward the traditions, values, and interests that characterize a particular community. Only when "there is conjoint activity whose consequences are appreciated as good by all singular persons who take part in it, and where the realization of the good is such as to effect an energetic desire and effort to sustain it in being just because it is a good shared by all, there is in so far a community" (Boydston, 2008/1984, p. 328). In other words, while working in membership with a particular group, there also needs to be meaning shared. In one of his last essays, "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us" (1939), Dewey depicted democracy as:

> … the free gatherings of neighbors on the street corner to discuss back and forth what is read in uncensored news of the day, and in gatherings of friends in the living rooms of houses and apartments to converse freely with one another. Intolerance, abuse, calling of names because of differences of race, color, wealth or degree of culture are treason to the democratic way of life" (Boydston, 2008/1988, p. 227).

Dewey (1902) had long explained the need to be in membership with others and form shared meaning and belonging through an emphasis on "associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Boydston, 2008/1976, p. 93). In an earlier work, "The School as Social Center" (1902), Dewey also states that citizenship is "coming to mean all the relationships of all sorts that are involved in membership in a community" (Boydston, 2008/1976, p. 83), and that the school "must provide means for bringing people and their ideas and beliefs together" (Boydston, 2008/1976, p. 90). People coming together speaks to the concept of place as socially produced and embodied by people acting in membership with one another

(Haltunnen, 2006). This is the basis of place-making – place is something that is made and becomes a collective endeavor when students make meaning and belonging in that space.

By acting in space, people engage in activities that people enact to make place that is about membership, meaning and belonging. In *Democracy and Education: A Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1916), Dewey states that, "To have the same ideas about things which others have, to be like-minded with them, and thus to be really members of a social group, is therefore to attach the same meanings to things and to acts which others attach" (p. 33). When things have meaning to people, they "mean (intend, propose) what [they] do" (Dewey, 1916, p. 35). In "The Bearings of Pragmatism Upon Education" (1909), Dewey tries to make sense of how engaging students in activities that have social value and appeal to their interests can change the morale of a school, because this is part of the educative process of the school (Boydston, 2008/1977). Students participate in spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging that bind them to purposely engage in place-making activities. Further, in "Education and Social Change," (1937), Dewey describes that democracy is:

> … a way of living together in which mutual and free consultation rule… and in which cooperation… is the law of life; a social order in which all the forces that make for friendship, beauty, and knowledge are cherished in order that each individual may become what he, and he alone, is capable of becoming (Boydston, 2008/1987, p. 417).

Free association and communication with others are essential in building the dispositions, purposes, and values necessary for social change.

Scholars have taken up the myriad of Dewey's ideas and related them to themes about place, meaning, and membership. Westbrook (2005) writes that Dewey's body of work was most concerned with the practice of schooling and the social part of education, asserting that Dewey

124

envisioned students working with others, under appropriate schooling conditions, as members of community life, all participating and all contributing. Biesta (2007) acknowledges that Dewey's (1916) conception of a democratic person "cannot be created in isolation but can only emerge through participation in democratic life" (Biesta, 2007, p. 749) which is associated living. Interaction with one another is participation, and "participation is central to Dewey's understanding of communication" (Biesta, 2007, p. 751). Communication is important to conceptions of democracy because through communication "patterns of action are formed and transformed, in which meanings are shared, recreated, and reconstructed and through which individuals grow, change, and transform" (Biesta, 2007, p. 751). It is a process of social cooperation and coordination with one another, a shared understanding around a shared interest that informs their desire for participation (Biesta, 2006). McDermott and Raley (2007) also point out that intelligence and collective wisdom, components of social life that Dewey wrote about extensively, come about when people engage with and educate one another. Although their focus is the field of anthropology and the study of peoples' everyday lives, McDermott and Raley (2007) use Dewey's ideas to understand how people, together and within particular social contexts, make and remake their world. In his discussion of the conceptual history of social capital, Farr (2004) examines how Dewey's (1909) writings about critical pragmatism emphasize associated living through active networking, cooperative learning and action, and compassion for others to solve social problems and enact change. Such a discussion resonates with themes about place and place-making.

To summarize, students have their own capacities for action – for place-making – that is about working with one another for the greater good of their peers, the school, and community:

"For Dewey, democracy is participation, and the key question he asks when defining democracy is about the opportunities for communication and participation, thereby making the principle of shared interests the primary test of the worth of any form of human association" (Biesta 2006, p. 36). The importance of space in democratic participation is that "to have a social environment means to be in a situation in which one's activities 'are associated with others'" (Biesta, 2006, p. 30). Through making place, students come together to participate in a common activity around a shared interest, engage in activities appropriate for their group, and work toward the greater good.

Creating, Maintaining & Recreating Democracy

While Lefebvre (1991) explains the social production of space, Dewey (1916) emphasizes the production of democracy. Similar to the notion of place as "constructed by people doing things" and "constantly being performed" (Cresswell 2004, p. 37), in *Creative Democracy* (1939) Dewey argues that democracy is not maintained on its own; rather, it takes creative effort and activity, and is a way of life. Dewey (1939) asserts that democracy is about the "possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character, and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life," "faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgement and action," "free gathering of neighbors… to converse freely with one another," and "faith in the possibility in conducting disputes, controversies, and conflicts as cooperative undertakings" (Boydston, 2008/1988, pp. 226-228). In other words, democracy requires a faith in the ability of individuals to come together to form public opinion, dispute cooperatively, and, interact, share, and contribute to increase knowledge. Such processes are similar to the notion of place-making as an experience that is an "embodied relationship with the

126

world" (Creswell, 2004, p. 37) and people creating, maintaining, and recreating something. Dewey (1939) similarly talks about *experience* as – "free interaction of individual human beings with surrounding conditions, especially the human surroundings, which develops and satisfies need and desire by increasing knowledge of things as they are" (Boydston, 2008/1988, p. 229).

Notions of democracy are tied to those of place and place-making, particularly the need to be in membership with others and participating in space. Since place is produced in membership and meaning, schools are important sites for youth to come together, make new collective identities in which they see themselves as members of a group – as democratic actors – capable of seeing and enacting change within their spaces for the greater good of the school and community. The student spaces I observed served as social sites where particular forms of social relations tied to membership and meaning were created and enacted. These spaces also shaped students' personal and collective identities within the school and the larger community. Conceptions of democracy point to the need for such associated living, of being in membership to advance a way of life that is about being, and enacting change with others – in other words, democracy is about place-making.

Latina Student Leaders' Place-Making

The most enjoyable part of this project for me was shadowing Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel in their everyday life at school. Since spatial practice, as conceptualized by Lefebvre (1991), is the everyday life – i.e., the routines and rhythms of life realized and deployed in space – I paid particular attention to the *how*, i.e., the social relations and democratic practices of place-making my student participants employed to create spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging. During these observations, I witnessed various instances in which their place-making

127

involved both (a) cooperating and deliberating with peers around a shared concern and (b) encouraging each other to find enjoyment in their everyday life at school. These forms of place-making were about both constructive and creative actions for the greater good of the school and community. Acting collectively with peers, my student participants' place-making sought to improve conditions in their community and create a positive school culture for their peers and teachers.

My discussion is divided into two section. First, I provide examples from Emily and Azul about how their place-making in the Youth Action Club and Leadership class involved cooperating and communicating with peers about a shared concern for the greater good of the school and community. Second, I present examples of how Olivia, Maribel, and Azul engaged in place-making in the Band Room, the hallways, and other classrooms that aimed to create a positive school culture for their peers.

Cooperation & Communication for the Greater Good of School & Community

My student participants created places at school that allowed them to work with one another around a shared meaning and for the greater good of both the School and community. Given that the thematic focus of Pride School is health and medicine, many instances of place-making involved efforts to maintain healthy communities both within and outside the School. Some student participants did this by engaging in school spaces with peers wherein they voiced their concerns and took ownership over their place. I describe two observations from Azul and Emily that show how they worked with peers through cooperation and communication to make place at school.

Azul: Health Fair. Nothing Azul did as ASB President was done in isolation. Rather, it was in membership and around a shared meaning or purpose with her peers in the Leadership class. When I asked her why she got involved in Leadership she shared, "I like organizing events, so I found it was an opportunity to execute my own ideas and give more to the School." In this embryonic society within the School, the students Azul worked with created meaningful place in this classroom through cooperation and deliberation about the needs of the School and community. On one occasion I observed such students' place-making while they planned the School's Health Fair, an annual event held in May in partnership with a local nonprofit.

Within the Leadership class, students were grouped into committees overseeing various school activities. It was within these committees that they engaged in making decisions for the greater good of the School and community. For example, there was a committee for organizing and implementing lunchtime spirit games, another for setting up the School's blood drive, another for designing and creating the yearbook, etc. Azul was part of the Health Fair Committee, along with about eight other students. I observed their meeting on one occasion and an entry in my fieldnotes reveals how this meeting began and where it took place:

> Towards the beginning of class, students in charge of the School's Health Fair were directed by the Leadership Advisor to meet in the "back room" (the work room), separate from the regular classroom space "because I have lots of things to go over," she said. Azul asked if I wanted to join their meeting, and I followed her into the work room. The work room was about a third the size of the classroom. In there, a conference table was at the center of the room. Around the room were white boards, computers, printers, large rolls of butcher paper, empty and non-empty supply boxes, and cabinets containing paints, brushes, and other work supplies. (fieldnote)

When I first met Azul, she described this room as a space where they go if "we have to have serious conversations." The purpose of this particular Health Fair Committee meeting was to

129

figure out how to publicize the event. Students had printed informational flyers about the event

in both English and Spanish, and were going to divide up the work about where to publicize the

Fair within the community (gas stations, parks, restaurants, etc.). However, Ms. Smith, the

Leadership advisor began the meeting by announcing that the day before she had met with their

community partnership representative, and she shared information from this meeting with the

students. The partnership representative had had new ideas to potentially incorporate into the

Health Fair, and Ms. Smith asked Committee members to think about how to implement these

ideas for discussion at a later Committee meeting.

Although the initial purpose of this Committee meeting was to select community spaces

to promote the Fair and the community partnership representatives ideas were postponed,

another focus took up a majority of the meeting's time – what food to sell at the Fair. An entry

from my fieldnotes describes how this concern arose:

> After sharing information from her meeting with the community partnership and
> before excusing herself early from the meeting to let students carry out their
> committee work amongst themselves, Ms. Smith asked the group if there were
> any questions. One student said "Food trucks?" Students had to decide if they
> wanted to have one at this year's Fair. They didn't have [a food truck] last year or
> the year before that, and they didn't make a lot of money because, Ms. Smith
> jokingly stated, "It was healthy food and who wants that?" She suggested other
> things they could do. They could have a fundraiser to have their own pot of
> money for spirit games, to buy pizza when they stayed late to decorate or work on
> projects, etc. The options she suggested were to: 1) have a concession stand and
> sell chips and other snacks or, 2) contract a food/taco truck. Given lessons from
> previous years, she advised, "The less healthy, the best if we're trying to make
> money." She said, though, that ultimately it was up to them. She said they could
> discuss this and decide. If they went with the food truck option, students would
> have to do research, and call places to make sure they had the appropriate
> insurance and permits to meet all the business requirements required by the
> District. Once they received the information, she would send it along to the Risk
> Management Office for District approval. (fieldnotes)

After sharing various options to consider, Ms. Smith left the decision up to the Committee. When

I later spoke to Ms. Smith about her position as the Leadership Advisor, she shared that "my role

is to kind of guide the 50 kids that I have… They are incredibly self-sufficient, so they don't

really need a lot from me." Besides being the adult voice in the room, she added, "Once they get

an idea, they kind of do it all. I just am support."

After Ms. Smith left this Committee meeting, the students deliberated about what to sell.

The Committee members engaged in discussions about past events, considered everyone's

insights and opinions, and came to decisions based on everyone's input:

> After Ms. Smith left and students were left to discuss this matter on their own, the
> student in charge of the Committee began with "So what do you guys think? Food
> truck? No food truck?" Azul added, "Let's talk about the pros and cons of it.
> What's your perspective? Anyone want to start?" One student shared that his
> freshman year they had Meals on Wheels and it didn't go well. Other students
> agreed. He added that with the concession stand option they could fundraise
> money for themselves; he thought the food truck option "would be pretty cool,"
> but then ended with "but I don't know." Azul noted that he was unsure about it.
> She turned to another student and asked, "What do you think?" This student
> shared that the food truck at the Fair would look "professional" and "better," but
> added that they would make more money from having their own fundraiser.
> Another student asked the clarifying question if they would be selling chips if
> they took the concession stand option. The student who said the food truck would
> look "professional" answered "Yes," they would be selling chips and soda. The
> student who said the food truck his freshman year did not do well said they'd be
> selling "snacks." Azul added that the student store manager had a list of snacks
> they could sell. After listening to these responses, the student who asked the
> clarifying question asked "Wouldn't that be better? Wouldn't we make more
> money." Azul then went on to further explain that they would have to split 50% of
> their profits from concession stand sales with the student store manager, but that
> they would still make money. Another student, who had not spoken yet and had
> been sitting quietly listening to these concerns, then brought up the question
> "Doesn't it look bad that we're selling chips?" She added that the Health Fair is
> trying to help people be healthier "and we're going to have chips?" The student
> who first spoke agreed and said they would be promoting health at the Fair and
> that people may complain that their only option for snacks to purchase would be

chips. Azul added that Ms. Smith has a list of healthier versions of snacks and said, "So if you guys want to look into that..." She also added that they could sell fruit, but there was only one staff member at the School who had the permission to handle that so they would have to ask her. (fieldnotes)

This classroom space contained particular democratic social relations that were about communicating concerns and cooperating with one another to make decisions. Even though having a food truck would be "cool" or would "look professional," students weighed the concession stand option. By discussing the contradiction of selling chips at a health fair, students centered the needs of their community. Their individual interests were set aside to determine a collective good. Within the parameters of their own decision-making power, they questioned the healthiness of snacks to sell at the Fair and this concern drove their deliberation.

About 15 minutes into the meeting the students shifted their focus to promoting the Fair (their original purpose in meeting), but returned to the food trucks versus concession stand question toward the end of their meeting. Azul reminded them, "Okaym so food truck! Are we doing it or not doing it?" I recall what ensued:

A student, once again, brought up the healthiness of snack options. Azul reminded him that the student store manager does have healthy options for them to sell, but that they would have to go get a list of snacks from her to mark off the snacks they would like to have. Azul added, "So obviously Hot Cheetos and all those chips, we don't have to have them." (fieldnotes)

Such social cooperation and community life occurring in school space is how the students made place. They worked along common lines of considering health needs and aimed to do what was best for the school and community. By Ms. Smith taking a step back from this committee, students were allowed to participate and communicate freely amongst themselves because she

knew the students could work cooperatively and constructively, and share and contribute towards

their common aim, what she described as them being "self-sufficient."

The students in this committee came together to share their ideas and make decisions

with others to benefit the School and community. They represented an embryonic society in

which all members contributed and shared their opinions. As such, Azul's place-making was a

collective endeavor that sought to impact the greater good of the school and local community.

Emily: Lead Presentation. Emily's place-making involved working with others at the

School to take action for social change in the community. She acknowledged that prior to her

involvement in Pride School clubs, she was not as deeply aware of issues in her community. In

these spaces, she worked collectively with peers who were also interested in learning more about

environmental racism in Southeast Los Angeles. For example, Youth Action Club meetings were

held every Friday during lunch in a math teacher's classroom. In those moments of meeting, this

classroom became a space shared by a group of peers who were brought together in associated

living around the shared interest in bettering the conditions of their local community. In this

space, they communicated about community concerns in ways that were appropriate for their

group.

In one instance, Emily and her peer Marco presented their interdisciplinary project (IDP)

on lead toxicity to the Club. As part of a yearly requirement at Pride School, all students must

complete an IDP that focuses on health since Pride School is a medically-themed school.

Students are assigned a group of peers to work with and are given a topic based on their grade

level. For example, all 11th graders are assigned the topic of lead poisoning in their community.

