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MUSEUMS AS SITES OF SOCIAL CHANGE: EXPLORING PROCESSES OF PLACEMAKING AND BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION FOR UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

Museums as Sites of Social Change: Exploring Processes of Placemaking and Barriers to Access and Participation for Underrepresented Communities

Erin Toolis

The ability to participate in public places and access public resources is important for individual and societal well-being, yet access to such resources is not equitable across racial and socioeconomic groups. The goal of this dissertation is to explore the psychosocial processes that facilitate civic engagement and lay the groundwork for social change, and to examine how participation in these processes can be made more accessible to marginalized community members. I utilized mixed methods to (a) test the psychological pathways facilitated by participation in place-based, community-oriented settings- specifically, museums- and (b) amplify the experiences of low-income residents and residents of color to document mechanisms of exclusion and avenues for enhancing inclusion. Analyses of questionnaires administered to 543 museum visitors found that museum participation was linked to significant increases in place attachment and to sense of community, both of which were associated with increased civic responsibility and intentions for civic action. Analyses of focus groups conducted with 39 low-income residents and residents of color not actively engaged in the museum shed light on ways in which access and participation in resource-rich places can be broadened to marginalized communities. Experiences of museums as unfamiliar, unaffordable, white and elite, and constraining, sterile spaces worked to exclude low-income residents and residents of color from cultural resources. Focus

groups revealed insights for reducing barriers, amplifying the voices of community members who have been traditionally excluded from decision-making to explore how community settings can be made more inclusive and equitable. This dissertation has importance in understanding empowering processes that increase stakeholder access and engagement in public spaces and institutions.

To my mother and father, and to Seán

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Chapter 1

Unless local communal life can be restored, the public cannot adequately resolve its most urgent problem: to find and identify itself (Dewey, 1927/2016, p. 232).

Introduction

Consider two views of the public:

In the first, the public is a collection of isolated, passive spectators. The majority are fundamentally irrational, ignorant, and self-interested; their participation must be minimized. Elites, with their privileged access to truth, must render "unseen facts intelligible" so as to make sound decisions for the rest and maintain order. This stance is epitomized by Walter Lippman, an American Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and influential intellectual, who argued, "The public must be put in its place… so that each of us may live free of the trampling and the roar of a bewildered herd" (1927/1993, p. 145).

In the second view, the public is a community of interdependent, active participants. Members of the public hold expertise derived from lived experience and possess the ability to grasp social reality through dialogue and action in community, which reveals the shared nature of individual problems (Freire, 2005; Martín-Baró, 1994). American psychologist and philosopher John Dewey, who wrote in opposition to Lippman, envisioned an engaged and interconnected public as the heart of a well-functioning democracy (1927/2016). Justice is endangered, he argued, not by an immoral and irrational public but by a fragmented, disconnected public. He explained,

> There is no limit to the… intellectual endowment which may proceed from the flow of social intelligence when that circulates by word of mouth from one to another in the communications of the local community… But that intelligence is dormant and its communications are broken, inarticulate and faint until it possesses the local community as its medium. (1927/2016, p. 233)

In this view of the public, broad deliberation over shared problems, goals, and action is necessary so that a society can become the "Great Community."

Participation in the public realm, and in the places and institutions that make it up, has historically been dominated by elites and limited for the majority of the public. In this dissertation, I examine how public places and institutions can promote civic engagement and how barriers to access and participation can be reduced for community members who have been historically underrepresented. This inquiry is grounded in the intellectual traditions of environmental psychology (i.e., Barker, 1968; Dewey, 1896; Gibson, 1979; Reed, 1996), cultural psychology (i.e., Adams, 2012; Hammack, 2008; Shweder, 1990; Volosinov, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978), and community and liberation psychology (i.e., Freire, 2005; Martín-Baró, 1994; Rappaport, 1995), emphasizing a critical, social constructionist, agentic, and transactional approach to understanding the self in society. As such, the organism-environment system is taken as an indivisible unit of analysis (Dewey, 1896; Heft, 2001) and attention is devoted to lived experience in context (Reed, 1996).

This chapter provides an overview of the dominant social construction of the public and its consequences for participation, focusing on the context of the U.S. I argue that an individualistic level of analysis, dismissal of lived experience, and essentialist divisions between elites and the "masses" have historically served to

restrict participation for the majority of the population, and especially members of low-status social groups. I then discuss the ways in which the limitations on meaningful participation for everyday people, from the founding of the U.S. to the current neoliberal era, have contributed to rising inequality and fragmentation. Finally, I review empirical literature exploring the harmful consequences that inequality entails for individual and societal well-being, arguing that inequality undermines opportunity by limiting access to resources and constraining upward mobility, undermines community by dissolving trust and cohesion, and undermines democracy by reducing the political power of the non-wealthy relative to the wealthy.

Socially Constructing the Public: Implications for Participation and Equity

The fear of granting too much freedom to the public stretches back to antiquity. Plato, a critic of democracy, conceptualized aristocracy as the ideal form of government in which decision making is entrusted to philosopher-kings, who possess superior intellect and reason, on behalf of the "masses," who are prone to unruly impulses and base desires. Many founders of the U.S. government held similar views of the public, as expressed by Alexander Hamilton:

> All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well born, the other the mass of the people. The voice of the people has been said to be the voice of God; and, however generally this maxim has been quoted and believed, it is not true in fact. The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give, therefore, to the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. (Yates, 1836, p. 421-422)

This conception of the public as inferior to enlightened elites was used to legitimate restricted boundaries of participation for everyday people. Edward Bernays, Sigmund Freud's nephew and founder of public relations, claimed,

> The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country… They govern us by their qualities of natural leadership, their ability to supply needed ideas and by their key position in the social structure. …We are dominated by the relatively small number of persons—a trifling fraction of our hundred and twenty million—who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind… (1928, p. 9)

Heavily informed by his uncle's psychodynamic theory, Bernays believed the minds of "common people" were governed by an instinctual, pleasure-driven, and often aggressive id. "Ours must be a leadership democracy administered by the intelligent minority who know how to regiment and guide the masses," he concluded (Bernays, 1928, p. 9).

The view of the "masses" as less evolved and less competent than elites is rooted in philosophical assumptions of individualism, mind-body dualism, and essentialism. Skepticism regarding the truthworthiness of lived experience and collective deliberation can be traced back to Enlightenment values, and especially Descartes, who doubted that "True" knowledge could be found anywhere except in one's individual capacity to reason. This logic privileges the isolated individual as the fundamental level of analysis, reflecting the atomistic assumption that grasping reality requires breaking phenomena into their individual component parts and peeling away layers of context, which were seen as epiphenomenal and illusory

(Reed, 1996). It also reflects a Cartesian dualism between the mental and material world, privileging abstract intellect over embodied experience (Reed, 1996). Finally, the view of the "masses" as inferior to elites is grounded in essentialism, linking participatory capability to a natural hierarchy of character, based on the purported essence of different groups of people (Adams & Markus, 2004). This essentialism is evident in the word "masses," which communicates an inchoate, homogenous heap. The essence of elites, on the other hand, is perceived to be "of superior character and energy", "more noble, more efficient, made out of better stuff…" (Mills, 1956/2000, p. 13).

This distinction is not a neutral reflection of reality, but rather a reflection of dominant ideology that serves the interests of those in positions of power—disproportionately occupied by white, wealthy men (Gone, 2011; Mills, 1956/2000). In *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, historian Charles Beard (1962; supported by more recently by McGuire, 2003) argued that the framing of the U.S. Constitution was motivated less by beneficent ideals than the self-motivated economic interests of the document writers, creating a version of democracy that limited the participation of the public to prevent the redistribution of wealth. This economic interest was stated explicitly by James Madison (Yates, 1836, p. 450):

> If elections were open to all classes of people, the property of the landed proprietors would be insecure… If these observations be just, our government ought to secure the permanent interests of the country against innovation. Landholders ought to have a share in the government, to support these invaluable interests, and to balance and check the other. They ought to be so constituted as to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority.

Hence, the rest of the public— composed of people of color, women, and the poor and working classes— were not counted as legitimate civic participants at the nation's founding, but were rather constructed as passive objects for the benefit of the "opulent."

Although the right to vote is no longer directly tied to class, race, or gender, the social construction of historically disenfranchised groups as inferior persists in negative beliefs (stereotypes), attitudes (prejudice), and behaviors (discrimination; Lott, 2012). Research shows that low-income groups and people of color are consistently perceived as more animal-like (Goff, Eberhardt, Williams & Jackson, 2008; Loughnan, Haslam, Sutton, & Spencer, 2014) and stereotyped as low in competence, warmth, and morality, and more likely to be treated with disgust and contempt (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). The construal of individuals who belong to low-status social groups as essentially distinct from elites affects access to resources in the educational realm, where low-income students are often perceived as less capable (Baron, Albright, & Malloy, 1995; Russel & Fiske, 2008), on the job market, where employers have been found to exclude applicants of color and those with less elite backgrounds from interviews and jobs (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Rivera, 2015), and in the housing market, where discrimination against Section-8 voucher holders (NHLP, 2017) and people of color is a common occurrence (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2012).

Social institutions play a key role in the reproduction of inequality and maintenance of the status quo. For example, the Federal Housing Administration

allowed banks to refuse loans and mortgages in Black neighborhoods from 1934 to 1968 in a practice called redlining, denying African Americans the ability to build equity (Rothstein, 2017). Zoning laws have prevented the construction of affordable, multi-family rentals in well-resourced areas and more often locate subsidized housing in primarily low-income neighborhoods (Rothwell & Massey, 2010). Anti-homeless ordinances, which are prevalent in cities across the U.S. and prohibit sleeping, sitting, standing, congregating, and panhandling in certain public places, are yet another way in which exclusion is institutionalized (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2014). These examples illuminate how differential access to resources, such as home equity, banking, and public places, is mediated through social institutions. C. Wright Mills wrote,

> The elite are not simply those who have the most, for they could not "have the most" were it not for their positions in the great institutions. For such institutions are the necessary bases of power, of wealth, and of prestige, and at the same time, the chief means of exercising power, of acquiring and retaining wealth, and of cashing in the higher claims for prestige… No one… can be truly powerful unless he has access to the command of major institutions, for it is over these institutional means of power that the truly powerful are, in the first instance, powerful… Only within and through them can power be more or less continuous and important. (1956/2000, p. 9)

In sum, the social construction of the public has profound implications for the distribution of power and wealth. Inequitable policies and practices by institutions of power, including government agencies, financial institutions, schools, and housing authorities, create a two-tiered society that reinforces distance between elites and non-elites.

Privatization and the Eclipse of the Public realm: Implications for Settings and Selves

Although elite private interests have overshadowed the common good since the nation's founding, the transfer of resources from the public to the private sector, or privatization, has become even more acute in recent decades (Dreier, Swanstrom, & Mollenkopf, 2002; Mele, 2011). Processes of privatization accelerated with the rise of neoliberal political economic ideas and practices in the 1970s, which touted free market competition and deregulation as the key to progress (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). The architect of neoliberalism, Friedrich Hayek, was influenced by Lippman's ideas and deeply affected by the events of World War II. In observing the spread of fascism and communism, Hayek perceived collectivism, a strong central government, and redistributive policies as endemic to totalitarianism, and argued that a strong private sphere was necessary to protect individual liberties (Hayek, 1994). Critics speculated that a system governed by the market merely substituted totalitarian rule by the state with totalitarian rule by the wealthy (Polanyi, 2001; Sachs, 2006). Nevertheless, neoliberalism became commonplace in the U.S. and across much of the globe as it garnered funding from elites who were eager to curb government regulations, was disseminated in academic writings, and was institutionalized in the policies of Reagan and Thatcher (Chomsky, 1999; Harvey, 2005, 2007).

Processes of privatization in the era of neoliberalism have contributed to the disintegration of the public realm (Clarke, 2004), or what historian Tony Judt has

called “collective impoverishment” (2010, p. 12). Tax cuts and subsidies for wealthy individuals and corporations coupled with disinvestment in public infrastructure and the dismantling of social welfare reflected and maintained the dominant belief that redistribution interfered with the free market and was antithetical to growth. The prioritization of growth above all else, including the common good, has greatly reduced the quantity and quality of public services and institutions. The rolling back of public programs continues today with cuts to food assistance, income assistance, housing assistance, college assistance, social security disability insurance and supplemental security income, and Medicaid, in addition to work requirements, and “public charge” regulations (which prevent undocumented immigrants from accessing public assistance) issued by the Trump administration (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2018; Horsley, 2017; The White House, 2018). These cuts raise barriers to meeting basic needs and exacerbate social and economic divides.

What kind of settings are produced by processes of privatization? Research shows that disinvestment in public infrastructure disproportionately affects neighborhoods where people of color and low-income people live, paving the way for profitable re-investment and, subsequently, gentrification, displacing marginalized residents and creating more segregated, homogenous settings (Dreier et al., 2002; Shaw, 2008; Smith, 1996). Other scholars have connected privatization to the construction of “defensible” architecture and “filtered” spaces, which may employ gates, security guards, surveillance cameras, or spikes to limit access for members of the public who are deemed unwanted or unsafe (Low, 2001, 2006; Mitchell, 1995;

Smith, 1996). As one example, some U.S. cities have installed "mosquito boxes," which emit a high-pitched sound intended to cause headaches, under bridges to deter unhoused individuals from lingering (KSBW, 2014). In addition, the decrease in government support for public spaces necessitates a greater reliance on private funds, producing settings that are more consumer-oriented, catering to wealthier patrons and prioritizing profitability over civic participation (Zukin, 1998). Overall, these findings illustrate how neoliberal ideology produces and is a product of segregated, market-centered settings.

What does this mean for the selves who occupy these increasingly private settings? As captured by the concept of mutual constitution in cultural psychology (Shweder, 1990) and transactionalism in ecological psychology (Altman & Rogoff, 1987), culture, settings, and selves are understood to make each other up. Individuals are not isolated minds but embodied actors embedded within a cultural and ecological system (Dewey, 1896; Heft, 2001). Critical cultural psychologist Glenn Adams writes,

> Cultural worlds do not exist apart from human action; instead, people continually reproduce environmental extensions of the person into which they inscribe, objectify, and realize (literally, make real) their beliefs and desires. (2012, p. 183)

Engagement in neoliberal settings tends to construct the self as an isolated individual, as a competitor, and as a passive consumer. These selves are driven by self-promotion and enhancement, seeking freedom from social and material constraints (Adams, 2012). The reduction of society to self-bounded, self-interested individuals was expressed by former U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher when

she famously claimed, “There's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first” (1987, pp. 29-30).

Research suggests that selves in these societies experience increasing levels of loneliness and social alienation (Cigna, 2018), believed to pose a greater threat to public health than obesity and tobacco (Cacioppo, Capitanio, & Cacioppo, 2014; Murthy, 2017). Market-oriented settings construct selves whose participation is limited to passive consumption (Katz, 2006; Kohn, 2008), and isolation has been found to inhibit collective action (Nafstad, Blakar, Carlquist, Phelps, & Rand-Hendriksen, 2009). Noam Chomsky (in Lydon, 2017) explains of neoliberalism:

> …Its crucial principle is undermining mechanisms of social solidarity and mutual support and popular engagement in determining policy. It’s not called that. What it’s called is “freedom,” but “freedom” means a subordination to the decisions of concentrated, unaccountable, private power… The institutions of governance—or other kinds of association that could allow people to participate in decision making—those are systematically weakened.

Taken together, research from across the social sciences suggests that privatized settings, and the neoliberal cultural values they inscribe, co-constitute isolated and passive selves, leading to the erosion of power for everyday people.

Consequences of Privatization: Inequality, Fragmentation, and Disengagement

A Society Divided

> A rich country with millions of poor people. A country that prides itself on being the land of opportunity, but in which a child’s prospects are more dependent on the income and education of his or her parents than in other advanced countries. A country that believes in fair play, but in which the richest often pay a smaller percentage of their income in taxes than those less

> well off. A country in which children every day pledge allegiance to the flag, asserting that there is "justice for all," but in which, increasingly there is only justice for those who can afford it. These are the contradictions that the United States is gradually and painfully struggling to come to terms with as it begins to comprehend the enormity of the inequalities that mark its society— inequities that are greater than in any other advanced country. (Stiglitz, 2015, p. 105)

The decades following the introduction of neoliberal economic political practices have witnessed a rapid growth in inequality (Harvey, 2005). Wealth and income are distributed highly unevenly across the U.S. population, with the wealthiest 10% earning half of the nation's income, owning 78% of its wealth, and controlling 84%-94% of business equity, stocks, mutual funds, and trusts (Stiglitz, 2015; Stone et al., 2018; Wolff, 2017). The top 1% alone earned 24% of the nation's total income and owned 40% of its wealth (Stone et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the wealth owned by the bottom 20% has a negative net worth, with their debt outweighing their combined assets (Wolff, 2017). With the concentration of wealth at its highest point in decades, the U.S. ranks as one of the most unequal countries amongst industrialized nations (Piketty & Saez, 2014; Wolff, 2017).

The gap between the rich and poor— having reached record levels— is growing wider (Fry & Kochhar, 2014). In the past three decades, the economy has grown, but only the wealthiest have seen their incomes increase while growth for middle and low-income families has stagnated (Bialik, 2017; Pew, 2015b; Stone et al., 2018). The ratio of wealth for the 90^{th} percentile to that of the 50^{th} percentile tripled between 1962 to 2013 (Wolff, 2017). During the same period, the ratio of wealth for the 50^{th} percentile to that of the 25^{th} percentile grew tenfold due to the drop

in the bottom quartile's net worth (Wolff, 2017). The racial wealth gap also tripled in the last three decades (Shapiro, 2017). Today, African Americans own less than eight cents and Latinos own less than ten cents for every dollar owned by whites (Shapiro, 2017). This research demonstrates the divergence in wealth and income between the affluent (and especially affluent whites) and the rest in recent decades.

Wealth concentration in the U.S. is more severe than what most members of the population estimate it to be or believe is ideal. In a survey conducted with a large, nationally representative sample of Americans, participants were asked to estimate the distribution of wealth owned by each of the five quintiles and to construct their preferred distribution of wealth (Norton & Ariely, 2011). Across all demographic groups, the vast majority significantly underestimated the level of inequality in the U.S. and constructed ideal wealth distributions far more equitably distributed across the five quintiles than what currently exists (Norton & Ariely, 2011). These findings reflect very low levels of equality and upward mobility for a country that claims to hold these values in high regard (Pew, 2015a).

Harms of Inequality for Individual and Societal Wellbeing

Having reviewed research documenting the widening gap between elites and the rest of the public, I now explore how inequality undermines three foundational U.S. principles: opportunity, community, and democracy. Although these ideals have always been far from being fully realized throughout America's history, social science research sheds light on the processes that bring us closer or further to these shared goals.

Inequality as a threat to opportunity. High levels of inequality, coupled with economic and racial segregation, reduce low-income individuals' control over and access to enriching resources and environments that support opportunities to be healthy, happy, and able to achieve one's definition of prosperity and success. First, income inequality is a proven cause of health problems (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015). It is well-documented that low-income individuals suffer disproportionately from poor health and live shorter lives on average than the rich (Chetty et al., 2016). Research analyzing tax records and mortality data collected from Social Security Administration death records discovered that the top 1% of income earners live longer by 15 years for men and 10 years for women on average than the bottom 1% (Chetty et al., 2016). Moreover, this life expectancy gap is rising. In just a little over a decade, between 2001 and 2014, the wealthiest 5% of the population gained an extra three years in life expectancy, while the bottom 5% gained none (Chetty et al., 2016).

An abundance of research also highlights the negative impact that inequality has for psychological wellbeing (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2011). Research shows that low-income individuals report higher levels of stress, pain, worry, sadness, anger, and chronic suffering than wealthy individuals (Graham, 2015). In addition to these findings, an analysis of responses from the General Social Survey between 1974 and 2012 revealed a "gross happiness gap," showing that middle and low-income individuals are sadder now than they were in the 1970s whereas the happiness levels of affluent and upper-middle-income individuals have stayed constant (Hout, 2016). The author remarks,

> These economic realities have affected how Americans perceive the rewards in their lives… Money does not literally buy happiness, but the status and security associated with higher income correlated more strongly with happiness in recent years than it did 40 years ago. (Hout, 2016, p. 219)

These studies suggest that income is increasingly linked to well-being.

The widening of economic and racial divides also undermines academic achievement for low-income youth and youth of color (Reardon, 2012). The education achievement gap has grown by 40-50% between the 10^{th} and 90^{th} income percentiles over the past 25 years, and the racial achievement gap, although narrowing, remains high (Reardon, 2012). Research suggests that educational outcomes are increasingly tied to a family's access to private wealth (Reardon, 2012, p. 22). Whereas middle and low-income families more often must rely on increasingly defunded public resources for their educational enrichment, high-income families can use private resources to access educational products and services such as computers, books, summer camps, private schools, lessons, and travel. In fact, in the midst of cuts to public spending, the gap between what high and low-income families paid for educational goods and services tripled between the mid-1970s and mid-2000s, such that in the mid-2000s, bottom quintile families spent $1,315 per child on educational enrichment expenditures on average over the course of a year, compared to almost $9,000 per child spent by top quintile families (Duncan & Murnane, 2011; Kaushal, Magnuson, & Waldfogel, 2011). As education is thought to be the great equalizer and path to upward mobility, these gaps warrant attention.

It is important to note that inequality harms not only the marginalized but the entire population. In a powerful study conducted by Wilkinson and Pickett (2011),

internationally comparable data was collected from dozens of rich countries to create an index of health and social problems, finding that across the population, high rates of inequality are strongly correlated with infant mortality, obesity, teen births, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, life expectancy, children's educational performance, imprisonment rates, and social mobility. As inequality reinforces the spatial divides that separate people of different races and incomes, everyone pays the price. Taken together, these findings demonstrate the detrimental effects that racial and economic exclusion have for life chances as well as psychological and physical health.

Inequality as a threat to community. Increases in economic and spatial divides limit social interaction between diverse groups, undermining community by eroding social trust and cohesion (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2011). Thus, not only does inequality make our society sicker, sadder, and less free to achieve our goals, it also makes us lonelier and more hostile toward those we perceive as different from us.

