

UCLA

InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies

Title

Book Review: Critical race spatial analysis: Mapping to understand and address educational inequity

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1908g63w>

Journal

InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies, 15(1)

Author

Escobedo, Cindy Raquel

Publication Date

2018

DOI

10.5070/D4151037113

Copyright Information

Copyright 2018 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Critical Race Spatial Analysis: Mapping to Understand and Address Educational Inequity. Deb Morrison, Subini Ancy Annamma, and Darrell D. Jackson, eds. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing LLC, 2017. ISBN: 978-1620364246

Researchers who produce social-justice and anti-racist scholarship often situate their studies within frameworks that examine the nexus of race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, the economy, politics, and history. Across disciplines, such scholars will use the theoretical and methodological tools of Critical Race Theory (CRT) to analyze how various social systems in the U.S. legitimize oppressive structures to uphold white supremacy and perpetuate injustice in the distribution of power. In the field of Education, Critical Race scholarship is vibrantly expanding as it continues to interrogate how racialized educational inequities are created and sustained. However, largely absent from this tradition is an explicit discussion on the spatial dimensions of race. Better said, CRT scholars in Education have yet to systematically examine the intersections of race, power, and privilege while interrogating geographies that perpetuate inequities within various educational settings. The editors of *Critical Race Spatial Analysis: Mapping to Understand and Address Educational Inequity* respond to this gap in the literature by offering an anthology that bridges the gaps between spatial studies, geography, and CRT in Education.

This collection, edited by Deb Morrison, Subini Ancy Annamma, and Darrell D. Jackson, engages a discussion of how race, racism, and white supremacy are intricately connected to educational geographies and social spaces. The editors lay out the focus of the volume as one that seeks to uncover and dismantle geographies of racialized oppression by privileging a Critical Race Spatial Analysis (CRSA) framework in educational research. Thematically, the book first shares its purpose as one that seeks to uphold spatial justice (Part One: Introduction), moves to explanations of guiding theoretical and methodological frameworks (Part Two: Case Methodologies and Tools), and shares empirical findings from historical and contemporary examples of U.S. space and race relations (Part Three: Case Examples). The anthology features the work of junior and senior scholars from various fields of study who “apply a spatial lens to issues of racial injustices in education within their own research contexts” (p. 167).

In Part One, Annamma, Morrison, and Jackson introduce the concept of critical spatial analysis and make explicit connections with the historical traditions of Critical Race Theory and the groundbreaking work of Edward Soja (2006) on Thirdspace. In Chapter 2, Veronica N. Velez and Daniel G. Solórzano lay out the theoretical foundations of the book by rooting a spatial analysis of education within a Critical Race framework. They operationalize CRSA as “an explanatory framework and methodological approach that accounts for the role of race, racism,

and white supremacy in examining geographical and social spaces and that works towards identifying and challenging racism, white supremacy within spaces as part of a larger goal of identifying and challenging all forms of subordination” (p.20).

The authors in Part 2 offer readers a methodological toolkit that can be used when researchers and practitioners engage in critical spatial analysis. Subini Ancy Annamma shows how educational journey mapping can be used to explore how the physical spaces of schools and communities, and the internal spaces of students, influence the educational trajectories of historically disenfranchised students. Deb Morrison and Grahma S. Garlick reimagine the tool of geospatial analysis as one that can be used to critically examine racialized spaces. Leigh Anna Hidalgo explores augmented fotonovela as a methodology that honors the concerns and voices of communities of color while “[drawing] upon the aesthetic of traditional fotonovelas but [incorporating] new technologies, such as video interviews, interactive mapping, smartphone technology, and augmented reality (AR)” (p. 71). All three methodologies elevate the experiential knowledge of communities of color and highlight the ways that communities of color engage in agency and resistance as they navigate racialized terrains inside and outside of schools.

The third section connects the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of Part One and Two by offering case study examples that vary in scalar focus. In chapter 6, Daniel G. Solorzano and Veronica N. Velez uncover a history of Los Angeles whereby racial covenants demark “white spaces” in Los Angeles through the use of redlining to keep People of Color out, thereby setting up racially unequal landscapes. Benjamin Blaisdell continues a discussion of redlining, but explores this concept from the lens of segregation and differential treatment at the micro level- in the classroom context. Mark C. Hogrebe and William F. Tate IV examine “the extent to which districts in Missouri offer access to advanced coursework in mathematics at the high school level” (p. 6), thus interrogating regional scales of educational inequity. In Chapter 9, Federico R Waitoller and Joshua Radinsky explore the nexus of race, space, ability, and educational opportunity in Chicago and find that a critical examination of all four categories is warranted for addressing and dismantling unequal schooling structures at the state scale, and beyond.

I highly recommend this book to researchers interested in connecting the racial with the spatial. It is written in a manner that is accessible and serves as a sort of ‘how-to’ guide for scholars interested in exploring the terrain of race and space. This collection highlights the work of scholars who demonstrate a commitment to honoring the epistemological and theoretical roots of Critical Race scholarship and trail blazing the field of Critical Race Spatial Analysis. Moreover, it offers readers particular language and a practical toolkit for engaging in race and space discussions, all the while bringing together scholars from various disciplines to create a community of scholars devoted to the study of racial and spatial justice.

Though the contributors of this anthology do not engage in an explicit discussion that delineates the differences between space and place (as is the tradition in geography studies) they, “(re)imagine space in education as more than a simple background where education happens” (p. 4).

References

Soja, E. (2010). *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.