In their classes and with their peers, students research the topic and present their project's

findings to a panel of judges made up of teachers, students, and community members. It was this IDP, which together they had worked on in the previous academic year, that Emily and Marco presented at a Youth Action meeting. They began by explaining why this was an important topic to explore and understand. My fieldnotes describe what I observed during their lunchtime Club meeting:

> Emily met me in the hallway and reminded me that for this day's Youth Action Club meeting she and Club member Marco would be presenting information from their IDP. As I walked into the classroom (a math classroom) I noticed there were already several students sitting down eating their lunch. As I sat down at one of the tables, I also noticed there was a PowerPoint slide projected that read: "Lead Toxicity."[…] Lunch had started at 10:45 and it was about 11:00 when Emily and Marco began their presentation. There were about 22 students present… Emily and Marco began their presentation by going over their project's purpose – to inform all ages, educate them on issues in the public, and also be aware of what lead toxicity does to the environment and their health. Emily stated, "It's a common issue and there's a lot of lack of knowledge on the topic and we wanted to spread awareness to further fight lead toxicity in the environment and in our community." (fieldnotes)

Emily and Marco had ten minutes to present as students ate their lunch and listened. Their place-making in this instance included going in front of this peer group and communicating information as a basis for shared meaning and understanding in order to push the group toward enacting change, i.e, to inform their basis for action and participation in their community. Emily and Marco's shared purpose was to use this space and time to spread awareness and communicate information about community concerns. As such, for Emily, her place-making involved presenting information to peers and communicating a shared concern for others in the community because, as she stated during one of my interviews with her, "I mean, it is your health and it's affecting your health, but also affecting those in your community."

134

As they continued their presentation, Emily and Marco shared components of their IDP,

such as findings from a survey and experiment (see Figure 6.1) they conducted:

> They presented facts about exposure to lead as well as how they explored this
> topic by talking to residents and engaging in a "test" of their home soil. They
> explained the ways lead is toxic and harmful to the body's development. For
> example, they explained that if a child is born in an environment with high levels
> of lead, their nervous system may be affected, making it difficult to control some
> areas of their body. These children may also experience seizures, heart problems,
> and other birth defects. Next in their presentation they also shared results from a
> survey they conducted by speaking with local residents at a nearby park to gauge
> their understanding of lead toxicity. Using a questionnaire to rank residents' level
> of knowledge about lead, they found that there was not a high awareness from
> local residents about lead contamination in the soil. They also shared results from
> an experiment they conducted to test the high levels of lead in local soil. Using
> organic soil purchased at a store and soil from a local front yard, they monitored
> plant growth as cultivated in both soil types over the duration of several months.
> They took pictures of the plants' growth progress, once in November and again in
> January. Their experiment results revealed that the plant cultivated in organic soil
> grew at a faster rate than the one planted in soil from a local yard, which actually
> did not grow at all. Students had initially hypothesized that if the plant is able to
> grow, then the soil would have little to no levels of lead. They concluded that
> organic soil has a greater impact on plant growth and that their home soil was in
> fact contaminated/affected by lead. (fieldnote)

Figure 6.1: *Emily and Marco share findings from their experiment to Youth Action Club.*
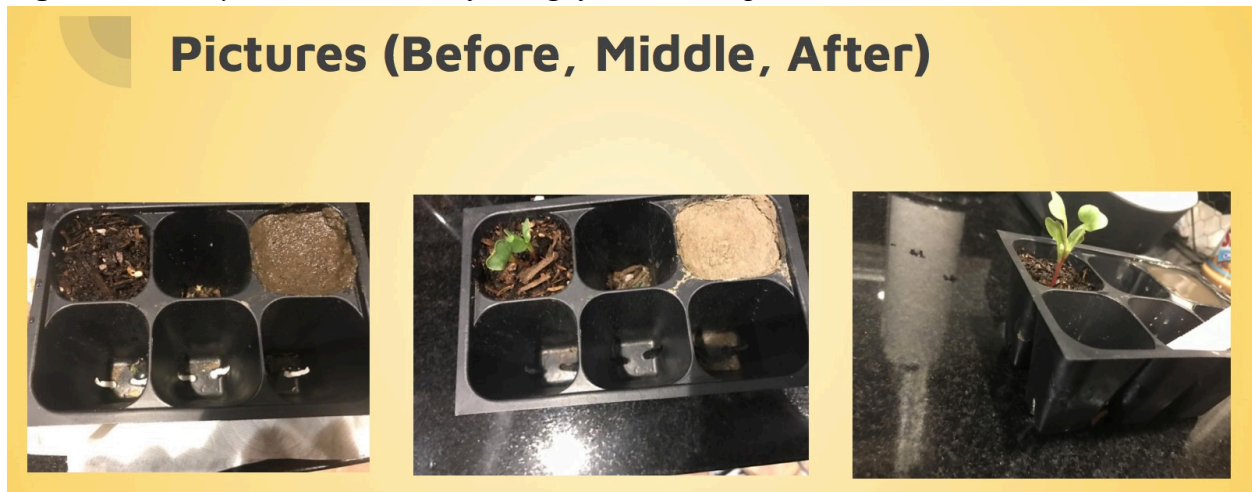
In *How Racism Takes Place*, Lipsitz (2011) states that living in segregated neighborhoods, particularly in urban areas, is taxing on Black and Brown bodies because of their increased exposure to hazardous material, freeway pollutants, lead-based paint, incinerators, and garbage dumps, so much so that the "racial wealth gap is also a racial health gap" (p. 7). Within the Pride School's particular community, factories are major polluters who impact the soil in the surrounding areas. Emily and Marco's presentation brought these issues to home. These two students shared that exposure to lead impacts residents that garden, play in the dirt, etc. In Youth Action Club, students become aware of the health consequences of living in their segregated community and impacted by environmental racism.

The Youth Action Club at Pride School served as a miniature community wherein, through free association, students were presented with opportunities to communicate with peers. Emily and Marco's place-making sought to build the dispositions, purposes, and values necessary for their peers to enact change in their local community. By fostering a spirit of community engagement and concerns for others, Emily and Marco made efforts to create a space that was meaningful for students where they could feel like members of the community that could take action on its behalf. According to Emily, clubs like Youth Action "are great spaces for the youth to get involved in their community… and these spaces actually make you go out. It's not really limited to the school environments, you can take it out of the school environment as well."

Emily and Marco, and other Youth Action members, presented to and communicated with a group of students for the greater good of Pride school and their local community. Much like in Leadership, the teacher-advisor of the Club was present but off to the side, allowing students to

communicate and participate on their own. The students' shared interest was that they wanted to

be aware of issues in their community and learn of ways to get involved. Emily and Marco

enacted collective identities as members of a group and participated in ways appropriate for their

group, such as giving a presentation during their lunchtime meeting, for the greater good,

spreading awareness within the School and encourage others to be aware and involved in issues

that impact their community. Thus, Emily's place-making required working with peers. In Youth

Action Club, these students came together around the shared interest of being part of a

community of students that were interested in bettering the health of the local environment.

Motivation, Fun & Enjoyment for a Positive School Culture

In other instances, students engaged in place-making that was about encouragement,

enjoyment, and fun in school spaces. These activities also supported the greater good of the

School. By participating with others around a shared meaning, students engaged in place-making

to build a positive school culture. They raised school spirit and attempted to foster a school that

would be an enjoyable place to be for both teachers and students. I describe three observations

from Olivia, Maribel, and Azul wherein they engaged in activities around encouragement,

enjoyment, and fun to make place at school.

Olivia: Marching Band Practice. In Marching Band, Olivia and her peers made place

by creating music for school spirit, and they encouraged one another to play as members of Pride

School's Marching Band. Olivia believed that the shared meaning of their group was "to bring

more excitement, more spirit into our school." In other words, their collective place-making

aimed to build a positive school culture. Within the Music Room, Olivia motivated and

encouraged her bandmates to play as members of a group and to contribute in the best way

137

possible to the group's collective endeavor of raising school spirit for the greater good of the School.

To be successful at raising school spirit, Band members had to work together to produce music that the student body would enjoy during sporting games, pep rallies, assemblies, etc. Olivia encouraged her bandmates to give it their all and work together, playing louder or lower depending on the dynamics of the group:

> To benefit the sound of the music and the quality, I ask them to balance each other out and I encourage that everyone play no matter what. We could still hear them. As long as we can hear them it's okay because they do contribute. We try to prove that they could contribute a lot, so sometimes we play lower to all be the same level. Sometimes we ask someone to play louder so we can hear them even more. They sometimes even sound better than the most, but they all still come together. It doesn't sound at all imbalanced. It sounds perfect. So, we always try to fix the quality and try to tell everyone that they still contribute because there's always that one shy person in each section that doesn't sound loud. (focus group)

The production of an enjoyable sound was dependent on everyone playing their instruments as members of a group. Olivia stated how she contributed to this:

> Sometimes I suggest that a drummer can play louder because in my section, in some songs, we have our own individual parts. Each of the bass drums [has] their own parts… I usually encourage the player to play 'cause they're mostly girls; like, I tell them that they're strong, that they can play loud because I've heard them play loud before and I sort of remind them. A friend of mine… [is] only a grade younger, but that's why I encourage her to feel better and help her play loud because she's sort of anxious, she gets some episodes of anxiety like where she gets so nervous that she can't play. For some individuals, others of my sections, I help them by playing the music for them. I play the music with them, along with the other students. (focus group)

Olivia played along with members of her drumline to ensure they knew and understood their individual parts or by reminding them that they were strong and could play louder as she had seen them do before. As drumline major, Olivia's place-making was about encouraging her

138

bandmates to benefit the group and recognize their collective purpose in bringing spirit to the

School. She made sure that everyone felt like they were part of the group and encouraged them

to contribute the best they could. In this sense, students practiced being members of a community

– all participating and all contributing.

I attended one Marching Band practice when I observed Olivia lead the drumline group

and encourage members of her section to take more active roles in the Marching Band. During

these practices, the 40 or so students were grouped in three separate areas of the Music Room

depending on which instrument they played. All drum and other percussion instruments set up

towards the back of the Room, flutes and other woodwind instruments on one side of the Room,

and trumpets and other brass instruments on the side opposite the flutes; these groups formed a

semi-circle around the Room. In the front center, the Band Director (Mr. Flores) or designated

student drum major, conducted the group. In one observation, Mr. Flores wanted students to

volunteer to "conduct" the group and take on the role of drum major. Olivia immediately

encouraged her friend Michelle, who was standing next to her in the drumline section of the

class, to volunteer:

> After their warm-up set, Mr. Flores transitioned to the next part of their practice.
> He said, "First things first: drum majors, if you're trying out or want to do it for
> fun, do 'Pre-Game,' 'Star Spangled Banner,' 'Victors,' in that order." Mr. Flores
> told the group that they had to find their replacers. Olivia, in a loud voice, said: "I
> think there are a couple," and Mr. Flores responded with, "I know." Then,
> speaking to the whole group Mr. Flores said, "You should be watching [the drum
> majors]. If they go slow, you go slow. If they go fast, you go fast." He then asked,
> "Anyone want to try?" Olivia immediately turned to her friend, standing next to
> her, another member of the drumline and yelled out "Michelle! Michelle!" and
> nudged her friend forward. Michelle was smiling but a little unsure. Mr. Flores
> said that he would model leading the set first and this seemed to put Michelle at
> ease because she shook her head and said "Yes"[…] Once Mr. Flores was done
> modeling conducting the set and students played along, Mr. Flores turned to

Michelle and asked, "Okay Michelle, want to try it?" And once again Olivia encouraged her, "Go Michelle, yeah!" Mr. Flores told Michelle, "I know you have the voice. It's okay if you make mistakes. You're in control, not them. I'll be here guiding you." With a smile on her face, Michelle seemed like she was nervous but also looking forward to trying to lead the group. Olivia was clearly excited for Michelle. She was standing next to her and was once again nudging her forward, telling her to go up to the front of the room where she would be conducting… With her arms raised halfway up, Michelle, in a loud commanding voice said, "SET!" The whole group quieted and Michelle began to conduct the group, and the students looked at her to follow her tempo. (fieldnote)

Olivia encouraged Michelle to acknowledge her potential to lead the group. This is reflective of Olivia's faith in her bandmates to come together and work toward their common aim of producing music they could be proud of and would have a positive impact on the students and School. They engaged in place-making that was appropriate for their group by ensuring that everyone was invested in their collective endeavor. They were brought together by the common aim of making music for the greater good of the School and they evoked particular social relations that were about encouraging fellow members in conjoint effort to produce music – a space where they all contributed and participated.

Azul: Teacher Birthdays. There were various instances when I observed my student participants and their peers engage in actions to make Pride School a more enjoyable place. When I first met her, Azul described herself as a creative person that liked to think of things that would benefit the students and teachers. She was interested in getting them involved and excited about being at the School. An initial example she shared was that on the first day of the Los Angeles Teachers' Strike, she brought the teachers *champurrado* to drink on that cold, rainy morning. When I asked her if she made it herself or bought it at the store, she said she made it at home "because when you buy it, it's just not as meaningful." On other occasions, while visiting

the Leadership classroom, I observed groups of students working on posters to give to teachers

on their birthdays (see Figure 6.2). On butcher paper students painted "Happy Birthday" with big

letters and personalized their posters in some way. The students included figures particular to the

teacher's subject or other things that reminded them of that teacher. For example, for one of the

science teachers, students drew a rocket ship and a lab beaker on their poster. This was a place-

making activity by the students in Leadership to make the School a more enjoyable place to be

for their teachers on their birthdays, even if it was simply for an instant.

Figure 6.2: Students work on a teacher's birthday poster during their leadership class.

During one of my observations of Azul during the Leadership class, I witnessed how

students used their posters for the greater good of the students and teachers. Azul began the

Leadership meeting with announcements about that day's lunchtime spirit game, the Blood Drive

taking place that Friday, and students' efforts to inform the local community about the School's

Health Fair taking place in May. At the conclusion of these announcements and discussions, Azul

shared with students that two teachers had upcoming birthdays so they were going to begin class

by walking over to Mr. Valencia's classroom to sing to him "Happy Birthday." There was a birthday poster already prepared with his name on it. An entry in my fieldnotes describes what I observed:

> As Azul went to the back room to get the poster students had previously prepared for the occasion, the other students got up and began walking out toward the hallway. Students were talking with each other, so they were reminded to be quiet in the hallways since other classes were in session. As Azul walked out of the back room with the rolled-up butcher paper, another student went up to her and said, "I'll hold it, I'll hold it!" The 40 or so students walked down the hallway and still spoke to one another in low voices. When we reached the teacher's classroom, three students were holding the poster Azul had gone to get. It was made out of butcher paper and was painted with the message "Happy Birthday Mr. Valencia, "something the teacher, I'm sure, will later put up somewhere in his classroom as I've seen other teachers hang up theirs. The Leadership students gathered in the back and along the sides of the classroom, forming a semi-circle. [Mr. Valencia] stood in the front of the classroom with a smile on his face, and his own students, sitting at their desks ready for the singing to begin – they too seemed excited and were smiling. [Ms. Smith] began the singing by counting to three, and in unison students began singing "Happy Birthday" with "cha, cha, cha" at the appropriate times. The students sitting at their desks also took part. At the end of the singing, students cheered, and Mr. Valencia remained with a huge smile on his face as he thanked them. As we walked back down the hallway, Azul walked up to me excitedly and asked, "It's fun, huh?" (fieldnote)

Ms. Smith later described her Leadership students' place-making during our interview: "They make the School's student culture outside of the School's academic culture." The students in Leadership do this in ways that are appropriate for their group and through the means available to them. Leadership students, as well as the students in Mr. Valencia's classroom, singing together, at least for a moment, became a community of peers. Sharing in conjoint efforts in their singing, their common aim was to create a memorable experience for Mr. Valencia on his birthday. Working collectively, students engaged in place-making that was about creating spaces of and for enjoyment with a shared meaning in building a positive school culture.

Maribel & Azul: Hallway Decorations. Pride School is located on the second floor of the main building at DHHS. The first time I entered Pride School, I was immediately awestruck by the hallway spaces, i.e., the walls, ceilings and doors: Almost every inch of the hallway was covered with Harry Potter-themed decorations. Different sections of the hallway represented and were decorated with figures from the different schools from Harry Potter (e.g., Gryffindor, Ravenclaw). Azul shared that since they were one of three small schools on the DHHS campus, they were not permitted to decorate common areas such as the Quad, the gyms, or the Cafeteria. They could, however, decorate their own floors. The students at Pride School took ownership over their hallway in creative forms and in ways, once again, that were appropriate for their group and for a positive school culture focused on students enjoying being at school.