Robert Putnam's seminal work on social capital, defined as the formal and informal social networks, norms, and relationships that link people together and facilitate cooperation, reciprocity, and trust within and between groups, suggests a decline in social interaction and overall community participation (Putnam, 2000, 2001). Compared to past decades, Americans now engage in more private leisure activities and fewer collective activities (Putnam, 2000). Moreover, Americans are less trusting of their neighbors than in the past. According to analyses of data from a large nationally representative U.S. sample collected from the General Social Survey, the share of respondents who reported that most people can be trusted dropped from

almost half (46%) in 1972 to just a third (33%) in 2012 (Twenge, Campbell, & Carter, 2014). Higher rates of inequality are also known to be associated with an increase in violence and homicides— which are particularly high in the U.S. compared to other industrialized democratic nations (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2011). Such a decline in social cohesion has a corrosive effect on community and is associated with higher levels of intergroup conflict and poorer economic, health, and well-being outcomes for all (Benner & Pastor, 2015; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

American society has also lost common ground in the realm of political ideology. A national telephone survey of over 10,000 adults conducted by the Pew Research Center (2014) found that political and ideological polarization and partisan antipathy are higher now than at any point in the last two decades. The vast majority of both Democrats and Republicans hold unfavorable views of the opposing party (79% and 82%, respectively), with many even holding deeply unfavorable views (38% and 43%, respectively), percentages that have risen in recent decades (Pew Research Center, 2014). Almost a third of adults (36% of Republicans and 27% of Democrats) view the other party as a threat to the nation's wellbeing (Pew Research Center, 2014). Research shows that members of the public are more likely to isolate themselves in ideological "echo chambers" where they avoid interaction with people who do not share their views (Benner & Pastor, 2015; Pew Research Center, 2014).

Research also points to a waning in trust in the U.S. government. According to a report by the Pew Research Center, very few members of the public feel that they could trust the federal government always or most of the time (18%) in 2017,

compared to about three-quarters (77%) in 1964 (2017a). Another report found that less than half of respondents reported trusting Congress (37%) or federal government agencies (44%; Pew Research Center, 2011). Research also shows that a large majority of adults believe that most elected officials are dishonest (71%) and put their own interests ahead of the country's (74%; Pew research center, 2015a). Trust in other central U.S. institutions, such as banks (Sorkin & Thee-Brenan, 2014) and the media (Pew Research Center, 2011), is also low.

A strong civic fabric is grounded in a sense of shared values and shared fate. Yet evidence suggests that neoliberal values of individualism and competition can detract from community and collective civic principles (Mitchell, 1998). It has been argued that affluent settings foster individualism through "freedom from constraint and abstraction from context" (Estrada-Villalta & Adams, 2018), and that this worldview privileges and is privileged by individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Stephens, Fryberg, & Markus, 2011; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). Those in power often view competition and individual achievement as the keys to economic advancement. However, this ethos both neglects the role that labor and resources from marginalized communities have played in the wealthy's ability to accumulate capital, and may undermine interdependence and cohesion, further harming marginalized communities and worsening inequality (Estrada-Villalta & Adams, 2018).

Research suggests that unrestrained self-interest on the part of a wealthy few can have an adverse effect on the good of the many. Tax avoidance, for example,

practiced by wealthy individuals increases the tax burden on the rest by an estimated 8% (Davidson & Davidson, 2015). Numerous studies find that higher income individuals display lower recognition of suffering and feelings of empathy for others (Kraus, Côté, & Keltner, 2010; Stellar, Manzo, Kraus, & Keltner, 2011), and are less likely to engage in prosocial or charitable behavior toward others than their lower-income peers (Piff et al., 2010). As the wealthy self-segregate, they become detached from the problems of the rest of society (that their practices largely helped to create) and the existence of inequality itself become less visible.

For the non-wealthy, a growing sense of scarcity and malaise diminishes motivation to participate in a society that has largely exploited and abandoned them (Stiglitz, 2015; Uslaner, 2004). Highlighting this point, belief in the American Dream is at 64%: its lowest point in two decades (NYT, 2014). In addition, inequality stokes intergroup conflict along class lines. According to a Pew Research Center survey of American adults, a full two-thirds of the public believe there are "very strong" or "strong" conflicts between the rich and poor (Morin, 2012).

Trust is necessary for our social and civic sphere to flourish. Trust is correlated with decreased crime, increased civic participation, work productivity, and increased health and happiness (Carl & Billari, 2014; Stiglitz, 2015). Yet it appears that the ties that bind our community together have deteriorated to the point of compromising our ability to function effectively. As Stiglitz (2015, p. 223) observes,

> It is trust, more than money, that makes the world go 'round… Unfortunately, however, trust is becoming yet another casualty of our country's staggering inequality: As the gap between Americans widens, the bonds that hold society together weaken.

Inequality as a threat to democracy. Not only does inequality undermine opportunity and fracture community, it widens the gap between everyday people and the political systems and policies that shape their lives. Wealth and political power are tightly interlinked: wealth can be used to wield power in politics through lobbying and campaign financing, and power can be used to concentrate wealth (Domhoff, 2017). As wealth becomes more concentrated, so does power.

The erosion of faith in U.S. government and political systems contributes to political disengagement by everyday members of society. An analysis of cross-national surveys conducted across wealthy, industrialized, democratic nations found that greater economic inequality is associated with lower interest in the issues being discussed by politicians, lower frequency of political discussion, and decreased voting by the non-wealthy (Solt, 2008). The author concluded,

> Greater economic inequality increasingly stacks the deck of democracy in favor of the richest citizens, and as a result, most everyone else is more likely to conclude that politics is simply not a game worth playing. (Solt, 2008, p. 58)

Indeed, the U.S. has one of the lowest voter turnouts in all democratic countries (Desilver, 2015; Mahler, Jesuit, & Paradowski, 2014). Moreover, participation in elections is strongly related to income and education level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012; Leighley & Nagler, 2007). Low-income constituents are also less likely than high-income constituents to donate to political campaigns, volunteer for campaigns, or send letters or emails to elected officials (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2012). Research finds that organized interest groups and lobbyists are less likely to mobilize on the behalf of low-income voters' interests (Schlozman, Verba, &

Brady, 2012). Consequently, the wealthy exert a disproportionate influence on politics, who use that influence to oppose redistribution and further concentrate wealth (Gilens, 2012; Mahler, Jesuit, & Paradowski, 2014).

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center (2018) found that 40% of respondents believe that democracy is not working too well or not at all well. A majority of respondents feel that the country is not fulfilling its promise as a place where the "rights and freedoms of all people are respected" (52%), "campaign contributions do not lead to greater political influence" (72%), and the "government is open and transparent" (69%). Over three-quarters (76%) of respondents believe that the government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves and only 21% believe it is run for the "benefit of all the people" (Pew Research Center, 2018). Less-educated respondents are less likely to believe that voting is a way to have a say in how the government runs things (Pew Research Center, 2018). A majority (61%) feel that significant changes are needed in the fundamental design and structure of the government. This percentage is highest amongst respondents who identify as Black (70%) and Hispanic (76%; Pew Research Center, 2018). The government has also received low ratings for helping people get out of poverty, ensuring access to healthcare, and ensuring access to a quality education (Pew Research Center, 2017b).

How accurate is the belief that democracy in the U.S. isn't working well? In *Affluence and Influence*, Martin Gilens' (2014) analyzes the relationship between the policy preferences of different income groups and the policy changes that are actually adopted. His findings show that when low and middle-income groups' preferences

diverge from high-income groups, policy only responds to the preferences of the high-income group— yet another trend that has amplified in recent decades (Gilens, 2014). These findings add to a growing body of literature showing that U.S. federal policies tend to mirror the interests of the top quintile of Americans more closely than low and middle-income citizens (Bartels, 2008; Page, Bartels, & Seawright, 2013). Part of the issue may be the difference between policymakers and the majority of Americans: almost half (44%) of Congress is composed of millionaires (Gilens, 2014).

This bias toward the interests of the top poses a serious problem for representational equality and results in anti-redistributive policies. Although the extremely wealthy are shown to be more liberal than low and middle-income constituents on social issues such as abortion and gay marriage, they are far more conservative on economic policies and issues of social welfare (Gilens, 2014; Page Bartels & Seawright, 2013). For the most part, everyday Americans favor a stronger public sphere in which the government plays a role in ensuring access to a living wage, quality education, health care, social security, and public infrastructure (e.g., roads) for everyone. Elites, on the other hand, advocate for a stronger private sphere with a deregulated market, lower corporate taxes, privately run health care and social security, and school vouchers (Gilens, 2014). And because the voices of elite individuals and corporations, aided by large donations and policies like Citizens United, speak the loudest and have the least need for shared resources, the public realm is steadily declining (Reich, 2015).

Recent literature suggests that democracy in the United States and European nations is in trouble. Foa and Mounk (2017) theorize about the "signs of deconsolidation," warning that democracy can unravel without sufficient support. According to their analysis of data from the World Values Survey between 1995 and 2014, there has been an increase in the proportion of the American public (along with residents of other longstanding democratic nations) who feel that the democratic political system is a bad or very bad way to run the country. Between 1995 to 2011, the percentage of those who believe it is better to have a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections rose from 24% to 32%, and the fraction of those who believe it would be a good or very good idea to have military rule rose from 6% to 17% (Foa & Mounk, 2016). This rise in antidemocratic viewpoints has been most marked amongst the wealthy (Foa & Mounk, 2016). Although some scholars in political science and economics note that longstanding democracies tend to be fairly stable and that high inequality doesn't necessarily predict the complete collapse of a democracy, inequality is widely agreed to be profoundly detrimental to democracy and the fulfillment of civil rights, and worthy of greater attention (Bermeo, 2009; Kapstein & Converse, 2008). A century ago, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis noted, "We must make our choice. We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both" (Lonergan, 1941, p. 4).

Conclusion

To conclude, the privileging of private elite interests over investment in public places and resources has contributed to increasingly unequal, segregated, consumer-oriented settings, inhabited by increasingly alienated, passive, and discontented selves. Research is needed to better understand and address the growing divides that erode opportunity, community, and democratic participation, especially for those who are low-income and of color who have shouldered a disproportionate share of the burden. To explore the psychosocial processes that contribute to reproducing and resisting inequality and exclusion, it is necessary to consider the ways in which historical, economic, political, social, and environmental context shape access to vital resources. The goal of this dissertation is to examine how participation in public spaces and institutions that have historically been created by and for elites can be accessed and transformed by the broader public so as to better promote equity and democratic engagement.

In Chapter 2, I investigate how participation in public spaces and institutions—museums, in particular—can facilitate connectedness between people and the place they live, the community they belong to, and opportunities to engender social change. The term "placemaking" has emerged in recent decades to describe bottom-up, place-based, collaborative processes by which communities access and transform the settings where they live and work. Examples of placemaking initiatives include converting abandoned lots into community gardens, installing public seating in underutilized urban areas, and painting murals to honor the histories and

contributions of local marginalized communities. I describe a study that explores the psychological processes facilitated by "placemaking" by analyzing questionnaires administered to visitors of a museum committed to inclusion and participation. This study contributes to the understudied topic of placemaking by providing empirical evidence for the pathways and outcomes involved.

In Chapter 3, I describe my second study, which focuses on the barriers that limit access and participation in museums for historically marginalized community members and how they can be reduced. Focus groups were conducted with low-income residents and residents of color not currently engaged in the museum to explore perceptions of museums, barriers to utilizing the museum, and suggestions for ways to enhance relevance and inclusion in the museum. This study enhances our understanding of how to increase stakeholder engagement to enhance museums' ability to fulfill their mission of serving the public good.

In Chapter 4, I conclude with a discussion of the study's implications. First, I consider how the findings about placemaking processes speak to the problems associated with privatization and inequality outlined in the present chapter. Second, I describe the study's practical implications in assessing and evaluating placemaking processes, which holds utility in enhancing accountability to the public. I then discuss the importance of amplifying the feedback of community members who have been historically underrepresented in decision-making. Finally, I conclude by considering the value of participation in public institutions and spaces for civic life.

Chapter 2

"A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives" (Berry, 2012, p. 71).

Introduction

In the face of growing income inequality, persistent race- and class-based segregation, and commodification of place (Dirlik, 1999), place-based awareness and action, or "placemaking," can provide an important pathway to community empowerment. As argued by Sutton and Kemp (2011, p. xiii), "Bringing place into consciousness and realizing that everyone has the potential to be makers of place changes not only the place but the people as well." Yet little social psychological research has been dedicated to understanding the psychosocial mechanisms involved in placemaking processes.

In this chapter, I present a study that empirically explores how participation in an open, participatory community setting— specifically, a museum— can facilitate civic engagement and pave the way for social change. Drawing from a theoretical framework for "critical placemaking" (Toolis, 2017) rooted in environmental psychology, narrative psychology, and community psychology, I begin by explaining how placemaking processes can lay the groundwork for social change by facilitating place attachment, social capital, and conscientization. I then review literature highlighting the challenges and opportunities for placemaking processes in the context of a specific institutional context: museums. Finally, I describe the methods

and findings of (a) observational fieldwork to examine how placemaking principles were constructed through content and afforded by the environmental design of an art and history museum centered on participation, and (b) questionnaires administered to 543 museum visitors to understand the psychological pathways facilitated by participation in such an institution.

Critical Placemaking as a Tool for Resisting Exclusion

Placemaking is a bottom-up and asset-based process, drawing from the skills and expertise of everyday community members to collaboratively design and create public places rather than relying exclusively on professionals (Project for Public Spaces, 2015). As such, this process illuminates the dynamic relationship between people and settings, highlighting the role of everyday citizens as active participants (Jacobs, 1961; Whyte, 1980). Placemaking connects people to each other, to the places where they live and work, and to vital knowledge and resources (Toolis, 2017). The goal of placemaking is to promote social equity and strengthen the civic fabric of communities by improving the livability, diversity, and economic vitality of towns and cities (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Webb, 2013). The underlying idea of placemaking is that increasing stakeholder participation in the process of planning and transforming community places will make those places healthier, more useful, and more equitable (National Endowment for the Arts [NEA], 2016).

Placemaking has risen in popularity in the past decade. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) launched the Our Town program, a federal policy frame and investment of over $30 million in creative placemaking, and created a

private research and funding collaborative called ArtPlace America (NEA, 2016). As urban areas across the U.S. struggled with the effects of de-industrialization, suburbanization, and depopulation, these initiatives emerged in response to the decline in jobs and investment in public infrastructure as a way to re-animate and revitalize the physical, social, and economic life of cities (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010).

Yet placemaking initiatives face two major challenges. First, as placemaking receives increased attention and funding, there is a need to evaluate the processes and outcomes of these efforts to document progress and better understand the mechanisms that facilitate desired outcomes (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Moss, 2012; Palermo & Ponzini, 2014). Second, when placemaking efforts ignore existing racial and social injustices and focus on attracting investment and enhancing a property's exchange value, they can contribute to gentrification and the involuntary displacement of marginalized residents (Bedoya, 2013; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). It is important that placemaking initiatives attend to inequities and work to promote social justice by expanding the community's capacity to act and access resources (Webb, 2013). I call this process *critical placemaking* (Toolis, 2017; see also Sutton & Kemp, 2011). In this section, I outline a theoretical foundation illuminating how critical placemaking can act as a tool to promote social change by facilitating place attachment, social capital, conscientization, and civic engagement (see Figure 1).

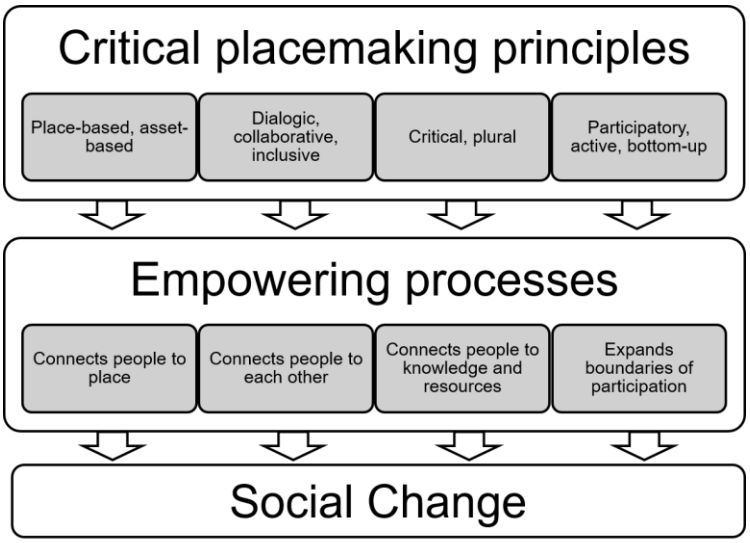

Figure 1. Conceptual model illustrating how the principles of critical placemaking facilitate empowering processes and contribute to social change.

Placemaking as a Tool for Facilitating Place Attachment

As a place-based process that emphasizes local assets and contributions, placemaking strengthens individuals' sense of affinity, pride, and identification with their environment. Environmental psychologists have long argued for a dynamic, transactional, and ecologically situated conception of human thought and behavior (Barker, 1968; Heft, 2001; Gibson, 1979; Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff; 1983). In this view, self and place are mutually constituted— that is, "questions of 'who we are' are often intimately related to questions of 'where we are'" (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 27).

To analyze the bond between people and place, Low and Altman (1992) advanced the concept of "place attachment" as a sense of "insidedness" or "rootedness." Low explains that place attachment is informed both by individual and

collective meaning, shaped by historical, cultural, economic, spiritual, narrative, and family ties (1992). Recent research has built on these ideas by exploring the ways in which individuals' relationship to place is dialogically constructed within a sociopolitical context that is inherently shaped by relationships of power (Bernardo & Palma-Oliveira, 2016; Devine-Wright & Lyons, 1997; Di Masso, Dixon, & Durrheim, 2013; Dixon & Durrheim, 2004; Kirkwood, McKinlay, & McVittie, 2013; Lewicka, 2011; Manzo, 2003).

Research suggests that place attachment functions to support a sense of security, continuity, and goal attainment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Factors that predict place attachment include residence length, home ownership, mobility, community size, household density, housing and neighborhood quality, community ties (or social capital), access to green space, access to resources and services, lack of perceived "disorder" and pollution, and sense of security and stability (Lewicka, 2011). The strength of these predictors may vary depending on a resident's demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Lewicka, 2011).

Place attachment has been empirically linked to a host of beneficial outcomes, including well-being and neighborhood satisfaction (Anton & Lawrence, 2014; Bernardo & Palma-Oliveira, 2016; Lewicka, 2011). For residents who have been historically marginalized and excluded, the process of strengthening place attachment can be an act of resistance that legitimizes their presence and contributions. For example, interviews conducted by Main and Sandoval (2014) with Central American

immigrant communities in Los Angeles about their use of a public park found that these communities felt a strong emotional connection to the park and saw it as a space that reinforced their identity and sense of belonging, both through its physical features (e.g., a recently constructed plaza and statue honoring the late Archbishop and social justice figure Oscar Romero) and through events (e.g., a Central American Independence Day celebration and parade). Attachment to the park was found to be associated with a sense of agency, spurring parkgoers to advocate and organize for the right to use the park to fulfill their purposes and activities, such as soccer and street vending, even when those activities were prohibited.

It should be noted that strong place attachment is not always associated with positive outcomes. For example, place attachment can lead residents to minimize or deny negative qualities about their environments, which can reduce residents' willingness to relocate, even when one's environment is unsafe (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Place identification and attachment can also contribute to "NIMBY" (Not In My Back Yard) attitudes and behaviors, such as resistance to change and hostility toward newcomers, when a cherished place is perceived to be under threat (Devine-Wright, 2009). These findings highlight that place attachment and identity alone are not a guarantee of beneficial outcomes, and that additional factors, such as communication and trust, are important to consider (Payton, Fulton, & Anderson, 2005).

By fostering a sense of commitment and responsibility for one's place and others who share it, placemaking can pave the way for civic engagement (Manzo &

Perkins, 2006). Civic engagement may be conceptualized as "the feelings of responsibility toward the common good, the actions aimed at solving community issues and improving the well-being of its members, and the competencies required to participate in civic life" (Lenzi et al., 2013, p. 45). Research shows that higher levels of place attachment and identification are associated with participation in community organizing (Lewicka, 2005; Perkins, Brown, & Taylor, 1996), involvement in local organizations (Anton & Lawrence, 2014), pro-environmental behavior (Vaske & Kobrin, 2001), and political engagement (Mesch & Manor, 1998). These findings lend strong support to placemaking as a pathway for social change.

Placemaking as a Tool for Building Social Capital

In addition to strengthening the relationship between self and place, placemaking also strengthens relationships between people by fostering social interaction and dialogue between diverse members of the public. In doing so, placemaking builds social capital. Social capital refers to formal and informal ties, trust, and norms in a community that facilitate cooperation and collective action (Perkins & Long, 2002; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2001). Perkins and Long (2002) identify sense of community as an important cognitive dimension of social capital. Sense of community is characterized by "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met by their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9).

By facilitating a sense of community, placemaking bridges personal narratives to collective "community narratives" (Rappaport, 2000). Community narratives are shared stories that serve to remind a community of its identity, values, beliefs, and history. "The stories a society tells about itself," write Thomas and Rappaport, "are the glue that hold its citizens together" (1996, p. 318). However, although the public is inherently plural, this plurality is often obscured or erased by monologic, mythologizing master narratives that reproduce existing power relations. Narratives that frame certain groups as outsiders, or not full members of the public, can serve as the basis for exclusion and delegitimization (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Tileagă, 2007). These narratives are more easily reinforced in private places, which are inherently more exclusive, mediated, and homogenous than public places. Public places are one of the few places where community members can encounter worldviews and perspectives that are different from their own. The act of engaging and communicating in this diverse realm allows us to come to recognize and better understand the worlds of others, and even to incorporate their words and experiences into our own stories (Bakhtin, 1992). Providing a space for community members occupying different social positions and perspectives to encounter one another affords opportunities to disrupt master narratives and expand the community narrative to include a greater plurality of voices (Sonn, Quayle, & Kasat, 2015).

Building a sense of community, and social capital more broadly, can be an important pathway to empowerment (Collins, Neal, & Neal, 2014), and is cultivated through the strengthening of bonds within groups (bonding capital) as well as the

creation of bonds between groups (bridging capital; Neal, 2015; Putnam, 2000). Strengthening connections amongst marginalized residents has been found to play a key role in building capacity and collective efficacy (Collins, Neal, & Neal, 2014; Ohmer, 2007), providing the foundation for effective civic action (Thomas & Louis, 2013; Saegert & Winkel, 1998; Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001). Strengthening ties between members of diverse groups, on the other hand, is especially important for fostering cohesion and cooperation (Briggs, 1998; Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001). For example, a study by Fisher (2015) confirmed a path model showing that social capital promoted higher quality intergroup contact conditions, which contributed to common in-group categorization, meaning that the definition of the group was expanded to be more inclusive. In turn, this process predicts more positive attitudes about racial out-groups (Fisher, 2015).

This research highlights sense of community, as a dimension of social capital, as an important pathway to promoting inclusion and fostering civic engagement. In building social connections, placemaking contributes to a stronger civic fabric and more empowered, resilient, prosperous communities (Putnam, 2000). Benner and Pastor (2015) argue that dialogue helps to establish "epistemic communities," collaborations "in which knowledge is developed, shared, and used to inform regional decision making and governance processes" (p. 130). They explain that these communities must be driven by leadership from diverse stakeholders, share a sense of common regional destiny, acknowledge plural viewpoints, and pursue action-oriented goals.

Placemaking as a Platform for Conscientization

Another pathway by which critical placemaking can contribute to social change is through the facilitation of conscientization (Freire, 2005; Martín-Baró, 1994). Conscientization is "a mobilization of consciousness aiming to produce historic knowledge about oneself and about the groups to which one belongs, thereby producing a different understanding, and giving sense to one's temporal and spatial place in the society, and in one's specific life-world" (Montero, 2009b, pp. 73-74). This process involves critical reflection on the connection between living conditions and oppressive social structures, political efficacy to feel that an individual or group has the capacity to change those structures, and critical action to engender that change (Christens, Winn, & Duke, 2015).

Because public spaces provide opportunities for exercising the rights of expression and assembly and allow community members to encounter worldviews and perspectives different from their own, critical placemaking can help reveal marginalized perspectives and shed light on what Rappaport (2000) calls "tales of terror" hidden in the dominant narrative of the community. In this way, engaging in critical placemaking could facilitate participants' ability to question and reflect on the systems that produce oppression (Martín-Baró, 1994). By providing opportunities for dialogic encounter, exposing community members to plural and contested perspectives, and providing a platform to voice local concerns and issues, critical placemaking can help to raise awareness of injustices.

In addition, the open nature of public spaces can enable them to act as informal, everyday sites of critical pedagogy by allowing for more self-directed exploration and experimentation that nurture more holistic, embodied, affective learning than what occurs in formal academic settings (Callanan, 2002; Giroux, 2003; Sandlin, Wright, Clark 2013). By drawing attention to the conditions of one's local context and illuminating its socially constructed nature, placemaking can help to deconstruct the taken-for-granted, natural, static view of the environment. In this way, placemaking works to fuel problematization— the questioning of dominant beliefs and assumptions— which is key to conscientization (Montero, 2009a). As such, engaging in critical placemaking encourages participants to see the world as constructed, unfinished, and transformable, and to imagine alternative possibilities. This critical reflection and awareness in turn fuels critical action against unjust systems (Montero, 2009a). Indeed, research suggests that critical consciousness plays a key role in facilitating civic engagement (Diemer & Li, 2011; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011).

Placemaking as a Tool for Civic Engagement and Social Change

For critical placemaking to effect social change, it must be connected to the praxis of transformative reflection and action (Freire, 2005). By transforming the relationship between people and place, connecting people with one another, and connecting people to valuable knowledge and resources, critical placemaking can contribute to the transformation of oppressive social structures by facilitating empowerment. Empowerment is defined as ‘‘a group-based, participatory,

developmental process through which marginalized or oppressed individuals and groups gain greater control over their lives and environments, acquire valued resources and basic rights, and achieve important life goals and reduced societal marginalization'' (Maton, 2008, p. 5). Settings can facilitate empowerment by building a shared belief system, engaging core activities, a supportive relational environment, an accessible and pervasive opportunity role structure, committed leadership and staff, and setting maintenance and change that focuses on learning and bridging (Maton, 2008).

The process of placemaking works to position the community as the expert and expand opportunities for residents to have a voice in creating and transforming their towns and cities (PPS, 2012). This process transforms how we conceptualize the relationship between self and place, promoting a sense of self as meaning maker, civic actor, and change agent in public settings. Although agency and opportunities for social change are inherently constrained by social structures and vary by social location, critical placemaking can work to expand boundaries of participation for residents, laying the groundwork for civic engagement and the ability to collectively demand and exercise rights (Montero, 2009a). Building more active, participatory, inclusive spaces that foster civic engagement is critical to a functioning democracy (Arendt, 1958).

Museums as Sites of Placemaking

A museum is "an institution whose core function includes the presentation of public exhibits for the public good" (Dillenburg, 2011, p. 11). This emphasis on the

public good emerged in the nineteenth century, when the concept of museums transitioned from private collections owned and accessed by the privileged to institutions of public education and, increasingly, community engagement (Rosenburg, 2011; Stephen, 2001).

What purpose do museums serve for the public? First, museums are important educational resources where the public can explore and learn about historical, artistic, cultural or scientific artifacts and information (Rosenburg, 2011; Stephen, 2001). The desire to learn new things was the most common reason reported for visiting exhibits in a survey conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA, 2015). Experimental research has shown that students randomly assigned to tour a museum improved in critical thinking, empathy, and tolerance, and that these improvements were largest for students of color, students from rural schools, and students from high poverty schools (Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014). Museums are also increasingly dedicated to recreation and entertainment, functioning as spaces of relaxation, enjoyment, and contemplation where visitors can spend leisure time (Stephen, 2001). Research suggests that museums may function as restorative environments, enhancing reflection and directed attention (Kaplan, Bardwell, Slakter, 1993). Museums also provide space for social interaction and community engagement (Crooke, 2011; Stephen, 2001). Spending time with friends and family was the most common reason for participating in arts and cultural activities, according to the NEA (2015). Finally, museums are sites of meaning making that represent shared stories about collective identity, history, and values. As such, these spaces "provide a public forum for

celebrating and criticizing the past as a way of making sense of the present, using personal stories as an entry point to official cultural narratives" (Rowe, Wertsch, & Kosyaeva, 2002, p. 103). Thus, museums play a role in constructing knowledge, social relations, identity, and cultural narratives.

Despite the valuable function performed by museums, museums face two serious challenges. First, research shows that access to this important public resource is not equitable across racial and socioeconomic groups, and that significant barriers to participation exist for many community members (Keaney, 2008; NEA, 2015). Second, according to the NEA's Survey of Public Participation, participation in traditional arts and cultural institutions, including museums, is in decline (NEA, 2015). In order to survive, museums are faced with two paths. They can become more private and market-oriented by raising fees, partnering with corporations, and catering to the wealthy. Indeed, many of the changes undergone by museums in recent decades, such as the increasing emphasis on entertainment and the inclusion of shops and restaurants, reflect attempts to increase revenue, driven by competition with private amusement/commercial spaces such as malls and theme parks (Stephen, 2001). The alternative path that museums can take is to become more public, inclusive, and democratic in order to increase their relevance for the communities they serve (Ellis, 2017; Simon, 2010, 2016). The NEA has called for the latter strategy, emphasizing enhancing relevance through meaningful audience participation, strengthening the connection between institutions and communities, and increasing artists' voices (Ellis, 2017; NEA, 2018). In the context of increasing

privatization and inequality, it is important to consider the ways in which museums can function as sites of exclusion, and how they can function as sites of social change.

Museums as Spaces of Social Change

Although museums have historically acted as sites of privilege and prejudice, they are well positioned to facilitate empowerment and act as sites of social change (Simon, 2013). In recent decades, the museum sector has shifted to an emphasis on social responsibility and increased attention to improving public access and participation for underrepresented groups (Dean, 2013; Kinsley, 2016; Simon, 2010, 2016).

One way in which museums can facilitate empowerment is through strengthening place attachment. Interventions conducted by Stefaniak, Bilewicz, and Lewicka (2017) tested the effects of teaching local history on middle and high school students' place attachment, social trust, and civic engagement. They found that increasing local historical knowledge and interest resulted in an increase in place attachment, which in turn resulted in increased intentions for civic action and social trust.

Museums may also provide opportunities for dialogue between visitors, constructing a shared sense of community identity (Kinghorn & Willis, 2008; Rosenberg, 2011). Research suggests that museum visits can facilitate bonding amongst families (Archer, Dawson, Seakins, & Wong, 2016; Wu & Wall, 2017) and offer opportunities for members of the broader public to form new connections (Simon, 2010). For example, the Lower East Side Tenement Museum hosted

dialogues about immigration that provided visitors a space to voice their opinions and hear diverse perspectives (Abram, 2007). In another example, an analysis of focus groups with older adults with early-stage Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers who participated in an art museum engagement activity revealed social connection as a major theme (Flatt et al., 2015). Museum director and author Nina Simon asserts, "Object-centered institutions are uniquely equipped to support creative and respectful community dialogue. Interpersonal interactions around content can strengthen relationships among diverse audiences" (2010).

Museums may also enhance a sense of agency for visitors. Many museums have transitioned from being spaces of quiet, passive information consumption to interactive, embodied learning (Dean, 2013). Research by Morse, Thomson, Brown, and Chatterjee (2015) with mental health and addiction recovery service users revealed that participation in museum activities was associated with a significant increase in confidence, well-being, and sociability, finding that opportunities for active interaction, such as object handling and creating their own arts and crafts, facilitated a sense of pride and achievement. In another example, a study conducted by Luke and McCreedy (2012) found that science museum engagement was linked to an increase in parents' sense of comfort and capability as facilitators of their child's learning.

Museums can function as sites of critical consciousness. By representing the history and culture of marginalized groups and facilitating historical understanding of past injustices, museums can challenge dominant narratives of exclusion. For

example, the Civil Rights Heritage Center in South Bend, Indiana, located in a building that formerly housed a segregated public pool, works to raise awareness of the experiences of marginalized peoples in the U.S. and documents the history of civil rights movements (Civil Rights Heritage Center, 2018). Special exhibits can also raise awareness of past injustices, such as the Los Angeles Japanese American National Museum's "Instructions to All Persons: Reflections on Executive Order 9066," which educated visitors about the internment of Japanese Americans and its continuing relevance (Japanese American National Museum, 2018), as well as an art exhibit displayed at Columbia College Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Photography titled "Petcoke: Tracing Dirty Energy," which highlighted environmental degradation caused by the petroleum industry (Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago, 2016). Opotow's (2015) study on the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Chile highlights how the portrayal of historical trauma and human rights violations can elicit empathy for victims and prompt visitors to consider the possible consequences of exclusion. Awakening critical consciousness about the past has relevance for how visitors think about the present by denaturalizing assumptions that are taken for granted. Opotow (2012) writes, "Museums' interpretive strategies… are interventions with the potential to change people's understanding that can widen the scope of justice" (p. 56).

Finally, museums can work to facilitate advocacy and civic action. For example, in the "Oakland, I want you to know" exhibit at the Oakland Museum of

California, visitors were invited to write letters to city council members, which were hand delivered by staff at the close of the exhibit (Abbey-Lambertz, 2016). The Jane Addams Hull House Museum offered a protest banner making workshop in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, where visitors could create their own banners or contribute to a collective banner for the Protest Banner Lending Library (University of Illinois at Chicago, 2017). The Arizona State Museum's Native Eyes program worked with Native community partners to hold a workshop and walk to promote and preserve water rights. In their evaluation, 60% of participants reported becoming more involved with their community and were more motivated to engage in social action projects (Falk & Juan, 2016). In sum, these examples illuminate how museums, as resource-rich public institutions, can be powerful sites of critical placemaking that promote inclusion and social justice by fostering dialogue, building a sense of agency and belonging, facilitating critical consciousness, and laying the groundwork for individual and collective action.

Despite the increase in attention to placemaking, more work is needed to understand the processes that connect placemaking initiatives to desired outcomes, such as civic engagement (Moss, 2012). The current study explores two research questions. First, how are conceptual placemaking principles (place-based, dialogic, critical, participatory) constructed through the setting of a cultural institution focused on community, inclusion, and participation? This question was examined through observational fieldwork documenting characteristics of the built environment, exhibit content, programs, and visitor behaviors and interactions in an art and history

museum centered on building a more connected, more engaged community. Second, what are the psychosocial processes and outcomes facilitated by participation in such a museum setting? This question was studied quantitatively and deductively through questionnaires administered with local adult museum visitors. Based on theoretical and empirical literature reviewed here, I hypothesized that visitors surveyed after participating in the museum would report higher levels of intentions for civic action than those surveyed before, and that these pathways would be mediated by increases in place attachment, sense of community, awareness of structural injustice, and civic responsibility. However, alternative pathways that were viable based on previous literature were also explored. This study empirically tested the conceptual pathways proposed in Toolis' (2017) theoretical framework illuminating critical placemaking as a tool for social change.

Method

Setting

The field site for this study was the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (MAH), located in the downtown area of the city. Santa Cruz is a mid-size city with a population of approximately 60,000 located just south of California's San Francisco Bay Area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Santa Cruz is one of the most expensive metropolitan areas to rent in the nation (NLIHC, 2014), with approximately one quarter of residents living below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The city's population is predominantly non-Hispanic white (67%) and Latinx (19%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The museum began in the 1980s when the Santa Cruz Historical Society and Art Museum of Santa Cruz County merged together in a former county jail building. The current building was constructed adjacent to this location after an earthquake destroyed much of downtown in 1989 (Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, 2017a). The museum contains three rotating art exhibits, one permanent history exhibit, and several conference and office rooms. A plaza surrounding the museum was constructed in 2017 using public and private funding, featuring food vendors, a garden, and community events. It also maintains three historic locations off-site (Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, 2017a). The museum is open six days a week. The cost of admission is $10 for adults, $8 for students, and free for children under five (Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, 2017b). This study focused on the MAH's community and cultural events that aim to connect diverse local organizations, artists and visitors around specific themes, including their First Friday program, a well-attended monthly event that is free and open to the public.

The MAH identifies as a "different kind of museum" and is making a concerted effort to stake out a claim in the community as a nontraditional, inclusive, participatory public space. Its mission is to use art and history to build a stronger, more connected community by strengthening bonds, building bridges, and facilitating empowerment (see Figure 2, Simon, 2015). This emphasis was introduced when the museum hired a new executive director, Nina Simon, in 2011. Simon is a recognized leader in this field and a published author on the need to make museums more participatory, dynamic, and relevant (2010, 2016). With this new emphasis came an

increase in attendance and revenue for the museum. However, some patrons lamented the loss of professional, traditional art presented in a quiet and "serious" setting (e.g., Dobrzynski, 2013). This study was designed in consultation with the fieldsite in order to maximize the utility of the information collected. Although the MAH has collected some data on its programs, the current study draws on theories and measures grounded in environmental, narrative, and community psychology literature to conduct a more systematic assessment aimed at deepening understanding of institutional processes, visitor experiences, and community perceptions.

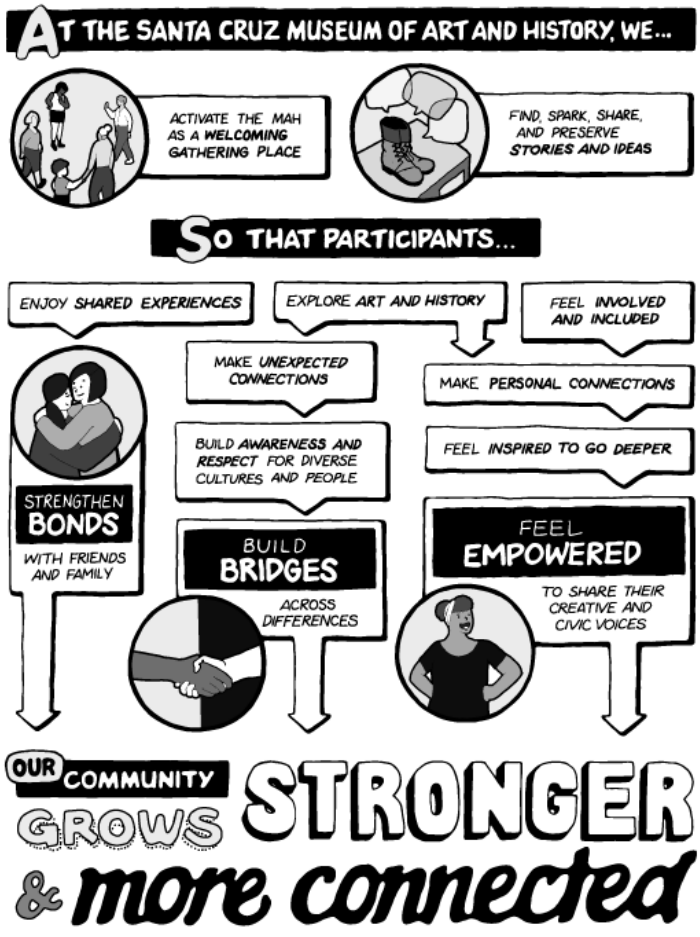

Figure 2. Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History Theory of Change (Simon, 2015).

Participants

Adult visitors of public community events at the Santa Cruz MAH were approached and invited to participate in a survey about their experiences in the museum if they were residents of Santa Cruz County. This study utilized a quasi-experimental design, where approximately half of participants were approached upon entering the MAH (the "before" condition) and approximately half were approached upon completing their visit to the MAH (the "after" condition; see Mukherjee, Salter, Molina, 2015). Although random sampling was not possible, we approached every other visitor to ensure systematic sampling. Our estimates placed the response rate between 15% to 75%, with an average of approximately 20%.

Participants included 543 visitors to the Santa Cruz MAH, 52% of whom were surveyed before they entered the museum, and 48% of whom were surveyed as they exited. Demographic information is summarized in Table 1. Racial and ethnic identities reported by visitors in this sample were fairly representative of the County's population (with no difference above 5%). However, compared to the County population, women were over-represented in this sample (66% of visitors versus 51% County-wide) as were highly educated individuals (66% of visitors reported having a Bachelor's degree or higher versus 51% county-wide).

About one-fifth (21%) of participants were visiting for the first time, and a small percentage (13%) of participants held a museum membership. Of participants in the leaving condition (n = 258), a few (6%) spent less than 15 minutes in the museum, 30% spent between 15-30 minutes, 32% spent between 31-60 minutes, 18%

spent between 61 and 90 minutes, and 14% spent over 90 minutes. Two-thirds (67%) of participants in the leaving condition reported that they spent time with family or friends, 62% viewed one or more exhibitions, 60% visited Abbott Square, 46% encountered art, history, ideas, or experiences that were new or unfamiliar to them, 40% watched a performance, 36% had a conversation with someone they didn't know before, 33% created something, and 24% had a conversation with someone of a different cultural background than themselves.

Table 1.

Demographic characteristics of questionnaire participants (*N* = 543)

Demographic variable	*n*	%
Gender		
Woman	350	66%
Man	169	32%
Non-Binary	11	2%
Different identity	4	1%
Race or ethnicity[a]		
White or European American	376	69%
Latinx or Hispanic	88	16%
Bi- or multi-racial	61	11%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	38	7%
Black or African American	16	3%
American Indian, indigenous, or Alaskan Native	14	3%
Education		
Did not complete high school	4	1%
High school diploma or GED	35	7%
Technical, trade, or vocational school after high school	8	2%
Some college but no degree	96	18%
Two-year Associate's degree	39	7%
Four-year Bachelor's degree	146	27%
Some postgraduate or professional schooling after college, but no postgraduate degree	52	10%
Postgraduate or professional degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD)	155	29%
Annual household income		
Less than $10,000	51	10%
$10,000 to $14,999	26	5%
$15,000 to $24,999	40	8%

$25,000 to $34,999	42	8%
$35,000 to $49,999	59	11%
$50,000 to $74,999	65	12%
$75,000 to $99,999	59	11%
$100,000 to $149,999	68	13%
$150,000 to $199,999	31	6%
$200,000 or more	27	5%
Prefer not to answer	61	12%
Length of residence in Santa Cruz County		
Less than a year	30	6%
1-5 years	169	32%
6-10 years	52	10%
11-15 years	41	8%
16-20 years	57	11%
21-25 years	48	9%
Over 25 years	140	26%
Homeownership status		
Owns home	183	34%
Rents home	308	58%
Other	42	8%
Political outlook		
Very conservative	10	2%
Moderately conservative	13	2%
Middle-of-the-road	51	10%
Moderately liberal	161	30%
Very liberal	223	42%
Other	45	6%
Prefer not to answer	32	8%
	M	*SD*
Age (in years)	40.6	16.4

[a]Participants could select all identities that applied.

Procedure

Fieldwork. Observational fieldwork was conducted twice monthly for an average of two hours by members of the research team to understand how theoretical placemaking qualities (place-based, dialogic, critical, and participatory) were constructed through exhibit and programming content of the museum and afforded through its built environment. This process involved recording fieldnotes after attending the museum's cultural and community events, attending staff meetings,

viewing exhibitions, and viewing printed and online promotional material distributed by the museum over a 6-month period between July and December of 2017. Digital photographs of exhibit and setting characteristics were taken and descriptions were recorded about the photographs (see Kohfeldt, 2014). Fieldnotes and photograph descriptions were analyzed via directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), using a descriptive and deductive approach in which codes were defined prior to analysis based on the conceptual model for critical placemaking (Toolis, 2017). The goal of this fieldwork was to provide descriptive evidence of how placemaking principles were manifest in the museum's social and physical environment.