The common aim behind Leadership students decorating the hallway was creating a space of enjoyment for Pride School students and a space that was *for* them. Ms. Smith shared with me how such an intervention on the School's physical space was first conceptualized by Maribel and Azul:

> They made the School so much more like… I hesitate to say… a home because it wasn't their home, but more of, maybe, like a second home. All of the decorations that we do in our hallways, that's all Azul. She got a crazy idea two years ago: "I want to decorate the hallway for Valentine's Day!" and she took a bunch of string and put a bunch of hearts on the string and looped it through the entire hallway and had it hanging down. Then the next month it was, "I want to decorate for St. Patrick's Day!" So, this time it was shamrocks and rainbows down the hallway. And then it was, "Well we want to do a big thing for Harry Potter." So now each section of the hallway is a different house of Harry Potter and that's all Azul. It was something that she got this crazy idea because she is so creative and she was like, "I want to make this place a place that people want to be" and the way that she knew to do that was to make it a cool environment, make it visually appealing, make it a place where, you know, okay, this month it's hearts. What's it going to be next month? What's it going to be a month after that? And kids

143

anticipating that and being excited about it and, you know, seeing their faces when they walk in and the hallways have completely changed. (interview)

These decorations personalized the physical environment of the school and students' sense of belonging there. It was their way of positively impacting both the human and physical surroundings of the School, i.e., their ideas about a better place to be, spatialized. Echoing Ms. Smith's comments, Maribel shared that the hallway decorations were intended to benefit the students:

> So, it's just the extra work that we do to make sure that the students are enjoying school and not just here because we have to be. And even in the hallways, we try to be interactive with them. It was something that the students could connect to to feel like they are actually a part of something, not just coming to school and studying and just going home as a routine. Just having something that they could look forward to and they could feel like they're a part of. That's our goal. (focusgroup)

In Leadership, Maribel and Azul took part in efforts to change the conditions of the School.

Working collectively, Leadership students took actions appropriate to their group and created spaces of belonging for the greater good of the School. Their mark on the physical space of the School did not go unnoticed. During the various times that I visited the Leadership classroom in the month of February, I saw groups of students working on decorations for their next hallway decorating theme: DC versus Marvel. They prepared to decorate the hallway in various ways: I saw some students paste butcher paper to a blank wall, project an image onto it, trace the image, then take the traced image back to their table to paint it (see Figure 6.3); I saw another group of students trying to figure out how to resourcefully make dimensional crystals by cutting, pasting, and painting food trays from the school's cafeteria (see Figure 6.4). These

efforts were representative of other activities Leadership students did to contribute to making

Pride School a more enjoyable place to be:

> My Leadership kids specifically, they want to make [Pride School] a place that everybody enjoys being at. They come up with ideas that they want to do. They want to play games at lunch, they want to have a pep rally, and they want to do things that make kids want to have school spirit. They want to have people enjoying where they come to school and enjoy having to come to school every day, and being with their friends and kind of making a community out of our 800-student school. (interview)

These students' creative contributions to the school were seen and felt. Making place within the

hallways of Pride School was a collective endeavor in which Leadership students' decorations

were about meaning and belonging for the broader student body. Working together to change the

conditions of the School was making and sustaining a school that students wanted to be a part of.

These students' vision for the School was creating one that students could claim and transform

on their own; they participated as members of a community and were intentional about their

work. They invested in the good of Pride School through their creative efforts.

Figure 6.3: Students work on DC v. Marvel hallway decorations during leadership class.

Figure 6.4: Pride School Hallways decorated DC v. Marvel during second semester.

Place-Making as Democratic Practice

Students at Pride School had a lot of agency over school space. When I asked Mr. Perez

for his views on the students' role in shaping the School, he said:

> I've seen micro-manager principals that are much more authoritarian [toward
> students]. I tend to be much more like: "Okay, come up with an idea, show me
> the plan and how you're going to execute this plan. Go ahead and execute
> it." [Their plan] may fail miserably and that's totally okay… We don't just say
> [something] is going to be student-driven or student-led. [The students] are going
> to have to do it and it's going to either succeed or fail based on [their] efforts in
> this endeavor. So, we really tell them that a lot, that "We [educators] will guide
> you and if you need help, we're going to be here," but ultimately they need to,
> like… I don't want to say sink or swim because we're not going to let them sink
> completely… they need to be asking for help. And that's a very big deal for us. If
> they're not asking for help, then if they sink then that's on them. And that is in
> itself a learning experience or a teachable moment for them. (interview)

They Ms. Rojas, who worked closely with Maribel, expressed similar views about taking a step

back and letting students take the lead within the spaces they were involved in:

> I teach them how to run the Club in the sense of they're responsible for it and I'm
> there to assist. I've seen them grow. Maribel is one of the perfect examples of
> that. She started Key Club as a member, as a freshman, and then recruited her
> friends to come along, and then took on a leadership role to the point where she
> was actually Vice President as a junior and even President for a little while as a
> junior. She's one of those examples of students that was very quiet, very timid,
> and she just blossomed into a community leader. I mean, literally, she's known
> throughout the community by name. She's just so involved. But she also learned
> that by taking ownership of the Club. And that's what I try to do: "This is your
> club. You guys tell me what you need and I'm going to provide you those
> resources. You tell me what you want to accomplish: What are your goals? What
> do you want to see in your community? What do you want to do?" (interview)

The comments of the principal and Key Club advisor afford insight into the freedom that

students have at Pride School to learn about democratic peer practices amongst themselves to

engage in place-making. The Principal was not "authoritarian," and instead encouraged social

activity on campus to be "student-driven or student-led." Students knew their power and acted to

147

meet those expectations within the spaces they were involved in. Place and place-making provide useful constructs to center the spaces where they enacted agency and how these related to the embryonic communities Dewey (1889, 1916) envisioned living within schools.

This chapter explored how four student leaders at Pride School, alongside their peers, created place at school, and examined possible connections between their place-making and democratic practice. The goal was to understand the social relations these students enacted through place-making, and what these relations meant regarding space, both within their groups and of the School and community. My findings demonstrate that students had constructive and creative ways of working toward the greater good of the School and their communities. They engaged with one another through cooperation and communication, encouraged each other, and created spaces for both students and teachers to enjoy. Through shared experience, my student participants created new collectivities within school through democratic uses of and for school space.

In spaces such as Leadership, Marching Band, and Youth Action Club, democracy was actualized. With and alongside their peers, Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel shaped the spaces in which they congregated, and enacted situated strategies for achieving a sense of place in a context of everyday life at school and their communities. Azul and Emily cooperated and communicated with peers in Leadership and Youth Action to center the health needs of both the School and the local community. Even in instances wherein students encouraged one another, as Olivia did in Marching Band, or creating moments of enjoyment, like singing happy birthday to a teacher, these students fostered social relations that produced and maintained a positive school

culture. In these ways, students' place-making was a means toward the greater good of the school.

I suggest that democratic practices are created and enacted as students claim the spaces that, to them, are more about membership, meaning, and belonging than they are about political means and ends. Since schools are centers of community and social life, it is important to pay attention to *what* students do within them. The social relations that are created for the greater good of the School and local community are how place is produce through spatial practice at Pride School. Engaging in clubs and organizations form part of the everyday routines and rhythms of life i.e., spatial practice, at school, and these spaces are dependent on students using and embodying space. Commenting on school space, principal Mr. Perez stated, "I'm happier seeing that kids are happy here. That they truly belong to this community. That they can feel it; that this is *their* place. It's not my place. I'm just a part of this place." Not only did these students make Pride School *their* place, they also learned about their collective social power over space to influence the greater good for everyone involved.

In the next chapter, I continue to discuss how Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel created their place at school. By engaging with a racio-gendered analysis, I capture how they learned about themselves, what they could accomplish as a collective, their positioning as role models, and that they gained affirmations from their interactions with other Latinas at Pride School.

CHAPTER SEVEN: LATINA STUDENT LEADERS & PLACE

In the previous two chapters, I focused on the where, why, and how of student place-making. Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel articulated meaning of particular school spaces through their representations of space and the reasons for their place-making. They also revealed the democratic practices enacted in their place-making. As such, I conceptualize their school leadership as place-based. In this chapter, I provide a racio-gendered analysis of my participants experiences by engaging with an "in place" and "out of place" framework drawn from geographer Tim Cresswell (1996), and how they navigated these dichotomies within the context of their school place-making. My original purpose in researching place-making at a Los Angeles high school, however, was not guided by a gender analysis: in the beginning I was more interested in how students created places of social membership, meaning, and belonging, and how this was informed by their community context, history and culture. It was later that I considered how my students' roles as female Latinas impacted space-making.

Throughout the study, I noticed that other female students were part of Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel's place-making. For example, in the Humanitarians Club, all the students who attended the lunchtime meetings led by Emily were female, and in ASB, all other elected officers whom Azul and Maribel met with, such as the Senior Class President, Secretary, etc., were also female. The focus group and final interviews I held with my study's participants served as a moment for me to ask them about this gender representation. I left the conversations open-ended with this prompting question: "Is there something you can say about being a Latina and the role you play in these spaces?" As students responded, I got the impression that they had not really reflected about their racio-gendered identity in a conscious way. As they were talking, their

considerations about this developed, so they talked about being women and Latina student leaders in nebulous yet insightful ways.

These four students expressed contradictory feelings about their own leadership. Maribel shared, "In society, women, especially Latinas, are pushed aside because we're not only minority, we're also women, so we're seen as weaker individuals." Olivia nodded in agreement, affirming Maribel's assertion. Similarly, Emily stated, "You don't really see a lot of Latinas in power," yet Azul countered, "I've learned from [my mom] to continue to be able to be strong throughout any challenge thrown at you." Cresswell (1996) argues that "one's awareness of being 'in place' is structured within an awareness of being 'out of place'" (p. 15), and that "the place of an act is an active participant in our understanding of what is good, just, and appropriate" (p. 16). When an act – such as holding a position of leadership at the school – is deemed as "in place," it is understood as being good, just, and appropriate. On the other hand, if an act is seen as "out of place," it is inappropriate. The statements by my research participants revealed that their perceptions of gender stereotypes and expectations informed what they consider to be "in place." Meanwhile, the lessons from their home and community – what some scholars have discussed in terms of *pedagogies of the home* (Delgado Bernal, 2001) – and engaging in place-making at school served as a reworking of what was considered "out of place" to them.

These four Latina student leaders, although agentive within the school spaces they were a part of, navigated a contradictory landscape when it came to their position as place-makers of the Pride School. While they were unable to fully examine their contradictory ideas about gender and race, school became a place where they got to try out new practices and identities with peers and in spaces that they shaped belonging to. They navigated and challenged gender stereotypes

151

and expectations. They also spoke candidly about how their identity as Latinas, as drawn from their family and community context, influenced their place-making in school. On the one hand, holding a leadership position at the school was "out of place" because of the gender stereotypes and expectations of Latinas. On the other hand, it was "in place" and guided by lessons of resistance and resilience from home and by the collective they formed with other Latinas in spaces at the School. That is, by taking up student leadership positions, these Latinas effectively challenged the racio-gendered societal normativities which sustain deficit-based gender stereotypes and impose upon Latinas oppressive expectations of compliance and subordination.

"In Place": Gender Stereotypes & Expectations

When Maribel stated that "In society, women, especially Latinas, are pushed aside because we're not only minority, we're also women so we're seen as weaker individuals" and Emily added, "You don't really see a lot of Latinas in power," they were speaking of their perceived societal expectations that do not view them as individuals capable of leadership roles. Despite these notions, however, research shows that Latinas hold elected office at higher rates than their Latino male counterparts (Bejarano, 2013), and scholars have reconceptualized notions of leadership to be more inclusive of the ways that Chicana/Latinas participate in spaces. For example, Delgado Bernal (1998) uses a cooperative leadership paradigm, what she terms "grassroots leadership," to expand the way we view involvement in activist spaces. Networking, organizing, developing consciousness, in addition to holding elected or appointed office, and being an official or unofficial spokesperson, are all dimensions of leadership that are more inclusive of the ways that women participate as leaders. Further, Jiménez (2012) proposes a sociological framework of "doing" leadership as leadership that is achieved through everyday

152

practices. Practices such as shared leadership, behind the scenes leadership, and leadership that

serves the community disrupt ways of viewing leadership through the dichotomy of leader/

follower, thus Jiménez (2012) asserts that "doing leadership is everyday life leadership" (p. 107),

meaning it is "in place." Latina leadership is important to conceptualize and understand because,

not only do Latinas hold political office at higher rates than Latinos, most Latina office-holders

began their political work at the community level (Gutiérrez de Soldatenko, 2002). For the

Latina students in my study, they embodied this example within their schools.

An in place/out of place framework to place and place-making brings to question who

gets to define the normative landscape of who is a "leader," especially when Latina leadership,

organizing, and activism is nothing new; This concept has been documented by Chicana/Latina

scholars from a historical and critical feminist perspective, by focusing on various aspects of

what "leadership" means (see Blackwell, 2011; Espinoza et al., 2018). These tensions are

articulated by Cresswell (1996) in that behaviors expected and deemed appropriate in certain

spaces are often ideological because they serve and are created by those in power. Expectations

in places correlate to one's position in the social structure via class, gender, race, etc., so it is

revealing when Maribel and Emily say Latinas are not expected nor fit to be in positions of

power. Place and what is proper and/or the right thing to do in certain spaces is part of the

landscape that these students must navigate.

My research participants spoke about the perceived gender expectations and stereotypes

that have influenced the way they think about their leadership and what is considered to be "in

place" within school spaces. When I asked what they could say about being student leaders and

being Latina, they replied in two main ways: their perceived role in the gendered division of

labor as Latinas, and the "feminine" school spaces they considered "in place" due to their gender.

Gender Stereotypes

Many of the gender stereotypes my student participants spoke about related to being both female and Latina. These factors related to their perceived role within a gendered division of labor typically associated with working class or low-income women from communities of color. These are often culturally prescribed behaviors that women are expected to uphold (Corby et al., 2007; Kulis, et al., 2010). For example, Emily states:

> Being a Latina, there's various stereotypes, not mine specifically but from other families that I've heard of, like teen pregnancy or you're not going to finish college or you shouldn't leave the house because you're not married to go to college and stuff like that. (interview)

Although Emily does not attribute these stereotypes as learned from her own family, she states that in other homes Latinas are stereotyped as becoming mothers at a young age, confined to the home, and not expected to pursue a higher education (Caballero et al., 2019). The other three participants used a similar framing as Emily in that they had not received messages of gender stereotypes directly from their families, bringing to question from where these stereotypes were acquired. Although this was not explored during their focus group interview, some scholars point to the media as major transmitters of stereotypes that Latinas then take on as expectations of themselves (McGrath, 2007).

As both females and members of a racial/ethnic group, Latinas are impacted by both gender and racial stereotypes and expectations (Bejarano, 2013). Although my student participants did not explicitly mention from where they received messages about stereotypes and

notions that deem their leadership as "out of place," scholars have discussed how women are misrepresented in the media and often in comparison to their male counterparts: "Men are often depicted as emotionally strong, independent, rational, aggressive, and in superior roles (i.e., bosses) in the workplace, whereas women are often depicted as nurturing, caring, emotional, dependent, irrational, submissive, and in subordinate roles in the workplace (i.e., secretaries or assistants)" (McGrath, 2007, p. 275). While in the media Latina women are often objectified, sexualized, and shown in the context of the home (their own or someone else's), Latinas are increasingly also depicted as gang members or pregnant teens (McGrath, 2007; Prieler, 2016; Roman, 2000). Such stereotypes often limit views of their own agency and fail to acknowledge the multiple identities they may take on (Rolon-Dow, 2004)

Similar to Emily – and in line with research about Latina representation in the media – Olivia also stated that Latinas are stereotyped to "learn to cook and clean and don't do anything else because that's going to help you when you're married." Maribel also spoke of the stereotypes that confine Latinas to the home in submissive societal roles; Latinas are relegated to the margins because they are both ethnic minorities and seen as weaker than men (Anzaldua, 1987). These stereotypes frame Emily's observations: "You don't really expect to see Latinas in power."