Questionnaires with museum visitors. The questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix A, included measures of place attachment, sense of community, awareness of structural injustice, intentions for civic action, civic responsibility, demographics, and information about the museum visit. Participants had the option to complete the questionnaire in English or Spanish. Questionnaires were administered on-site using iPads (programmed with survey software, SurveyGizmo) by the first author and several undergraduate research assistants, one of whom is bilingual in Spanish and English, and lasted approximately 5-10 minutes. To enhance accessibility, researchers offered to administer questionnaires orally, although the vast majority of questionnaires were self-administered. Questionnaires were administered approximately 3-4 times per month at a total of 22 events over a 6-month period between July and December of 2017.

A precision analysis was conducted to determine the appropriate number of study participants needed to estimate the paths in the structural equation model. Assuming all bivariate correlations are about .3, a minimum sample size of 350 was needed to obtain a 95% confidence interval for each correlation with a width 0.2. However, we continued to collect data after reaching 350 participants because a) we expected some data would need to be discarded due to ineligibility or poor quality, b) a larger sample could allow for tests of group differences, and c) data collection was not considered to involve an undue burden for participants or expenditure of resources.

***Measures*.**

Place attachment. Place attachment measures the affective bond between a person and place (Lewicka, 2008; Vidal, Valera, & Peró, 2010). Place attachment was measured using an adapted instrument developed by Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, and Hess (2007). The scale focuses on place attachment at the city level, and is composed of 8 items, such as, "I like living in the Santa Cruz area," and "When I am away, I miss the Santa Cruz area." This scale has been used in a number of studies in different contexts, showing construct validity and excellent internal reliability (Casakin, Hernández, & Ruiz, 2015; Vidal, Valera, & Peró, 2010). The original 6-point scale was converted to a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for consistency with the rest of the questionnaire, and because survey methodologists suggest that bipolar scales are most effective on a labeled, 7-

point scale with a midpoint (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997). Internal consistency for this sample was excellent (α = .94).

Sense of community. Sense of community, conceptualized by Perkins and Long (2002) as a cognitive dimension of social capital, pertains to a perception of belonging, influence, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection, and was measured using an adapted version of the Brief Sense of Community Scale (BSCS; Peterson, Speer, & McMillan, 2008) rooted in McMillan and Chavis's sense of community model (1986). This scale includes 6 items, such as "I have a good bond with others in this community." For this study, the word "neighborhood" was replaced with "community" (e.g., "I belong in this community") to reflect the study's broader focus on the community (county) level (see also Wilson-Doenges, 2000). In addition, the two items with the lowest factor loadings were removed from the scale ("I can get what I need in this neighborhood," and "People in this neighborhood are good at influencing each other") for brevity to enhance the response rate. The original 5-point scale was converted to a 7-point scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," for consistency with the rest of the questionnaire. The original scale demonstrated construct validity and excellent internal reliability in previous studies (Peterson, Speer, & McMillan, 2008). Internal consistency for this sample was excellent (α = .94).

Awareness of structural injustice. Awareness of structural injustice, intended to ascertain critical consciousness by assessing "awareness of the influence of societal and political forces on health and well-being," was measured using the Social Issues

Awareness subscale from the Social Issues Advocacy Scale developed by Nilsson, Marszalek, Linnemeyer, Bahner, and Misialek (2011). This scale is composed of 4 items, such as "State and federal policies affect individuals' access to quality education and resources" and "Societal forces (e.g., public policies, resource allocation, human rights) affect individuals' health and well-being." The original 5-point scale was converted to a 7-point scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," for consistency with the rest of the questionnaire. The scale demonstrated discriminant validity and very good internal reliability (Nilsson, Marszalek, Linnemeyer, Bahner, & Misialek, 2011). Internal consistency for this sample was excellent ($\alpha = .94$).

Civic responsibility. Civic responsibility was measured using an adapted version of the Civic Attitudes subscale of Doolittle & Faul's (2013) Civic Engagement Scale (CES). The scale was developed in a service-learning context and includes 7 items assessing an individual's beliefs and feelings about community involvement, including items such as, "I feel responsible for my community," and "I believe that it is important to be informed of community issues." The original 5-point scale was converted to a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for consistency. Also, the item with the lowest factor loading ("I believe that it is important to financially support charitable organizations") was removed for brevity, and another ("I believe that I have a responsibility to help the poor and the hungry") was slightly reworded (to "I believe that I have a responsibility to help community members less privileged than me"). The original scale has demonstrated

content validity, factorial validity, construct validity, and excellent internal reliability (Doolittle & Faul, 2013). Internal consistency for this sample was excellent (α = .93).

Intentions for civic action. Intentions for civic action were measured using an adaptation of the Behavioral Empowerment Scale, taken from Speer and Peterson's (2000) larger Empowerment Scale. The scale includes 7 items asking how likely a respondent is to get involved or take action (e.g., "sign a petition," "attend a meeting to gather information about a neighborhood issue."). The original items on the Behavioral Empowerment Scale asked for a self-report of the frequency of community-action behaviors in the past three months. For this study, items were adapted to assess intentions for *future* civic engagement in the *next* 3 months. Also, for the ease of scoring and interpreting data, these items were modified from absolute frequency responses to a 6-point ordinal scale ranging from "not at all," "1 time," "2 times," and ending with "5+ times." This adaptation was modeled after Peterson, Speer, and McMillan (2008) and demonstrated internal reliability. The original scale has shown good content and construct validity and internal reliability (Speer & Peterson, 2000). Internal consistency for this sample was good (α = .86).

Demographic information. Participants were asked to provide sociodemographic information including age, gender, race or ethnicity, highest level of education achieved, annual household income, length of residence in Santa Cruz County, whether they own or rent their home, their general political outlook, and their zip code. For the purpose of inferential statistical analysis, gender and homeownership status were dummy coded. Race and ethnicity variables, for which

participants could select all that applied, were converted into a single dichotomous variable with a "non-Hispanic white" category and a "People of Color" category (which included all respondents who identified as Asian American or Pacific Islander, African American or Black, Latinx or Hispanic, Native American, Indigenous, or American Indian, and/or more than one race). Residence length, which was created as a 7-point ordinal scale with higher scores indicating a longer length of residence, was coded into a dichotomous variable with a category for living in Santa Cruz for 15 years or less, and over 15 years, as the data was bimodally distributed with the majority of participants clustering at "1-5 years" and "over 25 years." Political outlook, which was created as a 5-point ordinal variable ranging from very conservative to very liberal (with higher scores indicating more liberal), was recoded into a dichotomous variable with a "liberal" category (which included moderately or very liberal) and "centrist or conservative" category (which included middle-of-the-road, moderately conservative, and very conservative), to consolidate the relatively small proportion of participants who did not identify as liberal.

Museum participation. Information about participants' museum participation was assessed. Participants were asked to report if this was their first visit to the museum, if they were museum members, and how many times they had visited the museum in the past 12 months. The frequency of visiting the museum in the past, which was created as a 6-point ordinal variable, was recoded into a dichotomous variable categorizing responses into "about once a year or less" and "several times a year or more." This was done because the variable did not have the equally spaced

intervals necessary to utilize it in a structural equation model, and to consolidate the relatively small proportion of participants who visited the museum more than several times a year.

Participants in the leaving condition were asked what activities they participated in during their visit (e.g., spending time with family or friends, viewing one or more exhibits) and how long they spent in the museum during this visit. Information about the length of their visit was combined with their quasi-experimental condition ("arriving" or "leaving") to create a 5-point continuous independent variable, "Museum Participation," which ranged from "0 minutes in the museum" (the arriving condition), "between 1-30 minutes," "between 31-60 minutes," "between 61-90 minutes," to "over 91 minutes." Participants in the leaving condition were also asked to report on a scale from 1 to 5 how comfortable they felt being in the museum, how comfortable they felt asking questions about the exhibitions and activities, and how able they felt to express themselves through the activities offered. The date and program attended for each respondent was recorded.

Eligibility and data quality checks. Several questions were included to serve as eligibility and data quality checks. Participants were asked to confirm that they were over the age of 18, currently lived in Santa Cruz County, and were asked to enter their zip code. Participants were also asked if they had taken the questionnaire during a previous visit. At the end of each questionnaire, the researcher was presented with a text box to mention any possible data quality concerns (e.g., excessive rushing, apparent inebriation, passing the iPad to a friend or family member to complete).

Observational Fieldwork Findings

Fieldnotes and photograph descriptions were analyzed deductively and descriptively using directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) with the aid of qualitative data analysis program, Dedoose, version 8.0.42. Prior to coding, four key placemaking qualities were identified based on the critical placemaking framework (Toolis, 2017): (a) place-based, (b) dialogic, (c) critical, and (d) participatory. I then read the fieldnotes and photograph descriptions and applied these codes to explore ways in which the principles of critical placemaking (Toolis, 2017) were constructed in the content of the museum's exhibits and programs and afforded through the built environment. This process generated descriptive evidence of placemaking qualities in the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History.

Place-based

Analyses found that the museum's exhibits and events observed made numerous connections to place, both on a local and state level. Place-based themes were represented through events that showcased artists and performers from across the county, and through partnerships with local community organizations, such as libraries, schools, and nonprofits. Place-based themes were also represented through exhibit content that focused on local history and artifacts. An interactive installation projected on the wall of the museum lobby, for example, allowed visitors to view stories and images of the city's river (see Figure 3). In addition, the museum's permanent history gallery emphasized influential events and figures from the county's past. Visuals highlighted the region's unique attributes and assets, such as its history

of activism and leadership in the organic farming movement. Visitors were observed sharing memories and situating their individual narratives within a larger place narrative. One group, for instance, reminisced together about what the region looked like before a devastating earthquake. Another visitor recounted positive memories of living in the region in the 1960s.

Figure 3. Vital Current: Seeking the San Lorenzo by Camille Utterback. An interactive installation in the museum's lobby that allows visitors to explore images and history related to the city's river.

Dialogic

Dialogic and collaborative features were exemplified in museum programming and environmental design that afforded visitors opportunities to listen to and share stories. For example, in a sound installation featuring the stories of local Hospice clients, visitors could read and listen to others' lived experiences and had the option to record their own reflections, which then became part of the exhibit. Events, such as a dance party and a "TED-talk"-style story sharing by leaders of community

organizations on the themes of struggle and resilience, also offered visitors a chance to hear from and interact with new people. Finally, environmental design features, such as seating in galleries, hallways, and outdoors, afforded visitors the ability to linger. Some seating included pillows embroidered with questions (see Figure 4), encouraging conversation between visitors.

Figure 4. Bench in gallery with pillows featuring questions written in English and Spanish to prompt dialogue between visitors.

Critical

Museum content embodied critical and polyphonic (multi-voiced) characteristics by raising awareness of existing inequities and injustices and highlighting marginalized perspectives. For example, one event featured a local author who shared the hardships he faced as a formerly undocumented immigrant. An exhibit on foster care presented stories of local foster youth's first-hand lived experiences expressed through videos, artwork, and journals, and included an installation highlighting the barriers to education, employment, and stable housing

faced by youth transitioning out of the foster care system. In the center of the gallery, a city bench with a sleeping bag called attention to the issue of youth homelessness. Another exhibit displayed photographs and tapestries focused on the contributions and exploitation of working people, with visual representations of wage theft in the local community (see Figure 5). The history gallery documented past and ongoing injustices in the community, including events characterized by racism, erasure, discrimination, and abuse of immigrant communities and Native peoples by European American community members. Portrayals of resistance in the community's history were also prevalent, such as a local union's strike to fight for worker's rights and a local Latina woman's success in fighting against discrimination in local elections to allow for a more diverse, representative city council.

Figure 5. Infographics displaying information about wage theft in the county, created by Working for dignity: Low-wage worker study from the University of California, Santa Cruz Center of Labor Studies, as part of the exhibit on "We who work."

Participatory

An active, bottom-up, participatory environment was constructed through interactive exhibit features and a responsive environmental design. For example, an installation on the museum's stair steps produced sound as visitors walked by, creating an environment responsive to the visitors' embodied motion. Hands-on activities afforded visitors opportunities to contribute their perspectives, such as sticky notes on which visitors could post answers in response to a question (Figure 6), or cardboard circles asking visitors to write or draw their response to a question and hang it on a string as part of a collective community art piece. In this sense, museum content was co-created by visitors, rather than imposed top-down by curators and staff.

In some cases, the museum also emphasized opportunities for participation outside the museum walls through calls to action. For example, the foster care exhibit included a display of business cards with a variety of civic actions visitors could take to motivate action to improve the child welfare system (Figure 7). These features positioned participants as active agents and co-creators rather than passive consumers of content.

Figure 6. Visitors' responses to a placard asking, "How will you make history?" posted in the museum's history gallery, written on provided sticky notes.

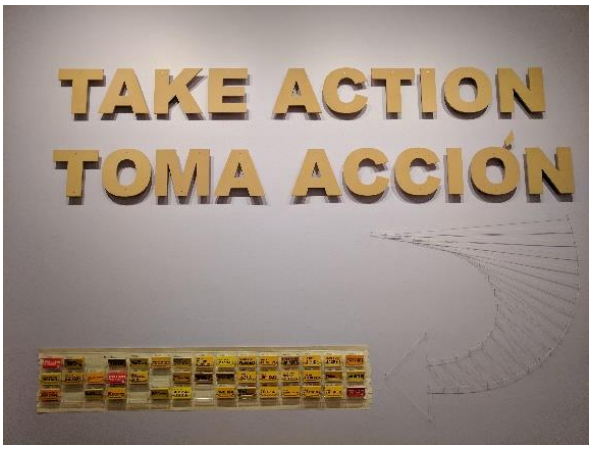

Figure 7. Display of suggested actions printed on business cards to support local foster youth, as part of the exhibit on Lost childhoods: Voices of Santa Cruz County foster youth and the foster youth museum.

Questionnaire Results

Overview

Structural equation modeling was conducted to test the hypothesized model that museum participation predicts increases in place attachment, sense of community, and awareness of structural injustice, which in turn predict increases in civic responsibility, which predicts increased intentions for civic action (see Figure 8). Exploratory analyses were also conducted to construct possible alternative models. Next, independent groups *t*-tests were conducted with participants in the leaving condition to examine if visitors who participated in specific museum activities differed from those who did not in terms of placemaking processes and outcomes. Finally, independent groups *t*-tests were conducted to examine if group differences existed in terms of comfort at the museum for participants in the leaving condition.

Data

Deletion of cases. Respondents were excluded from the analysis if they were found to be ineligible (e.g., reported an out-of-county zipcode or an age under 18), indicated that they had taken the questionnaire at a previous time, answered fewer than half of the total survey questions, or were flagged for data quality concerns such as finishing the survey in less than a minute or suspected inebriation. This resulted in the deletion of 64 cases, representing 11% of the original cases, reducing the original sample of 607 to 543.

Testing of assumptions. Prior to analyses, statistical assumptions for structural equation modeling were tested using SPSS 22.0. Place attachment, sense of

community, civic responsibility, and awareness of structural injustice were negatively skewed, and intentions for civic action was positively skewed. These variables were transformed to normality using square root transformations. There were no problems with linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of residuals, multicollinearity, and there were no multivariate outliers.

Missing data. Of the remaining participants, 73% had complete data. For items in the variable scales (place attachment, sense of community, awareness of structural injustice, civic responsibility, and intentions for civic action), missing data ranged from .4% to 6%. For demographic questions, system missing data ranged from 1% to 3%. A Little's MCAR test was non-significant (p = .969), meaning no evidence was found that data was not missing completely at random. Missing data estimations were conducted by AMOS using a full information maximum likelihood procedure.

Propensity Score Analysis

Although efforts were made to collect data as systematically as possible, because questionnaires were conducted in the field following a quasi-experimental design, it was not possible to guarantee perfect randomization. As such, participants in the "arriving" condition could differ significantly from participants in the "leaving" condition on important demographic characteristics. To statistically reduce possible confounding influences and enhance internal validity, a propensity score analysis was conducted to control for pre-group demographic differences (as recommended by Holmes, 2014). All pre-group characteristics, including age, race, gender, income level, education level, homeownership status, length of residence in the county,

political outlook, and frequency of visiting the museum were entered into a logistic regression predicting the quasi-experimental condition ("arriving" or "leaving") to compute a propensity score for each participant. Participants with missing data were assigned a propensity score of .5 (representing an equal chance of falling in the "arriving" or "leaving" condition). This propensity score variable was used as a covariate in all subsequent analyses.

Correlation Matrix with Standard Deviations

Bivariate correlations were conducted to explore relationships between study variables. Table 2 shows a correlation matrix along with variable means and standard deviations. The independent variable, museum participation, was positively correlated with place attachment, sense of community, civic responsibility, and intentions for civic action, but was not significantly correlated with awareness of structural injustice. All of the process and outcome variables, including place attachment, sense of community, awareness of structural injustice, civic responsibility, and intentions for civic action were positively correlated with one another.

Table 2.

Correlations, means, and standard deviations for variables included in the model (*N* = 543)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Museum participation[a]	.99	1.27	-					
2.Place attachment[b]	0.82 (5.93)	0.64 (1.20)	.14**	-				

3.Sense of community[b]	1.08 (5.47)	0.61 (1.31)	.15***	.68***	-			
4.Awareness of structural injustice[b]	0.58 (6.20)	0.68 (1.24)	.06	.16***	.18***	-		
5.Civic responsibility[b]	0.75 (6.09)	0.59 (1.01)	.14**	.41***	.52***	.40***	-	
6.Intentions for civic action[b]	1.17 (1.65)	0.53 (1.23)	.14**	.20***	.38***	.23***	.50***	-

[a]Museum participation is a 5-point continuous variable ranging from "0 minutes" (including all participants in the "arriving" condition), "1-30 minutes," "31-60 minutes," "61-90 minutes," to "over 91 minutes."

[b]Variables 2-6 were transformed to normality using a square root transformation. The means and standard deviations of the transformed variables are presented first, followed by the means and standard deviations of the original variables in parentheses.

*$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, $p < .001$

Testing the Placemaking Process Model

The hypothesized model predicted that museum participation would be associated with higher levels of place attachment, sense of community, and awareness of structural injustice, which would, in turn, be associated with higher levels of civic responsibility, which would be associated with increased intentions for civic action. A path diagram of the model to be estimated is presented in Figure 8. The hypothesized model was tested using structural equation modeling in SPSS Amos 25.0 (IBM, 2017). Fit indices used (as recommended by Hoyle, 2011) included the Chi-Square

test of model fit, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA). An adequate fit was determined by a Chi-Square value that is non-significant at a .05 threshold (Kline, 2005) and in which the Normed Chi-Square (χ2/df) is less than or equal to 2 (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2007), a CFI greater than .96 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and an RMSEA below .05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

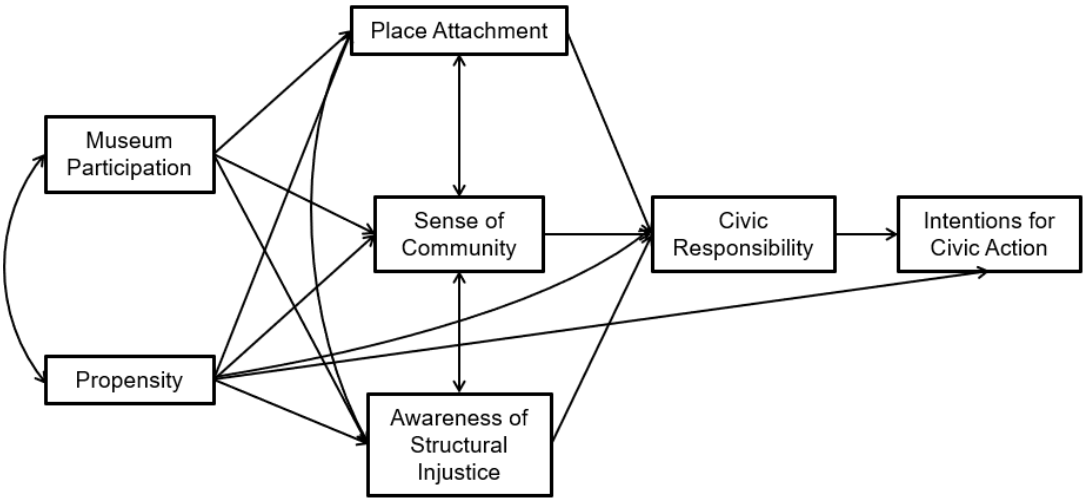

Figure 8. Hypothesized model in which museum participation is linked to intentions for civic action, mediated by place attachment, sense of community, awareness of structural injustice, and civic responsibility. Propensity was entered as a covariate. Disturbances have been omitted to improve the readability of the figure.

The model was estimated using the maximum likelihood estimation method. Propensity was entered as a covariate to control for pre-group demographic differences. According to the fit criteria, the fit of the model was not adequate, χ2 (5, N = 543) = 27.24, p < .001, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .09. Museum participation did not significantly predict awareness of structural injustice. Furthermore, place attachment

did not significantly predict civic responsibility. Although propensity did significantly covary with the independent variable, museum participation, it was not a significant predictor of the other variables in the model.

The model was modified, removing awareness of structural injustice and the nonsignificant pathways between propensity and the mediators and dependent variable. In addition, to address the high collinearity between place attachment and sense of community (indicated by the high Pearson's correlation between the two variables, shown in Table 2), two separate modified models were constructed and tested. The first modified model predicted that museum participation would be associated with higher levels of place attachment, which would in turn be associated with higher levels of civic responsibility, which would in turn be associated with higher levels of intentions for civic action. The second modified model predicted that museum participation would be associated with higher levels of sense of community, which would in turn be associated with higher levels of civic responsibility, which would in turn be associated with higher levels of intentions for civic action. Propensity was entered into both models as a control covarying with museum participation.

The first model, hypothesizing museum participation as predicting intentions for civic action mediated by place attachment and then by civic responsibility, did not show adequate fit to the data, $\chi 2$ (6, N = 543) = 13.50, p = .04, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05. After exploring the model, it was determined that place attachment only partially mediated the relationship between museum participation and civic responsibility. A

path estimating the direct relationship between museum participation and civic responsibility was added to the model. This model showed adequate fit to the data, $\chi 2$ (5, N = 543) = 8.46, p = .13, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .04. The resulting modified model and standardized regression coefficients are shown in Figure 9.

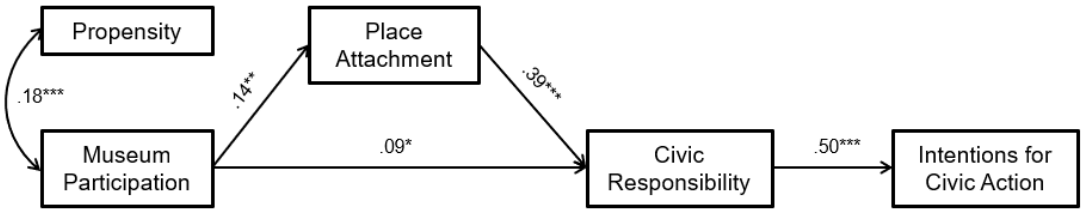

Figure 9. First modified model in which museum participation is associated with place attachment, which is associated with civic responsibility, which is associated with intentions for civic action. Propensity was entered as a covariate. Standardized beta weights for each estimated path are shown. Disturbances have been omitted to improve the readability of the figure.

In this model, increased participation in the museum is associated with higher intentions for civic action, mediated by increases in place attachment and civic responsibility. Museum participation also directly predicts increases in civic responsibility. Museum participation had indirect effects on civic responsibility (B = .055) and intentions for civic action (B = .072). Place attachment had indirect effects on intentions for civic action (B = .198).

The second model, in which museum participation predicted intentions for civic action mediated by sense of community and then civic responsibility, did not show adequate fit to the data, $\chi 2$ (6, N = 543) = 21.11, p = .002, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .07. After exploring the model, it was determined that civic responsibility only partially mediated the relationship between sense of community and intentions for civic action. A path estimating the relationship between sense of community and intentions for civic action was added to the model. The resulting model showed adequate fit to the data, $\chi 2$ (5, N = 543) = 8.99, p = .11, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .04. The modified model and standardized regression coefficients are shown in Figure 10.

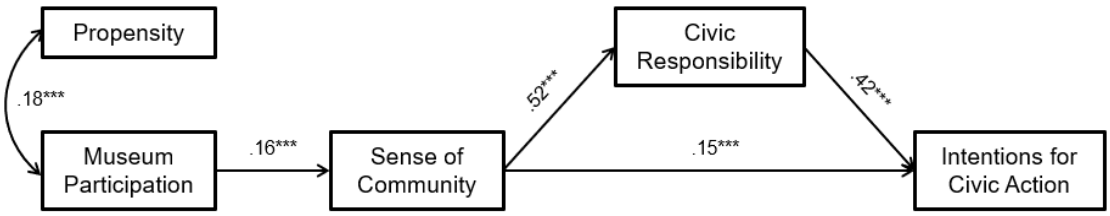

Figure 10. Second modified model in which museum participation is linked to sense of community, which is linked to civic responsibility, which is linked to intentions for civic action. Propensity was entered as a covariate. Standardized beta weights for each estimated path are shown. Disturbances have been omitted to improve the readability of the figure.

In this model, more time participating in the museum is associated with higher intentions for civic action, which is mediated by an increased sense of community and

civic responsibility. A higher sense of community also directly predicts higher intentions for civic action. Museum participation had indirect effects on civic responsibility (B = .08) and intentions for civic action (B = .06), and sense of community had indirect effects on intentions for civic action (B = .22).

It should be noted that several models exist that are theoretically plausible and mathematically equivalent to those presented above. In the case of the first modified model presented in Figure 9, a mathematically equivalent model would link museum participation to intentions for civic action, mediated by both place attachment and civic responsibility, which would be correlated with one another. In the case of the second modified model presented in Figure 10, a mathematically equivalent model would link museum participation to both civic responsibility and intentions for civic action, which would be correlated, mediated by sense of community.

To examine if any participation in the museum facilitated the hypothesized pathways regardless of the length of the visit, both modified models were re-run with the continuous independent variable replaced by a dichotomous version of the independent variable, comparing arriving participants (0) and leaving participants (1). The first model (see Figure 11), in which experience in the museum predicted place attachment and civic responsibility, which predicted intentions for civic action, still reflected adequate fit to the data ($\chi 2$ (5, N = 543) = 9.23, p = .10, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .04). However, compared to the model using the continuous measure of museum participation, the standardized beta weight of the path estimate between museum participation and place attachment was slightly weaker (B = .09, p = .03) and the

direct path predicting civic responsibility from place attachment was no longer significant (B = .06, p = .13). This finding suggests that visiting the museum is associated with increased place attachment, but the effect may increase with the length of the visit.

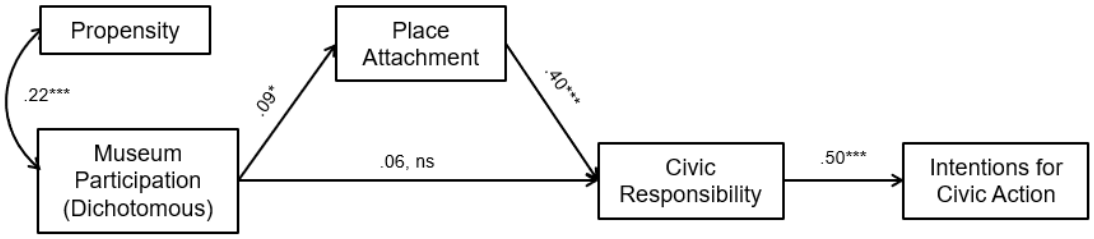

Figure 11. First modified model re-run with a dichotomous version of the independent variable, comparing the "arriving" versus the "leaving" condition. Standardized beta weights for each estimated path are shown. Disturbances have been omitted to improve the readability of the figure.

Rerunning the second model, in which museum participation predicted sense of community (see Figure 12), which predicted civic responsibility and intentions for civic action, also showed adequate fit to the data (χ2 (5, N = 543) = 7.39, p = .19, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .03) with the dichotomous measure of museum participation. The standardized beta weight of the path estimate between experiencing the museum and sense of community was roughly comparable (B = .15, p < .001) to that in the model using the continuous measure of museum participation.

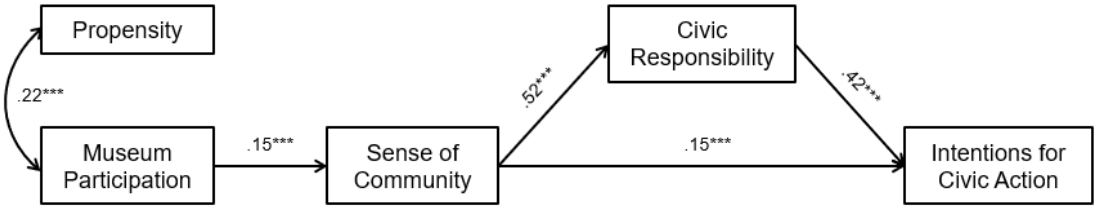

Figure 12. Second modified model re-run with a dichotomous version of the independent variable, comparing the "arriving" versus the "leaving" condition. Standardized beta weights for each estimated path are shown. Propensity was entered as a covariate. Disturbances have been omitted to improve the readability of the figure.

In sum, these findings suggest two pathways by which museum participation can facilitate civic engagement. First, museum participation is associated with an increased connection to the place where one lives, which is linked to an increased sense of responsibility, and hence an increased motivation to take action in that community. Second, museum participation is associated with an increased sense of connection to others in one's community, which also increases a sense of responsibility for that community, and, correspondingly, an increased commitment to take action in that community.

Effect of Activity on Placemaking Variables

Analyses were conducted to explore the relationship between participation in specific museum activities and placemaking processes and outcomes. Participants in the leaving condition (n = 258) were presented with a checklist to indicate which

activities they engaged in during their museum visit, including watching a performance, creating something, spending time with family or friends, having a conversation with someone they didn't know before, having a conversation with someone of a different cultural background than themselves, viewing one or more exhibitions, encountering any art, history, ideas, or experiences that were new or unfamiliar to them, and visiting Abbott Square (an outdoor public plaza and marketplace connected to the museum).

Results of independent groups *t*-tests showed several significant differences related to museum activity. Participants who watched a performance reported significantly higher levels of sense of community, $t(253) = 3.02$, $p = .003$, civic responsibility, $t(254) = 2.57$, $p = .01$, and intentions for civic action, $t(252) = -2.35$, $p = .02$, than those who did not watch a performance during their visit. Participants who had a conversation with someone they didn't know before reported higher levels of awareness of structural injustice, $t(191.77) = 2.41$, $p = .02$, and civic responsibility $t(216.29) = 2.10$, $p = .04$, than those who did not. Participants who had a conversation with someone from a different cultural background than themselves reported significantly higher levels of awareness of structural injustice, $t(243) = 2.18$, $p = .03$, civic responsibility, $t(254) = 2.27$, $p = .02$, and intentions for civic action, $t(252) = -2.29$, $p = .02$. Participants who encountered art, history, ideas, or experiences that were new or unfamiliar to them reported significantly higher levels of awareness of structural injustice, $t(242.89) = 2.01$, $p = .045$. Finally, participants who visited Abbott Square reported significantly higher levels of awareness of structural injustice

than those who didn't visit Abbott Square, $t(174.17) = 3.20$, $p = .002$. Creating something, spending time with family or friends, and viewing one or more exhibits during a visit were not significantly related to any of the placemaking process or outcome variables measured.

This analysis provides some useful insight into how different museum activities might be associated with different placemaking processes, although the directionality of the relationships cannot be inferred from these analyses.

Group Differences in Comfort

Statistical analyses were conducted to examine whether group differences existed in terms of comfort at the museum for visitors in the leaving condition ($n = 258$). Visitors were asked to what extent they felt comfortable being at the museum, comfortable asking questions about the exhibitions and activities, and able to express themselves through the activities offered.

No significant differences in comfort were found based on participants' race, gender, education level, income level, political outlook, or museum membership status. However, significant differences in comfort were found based on participants' age, residence length, frequency of visiting the museum, and first-time visitor status. Age was significantly positively correlated with comfort being in the museum, $r(253) = .23$, $p < .001$, and comfort asking questions about the exhibitions or activities, $r(241) = .23$, $p < .001$. Residence length was significantly positively correlated to the level of comfort being in the museum, $r_s(254) = .15$, $p = .02$). Frequency of visiting the museum was also significantly positively correlated with level of comfort being in

the museum, $r_s(256) = .16$, $p = .01$. In addition, first-time visitors to the museum (M = 4.38, SE = .11) reported significantly lower levels of comfort being in the museum than returning visitors (M = 4.62, SE = .05), $t(71.75) = 2.02$, $p = .047$.

Knowing that many of these characteristics are likely interrelated, a linear regression analysis was conducted predicting comfort being in the museum from age, residence length, frequency of visiting the museum, and first-time visitor status. Results showed that only age remained a significant predictor of comfort being in the museum ($B = .20$, $p = .009$), whilst residence length ($B = -.01$, $p = .87$), frequency of visiting the museum ($B = .09$, $p = .21$), and first-time visitor status ($B = -.03$, $p = .67$) were not. These results suggest that the older a visitor is, the more comfortable they feel being in the museum and asking questions.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the psychosocial processes and outcomes facilitated by placemaking activities in the context of a museum focused on community, inclusion, and active participation. Fieldnotes aided in the interpretation of these findings by illuminating how placemaking principles were embodied in the setting's built environment. The hypothesized process model was grounded in Toolis' (2017) theoretical framework for placemaking, proposing that by fostering place attachment, sense of community, and critical awareness, placemaking can catalyze civic engagement and lay the groundwork for social change. Results of structural equation modeling did not support the original hypothesized model. However, two modified models were supported that link museum participation to increased

intentions for civic action. In one model, the relationship between museum participation and intentions for civic action was partially mediated by place attachment and civic responsibility, with museum participation also directly predicting civic responsibility. In the second model, the path between museum participation and intentions for civic action was mediated by sense of community and civic responsibility, with sense of community also directly predicting intentions for civic action.

These findings suggest that actively engaging with local history and artwork in a public setting can cultivate a sense of pride and satisfaction in the place one lives. Field observations suggested that place-based themes were constructed through historical artifacts and information about influential social actors, landmarks, and events in the county's past, as well as artwork, music and dance performances by local artists. These environmental features connected visitors to place by constructing a narrative of the unique assets and contributions of the local area and its diverse inhabitants. In addition, through participatory activities, visitors were invited to add their own perspectives and stories to the exhibits, visually representing their stake in the local narrative.

These findings also demonstrate that participatory cultural and educational settings can provide visitors with the opportunity to strengthen bonds with others in their community, enhancing a sense of cohesion and belonging. Analyses of leaving visitors' activities revealed social interaction as a primary function of the museum. Spending time with family or friends was the most common activity reported by

leaving visitors (reported by 67%), and over one-third (36%) reported having a conversation with someone they didn't know before. Indeed, building social capital (both bridging and bonding) is a key part of the museum's theory of change and "community-first" design was frequently referenced as a guiding value during staff meetings. Observations in the field suggested that opportunities for dialogue were afforded through museum activities and environmental features that invited visitors to listen to and share stories with others, whether mediated through exhibit content or face-to-face interactions.

By facilitating place attachment and sense of community, museum participation was linked to increased civic responsibility and intentions for civic engagement. Participation was strongly emphasized in the museum's interactive features and responsive environmental design, which highlighted opportunities for community engagement both inside and outside the museum's walls and positioned the participant as an active agent of change. These quantitative and qualitative findings illustrate how the museum's physical and social environmental design exemplified theoretical qualities of placemaking, and highlight the unique role that cultural and educational settings can play in facilitating civic engagement by strengthening the connection between people, the place they inhabit, and the community who shares that place. This work expands on Maton's (2008) efforts to explore the psychological mediators through which community settings facilitate empowerment.

Museum participation was not found to be a significant predictor of awareness of structural injustice. However, awareness of structural injustice was found to be significantly positively correlated with place attachment and sense of community, and was a significant predictor of civic responsibility (which in turn predicts intentions for civic action). These relationships suggest that awareness of structural injustice does play a valuable role in placemaking processes that catalyze social change, but that museum participation was not found to activate this pathway for all participants.

One possible reason that the relationship between museum participation and awareness of structural injustice was not supported may be that although all the events where surveys were conducted emphasized place- and community-based elements, not all highlighted social justice issues. A number of events and exhibits on display during the time of surveying contained content that emphasized marginalized stories and histories, such as an exhibit featuring working people and labor issues, stories of local foster youth, and photographs by a local Native American artist. However, these themes were concentrated in a few exhibits and events. Many exhibits and events did not contain critical themes at all, such as a balloon animal exhibit, an event on guitar construction and music, and Salsa dancing. Thus, not all visitors were necessarily exposed to or engaged with critical perspectives during their visit.

It also may be the case that place attachment and sense of community are more easily activated than critical awareness of structural injustice. Attributions for social inequality are highly interconnected with ideology, which tends to remain fairly stable due to social, cultural, cognitive, and motivational forces (Huber &

Form, 1973; Jost, 2015; Kluegel & Smith, 1981). In their study of the representation of national identity and history at the Ellis Island Museum, Mukherjee and colleagues (2015) found that although dominant portrayals of history significantly strengthened participants' ethnocentric bias and support for exclusionary policies, viewing critical historical images were not found to have a significant impact (although findings trended in the opposite direction, as expected). They speculate that perhaps sustained, repeated exposure to critical accounts of history is needed to have an effect on participants' beliefs and attitudes.

Finally, it is also possible that the ability to assess the relationship between museum participation and awareness of structural injustice was hindered by a ceiling effect. Of all the survey scales, awareness of structural injustice showed the highest mean and median across participants before transformation (M=6.20, Mdn=7.00 on a 7-point scale). This suggests that, on average, this sample already possessed high levels of awareness of structural injustice, suggesting that items may not have provided adequate discrimination amongst visitors who already had high levels of awareness of structural injustice. Future research may benefit from using a different scale for this construct, especially in regions where a large share of the population identify as politically progressive, as was the case in this study (41% identified as very liberal, 30% identified as moderately liberal, and another 6% wrote in a progressive "other" identity).

This study also aimed to shed light on the specific activities that museum visitors participated in, and how these activities were related to placemaking variables

for participants in the leaving condition. Although directionality cannot be inferred, results suggest that different activities could be linked to different pathways. For example, participants who had a conversation with someone they didn't know before, had a conversation with someone from a different cultural background than themselves, encountered art, history, ideas, or experiences that were new or unfamiliar to them, or visited Abbott Square reported significantly higher levels of awareness for structural injustice than those who visited but did not engage in those activities. Further research is needed to better understand the qualities of programs, exhibits, and environmental features that contribute to these pathways, such as more event- or exhibit-specific quasi-experimental studies that collect specific information about the content and quality of museum participation.

Scholars have noted that construction of place meaning often varies according to an individual's social identity and positionality (Di Masso, 2012; Dixon & Durrheim, 2004; Hopkins & Dixon, 2006). In this study, no significant differences were found in comfort or welcomeness experienced in the museum on the basis of racial and ethnic identity, gender identity, education level, or income level. However, there are likely culturally specific ways in which different museum exhibits and programs activate placemaking pathways and outcomes. In this study, exploratory structural equation modeling analyses suggested that museum participation was a significant (albeit small) predictor for awareness of structural injustice for non-Hispanic white visitors, but not for visitors of color. However, the latter analysis was underpowered due to the relatively small subsample of visitors of color (n = 173), and

racial identity (dichotomously defined) was not found to be a significant moderator for any placemaking variables in subsequent analyses. This highlights important considerations around heterogeneity and particularity, and raises questions regarding how a community member's relationship to place (e.g., based on histories of colonization, enslavement, patterns of migration, and dispossession) and access to power and resources (e.g., based on documented status or poverty) create different opportunities for critical consciousness and construct different experiences of attachment and belonging in community spaces.

Further research is needed to more closely explore how placemaking processes, event attendance, and visit meaning could vary depending on important aspects of the visitor's social identity. Some routes for expanding on this work include critical ethnographic observations of museum participation, in-depth interviews with museum visitors exploring their perceptions and experiences, and participatory methods. Studies comparing placemaking processes across different institutional, geographic, and cultural contexts would also provide insight into when and why placemaking facilitates empowering processes, and for whom.

The results presented here raise additional questions that could prove generative for future work. For example, the findings presented here linking museum participation to an increased sense of community, civic responsibility, and intentions for civic action beg the question of *who* is included in one's community (Opotow, 1990) and *what values and policy attitudes* will inform their actions once they leave the museum. Follow up studies are warranted to complicate these relationships and

interrogate what is meant by "community," "responsibility," and "action." Such steps are aligned with calls from scholars in community psychology to acknowledge the tensions that often arise between community and diversity (Townley, Kloos, Green, & Franco, 2010) and critical intergroup contact scholars who theorize that over-emphasizing commonality and harmony can undermine meaningful social change by neglecting inequitable power relations (Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2010; Durrheim & Dixon, 2018).

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that bear mentioning. First, as in many community-university partnerships, several compromises were made to uphold a mutually respectful relationship with the community organization. For example, several proposed scales were removed or modified to avoid an undue time burden for visitors and to avoid items perceived by the museum as controversial or overtly political that could appear to link the organization to specific policy endorsements. Although the removal of these scales limited the relationships that could be explored, the support and access provided by the museum was a significant asset in making this study possible.

The constantly evolving nature of the fieldsite made systematic data collection challenging at times. During the course of the study, the museum underwent substantial changes to its programming and physical space that made certain entrances and exits more fluid as the museum's "territory" extended to the outdoor square adjacent to the museum, and sometimes the entire street. To ensure that we

were not including non-museum visitors in our sample, we only administered questionnaires at the building's main entrance (with the exception of a few specific community and cultural events, such as Dia de los Muertos, taking place in the outside square) and verbally checked with visitors to accurately categorize them as "arriving" or "leaving." In addition, at two events (n=11), it was not feasible to survey individuals upon arrival because it would have disrupted the start time of the event. Although these challenges introduced limitations to the study's internal validity, the study provides valuable, ecologically valid insight into placemaking processes on the ground in a dynamic, natural community setting.

It is important to note that due to the lack of random assignment, this study cannot demonstrate a causal relationship between museum participation and measured process and outcome variables. However, attempts were made to strengthen these claims by utilizing a quasi-experimental design comparing arriving visitors to leaving visitors, and by statistically controlling for pre-existing differences between groups. This study may have also been limited by selection bias. For example, we noticed that parents with very young children were less likely to participate in the questionnaire due to the time commitment required. It is also possible that residents who elected to participate were more engaged, outgoing, opinionated, or had more free time than those who did not.

The design of this study allowed for an exploration of the immediate impact of a single museum visit. Literature suggests that empowerment processes often require time and practice, unfolding over the life course (Kieffer, 1984). This sample

contained visitors who participated for brief lengths of time— in fact, one-third of leaving participants were in the museum for under 30 minutes. Thus, although the standardized regression coefficients for museum participation were small, as anticipated, they are likely underestimates. These findings represent a valuable first step in empirically showing how immersion in a participatory, resource-rich, informal educational environment with fellow community members contributes to processes that can pave the way for social change. Future studies need to be conducted to better understand the effects of sustained, long-term participation in placemaking initiatives, either by utilizing a longitudinal design or a larger-scale survey administered to the broader community, examining frequency and depth of engagement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this analysis provides valuable empirical evidence for an under-researched and understudied phenomenon within psychology: placemaking. This study has practical implications in identifying and measuring placemaking processes for individuals and communities and points to fertile areas for future research. On a local level, these analyses provided an evaluation of placemaking processes at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, offering evidence of the museum's success in facilitating place attachment, sense of community, civic responsibility, and intentions for civic action, and pointing to critical awareness of social injustice as a pathway to be strengthened. On a broader level, this placemaking model has utility in guiding museum professionals and community organizations toward effective mechanisms to engender civic engagement.

In an increasingly mobile, global, and digitally mediated society, the importance of our relationship to place is often overlooked (Reed, 1996; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). This study aligns with extensive research in environmental psychology that illustrates the power of everyday shared places to transform human thought and behavior (Barker, 1968, Low, 2000, Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff ,1983). Shared community places provide a common physical ground as well as a point of shared community identity and attachment that can mobilize action, which can in turn enhance the capacity of everyday people to transform those places and challenge exclusionary structures and policies (Main & Sandoval, 2014).