Gender Expectations. These stereotypes thus inform what is considered to be "in place" for Latina students. My participants articulated that what was "in place" for them was engaging in "feminine" spaces at the school. Their families, for example, expected them to be involved in activities usually thought of or reserved for female students. Olivia, who was a member of Pride

155

School's Marching Band since her freshman year, spoke about her family's expectations of her, as a female student:

> Most people expect girls to be into feminine things… my family had expected me to do something in dance or cheer. They expected me to do something more feminine rather than masculine, or more neutral, because most females are seen as smaller and weaker. (focus group)

As a member of the Marching Band's drumline, Olivia carried a bass drum that was half her size. To others' this may have been perceived as a masculine behavior because, as she stated, women are typically seen as smaller and weaker. To her family, being a part of drumline was initially seen as "out of place," not contending with behaviors or activities deemed as "in place" for women, such as dance or cheer. Olivia also echoed Maribel's observation that females are seen as weaker individuals, implying that certain behaviors in particular spaces – such as carrying a bass drum in a marching band – are not expected of Latinas. Maribel added, "My parents, freshman year, they told me that I should do something like color guard or cheer when I wanted to do wrestling here." Also seen as "in place" was being a part of color guard or cheer but what was seen as "out of place" was her desire to be a part of the wrestling team, a sport that requires strength and that contradicts with the perceived notion of females as weaker.

As Latinas who held positions of leadership within the Pride School, my student participants not only had to contend with but also negotiate gendered stereotypes and expectations of what was considered to be "in place" at school. While some scholars assert that the media reinforces stereotypes of females and Latinas, Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldua (1987) might say that culture is the culprit because it informs the beliefs one holds:

> Culture forms our beliefs. We perceive the version of reality that it communicates. Dominant paradigms, predefined concepts that exist as unquestionable,

156

unchallengeable, are transmitted to us through the culture. Culture is made by those in power – men. Males make the rules and laws; women transmit them (p. 16).

Anzaldua (1987) argues that nevertheless there is a rebel spirit in women – a "shadow beast" – that "refuses to take orders from outside authorities… hates constraints of any kind, even those self-imposed" (p. 16). Being a Latina "in place" is itself a political positioning, meaning that to face one's shadow beast is to interrogate race and gender, thus creating a space of liberation *against* gendered cultural constraints and societal expectations of what is considered "in place," either at school or in broader notions of leadership that have traditionally been seen as masculine.

The gender dynamics these young women express represent changing understandings about gender roles within their community, shifts whereby these young women find themselves in a moment of contradictory viewpoints – patriarchal limiting viewpoints, but also empowering ones. This is an active frame, decidedly different from the historically static renderings of Latina gender. For example, Anzaldua wrote:

> For a woman of my culture, there used to be only three directions she could turn:
> to the Church as a nun, to the streets as a prostitute, or to the home as a mother.
> Today some of us have a fourth choice: entering the world by way of education
> and career, and becoming self-autonomous persons" (p. 17).

As the students in my study express, school is a receptive space where young women can try out new identities and new ways of being. The spaces they are a part of have defied these stereotypes and expectations, or as Olivia put it, "We hit the opposite of what girls are expected to be in our community, and I feel like that's what we bring out based on our school and our experience." These Latinas expand what it is to be a student leader to include themselves, as a collective, as makers of the School to *embrace* their "difference," shifting themselves to the center of

157

leadership and away from the usual gendered roles they might have been expected to fill and uphold.

"Out of Place": Home & School Space

Although my research participants talked about perceived gender stereotypes and expectations that render their leadership as "out of place," what they learn from their family and community context – i.e., pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001) – informs how they create *their* place at school to actually make their leadership "in place." Through motivation, encouragement, and examples from and about their families, Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel learn that their leadership is in fact *not* "out of place" in their local context, so work to render it "in place" at school. By engaging with other Latinas in the spaces they are a part of at school, my students formed a collective and worked to create spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging about empowering their identity as women and as Latina students, expanding their place-based leadership at Pride School.

Home

Similar to Delgado Bernal's (2001) discussion on how Chicana students navigate educational obstacles by engaging with pedagogies of the home, i.e., strategies learned from home and community contexts, the students in my study discussed how their efforts to engage in place-making at Pride School through their leadership capabilities were rooted in home. For example, although Olivia stated that her family expected her to be in cheerleading or dance, she also shared this about her other female bandmates: "People's friends of mine in section told me that my mom 'loves that I'm in this,' my mom 'thinks it's great because it's something different.'" Most of the members in her drumline section of the Marching Band were female and

had found encouragement from their mothers to be involved in the music program because it was

different from what females were expected to be involved in at school (Gandara et al., 2013). So,

while being into feminine things is a gendered expectation, part of the contradictory landscape of

female student place-making is that rebutting the feminine is also "in place" because it is

something "different" for female students engage in and they are encouraged to do so. Maribel

also spoke of such encouragement to be a part of different spaces from her own family:

> In my family, I have older brothers so they're always expecting a lot of me, so it's
> never been "Oh, I can't do that." It's like I *have* to do it because they taught me…
> it sounds so bad but, even wrestling... In wrestling there's not a lot of small, petite
> females, especially Latinas, so it was always something that my brothers were like
> "You have to go and you have to win" or "You have to put your full effort." "You
> have to put your best foot forward," basically. So, it was never like being Latina
> or being a female was never a challenge for me. It was always just how it was, so
> I just had to make the best of it with the advice that I was given. (focus group)

Her brothers had always held high expectations of Maribel and had encouraged her to believe

she could do anything she set her mind to. Although she acknowledged that her small frame as a

female and her identity as a Latina were "out of place" in wrestling, her brothers advised her and

motivated her to work hard, even in spaces where she felt like she was not expected.

While Maribel and Olivia spoke of the encouragement they received to be involved in

particular school spaces, Maribel and Emily talked about finding motivation from examples in

the home for their efforts at school; Emily spoke about being a role model for her siblings:

> I have a strong family support system so having that… even in the face of
> obstacles I feel like they make it worth it. I have younger siblings. I'm the oldest.
> So, for me being able to graduate high school and be the first one to attend college
> is a big deal because I'm going to be their role model… it takes a community to
> raise a child. You need the support of other people and together you all overcome
> those obstacles. (interview)

Similar to the theme of encouragement, Emily described a supportive family and illuminated her role of serving as an example to her younger siblings of attaining a higher education despite life's challenges. For Emily, to act "in place" was to be part of the community that helped raise her siblings by acting as an example of educational success, something that contradicts one of the perceived gender stereotypes she mentioned, i.e., that Latinas are not expected to go to college. Instead, from her home, she learned that going to college is in fact "in place."

Also speaking about motivation from the home, Azul described the strong female example in her mother:

> My mom is a single parent so her being able to take the role of mom and dad after being with my dad for 16 years, like the sudden change, she was able to take initiative of taking care of both of us [kids] and taking extra responsibilities that before she didn't have. It showed me that it doesn't matter what situations you're in, as long as you're able to take the control back and be able to work with others. That is what I've learned from her to continue to be able to be strong throughout any challenge thrown at you. (interview)

Describing her mom as "strong" directly contradicts the stereotype of Latinas as smaller, weaker individuals. For Azul, being assertive and taking charge is very much "in place" because she saw her mother modeling these actions (Villenas, 2006; Villenas & Moreno, 2001) both individually, and in working with others, both strategies Azul enacted in her place-making at school. In fact, being a role model such as what Emily learned from her home and taking charge and being a strong female, what Azul learned, was also tied to themes described by Maribel and Olivia, rendering what they all do very much "in place" within the local context (home and community), that they then take into the school and enact through their place-making.

School

Entering and engaging in spaces at school not deemed for them is a form of transgression, or is "out of place." However, my research participants discussed how the spaces they were a part of became meaningful and about belonging and membership because of the other females within these spaces. These became safe and empowering places where they felt included and a part of as women, or they saw themselves as "in place" within them.

Maribel added this about the Latinas in the spaces she was involved in: "None of us are shy and we're just very outgoing people and that's us being a product of our society and our mothers telling us 'You can do that!'" Emily, who specifically talked about Humanitarians Club, mentioned: "Most of our members are females in all our clubs [chuckles] so that's interesting to also note." Echoing this, Olivia said that over the years, drumline had been mostly female and, at the time of this study, all ASB offices were held by females. Maribel further asserted that "I feel like now we're being encouraged to be more than 'You're just a girl' or 'You're Latina.' We're pushed." For example, while Maribel's desire to wrestle was deemed as "out of place" because of gender expectations, in school she was encouraged to take part in these spaces:

> My P.E. teacher told me, "If you want to wrestle, I can talk to the coach," so he actually set up a time in the morning when I could talk to the coach about wrestling here at Dolores High. We talked and I went to one practice, but then I stopped for personal reasons… but we weren't told that we couldn't do something. It's not seen as something new. It's always been if I want to do it, do it. (focus group)

It is within educational spaces that Latinas shift their understandings of themselves in relation to perceived gender roles and thus take on new ways of being. Latina students who enter new

spaces, such as wrestling, rupture traditional notions of being female and thus engage in a *counterstance*, what Anzaldua (1987) defines as the "constant state of mental nepantilism" (p. 78). In this *nepantla* state, "the counterstance refutes the dominant culture's views and beliefs, and, for this, it is proudly defiant" (Anzaldua, 1987, p. 78). By bringing up this question of gender in relation to their leadership and having them reflect on it, my study participants' experiences demonstrate that they were in a state of transition, developing identities that were more inclusive of gender equality, particularly within their school spaces.

Cresswell (1996) argues that behaviors deemed as "out of place," such as those that go against gender stereotypes and expectations, are important because if they continue, then the actors engaging in them have the potential to create new meanings out of space that then become *their* meaning, making that space *their* place. As members of ASB and the Leadership class, both Azul and Maribel talked about how their identity as Latinas informed the type of space they created at school, particularly via the lessons Maribel learned from her brothers and Azul saw in her mother. These students created school spaces that were about social membership, meaning, and belonging. By being in charge of school activities, Maribel recognized that "the girls that are running everywhere are always Azul and I. So, we're always like 'we got to make sure this is okay.' It's just really us taking charge of making sure that everything's okay and everything is running smoothly and just making time." While Maribel spoke particularly about the efforts of her and Azul, Azul added what this meant for the ASB and part of the leadership group made-up of Latinas:

> Originally our past few leaders have been females… The times that we have had
> female representation, it's very strong… I feel like [Latinas] have such a strong
> voice here and I like watching that, being able to see girls take charge and the

162

guys, yes they do help a lot, but I feel like most of the ideas and most of the commitments comes from girls and I like that. Like, "Yes!" I feel like "Girl Power!" I like that, and you feel comfortable going up and talking to your group because you know that they're listening, and you know that they're actually taking it serious. (interview)

While they articulated that their leadership is "out of place" because "you don't expect to see many Latinas in positions of power," within the Leadership class, Azul and Maribel's embodied experiences were very much "in place." Taking charge and getting things done – both through encouraging and motivating lessons from the home – contributed to making their leadership "in place." Here, space became one where females had "a strong voice," "girls take charge," and where there was "Girl Power!" It became a comfortable place for Azul and Maribel to engage in place-making activities with a collective of other female students.

Olivia also talked about empowering and safe spaces for female students as she described that the females in drumline found it to be an empowering space for them:

We all feel empowered in some sort of way because we usually find that guys complain about the weight of the drums. They complain. Sometimes they say it's heavy or sometimes they say "it looks weird" […] The girls just see each other… like, we get along better since we all see that we enjoy what we're doing and we feel stronger when we do it because most of my years there's always been pure girls; there's only been probably like, the max five, boys in the whole section. (focus group)

Olivia shared that in a drum line made-up of mostly females they felt strong, especially as they observed their male counterparts complaining about the size and look of the drums they played. Defying stereotypes that deem females as weaker, Olivia and her female drumline peers found enjoyment and felt belonging with and among each other. Whereas Olivia shared that her family initially expected her to be involved in "feminine" spaces such as cheer or dance, she found drumline to be an empowering space where "we say that girls can do as much as they want" and

163

where females also belong and are "in place." According to Emily, "Theses space give you the encouragement to step out of your comfort zone and develop those leadership skills that will help impact the generations that come after you," i.e, for the next generation of Latina student leaders. Delgado Bernal (2001) reminds us that pedagogies of the home are empowering, and mother-daughter pedagogies (Flores, 2016) also transmit messages of resistance and resiliency, those which my research participants enacted to be "in place" as Latina school leaders engaging in place-making, i.e., "making the school what it is."

Lastly, although they did not specifically address this in their interview responses, it seemed as if young men at the school also played into aspects of empowering one another, regardless of one's gender. During an observation of a Key Club meeting, I witnessed the process that students, both male and female, took to open up opportunities for others to step into leadership roles. As president of the Club, Maribel took charge of leading the nomination process to elect a new board to lead the Club the following school year. Positions available for students to nominate others to run for election included the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. When Maribel asked her vice presidents to explain their roles, two male students stood up. They described both their responsibilities and themselves as the "backbone" of the President (Maribel) in their desire to support "whatever she says." During the actual nomination process, males nominated females and vice versa. For example, two male students nominated two female students for the position of Vice President. To run for President, a female student nominated a male student, and a male student nominated a female student. These young people supported one another and had more gender-equitable constructs of who could lead their club, whether female or male. When I asked the Key Club Advisor to comment about what assets she believed

164

students brought with them into the Club's space, she said family, social relations, and school

space may account for this process:

> Many of our students value family and they know that. At home, family's
> important, family comes first for many of our students. I try to highlight that
> about how their school is their family as well. You may like each other. You may
> not like each other. But you will respect each other. Within the community
> organization, within Key Club, I try to tell them that they need to learn from one
> another. Right? Like you're always learners. You're always learning and
> everybody's different and you need to learn to have an open-door policy. When
> you have new members come in, you know, welcome them into, into your club.
> It's those values, those family values, that you have at home. If you have a guest,
> you do everything possible to make that guest feel comfortable in your home. So,
> I try to connect that with them at the School so that they have pride within the
> School, pride in their organization and pride in the work that they do. (interview)

It seemed that gender stereotypes and expectations were not fully embraced by all members of

the community, including the young men at Pride School. Perhaps students saw themselves more

as a collective, invested in one another and their club. Since the Latinas in this study

demonstrated that pedagogies of the home were important, then having a family and having a

home within school space, as articulated by the Key Club advisor, was also probably more

important for young men—prompting them to see beyond gender constructs of who belongs

where and in what positions at the school.

"Out of Place" Latina Student Leadership as "In Place" Place-Based Student Leadership

Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel speak of their school leadership in nebulous ways that

encompass perceived gender stereotypes and expectations, lessons from the home, and place-

making within school space. While gender stereotypes and expectations render their leadership

as Latinas as "out of place" in the home and in school space, their leadership is "in place." By

examining the place-making of Latina student leaders, we learn about their commitments to the

school and community contexts, their strategies for place-making, and the contradictory

landscape they must navigate as Latina student leaders (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

What I identify as a "contradictory landscape," Anzaldua (1987) narrates as the

challenges, uneasy space, ruptures, and surrendering that lead to the development of a *Mestiza*

consciousness, a mindset that says it is okay to live with ambiguity and contradiction. While

existing in two cultures, these Latina students were on the cusp of embracing their identity as

Latina leaders making place at their school and their school home. For example, while they held

a strong sense of identity with their families from whom they learned empowering lessons about

assertiveness, hard work, and responsibility to a collective, these also served to contested beliefs

about women because of gender stereotypes and expectations (Anzaldua, 1987; Villenas, 2006).

Nevertheless, through the spaces they were involved in at school, my participants learned about

themselves, what they could do as a collective, how to be role models, and how to gain

affirmations from their interactions with other Latinas. In doing so, these school spaces became

safe spaces for them where they felt included and created meanings about what it meant to be a

Latina student leader, although in nebulous ways, within the context of perceived gender

stereotypes and expectations, the home, and school space and place.

My student participants' school leadership was more than holding elected or appointed

office; it was also about the spaces in which they enacted their agency. Place played a role in this

reworking of what was deemed as "in place," such as gender stereotypes and expectations. My

research participants demonstrated that they were making new meanings about what it meant to

be a woman, a Latina, and a student leader within school. They questioned what it meant to be

"in place" – good, just, appropriate – by engaging in behaviors that transgressed expectations of

place because of their gender, such as being in drumline or wanting to be on the School's wrestling team, or, more generally, having leadership roles within the School. Based on preconceived gender stereotypes and expectations, these actions were deemed as "out of place." Such transgressions, however, "prompt[ed] reactions that reveal[ed] that which was previously considered natural and commonsense" (Cresswell 1996, p. 10), questioning the normative landscape created by place.