These findings are consistent with empirical studies connecting place attachment and sense of community to each other and to community participation, thus facilitating empowerment (Brown, Perkins, and Brown 2003; Lewicka, 2005; Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Many scholars have extolled the significance of "third places," or informal, shared gathering spaces beyond home and work, for public life (Jacobs, 1961; Low, 2000; Oldenburg, 1999; Whyte, 1980). In the midst of falling social capital (Putnam, 1995) and rising loneliness (Cigna, 2018), and in a political economic context in which public spaces and resources are increasingly defunded and subsequently privatized, documenting the value of local, inclusive, and participatory spaces for individual and community well-being is all the more important.

Chapter 3

> We have learned to say that the good must be extended to all of society before it can be held secure by any one person or class; but we have not yet learned to add to that statement, that unless all men [sic] and all classes contribute to a good, we cannot even be sure that it is worth having. (Addams, 1907, p. 220)

Introduction

The previous chapter presented results from a quasi-experimental study suggesting that engaging in placemaking activities in the context of an asset-based, community-oriented, interactive museum setting facilitated empowering pathways and boosted civic engagement by connecting visitors to the place they live and the community members who share that place. The story told by these findings, while good news for museum-going community members, is incomplete without also considering those who are not engaged in the museum. What are the barriers that limit access and participation for these members of the public, and how can those barriers be reduced? To address these questions, this chapter reviews empirical and theoretical literature on barriers to access, representation, and participation in shared community spaces—and museums in particular. I then present findings from a qualitative study analyzing focus group conversations with low-income residents and people of color not engaged in the museum to bring their experiences and suggestions into focus.

Barriers to Access, Representation, and Participation in Public Space

The ability to access and participate in public places has important implications for individual and community well-being (Cattell, Dines, Gesler, & Curtis, 2008). Shared community places, such as libraries and parks, play an

important role in connecting community members to each other, to the place where they live and work, and to vital public resources. Yet in the United States, with one of the highest levels of economic segregation and inequality in the global North, community members' ability to access and participate in shared community spaces is highly unequal (DeSilver, 2013; Fry & Taylor, 2012). The exclusion of low-income residents and residents of color from such spaces co-opts resources and participation in decision making for elites and restricts interaction between different social groups, contributing to the concentration of advantage and disadvantage (Cortright, 2015; Marcus, Echevarria, Holland, Abraido-Lanza, & Passannante, 2015). This exclusion is maintained through barriers to access that maintain class and race-based segregation, barriers to representation that exclude marginalized voices from dominant narratives, and barriers to participation that exclude everyday people from active decision-making.

Barriers to Access: Class and Race-based Segregation

Economic segregation in the U.S. is at its highest level in decades (Reardon & Bischoff, 2016), and racial segregation—which has been referred to as the "structural linchpin" of racial inequality in the U.S. (Pettigrew, 1979)—remains stubbornly high in metropolitan areas across the nation (Massey, 2016). Although studies on segregation most often focus on housing and schools, there is an increasing need for research to examine the reproduction of segregation in everyday social spaces (Dixon, Tredoux, Durrheim, Finchilescu, & Clack 2008). Discriminatory policies such as broken-windows policing, traffic stops, increased surveillance by closed-circuit

cameras, and municipal ordinances that restrict sitting, standing, panhandling, and sleeping in public for unhoused individuals are all examples of ways in which institutions prevent poor people and people of color from accessing resources in public spaces (Chaskin & Joseph, 2015; Mitchell, 1997).

Economic and racial segregation in the U.S. have been driven in part by gentrification, a political and economic restructuring of space in which poor and low-income residents are displaced and excluded from newly revitalized areas by higher income residents (Shaw, 2008; Smith, 1996), resulting in more socially, economically, and racially homogenous spaces (Shaw, 2008). These processes sequester resource-rich places for the profit and pleasure of an elite few while isolating low-income communities and communities of color in areas of concentrated poverty (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). The spatial concentration of poverty contributes to the reproduction of inequality across the lifespan and across generations by reducing access to resources and increasing social alienation for marginalized groups (Bullock, 2017; Massey, 2016).

Economic and racial segregation are associated with reduced access to vital resources including grocery stores with affordable, nutritious food, green space, public transportation, and services such as banks and hospitals (Bullock, 2017). A lack of investment in public spaces and infrastructure in areas of concentrated poverty often means that low-income children lack access to safe environments and enriching activities that nurture healthy development. A nationally representative survey conducted by the Pew Research Center (2015c) with parents of children under 18

across the U.S. found that while the vast majority (78%) of higher-income parents rated their neighborhood as an "excellent" or "very good" place to raise children, less than half (42%) of lower income parents did so. Lower-income parents were almost five times more likely to evaluate their neighborhood as just "fair" or "poor" than higher-income parents (33% vs. 7%). Lower-income parents were also more likely than higher-income parents to worry that their child might get shot (47% vs 22%), beaten up (55% vs 38%), kidnapped (59% vs 44%), or in trouble with the law (40% vs 21%). Similar differences were also found along lines of race: compared to white parents, Black and Latino parents were over five times as likely to rate their neighborhood as a "fair" or "poor" place to raise kids, and Black parents were about twice as likely to worry that their child might get shot (Pew Research Center, 2015c). The same study also found that low-income parents were more likely than high-income parents to report that affordable, high-quality after-school programs and activities are hard to find in their community (52% vs 29%) and are less likely to report that their child is engaged in after-school activities or programs (17% vs 32%), sports (59% vs 84%), music/dance/art lessons (41% vs 62%), part-time employment (25% vs 45%), or youth organizations like the scouts (14% vs 28%; Pew Research Center, 2015c).

Segregation also isolates communities living in concentrated poverty from social networks that could aid in finding employment. It has been found that up to half of jobs in the U.S. are found through family, friends, and acquaintances (Loury, 2006). Yet research shows that people of color are over four times more likely to live

in neighborhoods with high unemployment rates than white people (14% vs. 3%), and unemployed people of color are over three times more likely than unemployed white people to live in neighborhoods with high levels of unemployment (23% vs. 7%; Scoggins, Treuhaft, & Xiao, 2017). Furthermore, residents living in areas of concentrated poverty also experience higher fear of crime and exposure to crime, which is linked to depression, anxiety, and negative health outcomes (Quillian, 2014). Research also suggests that low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately burdened by environmental hazards, with higher levels of exposure to air pollution, unclean water, and lead paint (Dreier et al., 2001; Pastor, Morello-Frosch, & Sadd, 2005). These findings demonstrate the harmful effects that racial and economic segregation have for well-being and life chances.

Social and spatial divides along lines of race and class also contribute to the erosion of common spaces and weaken social capital, or social cohesion and reciprocity, for members of all social classes (Portes, 1998; Putnam, 2001). The erosion of social capital may harm marginalized communities most. Policies and processes that exclude low-income communities and communities of color from accessing resource-rich places and institutions fuel social alienation by trapping marginalized groups in deteriorating, disinvested environments, diminishing their job opportunities and their capacity to organize (Warren, Thompson, Saegert, 2001; Wilson, 1996). For residents living in areas of concentrated poverty, vacant homes, empty storefronts, and crumbling public spaces serve as daily symbolic reminders of their abandonment and marginal status (Wacquant, 2010). Place-based stigma has the

potential to harm communities by causing residents to disassociate from one another, retreat to their homes, or leave the neighborhood. Ultimately, these processes fuel uneven development and constrain spatial, social, and economic mobility (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2013).

Barriers to Representation: Exclusion from Dominant Narratives

Who is granted access to resource-rich public spaces and who is excluded is communicated and negotiated through stories about who is a legitimate and valuable member of the public. Individuals make meaning of social reality and their experiences in it through dialogue with existing cultural narratives through a process called master narrative engagement (Hammack & Cohler, 2009; Hammack & Toolis, 2016). Master narratives are dominant cultural scripts that work to justify the status quo and erase competing narratives of reality, and are defined by their rigidity, ubiquity, invisibility, and their prescriptive and compulsory nature (McLean & Syed, 2016). In the U.S., this dominant narrative is rooted in an ethic of individualism and meritocracy that frames poverty as the outcome of negative individual attributes, such as immorality and incompetence, rather than structural disadvantage, such as oppressive racist, classist, and sexist systems and a lack of affordable housing or jobs with benefits and secure wages (Bullock 2008; Bullock, 2013; Limbert & Bullock, 2009). Research suggests that relatively privileged groups, and those who are more politically conservative, endorse more individualistic attributions for poverty whereas relatively marginalized groups endorse more societal attributions (Bullock, 1999; Kluegel & Smith,1986; Zucker & Weiner, 1993).

Master narratives of exclusion serve as the basis for negative stereotypes that rationalize economic and racial differences between groups (Hoffman & Hurst, 1990), making segregation more palatable (Jost & Hundyady, 2002). These stereotypes contribute to dehumanized perceptions of marginalized groups, who are consequently placed outside what Opotow (1990) calls the *scope of justice*, meaning that they are denied fair and equal treatment. These stereotypes are perpetuated through interpersonal interactions and media framing that portray poor people and people of color as deficient, dysfunctional, and criminal (Bullock, 2008; Bullock, Wyche, & Williams, 2001; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). Consequently, poor people and people of color are seen as outsiders whose presence in public spaces is perceived as undeserved, fearful, and often transgressive. For example, interviews conducted by Dixon and Durrheim (2004) with beachgoers at a desegregated South African beach revealed that white visitors narrated desegregation as a loss and degradation of a cherished space, and saw the presence of racial "others" as intrusive and disruptive. Similarly, research with policymakers in New Zealand suggests that anti-homeless ordinances are grounded in narratives that exclude homeless individuals from being considered citizens or legitimate members of the public, and therefore they are not considered entitled to access public spaces and resources (Laurenson & Collins 2006).

Master narratives of exclusion contribute to social distancing by perpetuating a fear of unknown or different "others". Theoretical and empirical literature on stereotypes suggests that groups perceived as low in competence and morality (or

"warmth") elicit contempt, blame, and disgust and are treated with avoidance, exclusion, and even forceful removal (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). Social distancing is reflected in and reinforced through boundaries and walls in the built environment, as seen in the construction of gated communities and "defensive" architecture designed to deter crime and "filter" who can enter public space (Caldeira, 1996; Low, 2001). As Quillian (2014, p. 263) observes, "Racial and economic segregation were in part a result of political decisions and processes that represented the desires of whites and the affluent to maintain geographic distance from nonwhites and the poor."

Barriers to Participation: Exclusion from Active Decision-Making

In addition to barriers to access and representation, low-income people and people of color face barriers to active participation in public spaces. Public spaces have historically been important sites of democratic engagement where the rights of expression and assembly can be exercised. Yet public spaces and resources in the U.S. have been increasingly privatized in recent decades, meaning that the ownership and control of public property and resources have shifted from the government to private individuals or companies to be used for profit. Since the 1980s, land use regulations as well as investments in public resources and infrastructure have been cut back while subsidies and tax incentives for the private sector have increased (Dreier et al., 2001; Peck & Tickell, 2002). This can be seen in the private management of city plazas and parks, public transportation, parking, sanitation, and the use of private security to police public spaces (MacLeod, 2002; Savas, 1991). This political and

economic context of dwindling investment in public life has forced institutions to compete with one another and court private donors to remain financially viable.

Devoting public spaces to retail, commerce, and entertainment sanitizes and commodifies public space, constraining what kinds of activities can occur there and the degree to which the voices of the public can be heard. Historically, boundaries of participation in public spaces are drawn such that everyday members of the public are only permitted to occupy public places as passive consumers and spectators. Decisions about the design and regulation of public spaces are made by experts and professionals; everyday members of the public— and especially poor and marginalized members— are rarely consulted or provided opportunities to genuinely participate. Manzo (2011) writes,

> Genuine participation has at its core the principles of representation, social responsiveness, reflexivity, care, recognition of the agency of individual citizens, and, of course, social justice. It is about capacity building that uses community assets to achieve positive community change, and, in doing so, combats the exploitation of ordinary citizens through bureaucratic structures and processes. (p. 84)

Too often, low-income communities and communities of color are excluded from genuine participation, and are seen as passive objects of policies and programs rather than active partners (Warren, Thompson, Saegert, 2001). These barriers to decision-making frequently result in sterile or exclusive spaces that prioritize design or profits over users' needs (Whyte, 1980).

(In)equity in Museum Settings

Museums are cultural institutions charged with "hold[ing] information in a public trust" (Carr, 1990, p. 98), storing and displaying objects of vast cultural,

historic, and/or scientific value and significance on behalf of a community. The Smithsonian alone has 155 million objects in its collections and $1,924 million in total assets (Smithsonian Institution, 2017). Museums are spaces of shared and ongoing knowledge construction, preservation, and dissemination, where disparate places, times, and cultures converge (Leth, 2016). Experiences in museums have been linked to a host of benefits, and survey research from 2,000 geographically and politically diverse U.S. residents found that virtually all (97%) believed that museums are educational assets for their community (American Alliance of Museums, 2017). Furthermore, most museums in the U.S. receive some amount of public support in the form of government funding or tax breaks due to their nonprofit status (O'Hare, 2015). Museums, then, are stewards of valuable public resources, dedicated to public service, and subsidized in large part by the public.

Although museums are intended to serve the public good, they have not served all members of the public equitably. The historical origins of museums are steeped in colonialism and classism. When museums were first opened to the public, they were conceived of as solemn, quiet, refined places where the masses could join the gentry in accessing "high culture" and become more "civilized" (Stephen, 2001). In addition, many art and history museums appropriated artifacts and displayed stories told about but not by non-European peoples (Lonetree, 2012). Helen Molesworth, former chief curator of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, who was later dismissed for her critiques of the institution, wrote,

> The museum, the Western institution I have dedicated my life to, with its familiar humanist offerings of knowledge and patrimony in the name of

> empathy and education, is one of the greatest holdouts of the colonialist enterprise. Its fantasies of possession and edification grow more and more wearisome as the years go by… I confess that more days than not I find myself wondering whether the whole damn project of collecting, displaying, and interpreting culture might just be unredeemable. (Molesworth, 2018, para. 7)

Indeed, museums have often served to reinforce privilege through the amplification of dominant narratives and the suppression of critical and marginalized perspectives (Kinsley, 2016). Representations of collective identity and history often celebrate and glorify positive events while neglecting past injustices (Mukherjee, Salter, & Molina, 2015). Studies show that sanitized representations of history contribute to system justifying ideology and the endorsement of exclusionary policies (e.g., Salter, Kelley, Molina, & Thai, 2017; Salter & Adams, 2016). For example, a quasi-experimental study conducted by Mukherjee, Salter, and Molina (2015) found that visiting the Ellis Island Immigration Museum and viewing nation-glorifying objects and images led to an endorsement of dominant assimilationist American identity, a denial of the legacy of racism, and support for exclusionary policies. Taken together, this literature shows that museums and the cultural images and stories they construct have a significant impact on visitors' identities, attitudes, and beliefs. The overrepresentation of white museum curators, conservators, and board members (Jennings & Jones-Rizzi, 2017; Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2015) likely contributes to the promotion of dominant cultural narratives.

Equity in museums has also historically been hampered by uneven access. Significant disparities in museum attendance along the lines of race and class have been documented (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1997). A study conducted by the National

Endowment for the Arts (NEA, 2015) found that participation in arts and cultural institutions is much higher for U.S. adults with higher incomes and higher levels of education than for adults with lower incomes and lower levels of education. For example, the percentage of graduate-degree holding individuals who attended an art museum at least once in the past year is 49%, compared to 10% for those who graduated high school, and 4% for those who completed some high school (NEA, 2015). Research also suggests that white visitors are largely over-represented at U.S. arts and cultural institutions, whereas Latinx and African American visitors are under-represented (NEA, 2015; Smithsonian Institution, 2001). The same NEA study found that while 24% of whites/European Americans reported attending an art museum in the past year, only 14% of Latinos and 12% of African Americans did so (NEA, 2015). Similarly, a survey of eighth grade students in the U.S. assessing art museum visitation outside school in the previous year found that rates were significantly lower for students in public schools (25%) than private schools (34%), lower for students eligible for free and reduced-cost lunch (21%) than those who were not (29%), and lower for students whose parents did not finish high school (14%) than those whose parents graduated college (30%; American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2017).

Research suggests that these disparities in attendance can be explained not by a lack of interest but by barriers that exclude communities of color and low-income communities. Less-educated individuals are more likely than individuals with higher educational achievement to report being interested in attending—but not, in fact, attending—arts and cultural events (NEA, 2015). The cost of visiting museums—

even those with free entry— can be prohibitive for low-income community members (Dawson, 2014). Relatedly, the NEA's survey found that lack of time, money, and transportation were the most commonly reported barriers to attending arts and cultural events (NEA, 2015). Research shows that museums are often perceived as unwelcoming, uncomfortable, and not relevant for people of color and low-income community members (Dawson, 2014). A lack of familiarity and knowledge about museums can detract from visitors' sense of efficacy and sense of belonging (Kaplan, Bardwell, & Slakter, 1993). This sentiment was expressed by former first lady Michelle Obama at a museum ribbon cutting ceremony in 2015,

> You see, there are so many kids in this country who look at places like museums and concert halls and other cultural centers and they think to themselves, well, that's not a place for me, for someone who looks like me, for someone who comes from my neighborhood… And growing up on the South Side of Chicago, I was one of those kids myself. So I know that feeling of not belonging in a place like this. (Obama, 2015)

This quote highlights the experience of many people of color and low-income people, acknowledging that museums have historically been spaces of privilege belonging to white elites (Thomas & Rappaport, 1996).

Recognition of race and class-based disparities in museum attendance and leadership has spurred initiatives to decolonize and transform museums. The American Alliance of Museums (formerly the American Association of Museums) first adopted equity and public education as its guiding values in 1992 in its landmark policy statement, "Excellence and equity: Education and the public dimension of museums" (American Association of Museums, 1992). In the organization's 2018

report, Dr. Johnetta Betsch Cole, co-chair of the American Alliance of Museums Working Group on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion, stated,

> If we are to be relevant in this ever-changing world… all of our museums must boldly— indeed, bodaciously—commit to rethinking about what takes place in our museums, to whom our museums belong and who the colleagues are who have the privilege of telling important stories through the power of science, history, culture and art. (American Alliance of Museums, 2018, p. 7)

Recent initiatives include advancing racial and gender equity in the workplace (Baldwin & Ackerson, 2017; Jennings & Jones-Rizzi, 2017), emphasizing social action (MASS Action, n.d.), installations that complicate simplistic and singular Euro-centric views of art and history (Farago, 2018), artists that center marginalized perspectives (Helen Molesworth, 2018), training museum educators to hold courageous spaces for dialogue on the museum floor (Brown, Gutierrez, Okmin, & McCullough, 2017), owning the impact of harmful and exclusive institutional decisions (Chow, 2017), and collaborating with community members in the development and interpretation of museum content (Anila, 2017). Despite strategies to increase inclusion and participation for underrepresented community stakeholders, much work still remains to be done.

The present study aims to understand the perceived barriers that limit museum access, participation, and relevance and how they can be reduced for low-income residents and people of color living in Santa Cruz, a mid-size city in the San Francisco Bay Area with a population of approximately 60,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). This research examines how marginalized community members who reside within walking distance of an art and history museum, yet have not visited within the

past year, make meaning of the museum, and what obstacles they face in participating in critical placemaking. How do these residents perceive museums, and the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History in particular? What barriers to access, representation, and participation do these community members identify? What suggestions do they have to make the museum more relevant, welcoming, and empowering for themselves and their communities? These questions were explored through focus groups with residents from neighborhoods near the art and history museum with large populations of Latinx and low-income residents.

Method

Participants

Thirty-nine community members participated in one of five focus groups. A summary of participant demographics can be found in Table 3. Participants were recruited via purposive, nonprobability sampling from three neighborhoods located within a one-mile radius of the museum. Two neighborhoods were initially selected, and a third was added when, during a meeting with staff of a low-income housing property in one neighborhood to share flyers with residents, staff from another property associated with the same agency invited us to conduct a focus group with residents in their development. This neighborhood was directly adjacent to the first two and similar in demographic makeup and distance from the museum.

All three neighborhoods were located within walking distance of the museum and, compared to the rest of the city, households in these areas are composed of a higher number of Latinx residents (30-46% vs. 17%) and report much lower incomes

(with a poverty level twice as high as the city average; City of Santa Cruz, 2012). Survey research in the community led by sociologists McKay and Greenberg found that about three-quarters (76%) of renters in this area experience rent burden (spending over 30% of their income on rent), and about half (49%) experience extreme rent burden (spending over 50% of their income on rent). Almost half (46%) of renters reported forced moves (including evictions and involuntary displacement). These burdens were disproportionately shouldered by residents of color (University of California, Santa Cruz, n.d.).

Recruitment was conducted through announcements and flyers distributed through local community venues, including parks, community centers, organizations, businesses, schools, and social media, as well as door-to-door outreach on randomly selected streets in the target neighborhoods. Interested individuals were directed to complete a brief demographic screening questionnaire, available in both English and Spanish, which took approximately 5 minutes to complete. Questions inquired about age, past attendance at the museum, neighborhood of residence, gender, racial and ethnic identity, education level, length of residence in the county, preferred language spoken, and contact information (see Appendix B for screener). In the case of in-person recruitment, screeners were completed on a tablet. I reviewed responses to determine eligibility and assign participants to a focus group in the appropriate language. Participants were eligible if they were over the age of 18, resided in one of the three target neighborhoods, and had not visited the museum within the previous year. Individuals who identified as people of color and/or had lower levels of

education and income were prioritized for selection to privilege the feedback of marginalized community members. Potential participants were contacted by phone or email with an invitation to participate.

Table 3.