Cresswell (1996) also argues that "expectations about behavior in place are important components in the construction, maintenance, and evolution of ideological values" (p. 4). But what is considered "in place" can also be contested in the form of transgressions; as Emily noted, "you don't see many Latinas in power." In other words, certain behaviors may transgress expectations of a place. "Out of place" behaviors make people question what is appropriate action in certain places, and the students in my study talked about their position as leaders at Pride School in relationship to school space "by acting in space in a particular way the actor is inserted into a particular relation with ideology" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 17). For example, when commonsensical notions of space and place mean that "the meaning of a place is the subject of particular discourses of power, which express themselves as discourses of normality" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 60). Such discourses of power and, therefore of normality give places *imposed* meaning that "the question of who controls the discourse is an important one… because it says something about who gets to participate in the construction and dissemination of meaning of places and thus places themselves" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 60). Gender stereotypes and expectations become a sort of discourse that defines normality in particular school spaces such as cheer, color guard, and dance as places *for* females.

These discourses are important not only because they give spaces and places meaning, but because they dictate what is appropriate or expected within them. Here, ideology and what become commonsensical notions of what is "in place" play a role in producing space, then dictate what is deemed as "out of place." So, while students are expected to engage in practices that abide by prescribed gender roles that relegate them to subordinate roles or engage in "feminine" spaces at school, these notions are not natural or inherent in space and place. Instead, results from this study demonstrate that stereotypes and expectations "connect ideas of what exists, what is good, and what is possible to various forms of power relations" (Cresswell, 1996, p. 14), and place plays a major part in the continuation of ideology and power relations these ideologies uphold because ideological judgments of what is "in place" (good, just, appropriate, etc.) varies according to the place of the action.

Nevertheless, it is within a school that these students entered and made new meanings of what can be considered "in place." By engaging with "out of place" behavior, these students made new meanings and places at school. What was read as "out of place" was actually "in place" because the places in which they enacted their place-making was *their* space. This questioned and contested ideological constructs, such as gender roles and stereotypes, and who belonged in certain places, while also allowing students to make new meaning and *their* place. Leadership class and drumline, for two examples, became safe and empowering spaces for my research participants wherein they felt like they belonged. As such, "out of place" behaviors were important because they questioned the normative landscape of a place and constituted potential for the actors to make their own place by continuing to engage in the "out of place" behaviors to

shape space. By making something *their* place, these "out of place" behaviors, broadly, being Latinas and being leaders, then became "in place."

Seeing geography as having a role in producing, maintaining, and recreating meaning shows that spaces and places are not static entities but are struggled over and serve both on-going hegemonic power and counter-hegemonic struggle. These students contested commonsensical notions of place by engaging in place-making to make spaces *their* space. In other words, space and place are not merely concrete entities, they are also ideological, thus are constantly being made and remade. So, while place reproduces ideological beliefs of what is appropriate, it is also produced by those beliefs. When actions and behaviors in particular spaces are deemed as inappropriate because they do not abide by ideological constructs, they are deemed "out of place" by transgressing the expectations of that place. They act as an intervention *on* space.

"Out of place" instances are important because, although transgressions invite a negative reaction, Cresswell (1996) argues that they have the ability to shape space and are a way to create a sense of place by those enacting them. Often, transgressions are enacted by those deemed as different or *other*, such as Latina student leaders. Given their historical marginalization (as documented by many Chicana/Latina scholars) (Blackwell 2011; Delgado Bernal, 1998), my Latina students carried the seeds to shape spaces that were often created by patriarchal structures and ideologies. In this study, participants discussed the ways they reworked what is deemed as "out of place" to actually be "in place." By drawing from pedagogies of the home and mother-daughter pedagogies, these students engaged in place-making in the school spaces in which they are leaders. This reworking is how they make school space *their* place. These transgressions – or reworkings of gender expectations – show that "social groups are

169

capable of creating their own sense of place and contesting the constructs of others" (Cresswell 1996, p. 47).

Transgressions, such as being female and in positions of leadership at school, break from the norm and "cause a questioning of that which was previously considered 'natural,' 'assumed,' and 'taken for granted'" (Cresswell 1996, p. 26). By being read as "out of place," transgressions can be contestations toward the meanings that constitute that place. These transgressions question and contest materialized meaning through actions in space and place and reveal that the social power of dominated groups are spatial responses, wherein they make new meanings and *their* place.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Three central questions guided this study:

1. How do Latina student leaders at one urban high school in Los Angeles make place?

2. In what ways is this place-making informed by their culture, identity, community context or history?

3. To what extent does their place-making shape school space?

My aim was to unpack how Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel created spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging at their school and explore the significance of their everyday interactions with school space. Through an ethnographic research approach, I engaged with these students in their everyday realities of schools. School tours, interviews with both them and three Pride School educators, observations, and a focus group revealed several findings that position students as central to making and shaping the schools they attend. My analysis of the various sources of data allows me to present scholarly contributions and recommendations for theory and practice.

In this final chapter, I answer my research questions by summarizing major findings, discussing the significance of the study to the field of education, presenting implications for educational theory and practice, and ending with study limitations and avenues for future research.

Summary of Findings

First, Latina student leaders at Pride School made place by engaging in democratic associations with peers. Through the school spaces they were a part of, such as Band,

Leadership, and clubs, they came together around a shared interest, worked collectively, and took action in ways that were appropriate to the identity of their group. Communicating, cooperating, motivating, and encouraging one another, as well as simply having fun, were *how* they created place within the school spaces they were a part of. What they did within these spaces held implications for the wider school campus and community. By intervening in both the auditory and physical spaces of the School they sought to create an environment that was fun and enjoyable for the student body and teachers. They had an invested interest in creating and sustaining a positive school culture, as well as worked toward creating healthier conditions for their community. These efforts at making place were important because these were ways they were learning to fulfill democratic visions of collectively acting for the greater good.

Second, these students' place-making was largely influenced by their community context. A range of issues, such as family conditions, educational experiences, and the presence of increased levels of lead in their community, informed *what* they did in school spaces. While their community faced many hardships, my students also noted the resiliency of that community. Within school spaces, my study participants found ways to contribute positively to this context by, for example, spreading information to peers about issues impacting their community, planning enjoyable activities for students that carried added responsibilities from living in a working-class community, raising school spirit, and connecting city leadership with student leaders of the School. Their insights demonstrated that their attachments to place influenced what they did at school. Given that schools are not decontextualized from the local context, the school leadership these students enacted was place-based.

Third, through their place-making, my four students shaped school space by making the spaces they were involved in *their* space. There were two main ways in which they accomplished this: by presenting students' representational space and reviewing their "in place" school leadership as Latinas.

These students made space theirs by attaching meaning to it. In their articulations about representational space*,* they each mapped belonging to one or two specific school spaces. By offering their perspectives as the primary users of school space, they revealed the visions and meanings they held for school space and their place-making within it. Such visions and meanings were about making use of school space in ways that were about working with peers for the greater good of the school and their community.

These students also made space *their* place by forming belonging to it. While they talked about gender expectations and stereotypes that rendered their leadership roles as "out of place," they also revealed the empowering lessons of assertiveness, hard work, and responsibility to a collective learned from their homes. In the school spaces where they played a leadership role, they took on these lessons from the home to further learn about themselves and what they could do as a collective with other Latinas at the School. In doing so, these areas became safe spaces wherein they could practice new identities as Latina student leaders, and in so doing these spaces became "in place."

Contributions & Implications

My research pushes the field of education to think of school space and how young people fill that space in drawing from their culture, identity, and community contexts to make places of

meaning and belonging within their school. My study has the potential to contribute to the field by placing emphasis on:

- Place-making as a leadership category;

- Space and place becoming categories of analysis for civics education;

- Place-making as a possible tactic of transformational resistance; and,

- Envisioning schools with and for students.

I discuss four fields of education that may be informed by these considerations:

- School Leadership

- Civics Education

- Transformational Resistance

- School Design

School Leadership

My research has the potential to contribute to a field of education that focuses on school leadership broadly and Latina student leadership in particular. I focused on student leadership, and what it means to be a leader at their school. In this dissertation, I showed the different ways Latina student leaders defined their own school leadership:

1. Leadership is place-based.

2. Leadership is a democratic practice to realize visions of school space.

3. Leadership is "in place" in spite of gender stereotypes and expectations.

My student participants tied their leadership activities – particularly their place-making – to the School's local context. By engaging with discussions about school space via their mental maps and the meanings they attached to those spaces, these students articulated how place played

a role in the ways they understood school space and their actions within it. For example, Emily described Humanitarians and Youth Action as school spaces where she could learn about environmental justice with a group of peers, and related this involvement to the toxicity that emanated from local factories in her community. Azul described Leadership as a school space where she could plan activities for the student body to get involved in and enjoy school; also, by describing the family conditions she observed walking to and from school, she revealed that she wanted to have a positive impact on students' educational experiences. For Olivia, the Music Room was a space to use the music of her community to create an enjoyable school culture by raising school spirit. For Maribel, Key Club and Leadership were spaces to work with young people and community leaders for service and action. These insights showed how these students' attachments to their community context influenced their leadership within school spaces. As such, to expand notions of school and student leadership, a place-based leadership demonstrates that place plays a role in *what* students do at their school, *how* they think about what they do, and *why* they may articulate their identities as leaders, or "makers," of their school. By examining school and student leadership in this way, we not only look beyond traditional ways of conceptualizing educational leadership as that solely for adults or policymakers (Hursh, 2005; Lipman, 2011), but we also turn our attention to how students are constructing school space for place-making amid a particular community context.

Place-making itself can also be considered a leadership category. Democracy in schools requires a place that is not necessarily part of the classroom curriculum. Democratic, embryonic communities also occur in spaces that students create and maintain themselves to be about membership, meaning, and belonging. Leadership was not executed by these students in

175

isolation, rather it was through belonging to a group and being in membership with others and around a shared meaning or purpose. I saw this in the spaces my research participants interacted in, such as Youth Action, Leadership, the Music Room, and Key Club. By cooperating and collaborating with one another to center the health needs of their community, motivating peers, and having fun with each other to build a positive school culture, my student participants' leadership served to enact their own democratic visions of what they believed was for the greater good of the school and community. Yet, some scholars assert that students who take on a leadership role in schools are often considered to be "good" students who "buy into the system" and do no challenge it – these are "conforming students" (Poon, 2013; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). However, through place-making students have the potential to learn about their collective social power over space in order to influence the greater good of everyone involved. The social relations created for the greater good of school and local community, as with my study, are how place is produced through spatial practice – i.e., place-making – that is also a category for school and student leadership.

Leadership for Latinas in particular can also be about transgressing expectations of a place. Chicana/Latina scholars have expanded notions of what is deemed leadership to include the different ways Latinas participate in leadership, activism, and organizing spaces. It is behind-the-scenes work (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Jiménez, 2012), is executed at the community/local level (Gutiérrez de Soldatenko, 2002), occurs with other Latinas (Espinoza et al., 2018), and is where Latinas feel like their voices are heard and matter (Blackwell, 2011). The students in my study worked within the spaces that were available to them at their school and revealed that they navigated a contradictory landscape when it came to their position as place-makers of the

176

School. While they were unable to fully examine their contradictory ideas about gender and race, school became a place where they got to try out new practices and identities with peers and in spaces to which they shaped belonging. Through motivation, encouragement, and examples from and about their families, my research participants learned that their leadership was in fact not "out of place" in their local context, and thus worked to render it "in place" (good, just, and appropriate) at school. Through the spaces they were involved in at school, they learned about themselves, what they could do as a collective, how to be role models, and how to gain affirmations from their interactions with other Latinas. They questioned that which constituted to be "in place," by engaging in behaviors that transgressed expectations of place because of their gender, such as being in drumline or wanting to be on the School's wrestling team or having leadership roles within the school. In doing so, these became safe spaces for them, spaces where they felt included and created meanings about what it meant to be a Latina student leader (albeit in nebulous ways) within the context of gender stereotypes and expectations, the home, and school space and place. My research adds to Latina leadership frameworks to include how, in the process of doing leadership, Latinas are making new meanings about what it means to be a woman, a Latina, and a student leader within school.

An analysis of space and place shows us how student leadership is shared and collective in place-making. While students take active roles in particular spaces of the school, it is with other students that their place-making supersedes simply being a leader and becomes about their ability to make spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging. In whatever small ways, their place-making as leaders can be about students making life at school in ways that represent them and their communities.

Civics Education

Civic education scholars have discussed the role of schools in preparing youth for democratic citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). In particular, these scholars highlight the knowledge and skills necessary for engaging in democratic action for social and political change (Rogers et. al., 2012; Terriquez, 2015). Recently, scholars have called for a "lived civics education" that accounts for "how young people experience civic and political life and their perspectives on what can and must change" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 4). Their focus is on a curriculum that continues to focus on civic knowledge, action, and engagement while also considering race, ethnicity, identity, and lived experiences. These scholars also contend that "we see a significant need to expand and reimagine what constitutes civic" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 4). These learning objectives include school spaces beyond the classroom. My study pushes these scholars to expand notions of civic ways of being to consider young peoples' interactions with space and place.

It is important to pay attention to what students do and engage in *outside* of the classroom curriculum, as well as what meanings they make of their experiences. From my findings, I contend that place-making as a spatial practice *is* a type of *lived* civic practice – students are involved in action and engagement while also using their knowledge of themselves, other students, and their community to engage in these actions. Place-making positions these youths not simply as students, but also as experts and makers of their learning environments, i.e., their schools. Their personal and communal efforts at creating place are valuable lived space/spatial practices.

Similar to the ways in which youth organizing groups help students develop "a sense of critical civic possibilities" and a "schema for social change" (Rogers et. al., 2012, p. 56), place-makers find their power to enact educational change to be about school space, its culture, the built environment, and membership. These ideas allow students to develop identities as agents and makers of the school. Students develop communities of democratic practice that are not so much about the adults and/or educators, but about themselves as a collective leading the group. They invite active participation from their peers in that group and/or in community.

What if we expanded notions of the civic to include all forms in which students participate – where they get to know themselves as members of a group, engage in associated life at the school, and participate in activities that have a meaning to them? In other words, can we expand notions of the civic to instances in which students are engaging in creating place, i.e., spaces that are about membership, meaning, and belonging? In Chapter 6, I conceptualized place-making as a democratic practice and discussed the various ways that students do this in the spaces where they enact agency. Being political is important to civic engagement, but becoming social beings with others is just as essential to community life. The social relations that students engage with in spaces at school are about reimagining their schools as centers of community life, as places that represent them, and as entities that are not static but can be made and shaped by the social actors living and engaging within them in an everyday context. What's more, the lived experiences of young people of color in schools can also be about creating spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging because their localized perspectives and experiences shape their relationship to the urban schools they attend. If lived experiences are important to a civic education framework, then we must attend to the spaces that are meaningful to youth, where they

179

are feel like they belong and enjoy social membership as part of a collective with peers. These spaces embrace and affirm their agency and voice, concepts central to civic learning and action.

Transformational Resistance

Throughout this dissertation, I discussed the where, why and how of place-making of Latina students leaders through their (a) community context that informed how they understood their actions within meaningful school spaces, (b) everyday interactions in school spaces that illuminated the democratic visions and practices involved in their place-making, and (c) interaction in spaces where they learned about themselves, what they could do as a collective, how to be role models, and gained affirmations from their interactions with other Latinas. A central theme of my study is that these students shaped school spaces to be *their* place. Their place-making supports the notion held by geographers that people's "social power and social resistance are always already spatial" (Cresswell 1996, p. 11).

However, in educational scholarship, resistance as a theoretical construct is often equated with actions against an oppressive entity to challenge it or lessen its effects. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) contend that transformational resistance, for example, is reactionary behavior against oppressive schooling conditions in order to create better schooling environments. Students who engage in transformational resistance have a critique of social oppression and are motivated by social justice. As researchers, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) investigated the *how* and *why* students engage in oppositional behavior to assess their resistance as transformational. Students can have an awareness and critique of oppression, but it can simply be carried around in their minds as opposed to acted on. In order for something to become transformational, I contend that it also needs to be spatially expressed and made

concrete. The Latina students in my study accomplished these goals within their educational setting and in an everyday context, though to varying degrees. As their examples illustrate, my study suggests that student place-making may be considered a possible tactic of transformational resistance

I also investigated the *why* and *how* of student actions – in place-making in particular – and found that students engaged in place-making to create schooling environments that represented themselves and their communities, although not in a political, oppositional, or resistant manner. In other words, Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel revealed that there are other ways students may act to achieve place-making that are not overtly oppositional or political yet still make change to their everyday, local lives, albeit spatially. To some scholars, though, what my students accomplished in the school spaces they were a part of could be deemed as accommodations or conforming behavior – these students do well in school, follow the rules, and get involved in their school in traditional ways. However, further investigation excavates that their place-making is in fact driven by local conditions (why), which then serve as motivation to create spaces of membership, meaning, and belonging (how). Although operating within the traditional system, what my study participants did in their leadership positions – even just creating enjoyable schooling environments for themselves and their peers – is important. Therefore, does focusing on place and place-making open up new ways to think about youth resistance?

Students creating place is motivated by a sense that they want to create belonging, they want to create membership, and they attach meaning to particular spaces they create (Cresswell, 2004; Halttunen, 2006; Tuan 1977). Through creating place, students are still involved in

change-making, yet perhaps students – or outside observers – are not aware that students are playing this transformative role. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) touch upon this when they briefly draw out a distinction between internal and external resistance. Internal resistance refers to instances when students have an invisible social critique and motivation that may operate within the traditional system:

> …individuals are consciously engaged in a critique of oppression. Students maintain both criteria of transformational resistance, yet their behavior is subtle or even silent and might go unnamed as transformational resistance. One example is the Student of Color who holds a critique of cultural and economic oppression and is motivated to go to graduate school by a desire to engage in a social justice struggle against this oppression. This student might hope to give back to her or his community through a service profession in the teaching, medical, social work, or legal fields. The student maintains both criteria of transformational resistance, but on the surface, her or his behavior appears to conform to societal and maybe parental expectations. That is, they are doing well in school, pursuing a higher education, and their outward behavior may not overtly indicate any semblance of social justice. This is not conformist resistance because on further and deeper analysis, the student does in fact have a social justice agenda to "give back" to her [or his] community in the form of education and social service (pp. 324-325).

Here, the authors acknowledge that there are youth that seem like they are buying into the system but their internal motivation and what they do with within or after the system actually takes on dimensions of resistance, although not in overt ways.

Students in my study all expressed some level of community-driven motive for their place-making that could be interpreted as a social justice agenda. For example, Maribel spoke of this in terms of the toxicity of factories located in Vernon, Azul described family conditions she observed walking to and from school, Olivia shared educational experiences her mother faced as an immigrant student, and Maribel identified community needs for student service. Ways that place was described and motivations to engage in space were also tied to what actually happened

within school space: Emily engaged with a group of peers in Youth Action and Humanitarians to learn about environmental justice, Azul planned activities in Leadership geared at getting students involved and enjoying school, Olivia created music with members of the Marching Band to raise school spirit, and Maribel worked alongside community leaders to provide opportunities for service in her community through Key Club. Although they may not have possessed a full social critique of what they wanted to change, these students talked about their motivations in everyday terms, by just seeing and experiencing the conditions in their community. Their place-making then was a kind of social action because, although they may have had only some level of social awareness and critique of oppression, they did not simply carry these concepts in their minds: their awareness of their community context and their desire to create a school they felt invested in was spatially expressed and made concrete through their place-making.

Since creating meaningful space was a central part of my students' agenda for educational change – i.e., to shape their school– this study informs ideas about youth oppositional behavior to consider other ways that youth may be working toward educational change, and brings to question: What does it mean to be political and transformational? And, can student place-making be considered as either?

School Design

I am attentive to issues of space and place as ways to expand notions of democratic practices and visions occurring within schools, and I account for the ways students shape school spaces and places. But, students – especially students of color – do not always have such agency over school space. In his book *Strategies of Segregation*, educational historian David G. García

(2018) discusses how Mexican-American students in 20th century Oxnard were enrolled in separate classrooms, attended different recesses, and even had longer school days in order to keep them spatially separate from White students. García attributes such educational practices to the "White Architects" of education who designed and planned such strategies of segregation. Instead of Mexican-American youth having agency over school space, as opposed to the students in my study who did, space was used to exert power and dominant interests over a particular group of children.

The current moment brings up particular opportunities to reimagine what schools and schooling should look like. In efforts to transform schools, though, educational leaders often turn to reform efforts that implicate federal and state stakeholders to produce one-size-fits-all policies (Baltodano, 2012; Lipman, 2011; McGuinn, 2011). Other architects of education include venture capitalists who continue to push for privatized models of schooling (Lipman, 2011; Wells et al., 2002; Wright, 2012). Even more recent, with the onset of COVID-19 and stay-at-home orders, schooling and school space has transitioned to the digital realm. In these and future instances, what would it mean if students were considered producers of meaningful educational spaces and their agentive efforts were centered as something to leverage? In other words, what would schools and schooling look like if we considered students' lead in designing educational spaces? I believe my study provides some glimpses into the everyday complexities of this idea.

In this dissertation, I highlight how Latina student leaders make and shape their school, in a sense, taking on identities as architects, as "makers," of their school, different from the "White architects" that used space to oppress Mexican-American students. The students in my study articulated the value that school presented toward ascribing and making meaning of physical and

184

social spaces and their sense of self as members of a community they formed belonging to. Making school a second home, for example, or learning democratic practices through engagement with peers around a shared interest or purpose, revealed other values of schooling that were not restricted to narrow forms of achievement nor accounted for other ways that dominant architects of education created them.

I contend that improving schools can be about the school culture that is produced by students making and shaping spaces of meaning, membership, and belonging at school. Within human geography, humanists place importance on similar notions by centering "people's sense of place for the way they think about themselves and their relationship to others" (Murphy, 2018, p. 12). They question why a sense of place matters, or more importantly, how place is cultivated from within through efforts like those I emphasized in student place-making. Urban humanists in particular have an interest in the study of cities, which they define as "situated collective life emplaced in an urban context, comprised of historical interpretation, material environments, contemporary culture, and speculative future" (Cuff & Wolch, 2016 p. 14). They are interested in space and humanism that emanate from cities and the various cultures, identities, conditions, and histories that shape everyday life in the urban context. Together, these humanists engage with questions that can be applied to schools – *their* sense of place, how this is created from within the realities of everyday life, and what the urban context of Los Angeles means for how school space is shaped, and most importantly, how students themselves make place.

A place-based approach to reinvisioning and designing schools involves the dialectical relationship between two spatial scales of analysis, the school and the community (and for Los Angeles, the urban context as emphasized by urban humanists). Geographers and other scholars

have turned to questions about space to reveal dynamics about how society is organized and how different scales of analysis impact *why* something happens *where* it happens (Clifford et al., 2009; Murphy, 2018). Being attentive to the two scales of analysis recognizes the agentive capabilities of students and considers the urban, local context. In particular, geography is concerned with environmental, societal, and human-environmental systems and what we can learn about these by studying places (locations), and interdependencies between places and scale and how these create distinctive spaces and places (Murphy, 2018). To advance our understanding, the use of various spatial representations (visual, verbal, mathematical, digital, cognitive) to depict how distinctive places creates particular contexts, both physical and social, and material and imagined. Mental mapping of place (Gould & White, 1986; Lynch, 1960), such as of a school, reveals how the individual and collective student life is organized within school, as well as the larger scales that create a school's sense of place for students. To think geographically, or in spatial terms, is to "consider why things happen where they do, and to appreciate how geographical context influences what happens" (Murphy 2018, p. 135). Student place-making may be an effort to bring about both educational change that is about creating places of social membership, meaning, and belonging within schooling institutions that often alienate students or reproduce conditions of inequality present within the local context. To design schools that allow for students to take the lead is to take a place-based approach to school leadership that considers how student place-making is tied to the community context, as well as how space is imagined and lived by students, and not just how it is conceived by power and dominant interests.

186

Limitations & Future Research

Lastly, I would like to discuss the limitations that my study presents but that can be expanded on for future research, These concepts are:

- Other student voices and experiences not focused on in this dissertation;

- The relationship between space *and* time in student place-making;

- The recurring theme of joy and its importance to student place-making; and,

- Questions that explore about place and place-making that may inform teacher education and educational leadership.

Other Voices

The focus of my study was a very particular sampling of students: Latina student leaders. Given the small sample of students in my study, I was able to examine their everyday life and gather rich and particular insights into their meaning-making in and about school space. These students were very agentive over the school spaces they were a part of and felt like they had an important role in shaping and making the school. What emerged was a very positive story of place-making. For example, they each spoke about meaningful spaces at the school (Music Room, Leadership classroom) that they formed belonging to through their shared purpose in membership with peers (Key Club, Youth Action Club). Even in talking to the school principal, it seemed as if creating opportunities for such agentive capacity and development that did not simply focus on academics was built into the school planning. There was an intentional creation and investment in a music program so that students could have expanded arts opportunities, and a purposeful learning objective behind allowing students to plan activities, such as decorating the school hallways, that they were in charge of carrying out whether successful or not. These

187

opportunities for agency in this particular school show the possibilities of what Latina student leaders' experiences can be like if they all had expanded opportunities for agency over school space. The positive experiences of this small sample of students, however, raise questions for further study, namely: What about the experiences of *other* students at the school?

While the work of Emily, Azul, Olivia, and Maribel definitely opened more opportunities for Pride School students to engage in meaningful space, I wonder about the students that were not as central to that process. I highlighted students' representational space and spatial practice, which painted a positive story of this school from the perspective of school leaders. Students came together, outside the control of adults, and figured things out together through place-making and in spaces that they placed particularly positive attention to. For example, in Chapter 6, Maribel explained why she and her peers in Leadership decorated the Pride School Hallways:

> So it's just the extra work that we do to make sure that the students are enjoying school and not just here because we have to be. And even in the hallways, we try to be interactive with them. It was something that the students could connect to feel like they are actually a part of something, not just coming to school and studying and just going home as a routine. Just having something that they could look forward to and they could feel like they're a part of. That's our goal.

What was working in favor of place-making in this example was student agency and leadership at Pride School. Yet, through their own vocabulary, students who held leadership positions revealed an us/them framing at times. Maribel used words such as "we" and "our" to indicate Leadership students and what they did to benefit "them," i.e., the other students at the School. Even though meaningful school spaces that the leaders shaped belonging to were important, it seemed that within these spaces these student leaders might have also been marking off their own community of students ("we"/"our") from the rest of the student body ("them"/"they"). Place and

188

place-making, though, do put an emphasis on the efforts at creating meaning and belonging to space and in ways of membership with others (Cresswell, 2004), so it seemed natural that these leaders would create an "us" identity as members of a group. Glimpses of this dynamic as evidenced in the data collected show that if I had expanded the sampling of participants (through gender, number, or background), perhaps I would have painted a more nuanced picture of the Pride School vis-à-vis the perspective of other students who were not included as the "we" of school leaders. If so, would this picture have not been so positive?

Space & Time

Students in my study held positive attachments to certain school spaces that took on meaningful roles during particular times of the school day and year. Maribel and Azul described the Pride School hallway as meaningful space that they could personalize with decorations that they, along with their Leadership peers, created. These decorations, however, were not permanent and came down after periods of time, replaced with other decorations or not at all. The physical space of the hallway could have been meaningful for my student participants at some point, but then not at others, especially if the walls lay bare or personalization and/or attachment. While the emphasis and focus of my study was attentive to school space, I wonder: What about time?

School space deemed safe, of comfort, and like home at one time can be unsafe and insignificant during another. Drawing out this distinction is something I was not specifically attentive to but revealed itself in different instances in the data collected. Emily's Youth Action Club, for example, was a meaningful space for her where she could learn about issues in her community with peers. Club meetings took place once a week, for 30 minutes during lunch, and in a room that, at other times of the school day, was a math class. This classroom took on new

meanings and shifting functions depending on when it was being used and how. It is also the case that the significance of meaningful spaces such as Youth Action can be highlighted by drawing out a distinction of what would be an unsafe space, i.e., what are these spaces operating as counterspaces to? While the physical space is important, so is the human activity and sense-making that emerges within it and at particular times that make it significant to students. Since these same meaningful spaces, at other times, could be insignificant – or even unsafe – a question for further study could be: What is the role of time in student place-making?

Joy

In my exploration of student place-making, a recurring theme of enjoyment and fun arose in respect to my students' place-making. This reminded me of historian Robin D.G. Kelley's work (1996) wherein he shares that, as a teenager, he and his co-workers at the Pasadena McDonald's sought ways to find enjoyment and fun in low-wage employment via cracking jokes and styling their work uniforms. Similarly, raising school spirit and singing "Happy Birthday" to teachers were ways my students sought to make Pride School a more enjoyable place to be. I discussed these instances in terms of democratic practices and visions of student place-making – what these Latinas were doing to create a positive school culture and work toward the greater good of their school and community. Although I did not explore this fully, it seemed that joy was a central part of their agenda. Thus, a question to explore further is: What is the role of joy in student place-making? This question is significant because, as Kelley (1996) argues, it is important to illuminate the inventive struggles waged by people to "rethink how we construct the political, social, and cultural" (p. 4) instances enacted in everyday life. I began to conceptualize

190

this earlier when I made the case that student place-making can be a tactic of students' resistance. Thus, another question worth exploring is: Is joy a form of transformational resistance?

Teacher Education & School Leadership

Lastly, my research aim has always been to focus on the perspectives of young people to better understand school and schooling. As I transition into my role working with undergraduate pre-service teachers, certain important questions emerge for further exploration and may inform the field of teacher education and school leadership. All of these questions, of course, still foreground the actions and experiences of young people as place-makers of their schools and inquire about the role of educators in leveraging efforts for student place-making to expand schools as centers of and for community life. And, although this was not something I fully explored in this dissertation, talking about and understanding school space, place, and place-making is important for educators.

Philosopher John Dewey spoke of similar themes in his book *The School and Society* (1899) by foregrounding the local community of a school via emphasizing space and place. More specifically, Dewey placed an emphasis on schools as situated within communities and thought of schools as socially significant in being a form of active community life. What Dewey (1899) was really doing was conceptualizing schools as particular local spaces – an embryonic society – within a grander regional and national context, i.e., a place wherein students gain insights into their social power as agents of the school environment and where students, even in the face of social, economic and racial inequities, and work things out for themselves because students have inherent "impulses and tendencies to make, to do, to create, to produce" (p. 18). Given my study participants working together with peers and in spaces that held meaning and belonging to them,

schools are important to student place-making. By being attentive to place and place-making educators may build and sustain a school culture for student democratic action and change that is crucial for this capacity development in students.

Within this view, schools not only occupy a particular role within a democratic society, they are also particular spaces central to the local context and the capacity for agency and change, i.e., for action. Teacher education and school leadership may consider conceptualizing and centering students' actions as producing, shaping, and sustaining both school and classroom space because Dewey's (1916) vision of democratic schooling and experience also relies on how space is conceived, perceived, and lived by the social actors themselves, or the students engaging with space and making place of social belonging, membership, and meaning. If educators looked at Latina student leadership, for example, from such a geographical perspective as I emphasized in this dissertation, it may afford insights to view how student place-making is dictated by schools and community conditions, and show how place-based efforts are integrated and interdependent (the interconnections) on these various scales. As such, it is not enough to simply focus on schools as stand-alone entities; it begs the question, how can educators be community-engaged and in what ways are students central to such efforts? For example, social and pedagogical work was already occurring at Pride School outside the purview of the class and standard curriculum; so, what does it mean for educators to become aware of student place-making? What does it mean for educators to take on identities as ethnographers at their own schools to appreciate the work that is being done in student spaces and places? This would surely mean following the lead of young people in place-making at schools yet also provide valuable lessons for teachers and teacher educators. How do teachers also become a part of that? As my

dissertation shows, some of these lessons provide insights into youth democratic practices and visions, as well as transgressions, that educators may learn to amplify in their own classroom pedagogy.