Demographic characteristics of focus group participants (*N* = 39)

Demographic variable	*n*	%
Gender		
Woman	22	56%
Man	16	41%
Non-Binary	1	3%
Race or ethnicity[a]		
Latinx or Hispanic	26	67%
Bi- or multi-racial	5	13%
White or European American	5	13%
Asian American	1	3%
American Indian, indigenous, or Alaskan Native	3	8%
Prefer not to answer	4	10%
Education		
Did not complete high school	20	51%
High school diploma or GED	10	15%
Technical, trade, or vocational school after high school	1	3%
Some college but no degree	6	15%
Four-year Bachelor's degree	1	3%
Some postgraduate or professional schooling after college, but no postgraduate degree	2	5%
Postgraduate or professional degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD)	3	8%
Annual household income		
Less than $10,000	11	28%
$10,000 to $14,999	9	23%
$15,000 to $24,999	4	10%
$25,000 to $34,999	7	18%
$35,000 to $49,999	3	8%

$75,000 to $99,999	1	3%
Prefer not to answer	4	10%
Parental status		
Parent or guardian of child under 18	21	54%
Most recent visit to the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History		
At least once, between 1-5 years ago	7	18%
At least once, over 5 years ago	5	13%
Never	26	67%
	M	*SD*
Age (in years)	44.8	15.5
Length of residence in Santa Cruz County (in years)	21.9	12.9

[a]Participants could write as many identities as applied.

Reflexivity

My identity, values, and experiences influenced data collection and analysis in important ways, which were accompanied by limitations as well as strengths (White & Dotson, 2010). Throughout data collection, I regularly recorded reflexivity memos to examine my assumptions and consider how my own identity, personal experiences, and relationship to the institution and participants shaped the research process.

My research questions were motivated by a commitment to utilizing community-based research to promote social justice. As a U.S.-born, white, middle class, graduate-educated woman, I come from a background that confers unearned privileges and is historically over-represented in museum settings. Although I grew up in a small rural town with limited geographic access to museums and other cultural institutions, I have not experienced exclusion in community settings on the basis of race, immigration status, language, social class, or ability. This positioned me in many ways as an "outsider" to the phenomenon under study. At the same time, as a

six-year resident of Santa Cruz, and a four-year resident of one of the recruitment neighborhoods, I possessed some familiarity of the community and the social issues it faces.

My relationship with the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History influenced all phases of this study from design to data collection and analysis. I was a museum member and volunteer for approximately two years prior to beginning the present study, assisting with programs, training gallery hosts in survey administration, and leading an assessment of the museum's new plaza that collected visitor feedback throughout the summer of 2015. My knowledge of the museum staff, programs, and setting informed my prior understanding of the research topic, which carried the benefit of familiarity with the institution while possibly limiting my a priori expectations. In addition, participants often misperceived me as a museum employee (a view I worked hard to correct). I positioned myself as a multi-partial independent university researcher who was invested in listening to and understanding participants' points of view without imposing a narrative (Rifkin, Millen, & Cobb, 2007).

My identity also influenced my interactions with focus group participants. As a monolingual English speaker, I was unable to communicate directly with monolingual Spanish speaking participants and relied on the valuable expertise of a bilingual colleague and research assistants. In addition, given the inherent power inequities that exist between interviewers and interviewees, as well as interpersonal group dynamics, it is possible that participants' responses were constrained by a desire to provide positive feedback, intimidation by outspoken group members,

pressure to conform, or discomfort sharing personal experiences with strangers. Every effort was made to set guidelines for a safe, respectful, and transparent dialogue that emphasized the value of diverse viewpoints rather than consensus. Care was also taken to eschew a deficit approach, to avoid positioning participants as lacking or implying that not visiting the museum was wrong, but instead to explore the person-environment relationship to enhance public value.

Procedure

Each focus group included five to nine participants and lasted approximately 90 minutes. Two focus groups were conducted in English, which I facilitated, and three were conducted in Spanish, which were facilitated by a bilingual graduate student and undergraduate research assistant. Four of the focus groups were held in private rooms in community centers in two of the neighborhoods, and one was held in the community room of an affordable housing development in the third neighborhood. An undergraduate research assistant recorded notes on a large flipchart during the meetings to reflect the ideas shared.

After reviewing the informed consent, participants were asked to create a name tag with their chosen pseudonym and complete a brief demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C). Focus group questions explored perceptions of museums in general, the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History specifically, barriers that limit access and participation, suggestions for how barriers can be reduced, and what could be done to increase the relevance of the MAH's programs (see Appendix D for protocol). Snacks and childcare were provided, and participants received $30

and a free one-day family pass to the museum as a token of gratitude for their time. Focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed by me, in the case of English language focus groups, and professional transcribers, in the case of Spanish language focus groups. Spanish language transcripts were then translated into English by a bilingual undergraduate research assistant and translated back into Spanish by a second research assistant, who then met to resolve inconsistencies and ensure fidelity to the speakers' meaning. Participant-selected pseudonyms were replaced with new pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Analytic Strategy

Data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), in which patterns of meaning were identified to derive themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1988). Three trained undergraduates and I coded the data using consensus coding (see Ahrens, 2006; Langhout, Kohfeldt, & Ellison, 2011), which strengthened our analysis by prompting us to consider multiple perspectives, interrogate assumptions, and reflect on the ways in which our different identities and experiences came to bear on our interpretations. This process served to establish a hermeneutic community (Josselson, 2004; Tappan, 1997) and promote methodological integrity (Levitt, Bamberg, Cresswell, Frost, Josselson, Suarez-Orozco, 2018) by enhancing the fidelity, transparency, and groundedness of our interpretations. As noted by Tappan, "the opportunity for insight and enlightenment is increased enormously when different voices and perspectives are joined in a common effort of understanding" (1997, p. 653).

The first step in analysis involved a preliminary read of the transcripts to gain familiarity with the data. Next, each research assistant and I independently conducted a round of open coding on the same transcript, which was given an inductive, in-depth, line-by-line reading to generate a broad list of codes and record memos. Data was coded using the qualitative data analysis program Dedoose, version 8.0.42. After this initial round of open coding, we collaboratively created a preliminary codebook to describe patterns of meaning identified in the data. The remaining four transcripts were each coded independently by myself and one of the three research assistants, and were then discussed by both coders to compare codes. Disagreements in coding applications were resolved through discussion and consensus, so that codes were only applied if both coders agreed. Regular team meetings were held to refine codes and discuss memos and emerging analyses. Finally, I condensed and reorganized codes into higher-order themes.

Results

Barriers to Museum Access and Participation

Participants described four major barriers to accessing and participating in museums: a) the museum as an unknown quantity, b) the museum as unaffordable, c) the museum as a white, elite space, and d) the museum as a constraining, sterile space. With the exception of the museum as an unknown quantity, most of the barriers discussed were not based on the Santa Cruz MAH specifically, and few participants had negative perceptions or experiences related to the MAH. Nonetheless, this analysis revealed numerous obstacles that worked to exclude

marginalized community members from the museum, as evidenced in participants' perceptions and stories of past experiences.

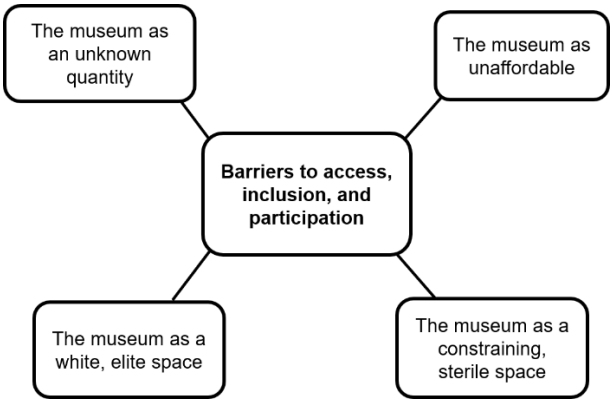

Figure 13. Thematic map depicting organization of data into themes.

The museum as an unknown quantity: "I don't feel welcome because I don't know what's going on." The barrier most frequently described by focus group respondents was the experience of the museum as an unfamiliar, and hence uninviting, space. "Sometimes the lack of information makes it so we don't- that we don't visit a place like that," Miguel, a Latinx man, shared. "Even though you go to have fun… There is a lack of communication sometimes. We are not told, 'The museum is open, the museum is close by, the museum is free.'" Most respondents were unaware of the Santa Cruz MAH's programs, exhibits, hours, cost of admission, and/or mission, many were unsure of its location, and several had not heard of the museum at all. Uncertainty regarding key details about the museum was expressed in another focus group in a conversation between Sofia, a Latinx woman, and Matt, an Asian American man:

> Sofia: We're just all trying to figure out, when does it open? What day, what hours? We all live here, and we walk right by it. What are the exhibits?
>
> Matt: Yeah, I think that that would be the one for me. You know I've thought of going over Thanksgiving with my family but it was sort of like, I don't know what's showing there. And then I don't know how much it costs either.

In addition, virtually all focus group participants were unaware that visiting the museum was free on the first Friday of every month. Participants expressed surprise at this information, and several voiced that this made a difference in their decision making. "I didn't know it was free the first Friday-they should advertise that more," stated Jason, a white man. Another participant, Aaron, a Latinx and Native American man, added, "Oh, yeah! That's huge! If more people knew that, I feel like that would promote so many more people to want to come in." In another focus group, Mercedes, a Latinx woman, reflected, "If they had let us know, we would have gone…"

Two factors were identified that contributed to participants' perception of the museum as an unknown quantity. First, it became apparent that information about the museum, such as advertising materials and signage, were not effectively reaching community members who were not already "plugged in" to the museum. Sofia explained,

> I think the only negative thing is that there is not much out there, being put out there about the museum. So that's a negative because the museum doesn't draw people in, in order to just check it out or even know that it's there. That's the only negative, is that there's not much, and if there is, obviously it's not working, whatever type of advertisement or whatever type of flyers.

In another focus group, Teresa, a Latinx woman, shared,

> I think that the museum is worthwhile, but we as Latinos, we are lacking that information, that's what it is. That is why a lot of people go to other places, but not to the museums. I think it's a question of better advertising the museums.

Some participants mentioned that they did not receive the local newspaper or did not have regular access to the internet. For non-English speakers, promotional materials written only in English were not accessible.

A lack of clear signage and visibility from the street also contributed to difficulty locating the space and learning what was inside. "That street has nothing to direct you towards it," explained Don. This contributed to a sense of "hiddenness" that discouraged the "uninitiated" from visiting the museum, as noted in the following conversation, between Laura, a Latinx woman, and Sofia, also a Latinx woman:

> Laura: It's really hidden almost/
>
> Sofia: Yeah, hidden, but also, even though it has, I think it has banners/
>
> Laura: It's pretty big, yeah/
>
> Sofia: But it's not like, "Come here, come in, this is what's going on." So it can be like, "Oh!" You know? I can just walk by and be like, I forgot that was even there.

This analysis demonstrated that for those unfamiliar with the museum, entering a new setting without a clear invitation could be challenging. Landon, a Native American man, explained,

> I've always said I was gonna check it out, it's just not knowing what's showing there. There's a couple of times I've went to the library and went by the museum and it didn't seem like anything was going on… I was like, I'll just go to the library.

He went on to say,

> Just walking downtown, you'd see exhibits being displayed and people going and I always thought it was sort of private or there was- it just doesn't- there was just nothing telling me this is a public event. Maybe I missed it, I don't know.

For Landon, the lack of transparency about the museum's events gave it the air of a "private" space.

A second factor that contributed to some participants' perception of the museum as an unfamiliar space was a mismatch between their personal habitus and the museum habitus (see also Archer, Dawson, Seakins, & Wong, 2016). In other words, the embodied knowledge and behaviors involved in accessing and participating in a dominant cultural institution in the U.S., acquired through socialization in a particular cultural context, did not map on to some participants' history of experiences (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). This theme applied mainly to the narratives of participants in the Spanish language focus groups, many of whom identified as first-generation immigrants to the U.S. Some participants explained that attending museums was not possible in their childhood due to experiences of economic hardship and distance from urban centers. As Daniela, a Latinx woman, explained,

> I tell you, back in my country I never went to a museum, nor did I know that these places existed, as I say… to me, in my time when I was in Mexico, I think there were no possibilities- well, my parents did not have the possibilities… I didn't even know that museums existed.

Daniela's comment elicited nods and agreement from others. Another respondent shared that this unfamiliarity made it difficult to communicate with his children about their experiences visiting museums as part of school field trips:

> I really do not know what's inside, right? …My children… have gone to museums because they have told me they were going to museums… But to tell the truth, I don't know where they have gone and they don't explain anything either, they don't tell me. Ey, it's like they see that I do not understand… you cannot tell me anything about the museum because I don't really have any experience.

These excerpts illustrate the experience of the museum as an unknown quantity— a space for those "in the know." A lack of transparency and communication regarding how, when, and where to access the museum reinforced a sense of "uninvitedness" or "outsidedness" for underrepresented community members. This was expressed by Miguel:

> Sometimes you don't have anything to do at home and you say, "What to do? Go to the museum, or the beach?" But sometimes we don't know what is going to be shown, and sometimes we would say, "No, well, I won't go to the museum." That can dishearten or discourage us if we don't know.

In another focus group, Sofia shared a similar sentiment:

> …If we don't know what's going on there, how can we- I don't feel welcome because I don't know what's going on because there's nothing telling me… Because not knowing doesn't even make me wanna go, oh, let me go walk up and see...

Both Miguel and Sofia intimate that the absence of information about the museum in their daily lives deters them from visiting because it suggests that their presence may not be wanted. These excerpts elucidate how unfamiliarity can act as a barrier.

The museum as unaffordable: "The problem is money to pay the price."

The second most commonly articulated barrier was cost. The expenses involved in visiting museums were consistently perceived as financially out of reach by participants in all five focus groups. This was articulated by Rosa, a Latinx woman: "Well, yes, it would be nice to go to the museum to relax at the museum, but the

problem is money to pay the price, to pay each time that you go to relax." In another focus group, when asked to describe what words came to mind when thinking of museums, Karen, a white woman, commented, "I kind of think that most of those things are- I don't have a big income- are kind of high-priced for me. So that's what I think of." "Yeah, I agree," echoed Sofia,

> Because I just remember going when I was younger, and there was always a cost for everyone to go. And as a parent now— because I have a 17-year-old and then for my 12-year-old, for the most part, you know, there's a cost.

Similarly, Aaron stated that the key factor in his consideration to visit the museum was

> probably money. I don't have a lot of access to money, as many college students know. It's also just something I've just grown up with in general not having too much to work with, that's always one of the first things that I think of.

Some respondents shared memories of the ways in which economic barriers limited museum access starting in childhood. For example, Roberto, a Latinx man, recounted,

> The thing is that in my childhood I did not go… I was the son of a single mother and I grew up with my grandparents and no, there was no money to go… There was a course that went from school and took the children, but I had to have the money for passage and all that. If not, you could not go. So I was one of those people who did not go on that trip… I could not go because there was no money. As the lady said, no way to feed me and send me there, so they better feed me. It is difficult because as someone raised by a single mother, and as a first child, it is very difficult because there is no money, and with the grandparents, they raise you and they are poor, too. Although they want to, no.

Similarly, Lucia, a Latinx woman, shared, "There were no resources to go… So, I did know that there was such a thing, but no, it wasn't really possible." Early memories

of economic exclusion were interconnected with perceptions of museums as "unknown" spaces.

Past experiences such as those recounted here contributed to general perceptions of museums as financially out-of-reach for low-income individuals and families. Yet few respondents were aware of the cost of admission to the Santa Cruz MAH specifically. Respondents were asked to guess the cost of admission, and then provided with information about the actual cost ($10 for general admission, $8 for students and seniors, and free for children under 5) to solicit feedback. Most guesses were higher than the actual cost, reflecting a perception of museums as expensive. "I thought that it would cost more, of course, since I have never gone," noted Rosa. Similarly, Elena, a Latinx woman, commented, "I was imagining that they would charge more." With a few exceptions, most respondents expressed that the actual cost did not seem unreasonable per se. "I thought [it would be] up to $30 or $40, $50, but look, if it is $10, that is alright," responded Lizette, a Latinx woman.

At the same time, most respondents saw this cost as a barrier for several reasons. First, the point was raised that even a seemingly low cost of admission quickly adds up with multiple family members:

> If you have three children or a large family, you are not going to say, "I'm going with one, and the others stay in the house." But what you want is to go out and visit. So you say, 'Well, it's $10, but we're six, it's $60. " So that's what you say. If the girl's lunch is worth $60 a week, I prefer to give her the money. So I think it's like the economic barrier to be able to access museums.

Similiarly, Javier, a Latinx man, explained, “Imagine, if I saw it, it's $10 per person and we're five, it’s $50… It is the food of a day.” David, a Latinx man in another focus group commented,

> As a family already sometimes with three, four, and they are at $10, they are already at $40, and if you buy something else… depending on the time it is, and every child wants something to eat, something light, right? Like a pizza or whatever it is out there nearby.

As consistently mentioned by respondents, the costs associated with multiple children, meals, and parking could be prohibitively expensive for low-income families.

Relatedly, respondents named the county’s high cost of living as creating an economic burden that constrained financial choices. As Don, a multiracial man, explained,

> People— like the regular people— we have to care because that $10 could be feeding your family. If it’s just you, it could feed you for 3 or 4 days. And I don’t know about you, but I live on, after all my bills are paid, $80 a month… and the food is nothing but a cup of noodles… housing is obscenely expensive.

As a Latinx woman in another focus group put it, “There is little work. A lot of income goes to rent in Santa Cruz.” With limited expendable income, basic needs had to take priority over leisure:

> You already think, "No, well with that $10, I could buy a gallon of milk, a package of tortillas"— Then it's more money that is not in one's budget, right? Because as they say, you have to buy a pantry or milk or other things for the house, or have a little for every day.

Jason similarly shared, “I tried to go into the museum one time, and when you’re a college kid you make decisions between food or admission to museums. And it’s always gonna be food.”

Respondents explained that economic hardship restricted time as well as finances. “Our Latino people do not have the time. They are field workers, they get home late and no, there is no time,” expressed Luis, a Latinx man. “There are times when many people do not attend museums, sometimes because they do not have time, or we spend more time at work,” Javier noted. This sentiment was echoed by Cristina, a Latinx woman: “Around here, people are very busy with their jobs because of the economy…” These excerpts point out that families’ time is a precious resource, and one that is highly constrained by low wages and demanding work conditions.

In sum, the costs associated with entering the museum, often combined with the costs of paying for children’s admission, food, and parking, on top of basic needs expenses, functioned as economic barriers that excluded low-income community members from accessing museums. When participants were asked where they would choose to spend their leisure time when it was available, the vast majority named places that were free of cost, such as visiting the beach. In fact, participants did perceive potential value in museums, but felt this value was often outweighed by the price. Vanessa, an Afrolatina woman, explained,

> It just seems to me that museums could be communal spaces when I could invite family to relax, or just have the kids go out, and here in Santa Cruz that’s kind of rough when you spend so much money.

This data illustrates how required admission fees privilege those with expendable income and reproduce inequality.

The museum as a white, elite space: "I feel like one has the mentality that it is not for us." Experiences of museums as spaces of privilege were another barrier that excluded low income people and people of color from accessing and participating in the museum. In a minority of cases, these perceptions arose from direct experiences at the MAH, while most were indirect, linked to narratives of exclusion rooted in dominant U.S. culture more broadly. Regardless of their origin, these alienating dominant narratives about who museums serve were found to factor heavily into participants' considerations about entering such a space.

The perception of museums in general as white spaces was mentioned by participants in multiple focus groups. Jason noted, "I feel like most times when you go into a nice museum, it's just white people in there and stuff." The lack of representation of visitors and staff of color in museums made some participants feel out of place and uncomfortable in museum settings, as observed by Cristina, a Latinx woman: "For me, what intimidates me the most is that I don't see Latinos, or better yet, I see Americans and I feel like something stops me from entering." Later she added,

> I feel like one has the mentality that it is not for us. Well, that it is more so for Americans. So then one has that mentality, and that is why we won't go into the museums. But when this kind of information is given, that it is free, that the whole community is invited, not only just a few, I think that- that has to change one's mentality.

Cristina points out that seeing important aspects of one's social identity reflected in a setting contributes to one's sense of belonging.

Expectations of language barriers, rooted in past museum experiences and a dominant cultural context that devalues non-English languages, also worked to exclude marginalized community members. "For some people, it's the language," shared Mariana, a Latinx woman. "Not having someone that can interpret. Because normally they explain everything, but they explain it in English, and obviously there are some words that sometimes you don't retain very well, and it passes you by." Similarly, Eduardo, a Latinx man, shared,

> I want to go with, I don't know, with my family, but they do not speak English very well. So an activity in English is not going to be very easy for them to enjoy it in the same way as if it were an activity in Spanish.

Ramona, a Latinx woman, recounted an experience from visiting a nearby museum as part of a school trip with her children:

> In the museum that was in San Jose, there were no people who spoke Spanish… There was no way to understand, because they don't tell you— you passed, and nobody explained anything to you, nor did anyone tell you anything. So, yes, there are many times the communications that one has in places. Sometimes that's why it does not catch your attention. There is no communication, well you say, "Why am I going if I don't understand anything?"

For Vanessa, too, the expectation of language barriers emerged as a deterrent to taking her family to the museum:

> I don't even know if my family would feel comfortable because I'm not sure they have signs in Spanish for them, because they don't necessarily speak English, right… I'm always looking for new places, but the language barrier is a big thing for us. Because they tend to feel really uncomfortable when they don't feel welcome.

For some participants, the feeling of not belonging was most salient along class lines. “Elitist” and “snobbery” were mentioned as words that came to mind to describe museums. The experience that museums are for elite patrons and not welcoming for non-elites is reflected in the following narrative about the MAH:

> Jason: I work across the street. So… I would go in my uniform and go trade food with the different places there you know that have food. And I felt like every time I went there it’s just, the food’s really expensive, the drinks are expensive, so it’s just like, just a demographic of people that can afford to eat there and drink there that are sitting out there. And I feel like, watched when I’m walking through… with like flour on my shirt and stuff. And it feels kind of like it’s not how normal Santa Cruz feels. It’s a little bit more bougie and stuff.
>
> Carmen: Not welcoming.
>
> Jason: Yeah. Not just dress code, just atmosphere… I mean, it doesn’t feel very welcoming.
>
> Don: A little stuffy, uptight.
>
> Erin: Thank you for sharing that.
>
> Jason: …I couldn’t afford that food there.