Given my study participants and their positive experiences for place-making at Pride School, I am left with these questions about the role of educators in place and place-making that occurs within schools: 1) Are adults establishing certain school conditions that open space for place-making? and, if so, 2) What are adults doing to create such an agentive student body? As the Latina students in my study demonstrate, youths are very important in creating their school environment, so these (and other questions) should be explored to reveal the affordances of thinking about the everyday at schools and what that means for teacher education and school leadership.

REFERENCES

Abrego, L. J. (2014). *Sacrificing families: Navigating laws, labor, and love across borders*. Stanford University Press.

Acuña, R. (1984). *A community under siege: A chronicle of Chicanos east of the Los Angeles River, 1945-1975*. Chicano Studies Research Center.

UCLA Center for Community Schooling. (2018). A decade of innovation. *LAUSD Pilot School 10th Anniversary Research, Practice & Policy Briefing*, Spring 2018, 1-4.

Alarcón, R. (2011). U.S. Immigration policy and the mobility of Mexicans (1882-2005). *Migraciones Internacionales*, *6*(1).

Anderson-Levitt, K. M. (2006). Ethnography. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research,* (pp. 279-296). AERA & LEA.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands: la frontera*. Aunt Lute.

Arreola, D. D. (2012). Placemaking and Latino urbanism in a Phoenix Mexican immigrant community. *Journal of Urbanism*, 5(2-3), 157-170.

Avila, E. (2004). *Popular culture in the age of white flight: Fear and fantasy in suburban Los Angeles*. University of California Press.

Avila, E. (2016). The folklore of the freeway: Space, culture, and identity in Post-war Los Angeles. In C. A. Noriega, E. Avila, K. M. Davalos, C. Sandoval, & R. Rafael Pérez-Torres (Eds.), *Chicano studies reader: An anthology of Aztlán, 1970-2015.* University of Washington Press.

Bacon, D. (2008). *Illegal people: How globalization creates migration and criminalizes immigrants*. Beacon Press.

Baltodano, M. (2012). Neoliberalism and the demise of public education: The corporatization of schools of education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *25*(4), 487–507.

Barboza, T. (March 14, 2015). Exide's troubled history: Years of pollution violations but few penalties. *LA Times*. https://graphics.latimes.com/exide-battery-plant/

Barraclough, L. (2012). Contested cowboys: Ethnic Mexican *charros* and the struggle for suburban public space in 1970s Los Angeles. *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies, 37*(2), 95-124.

Bassey, M. (2003). Case study research. In M. Coleman & A. R. J. Briggs (Eds.), *Research methods in educational leadership and management,* (pp. 108-121). Paul Chapman.

Bazeley, P. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: Practical strategies*. Sage.

Becerra, R.M. (1998). The Mexican-American family. In C.H. Mindel, R.W. Habenstein, & R. Wright (Eds.), *Ethnic families in America, patterns and variations (4th ed)*, (pp. 153-171). Prentice Hall.

Bejarano, C. E. (2013). *The Latina Advantage: Gender, Race, and Political Success*. University of Texas Press

Beltran, C. (2009). Going public: Hannah Arendt, immigrant action, and the space of appearance. *Political Theory, 37*(5), 595–662.

Bennett, W. L. (2008). *Civic life online: Learning how digital media can engage youth*. MIT Press.

Bhabha, H. K. (2012). *The location of culture*. Routledge.

Biesta, G. (2006). 'Of all affairs, communication is the most wonderful': The communicative turn in Dewey's *Democracy and Education.* In D. Hansen (Ed.), *John Dewey and our educational prospect*, (pp. 23-38). SUNY Press.

Biesta, G. (2007). Education and the democratic person: Towards a political conception of democratic education. *Teachers College Record, 109*(3), 740–769.

Blackwell, M. (2011). *¡Chicana power!: Contested histories of feminism in the Chicano movement.* University of Texas Press.

Boydston, J. (Ed.) (2008/1976). *The middle works of John Dewey, volume 2, 1899-1924: Democracy and Education, 1916 (collected works of John Dewey).* Southern Illinois University Press.

Boydston, J. (Ed.) (2008/1977). *The middle works of John Dewey, volume 4, 1899-1924: Democracy and Education, 1916 (collected works of John Dewey).* Southern Illinois University Press.

Boydston. J. (Ed.) (2008/1984). *John Dewey: The later works, 1925-1953: 1939-1941/essays, reviews, and miscellany, volume 2*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Boydston, J. (Ed.) (2008/1986). *The middle works of John Dewey, volume 9, 1899-1924: Democracy and Education, 1916 (collected works of John Dewey).* Southern Illinois University Press.

Boydston, J. (Ed.). (2008/1987). *John Dewey: The later works, 1925-1953: 1939-1941/essays, reviews, and miscellany, volume 11*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Boydston, J. (Ed.). (2008/1988). *John Dewey: The later works, 1925-1953: 1939-1941/essays, reviews, and miscellany, volume 14*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Brown, A., & Lopez, M.H. (2013). *Mapping the Latino population, by state, county and city*. Pew Research Center.

Brown, A., & Patten, E., (2014). *Statistical portrait of Hispanics in the United States, 2012*. Pew Research Center.

Caballero, C., Martinex-Vu, Y., Perez Torres, J., Tellez, M., & Vega, C. (2019). *The Chicana Motherwork Anthology*. University of Arizona Press.

Cabrera, N. L., Meza, E. L., Romero, A. J., & Rodríguez, R. C. (2013). "If there is no struggle, there is no progress": Transformative youth activism and the School of Ethnic Studies. *The Urban Review*, *45*(1), 7-22.

California Department of Education (2018). *Los Angeles Unified District Report (19-64733)*. Retrieved at: https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=1964733 &agglevel=district&year=2017-18.

Carpio, G. G. (2016). Racial projections: Cyberspace, public space, and the digital divide. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1-17.

Carpio, G., Irazábal, C., & Pulido, L. (2011). Right to the suburb: Rethinking Lefebvre and immigrant activism. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, *33*(2).

Carter, D. J. (2007). Why the Black kids sit together at the stairs: The role of identity-affirming counter-spaces in a predominantly White high school. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 542-554.

Case, A. D., & Hunter, C. D. (2012). Counterspaces: A unit of analysis for understanding the role of settings in marginalized individuals' adaptive responses to oppression. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *50*(1-2), 257-270.

Caughey, J., & Caughey, L. (1973). *To kill a child's spirit: The tragedy of school segregation in Los Angeles*. Peacock Publishers.

Chen, S. J. (2005). On the mission of multicultural education in the perspective of globalization. *Comparative Education Review*, 26(12).

Clifford, N., Holloway, S. L., Rice, S. P., & Valentine, G. (2009). Key Concepts in Geography. Sage.

Cohen, C., Kahne, J., & Marshall, J. (2018). *Let's go there: Making a case for race, ethnicity and a lived civics approach to civic education* [report]. GenForward at the University of Chicago.

Conner, J. O. (2011). Youth organizers as young adults: Their commitments and contributions. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *21*(4), 923-942.

Corby, B. C., Hodges, E. V., & Perry, D. G. (2007). Gender identity and adjustment in black, Hispanic, and white preadolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, *43*(1), 261.

Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, presence, and power: "Student voice" in educational research and reform. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *36*(4), 359–390.

Costanza-Chock, S. (2014). *Out of the shadows, into the streets! Transmedia organizing and the immigrant rights movement*. MIT Press.

Cresswell, T. (1996). *In place/out of place: Geography, ideology, and transgression*. University of Minnesota Press.

Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: A short introduction*. Blackwell Publishing.

Cross, J. (2001). *What is Sense of Place?* [Paper prepared for the 12th Headwaters Conference, Western State College, November 2-4, 2001]. Retrieved from: http://western.edu/sites/default/files/documents/cross_headwatersXII.pdf.

Cuff, D., & Wolch, J. (2016). Urban Humanities and the Creative Practitioner: A manifesto. *Boom: A Journal of California*, *6*(3), 12-17.

Cuauhtin, T., Zavala, M., Sleeter, C,. & Au, W. (Eds.). (2019), *Rethinking ethnic studies*. Rethinking Schools.

Davalos, D. B., Chavez, E. L., & Guardiola, R. J. (1999). The effects of extracurricular activity, ethnic identification, and perception of school on student dropout rates. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 21*(1), 61–77.

Dawson, M. C. (2006). After the deluge: Publics and publicity in Katrina's wake. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 3(1), 239-249.

Delgado Bernal, D. (1998). Grassroots leadership reconceptualized: *Chicana* oral histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles school blowouts. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, *19*(2), 113-142.

Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Learning and living pedagogies of the home: The Mestiza consciousness of Chicana students. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *14*(5), 623-639.

Dewey, J. (1899). *The school and society*. Cosimo Classics.

Dewey, J. (1902). The school as social centre. In J. Boydston (Ed.), *The middle works of John Dewey, volume 2, 1899-1924: Democracy and education, 1916 (collected works of John Dewey),* (pp. 80-93). Southern Illinois University Press.

Dewey, J. (1909). The Bearings of Pragmatism Upon Education. In J. Boydston (Ed.), *The middle works of John Dewey, volume 4, 1899-1924: Democracy and education, 1916 (collected works of John Dewey),* (pp.178-191). Southern Illinois University Press.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan.

Dewey, J. (1927). The public and is problems. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The later works, 1925-1953: 1939-1941/essays, reviews, and miscellany, volume 2,* (pp. 235-374). Southern Illinois University Press.

Dewey, J. (1937). Education and social change. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The later works, 1925-1953: 1939-1941/essays, reviews, and miscellany, volume 11,* (pp. 175-185). Southern Illinois University Press.

Dewey, J. (1939). Creative democracy: The task before us. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The later works, 1925-1953: 1939-1941/essays, reviews, and miscellany, volume 14,* (pp. 224-230). Southern Illinois University Press.

Diaz, D. R. (2005). Barrio *urbanism: Chicanos, planning, and American cities*. Psychology Press.

Diera, C. (2016). Democratic possibilities for student voice within schools undergoing reform: A student counterpublic case study. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, *14*(2), 217-235.

Dhar, P., & Ross, S. L. (2012). School district quality and property values: Examining differences along school district boundaries. *Journal of Urban Economics*, *71*(1), 18-25.

Duncan-Andrade, J. M. (2005). An examination of the sociopolitical history of Chicanos and its relationship to school performance. *Urban Education*, *40*(6), 576-605.

Duncan-Andrade, J. M., & Morrell, E. (2008). Pan-ethnic studies. *Counterpoints*, 133-156.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.

Espinoza, D., Cotera, M. E. & Blackwell, M. (Eds.). (2018). Chicana movidas*: New narratives of activism and feminism in the movement era.* University of Texas Press.

Ethington, P. J. (2000). Segregated diversity: Race-ethnicity, space, and political fragmentation in Los Angeles County, 1940-1994 [report submitted to The John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation].

Fairbanks, R. P. (2003). A theoretical primer on space. *Critical Social Work*, *3*(1), 131-354.

Farr, J. (2004). Social capital: A conceptual history. *Political Theory 32*(1):6-33.

Fielding, M., (2004). 'New wave' student voice and the renewal of civic society. *London Review of Education*, *2*(3), 197-217.

Flores, A. I. (2016) *De Tal Palo Tal Astilla: Exploring Mexicana/Chicana Mother-Daughter Pedagogies* (doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles).

Flores-Gonzalez, N. (2002). *School kids/street kids: Identity development in Latino students*. Teachers College Press.

Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text*, 25/26, 56–80.

Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice interrupts: Critical reflections on the "postsocialist" condition*. Routledge.

Friedland, R. (1992). Space, place, and modernity: the geographical moment. *Contemporary Sociology, 21*(1), 11-15.

Gallo, S., & Link, H. (2015). "*Diles la verdad*": Deportation policies, politicized funds of knowledge, and schooling in middle childhood. *Harvard Educational Review*, *85*(3), 357-382.

Gándara, P., Oseguera, L., Pérez Huber, L., Locks, A., Ee, J., & Molina, D. (2013). Making Education Work for Latinas in the U.S. UCLA: The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

Gándara, P., O'Hara, S., & Gutiérrez, D. (2004). The changing shape of aspirations: Peer influence on achievement behavior. *School Connections: U.S. Mexican Youth, Peers, and School Achievement*, 39-62.

Gándara, P. C., & Contreras, F. (2009). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed social policies*. Harvard University Press.

García, D. G. (2018). *Strategies of segregation: Race, residence, and the struggle for educational equality*. University of California Press.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.

Gee, J.P. (2002). Literacies, identities, and discourses. In M. J. Scleppegrell & M. C. Colombia (Eds.)., *Developing advanced literacy in first and second languages: Meaning with Power,* (pp.59-175). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ginorio, A., & Huston, M. (2001). ¡Si, se puede*! Yes, we can: Latinas in school*. American Association of University Women Educational Foundation

Ginwright, S., & Cammarota, J. (2007). Youth activism in the urban community: Learning critical civic praxis within community organizations. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *20*(6), 693-710.

Giroux, Henry. (2003). *Public time and educated hope: Educational leadership and the war against youth*. Retrieved from: http://www.units.miamioh.edu/eduleadership/anthology/ OA/OA03001.html.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (2017). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.

Gómez, Jr., J. E. A. (2013). The Korean diaspora in Philippine cities: Amalgamation or invasion? In G. Hou (Ed.), *Transcultural cities: Border-crossing and placemaking*. (pp. 77-90). Routledge.

Gómez, L. E. (2007). *Manifest destinies: The making of the Mexican American race*. NYU Press.

Gonzalez, N., Andrade, R., Civil, M., & Moll, L. (2001). Bridging funds of distributed knowledge. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, *6*(1⁄2), 115-132.

Gorski, P. (2008). The myth of the "culture of poverty." *Educational Leadership*, *65*(7), 32.

Gould, P., & White, R. (2012). *Mental maps*. Routledge.

Gregory, D. (1994) Geographical imaginations. Wiley-Blackwell.

Gutiérrez, K. D. (2008). Developing a sociocritical literacy in the third space. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *43*(2), 148-164.

Gutiérrez, K. D., Baquedano-Lopez, P., & Tejeda, C. (1999). Rethinking diversity: Hybridity and hybrid language practices in the third space. *Mind, Culture & Activity*, *6*(4), 286-303.

Gutiérrez de Soldatenko, M. A. G. (2002). ILGWU Labor organizers: Chicana and Latina leadership in the Los Angeles garment industry. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 46-66.

Halttunen, K. (2006). Groundwork: American studies in place: Presidential address to the American Studies Association, November 4, 2005. *American Quarterly*, *58*(1), 1-15.

Hamilton, M. P., Heilig, J. V., & Pazey, B. L. (2013). A Nostrum of school reform? Turning around reconstituted urban Texas high schools. *Urban Education*, *49*(2), 182-215.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

Hernandez-Nieto, R., & Gutierrez, M. C. (2017). *Hispanic map of the United States 2017*. Observatorio Reports. Instituto Cervantes at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University.

Hess, F. M. (2008). The supply side of school reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90, 211–217.

Hines, T. S. (1982). Housing, baseball, and creeping socialism: The battle of Chavez Ravine, Los Angeles, 1949-1959. *Journal of Urban History*, *8*(2), 123-143.

Hise, G. (2004). Border city: Race and social distance in Los Angeles. *American Quarterly*, *56*(3), 545-558.

hooks, b. (1990) Marginality as a Site of Resistance. In R. Ferguson, M. Gever, T. Minh-ha & C. West (Eds.), *Out there: Marginalization and contemporary cultures,* (pp. 341-343). MIT Press.

Hursh, D. (2005). Neo-liberalism, markets and accountability: Transforming education and undermining democracy in the United States and England. *Policy Futures in Education*, 3(1), 315.

Jackson, P. (1989). *Maps of meaning*. Routledge.

Jiménez, H. (2012). Doing leadership: New models of Chicana/Latina leadership in Austin, Texas. *Chicana/Latina Studies, 12*(1), 82-113.

Johnson, G. T. (2013). *Spaces of conflict, sounds of solidarity: Music, race, and spatial entitlement in Los Angeles*. University of California Press.

Kafka, J. (2008). "Sitting on a tinderbox": Racial conflict, teacher direction, and the centralization of disciplinary authority. *American Journal of Education*, *114*(3), 247-270.

Kahne, J., Middaugh, E. & Allen, D. (2014). *Youth, new media, and the rise of participatory politics* [working paper]. Retrieved from http://ypp.dmlcentral.net/publications/203.

Keith, M., & Pile, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Place and the politics of identity*. Routledge.

Kelley, R. D. (1996). *Race rebels: Culture, politics, and the black working class*. Simon & Schuster.

Kelley, R. D. (2001). *Yo' mama's disfunktional!: Fighting the culture wars in urban America*. Beacon Press.

Kirshner, B. (2007). Introduction youth activism as a context for learning and development. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *51*(3), 367-379.

Kirshner, B. (2007). Introduction youth activism as a context for learning and development. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *51*(3), 367-379.

Knoester, M. (2011). Is the outcry for more pilot schools warranted? Democracy, collective bargaining, deregulation, and the politics of school reform in Boston. *Educational Policy*, *25*(3), 387-423.

Kropp, P. S. (2001). Citizens of the past?: Olvera Street and the construction of race and memory in 1930s Los Angeles. *Radical History Review*, *81*(1), 35-60.

Kulis, S., Marsiglia, F. & Nagoshi, J. L. (2010). Gender roles, externalizing behaviors, and substance use among Mexican-American adolescents. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 10(3), 283-307.

Kun, J. (2004). What is an MC if he can't rap to *banda*? Making music in *nuevo* LA. *American Quarterly*, *56*(3), 741-758.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(1), 74-84.

LAUSD Board of Education. (March 8, 2013). *LAUSD cuts ribbon on Linda Esperanza Marquez High School* [press release]. Retrieved from: https://home.lausd.net/apps/news/article/298877

Lefebvre, H., (Trans. by D. Nicholson-Smith, D.) (1991). *The production of space*. Blackwell.

Lipman, P. (2011). *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the City*. Taylor & Francis.

Lipsitz, G. (2006). *The possessive investment in whiteness: How White people profit from identity politics*. Temple University Press.

Lipsitz, G. (2011). *How racism takes place*. Temple University Press.

Lynch, K. (1960). *The image of the city (vol. 11)*. MIT Press.

MacDonald, V. (Ed.). (2004). *Latino education in the United States: A narrated history from 1513–2000*. Springer.

Marsh, H.W. & Kleitman, S. (2002) Extracurricular School Activities: The Good, the Bad, and the Nonlinear. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*, 464-515.

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. Polity Press.

Maxcy, B. (2011). The politics of priorities in turbulent times: Policy logics, faces of power, and reform possibilities. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *86*(3), 252–271.

McCann, Eugene (1999). Race, protest, and public space: Contextualizing Lefebvre in the U.S. city," *Antipode,* 31.2.

McDermott, R. & Raley, J. D. (2007). Discussion: From John Dewey to an anthropology of education. *Teachers College Record, 109*(7), 1820-35.

McGrath, K. (2007). Gender, race, and Latina identity: An examination of Marvel Comics' Amazing Fantasy and Araña. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 15(4), 268-283.

McGuinn, P. (2011). Stimulating reform: Race to the Top, competitive grants and the Obama education agenda. *Educational Policy, 26*(1), 136-159.

McKittrick, K. (2011). On plantations, prisons, and Black sense of place. *Social and Cultural Geography, 12*(8), 947-963.

McKittrick, K., & Woods, C. A. (Eds.). (2007). *Black geographies and the politics of place*. Between the Lines.

Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

Mirra, N., Garcia, A., & Morrell, E. (2015). *Doing youth participatory action research: Transforming inquiry with researchers, educators, and students*. Routledge.

Mitra, D., Serriere, S., & Kirshner, B. (2014). Youth participation in U.S. contexts: Student voice without a national mandate. *Children & Society*, 28(4), 292–304.

Moje, E.B. (2007) Developing socially just subject matter instruction: A review of the literature on disciplinary literacy teaching. *Review of Research in Education*, *31*, 1-44.

Moje, E. B., Ciechanowski, K. M., Kramer, K., Ellis, L., Carrillo, R., & Collazo, T. (2004). Working toward third space in content area literacy: An examination of everyday funds of knowledge and discourse. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *39*(1), 38-70.

Molina, N. (2010). Constructing Mexicans as deportable immigrants: Race, disease, and the meaning of "public charge." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power, 17*(6), 641-666.

Molina, N. (2015). The importance of place and place-makers in the life of a Los Angeles community: What gentrification erases from Echo Park. *Southern California Quarterly*, *97*(1), 69-111.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, *31*(2), 132-141.

Muñiz, A. (2015). *Police, power, and the production of racial boundaries*. Rutgers University Press.

Murphy, A. B. (2018). *Geography: Why it matters*. Taylor & Francis.

Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe*. Teachers College Press.

Neely, B., & Samura, M. (2011). Social geographies of race: Connecting race and space. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *34*(11), 1933-1952.

Nicolaides, B. M. (2002). *My blue heaven: Life and politics in the working-class suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965*. University of Chicago Press.

Ochoa, E., & Ochoa, G. L. (Eds.). (2005). *Latino Los Angeles: transformations, communities, and activism*. University of Arizona Press.

Oltman, S. (February 19, 2013). Teachers flocking to "pilot" school model. *LA School Report*. http://laschoolreport.com/autonomy-models-a-real-utla-lausd-compromise/

Orfield, G., & Ee, J. (2014). *Segregating California's future: Inequality and its alternative 60 years after* Brown v. Board of Education. Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

Osterman, K. F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, *70*(3), 323-367.

Osuna, S. (2015). Intra-Latina/o encounters: Salvadoran and Mexican struggles and salvadoran-Mexican subjectivities in Los Angeles. *Ethnicities, 15*(2).

Otero, L. R., & Cammarota, J. (2011). Notes from the ethnic studies home front: Student protests, texting, and subtexts of oppression. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *24*(5), 639-648.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, *41*(93), 93-97.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(1): 85-100.

Park, H. (2014). Children at the border. *The New York Times Interactive*. (updated October 14, 2014). https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/07/15/us/questions-about-the-border-kids.html

Payne, P. (2013). *Pilot school leaders' experiences in innovation* (doctoral dissertation, California State University, Northridge).

Perez Huber, L., Malagon, M., Ramirez, B., Camargo Gonzalez, L., Jimenez, A., & Velez, V., (2015). *Still falling through the cracks: Revisiting the Latina/o education pipeline* [CSRC Research Report No. 19]. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center.

Poon, O. A. (2013). "Think about it as decolonizing our minds": Spaces for critical race pedagogy and transformative leadership development. In S. D. Museus, D. C. Maramba, & R. T. Teranishi (Eds.), *The misrepresented minority: New insights on Asian American and Pacific Islanders and the implications for higher education,* (pp. 294-310). Stylus.

Popkin, E. (2003). Transnational migration and development in postwar peripheral states: An examination of Guatemalan and Salvadoran state linkages with their migrant populations in Los Angeles. *Current Sociology*, *51*(3-4), 347-374.

Powell, K. (2010). Viewing places: Students as visual ethnographers. *Art Education*, *63*(6), 44-53.

Pratt, M.L. (1991). Arts of the contact zone. *Profession*, 33-40.

Prieler, M. (2016). Gender Stereotypes in Spanish- and English-Language Television Advertisements in the United States. *Mass Communication and Society*, 19(3), 275-300.

Quijada Cerecer, D. A., Cahill, C., & Bradley, M. (2011). Resist this! Embodying the contradictory positions and collective possibilities of transformative resistance. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *24*(5), 587-593.

Quintana, I. S. L. (2015). Making do, making home: Borders and the worlds of Chinatown and Sonoratown in early twentieth-century Los Angeles. *Journal of Urban History*, *41*(1), 47-74.

Ravitch, S. M., & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason & rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. Sage.

Ream, R. K., & Rumberger, R. W. (2008). Student engagement, peer social capital, and school dropout among Mexican American and non-Latino white students. *Sociology of Education*, *81*(2), 109-139.

Rice, J. K., & Croninger, R. G. (2005). Resource generation, reallocation, or depletion: An analysis of the impact of reconstitution on school capacity. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *4*(2), 73–103.

Richardson, D. M., Pickus, H., & Parks, L. (2017). Pathways to mobility: Engaging Mexican American youth through participatory photo mapping. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *34*(1), 55–84.

Robinson, C. & Taylor, C. (2007). Theorizing student voice: Values and perspectives. *Improving Schools*, *10*(5), 5–17.

Rocco, R. (1999). The formation of Latino citizenship in southeast Los Angeles. *Citizenship Studies*, *3*(2), 253-266.

Rogers, J., Mediratta, K., & Shah, S. (2012). Building power, learning democracy: Youth organizing as a site of civic development. *Review of Research in Education*, *36*(1), 43–66.

Rubin, B., & Silva, E. (Eds.). (2003). *Critical voices in school reform: Students living through change*. Routledge.

Rogers, J., & Terriquez, V. (2013). *Learning to lead: The impact of youth organizing on the educational and civic trajectories of low-income youth*. Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access.

Rolon-Dow, (2008). Seduced by Images: Identity and Schooling in the Lives of Puerto Rican Girls. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 35(1), 8–29.

Roman, E. (2000)Who Exactly Is Living La Vida Loca: The Legal and Political Consequences of Latino-Latina Ethnic and Racial Stereotypes in Film and Other Media. The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice. 37-68.

Romero, A., Arce, S., & Cammarota, J. (2009). A *barrio* pedagogy: Identity, intellectualism, activism, and academic achievement through the evolution of critically compassionate intellectualism. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *12*(2), 217-233.

Rosen, G. (1974). The development of the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles from 1967 to 1969. *Aztlan*, *4*(1), 155-184.

Rosenblum, M. R., & Ball, I. (2016). *Trends in unaccompanied child and family migration from Central America*. Migration Policy Institute.

Sagarena, R. L. (2002). Building California's past: Mission revival architecture and regional identity. *Journal of Urban History*, *28*(4), 429-444.

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.

Sanchez, G. (2004). "What's good for Boyle Heights is good for the Jews": Creating multiculturalism on the Eastside during the 1950s. *American Quarterly*, *56*(3).

Sanchez, G. J. (2010). Disposable people, expendable neighborhoods. *Companion to Los Angeles*, A, 129-146. Blackwell Publishing.

Santiago, D. A., Calderón, G. E., & Taylor, M. (2015). *Factbook 2015: The condition of Latinos in education*. Excelencia in Education.

Santos, R. E. (2016). *Never silent: Examining Chicana/o community experiences and perspectives of school desegregation efforts in* Crawford v. Los Angeles Board of Education*, 1963-1982* (doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles).

Sassen, S. (2000). Foreword. In V. M. Valle & R. D. Torres (Eds.). *Latino metropolis*. University of Minnesota Press.

Schneider, J. (2008). Escape from Los Angeles: White flight from Los Angeles and its schools, 1960-1980. *Journal of Urban History*, *34*(6), 995-1012.

Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.

Shalby, C., Vines, R., & Campa, A. (January 14, 2020). Elementary school kids doused as jet dumps fuel before LAX emergency landing. *LA Times*. https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-01-14/plane-dumps-fuel-on-students-on-school-playground-en-route-to-lax-officials-say

Sides, J. (2003). *L.A. city limits*. University of California Press.

Simon, R. (1982). *Gramsci's political thought*. Lawrence & Wishart.

Sleeter, C. E. (2011). *The academic and social value of ethnic studies: A research review.* National Education Association.

Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Blackwell.

Sólorzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, *36*(3), 308–342.

Sólorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73.

Sólorzano, D. & Solorzano, R. (1995). The Chicano educational experience: A proposed framework for effective schools in Chicano communities. *Educational Policy,* (9), 293-314.

Sólorzano, D. & Velez, V. (2016). Using critical race spatial analysis to examine the Du Boisianc color-line along the Alameda Corridor in Southern California. *Whittier Law Review*, 27, 423-437.

Sólorzano, D., Villalpando, O., & Oseguera, L. (2005). Educational inequities and Latina/o undergraduate students in the United States: A critical race analysis of their educational progress. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *4*(3), 272-294.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

Spring, J. (2016). *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality: A brief history of the education of dominated cultures in the United States*. Routledge.

Teacher Powered Schools. (2020). Los Angeles Pilot Schools [commentary]. Retrieved from: https://www.teacherpowered.org/guide/resources/los-angeles-pilot-schools

Terriquez, V. (2015). Training young activists: Grassroots organizing and youths' civic and political trajectories. *Sociological Perspectives*, *58*(2), 223-242.

The Education Trust-West. (2017). *The majority report: Supporting the educational success of Latino students in California*. https://west.edtrust.org/resource/the-majority-report/

Tienken, C. H., & Zhao, Y. (2013). How common standards and standardized testing widen the opportunity gap. In P. L. Carter & K. G. Welner (Eds.), *Closing the opportunity gap: What America must do to give every student a chance,* (pp. 111–122). Oxford University Press.

Tintiangco-Cubales, A., Kohli, R., Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Sleeter, C. (2014). Toward an ethnic studies pedagogy: Implications for K-12 schools from the research. *The Urban Review*, *47*(1), 104-125.

Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and place*. University of Minnesota Press.

Valencia, R. R. (Ed.). (1991). *Chicano school failure and success: Past, present, and future (1st ed.)*. Routledge.

Valencia, R. R. (Ed.). (2004). *Chicano school failure and success: Past, present, and future (2nd ed.)*. Routledge.

Valencia, R.R. (Ed.). (2010). *Chicano school failure and success: Past, present, and future, (3rd ed.)*. Routledge.

Valencia, R. R. (Ed.). (2012). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. Routledge.

Valenzuela, A. (2010). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. SUNY Press.

Valle, V. M., & Torres, R. D. (2000). *Latino metropolis*. University of Minnesota Press.

Vargas, Z. (2011). *Crucible of struggle: A history of Mexican Americans from colonial times to the present era*. Oxford University Press.

Velez-Ibanez, C. & Greenberg, J. B., (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S.-Mexican households. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *23*(4), 313-335.

Velez-Ibanez C., & Greenberg, J. B. (2005). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge. In N. Gonzalez, L.C. Moll, & Amanti, C. (Eds.), *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households and classrooms*, (pp. 47-70). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Venzant Chambers, T. T., & McCready, L. T. (2011). "Making space" for ourselves: African American student responses to their marginalization. *Urban Education*, *46*(6), 1352-1378.

Villalpando, O. (2003). Self-segregation or self-preservation? A critical race theory and Latina/o critical theory analysis of a study of Chicana/o college students. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, *16*(5), 619-646.

Villenas, S. (2006). Pedagogical moments in the borderlands: Latina mothers and daughters teaching and learning. In D. Delgado Bernal, C.A. Elenes, F. Godinez and S. Villenas (eds.), *Chicana/Latina education in everyday life: Feminista perspectives on pedagogy and epistemology* (pp. 147-159). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Villenas, S. & Moreno, M. (2001). To valerse por si misma (be self-reliant) between race, capitalism, and patriarchy: Latina mother/daughter pedagogies in North Carolina. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(5), pp. 671-687.

Von Hoffman, A. (2000). A study in contradictions: The origins and legacy of the Housing Act of 1949. *Housing Policy Debate*, *11*(2), 299-326.

Wells, A. S., Slayton, J., & Scott, J. (2002). Defining democracy in the neoliberal age: Charter school reform and educational consumption. *American Educational Research Journal*, *39*(2), 337-361.

Westbrook, R. (2005). *Democratic hope: Pragmatism and the promise of truth*. Cornell University Press.

Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, *41*(2), 237-269.

Willis, J. W. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretive and critical approaches*. Sage.

Wineburg, S. (2001) *Historical thinking and other unnatural acts: Charting the future of teaching the past*. Temple University Press.

Wollenberg, C. (1978). *All deliberate speed: Segregation and exclusion in California schools, 1855-1975*. University of California Press.

Wong, K. K., & Shen, F. X. (2005). When mayors lead urban schools: Assessing the effects of mayoral takeover. In W. G. Howell (Ed.), *Besieged: School boards and the future of education politics*, (pp. 81–100). Brookings Institution Press.

Wright, A. (2012). Fantasies of empowerment: Mapping neoliberal discourse in the coalition government's schools policy. *Journal of Education Policy*, *27*(3), 279-294.

Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage Publications.

Zarate, M. E., & Burciaga, R. (2010). Latinos and college access: Trends and future directions. *Journal of College Admission*, *209*, 24-29.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(1), 69-91.