Here, Jason observes that the cost of food and interpersonal interactions with other patrons create an unwelcoming, “bougie” atmosphere. Similarly, Don shared,

> Every time I walk by and they have an exhibit, they’re always having people inside drinking wine… they’re not, they’re not regular joes. They’re like, it’s like going to a circus wearing a tuxedo and you’re 8 years old… Getting out of your school clothes and wearing a tuxedo to go play in the front yard, that’s what it is. It makes it uncomfortable. Because we all know people of means that sip wine are judgmental on everybody that is not in their class… They’re… sitting there wearing a $5,000 suit… and I look at ‘em and I’m shirt and t-shirt.

Like Jason, Don describes discomfort and judgement from interactions with high socioeconomic status group members. This analysis revealed how cues such as what

other visitors were drinking, eating, or wearing sent a signal as to who belonged in that space, upholding the dominant perception that museums are for elites.

The museum as a constraining, sterile space: "Somebody's gonna stifle you, shhh!" A fourth barrier to museum access was the perception of museums as constraining, rigid spaces— a space of being told you "can't" move, touch, or speak freely. This theme came up solely in the English language focus groups, possibly because these participants had more extensive previous experience in museums.

For some participants, the perception of museums as spaces of constraint was rooted in childhood experiences:

> Vanessa: I remember when I was younger, like that's one of the reasons why if I had a field trip and I knew I was going to a museum, I was like, I don't want to go, because it was like, "Keep moving, keep moving." It was just painful when you're little and it's like you're already, you're walking everywhere and the only time you get to sit down is during your lunch time and then you go back up and it's like, "Keep walking keep walking." I just, I've always, when I was little I wanted to touch things, and that's why I didn't like going to museums because I was just like/
>
> Aaron: Because you were getting discouraged.
>
> Vanessa: Yeah, it just did not interest me.

Vanessa describes an environment that was unresponsive to her needs and interests, and did not afford opportunities to touch or sit, making the experience uninteresting and "painful." Later in the conversation, she continued,

> I want to enjoy museums, and now that I'm thinking about it, it's like I don't really enjoy museums. I was thinking about temperature, right, sometimes they feel too cold. Right, and that just adds to it not being, the feeling of being constrained or being scared or whatever. But yeah, between the set up, right, and I never thought about the temperature. But for me, usually it's like, why do I gotta go to this place, where I've already been told I can't?

Don also expressed feelings of constraint and discomfort in museums. Like Vanessa, Don's perceptions were based in memories from childhood. Don contrasted his recollection of zoos and planetariums with that of museums:

> Don: You get to run around like a freak, and laugh, and touch, you can touch glass, you can get close to stuff. But the minute you went across the garden through the rose garden over into the museum it all the sudden just got, non-mentally stimulating. A museum should set your mind ablaze and you should just be going "gasp".
>
> Erin: Is there something about the space that made it not feel that/
>
> Don: The temperature… and the fact that the security guards are set up to intimidate you by their look. And the colors are like a fast food restaurant, they do the oranges and greens and mix them so it agitates you, gets you to eat food and get out. And that's kind of what, I mean they're not using soft pastels, there's no place comfortable to sit. And if you sit on the floor just to look, like you're absorbing it, nope you can't sit on the floor, you gotta get up, you gotta keep moving. It's like, did I just pay 25 bucks for you to tell me to get up and keep moving? For 25 bucks you should allow me to sit down on the floor and stare at the painting as long as I want. And it just, it's corporate.

Don attributes what he describes as a "non-mentally stimulating," intimidating, and uncomfortable environment to physical features of the setting, such as a cold temperature, unappealing colors, and lack of seating, as well as the social features of the setting, including the presence of security guards and norms that discourage free activity and noise.

Don was not the only participant for whom security and surveillance measures caused unease. Vanessa commented, "I usually feel constrained because I feel like I can't move freely. Like, I'm always being watched… like I'm going to touch something or break something. I always feel uneasy." Carmen, a multiracial woman, added,

> I had a memory— because I leaned in a little too close to a Freida Kahlo painting, a real one, and I set off the buzzer and "BEEP BEEP BEEP!" And I went, "Ooh!" ((Laughter)) So I felt kind of like how she was feeling at that time. Gotta just behave yourself in there, so I can dig what she was saying.

Another example came from Lynn, a Native American and white woman, who stated,

> Both of my sons are disabled. Every time we go to a museum or anywhere, they're like, "Oh! Don't touch it!" And they're chasing us around. So, I hardly can take my sons anywhere, it's not, you know, but they ain't breaking anything. They're older and they're just excited about everything, you know. So it's hard to enjoy it when that happens. I'm like, they ain't breaking it.

These excerpts suggest that surveillance measures position museum content as the source of value in need of protection, while positioning visitors as threats or liabilities in need of control. Participants' comments reveal how being policed can be intimidating and othering, prompting anxiety about the "right" or "wrong" way to behave.

As reflected in Lynn's statement, perceptions of art and history museums as quiet and passive spaces contributed to participants' hesitance to attend the museum, especially with children. "We have a 4-year-old, and I'm like, well, I don't know if it's going to be a good place for, to take the 4-year-old, right?," commented Vanessa. This concern was connected to the perception of art and history museums as adult spaces, as noted by Aaron:

> When you picture art, it's usually more of an adult, older thing. 'Cause a lot of art in a museum like this, usually, it's something you observe and look at and usually ones like that don't have a lot for kids, so it's not really as inviting for kids and families that're just out, which is also cutting off a lot of people who would want to go in.

Aaron describes art and history museums as spaces of passive observation, creating an environment that is uninviting and exclusionary toward families with children. The same theme was conveyed in a later exchange between Don and Aaron:

> Don: They expect patience out of us, but they don't have any patience for us… when you get to the museum, it's like, everybody in line, Sh! Sh! Sh! Sh! And it's just like, it's almost to the point where, I remember as a kid, it's like you're almost afraid to ask any questions cause somebody's gonna stifle you, Shhh! And it's like/
>
> Aaron: You should always be free to be able to ask questions. It's, having that voice silenced can really put a downer on the mood for people. I'm not sure.
>
> Erin: So you're saying when someone says, "Sh!" Or "don't touch something," that makes you feel silenced?
>
> Aaron: Yeah, it can. I know some things you just can't be close to or can't touch, it's just like not being able to really do anything besides watching or can't really, not being able to talk, not make it as enjoyable of an experience.

This analysis suggests that museums are often perceived as formal, rigid, surveilled spaces that police visitors' actions and construct them as unwelcome outsiders.

Suggestions for Enhancing Access and Participation in the Santa Cruz MAH

In addition to barriers, focus group conversations explored participants' suggestions for enhancing access and participation in the MAH, as well as perceptions regarding the potential value museums could hold for the community. Responses clustered around four primary (and often overlapping) "visions" for the museum: a) the museum as an inviting space that values and welcomes marginalized community members' participation, b) the museum as a relevant space with events and exhibits that represent the community's diverse history and culture, c) the

museum as a space for connecting with others, and d) the museum as an informal, hands-on, activating space of learning.

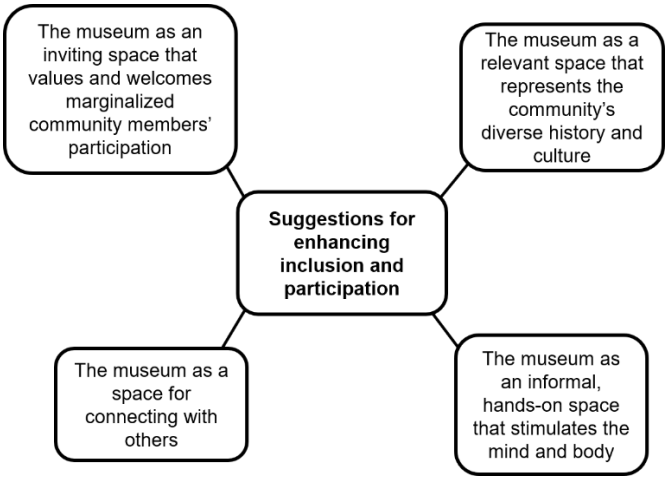

Figure 14. Thematic map depicting organization of data into themes.

The museum as an inviting space that values and welcomes marginalized community members' participation: "Come, you're important to us." Who is the museum for? Given that a major barrier to accessing museums was the perception of museums as an unfamiliar and unknown space— rooted in the historic exclusion of people of color and low-income people from mainstream, resource-rich institutions— many suggestions centered on ways to intentionally and actively welcome marginalized community members' participation.

Accessible communication was considered central for creating a more inviting atmosphere for visitors with little or no familiarity with the Santa Cruz MAH. "What is needed is to encourage people to go for the first time," stated Cristina.

> After going that first time, then they are going to like it, they are going to know that yes, it is interesting and that one could go visit it after. The hard part is getting to go that first time.

As observed by Fernando, a Latinx man, "Part of the inconvenience that I think could be handled in another way is the part of the promotion. When you asked if anyone had heard of the museum, most said no, they had not heard."

Suggestions for disseminating information ranged from announcements on local radio stations, free Spanish language magazines, flyers distributed through the mail and displayed in popular community venues, clear directional signage on the streets and sidewalks around the city, and announcements in community centers. Ramona commented,

> It would also be very good, as in the community centers, to give information about the events that take place, at what time the museum is opened and closed, how much is charged, and perhaps it is also another way that people may be interested to go.

Suggestions highlighted the importance of partnering with trusted local community organizations and spaces, and the need to communicate in Spanish as well as English, to ensure that information was accessible to all.

Another common point of feedback on the topic of enhancing welcomeness emphasized approachable, enthusiastic staff who greet visitors and orient them to the setting. When asked what would make the museum a more welcoming space, Carmen explained, "People who greet you, and say 'Hey, welcome. This is what's happening on each floor.' Welcome you when you get there, make you feel welcome when you come. That'd be awesome." This theme emerged in another focus group:

> Cristina: The most important thing is to see a smile from who it is at the door. With that, one already says, “Okay this is good.”
>
> Facilitator: Ah, okay.
>
> Claudia: It’s the same in every other store that you would go to— if they don’t treat you nicely at the entrance, if they don’t say “Welcome” or something like that, you’re not going to go back to that store. It’s the same in the museums, if someone doesn’t treat you right, you don’t go back.
>
> Facilitator: And what other things perhaps could help you feel welcome there?
>
> Teresa: Well, getting attention from people for them to be there.
>
> Claudia: Yes, and if they tell you, “Can I help you with something?”, “Do you need help?,” something like that. You know that they are being nice and attentive. Even if it is not in Spanish but they are trying to help… You see the good intentions.

Another participant, Luis, later added,

> What a museum should be offering is a person to be there for you to explain things, for example, what something means that is there. A person, like a guide. To be there explaining what it is and what the materials are, what it is that you are seeing whether it is in English or in Spanish, I mean there should be an allotment to help Latinx people and American people as well.

Luis’s comment points out the valuable role that bilingual, bicultural docents can play in making the museum more familiar and easier to navigate.

In addition, participants indicated that assurance of full participation without encountering economic or language barriers at the museum would go a long way in establishing a sense of welcomeness and invitation. This was articulated by Eduardo:

> The reality is that there is a very large community and one has to deal with the language. That is something that cannot be denied, and there must be mechanisms created to make it more accessible to the people, and in the same way, people will react differently and go if you said, "I went to the museum, I learned new things, the children had fun, I did not have money, but there is a little box there and I have $3, I’ll place it in.” …It’s better… than having a family not be happy and return because of the barrier they had. “Ah, I'm not

> going because I'm not interested, because I'm not attracted, they're not doing anything to tell me, 'Come, you're important to us.'"

Discounts for local residents, sliding scale admissions costs, free admission for students and children under 12, and more frequent free days were recommended to ensure more equitable access for all members of the community. "I would imagine opening the door to those who have few capabilities of being able to pay for the entrance fee," stated Luis. "Because there are so many museums that charge to enter, right? So then, opening the doors to those who are of low income, so they can learn, regardless of age, young and old." These comments illustrate that creating a genuinely inviting, welcoming community space is an active and intentional process that must reckon with a legacy of exclusion and inequality rather than assume that everyone has an equal opportunity to access and interpret information.

The museum as a relevant space that represents the community's diverse history and culture: "We have a beautiful story." Whose stories, heritage, and contributions are represented in the museum? Participants expressed a desire to have a space that showcased local assets, representing art, history, and interests created with and by their communities.

First, conversations consistently communicated an interest in local talent. Participants expressed a strong desire to see reflections of people they knew and cared about. For instance, Sofia, a mother of two, shared that she would like to see artwork by local children:

> Talent, like kids at [a local community center], they have some of those youth's paintings and their drawings, they're amazing, these 10, 12-year-olds. Like wow, to see their stuff in there… I would like to invite the whole damn

> neighborhood, my kid, you know?... Yeah, because again, children born and raised here, they're gonna be part of our history here. And it's just nice to see more of the kids, the younger people knowing about the museum or the art part of it.

Claudia, a Latinx woman, shared that she would be interested to see art created by artists in a local affordable art center and residence. "Works of art that I know," she emphasized. In a different focus group, Karen expressed her interest in the MAH's recent exhibit displaying the stories of local foster youth, which she heard about after her grandson's school trip: "The foster kids, I thought that was, you know, I want to see it and look at it and read it. But I like things that are happening around here." In another focus group, Jason shared,

> I'm an art major, so I hope to one day have stuff in there, you know, that would be cool. So I imagine they put a lot of hopefully students' stuff in there, a lot of local artists… That's what I would like to see is local art.

Many participants also expressed a desire to have a space that showcased local cultural diversity, where they could see art and history that represented their heritage. This theme was especially prevalent amongst Latinx participants who had immigrated to the U.S.:

> Teresa: It can be different cultures. For example, also, not just from here from the United States but also from our own states.
>
> Facilitator: Could you tell me more about something that you would feel moved or happy to see? You are saying something like cultural, could you tell me a little bit more information about what you would like to see?
>
> Teresa: Well, more customs from the towns, or for example the pyramids, I don't know, but things of art from our ancestors— but for it to be from our culture, from our states.

Teresa argues that museums in the U.S. should not be limited to displaying U.S.-centric history and artifacts, but to represent the diverse histories of its residents. A similar sentiment was voiced in another focus group:

> Mariana: I would like a museum of pure art things, like Mexico, too. There are many Americans who would be very interested. For example, there they make black clay or work for us, and—
>
> Daniela: The artistry.
>
> Mariana: - aha, crafts. Americans love all crafts. It could also be that it included all that.
>
> Daniela: The textiles, too.
>
> Mariana: Very nice and very interesting.
>
> Daniela: All the things that are art there in Mexico, too. There are many nice and interesting things.

In this conversation, participants affirm the beauty and value of artistry from their home countries. "We have a beautiful story," said Daniela.

Participants also expressed an interest in Latin American and indigenous festivals, folkloric clothing, dance, music, and storytelling. For instance, Carmen suggested,

> …Bring in some either drummers or dancers, local, to come in. For instance, if it's like Mexicana art, you know, have some people play Mariachi and dance. It's beautiful, everyone loves it, and in conjunction perhaps with a Native American exhibit, have someone come in as a storyteller. We have a great Chumash storyteller here.

Food also emerged as an important way to represent diverse cultures, as shared by Miguel: "What I miss is the food from my country. That is what I miss the most."

Participants who immigrated to the U.S. lamented that there are few places in the city where they can connect to their home countries. "We miss our, our land,"

reflected Teresa. “I think that we would feel better if we had more, well more things that were closer regarding our culture.” “That is what we are lacking… cultural representation” shared Rosa. Teresa and Rosa express a longing for symbols of their social identities in the community, and the museum was seen as a place that could facilitate collective remembering. “It would bring some memories of our, well, from where we come from,” explained Elena. Similarly, Cristina said,

> It is frustrating because of how there is none [representation], we cannot show our kids our roots, and for them to feel the thrill of seeing that. Because when one sees those dances, then you feel excitement and you better remember your country.

Like Cristina, Daniela expressed a desire to share her roots with her child:

> In my case, my girl has all three… nationalities: Mexican, Salvadoran, and American… They could put something from different countries so that the children of the different nationalities would see that, since if they never understand— with the technology they have right now, they don’t even realize what existed in our past— then it would be a way that since childhood or from elementary school, whether seeing in the museum, "Oh, this is from my mother's country, from my dad's country…”. Maybe that's why, we do not know, someone who is interested in the story can emerge and can be a great historian without being one before, right?

Here, Cristina and Daniela articulate the importance of sharing their roots with their children. These findings call attention to a powerful opportunity for the museum to function as a space of collective memory and identity maintenance for translocal communities, building bridges between the past and present and across geographic locales.

Participants’ comments relayed a vision of the museum as holding potential to challenge dominant narratives of the community as monolithic, instead revealing the plural, polyphonic nature of the community. Along those lines, some suggestions

involved raising awareness of marginalized perspectives and contributions that are too often neglected. Ramona shared,

> There are also Latin people here in Santa Cruz, one is not aware or anything, but there are very generous people who have donated land for good things like schools. Like when I was taking my son to school… I realized the story, that the school site was given by a Latino person there…. and that Latino left the land and said, "I do not want any business, nor do I want to sell it, I want the school there…" That was a very nice story for me.

Ramona's comment conveys a sense of pride found in uncovering the often overlooked contributions of Latinx community members. Other participants highlighted the importance of rendering visible critical and hidden histories, such as the history of indigenous peoples and past and ongoing oppression. For instance, Carmen shared a story about a local museum on the site of a former mission, describing how some residents were

> Tired of them glossing over the history of what really happened to the Indians at the mission, the original people and what they went through. And they fought… for a long time to finally put up the sign that was more realistic to the reality of the people who originally lived there. For me, that's super important, something that a museum should have, because a lot of times the original people are just erased. And we're not erased, we're still here. But you will feel erased when you go into a place like that.

Finally, participants named opportunities to offer feedback as a way to enhance inclusion. For example, some participants expressed interest in the museum holding community conversations to gather feedback regarding their experience: "Some sort of light conversation there with them, well, if they like the ambiance inside or if they did not like it. What was it that you did not like?" Similarly, Miguel shared, "I would like for them to ask people what would they like to see in museums," which elicited agreement from everyone in the room.

In sum, representation emerged as a significant way for participants to see themselves in the museum, and to feel a sense of ownership and belonging. Given that museums have historically functioned as largely ethnocentric spaces that lend authority to dominant histories, representing privileged perspectives and erasing marginalized perspectives, these narratives are important.

The museum as a space for connecting with others: "It could just build connection between community, the whole community." The opportunity to connect with others was identified as another valuable role for the museum to play. Some participants expressed interest in spending time together with family:

> Isabel: It motivates you to be closer to your kids, when you have kids.
>
> Miguel: And that is something that all of the family would always remember, and when there is some group chat they would always say, "Do you remember when we went to the museum?" And the kids, when they like it, they will talk about what they have seen…
>
> Elena: Yeah, I also think the same. Because it is a moment to spend as a family, no?

Other participants perceived value in enabling conversations between new people. Gloria, a Latinx woman, explained,

> You know, Santa Cruz has been a little bit more of a, becoming more of everything now, Mexicans, Salvadorans, Black people, Chinese people… so they should have like a monthly cultural day, you know, like this month, like Hispanic month, "Oh, well, we have an exhibition of Hispanic cultures" — Hispanic is not just Mexican, it's also Salvadoran, Oaxacanos… That's something I would go to, especially my daughter, she's learning how to, she hears a lot of bullying in school, you know, and I'm like, let's take her to this exhibition 'cause of the Chinese, this is what they went through, this is their history... This is the reason we should respect them… so you go to museum and you have that exhibition of knowing the people that you talk to, your neighbors, your friends, you'll get to learn more and you'll have a little bit more of an open mind.

Gloria imagines the museum as a space where community members can encounter one another's stories— whether through direct dialogue, or indirectly, through events and information— with the goal of deepening understanding. Vanessa added to Gloria's statement, saying, "Yeah, I agree with the cultural events. I think those are important. Especially because we have a lot of students that are away from home and we're a big population Santa Cruz, so I'm always looking for places where I can go create community."

Various community building ideas were raised by participants. These ideas envisioned the museum as a space not just to encounter artwork and historical artifacts but to foster social interaction. Suggestions included mixers for young adults, Ted Talks spotlighting local ideas, community talent shows, battles of the bands, and chess tournaments. In one example, participants discussed a proposal for an inclusive community dinner:

> Matt: I'd be interested in a sliding scale community dinner, sit down dinner, where everyone's invited so you can combine both homeless or people who have experiencing homelessness/
>
> Tyler: That'd be awesome.
>
> Laura: Yeah.
>
> Matt: And it could just build connection between community, the whole community, so just building.
>
> Tyler: …I really like the idea he had actually, about the dinner with everyone— homeless, everyone. Because I feel like people alienate them a lot but they're still humans, you know.

These suggestions highlight a perceived potential in the museum as a site of encounter between community members who might not otherwise come into contact.

The museum as an informal, hands-on, activating space that stimulates learning: "You walk out of there kind of feeling vulnerable or empowered or different than how you went into it." Finally, given that restrictive environmental and social constraints were identified as a barrier to participation in museums, many participants emphasized a preference for informal, activating environments that stoked their curiosity. "Anything that stimulates my mind or makes me interested and want to learn more, that would be, that's a good reason for me to be in a museum," explained Amir, an Iranian American man. Don reflected, "A museum should set your mind ablaze and you should just be going "gasp"." Jason described the potential of museums in this way:

> They make you think differently. And you walk out of there kind of feeling vulnerable or empowered or different than how you went into it and I think that could be a good way to make people want to come back because it changed their mind.

Jason describes the potential for museums to offer transformative experiences by exposing visitors to new perspectives.

Participants described opportunities for interactive, embodied, multi-model learning as particularly impactful. One participant described the value of "being able to use more than one sense, to be able to take it in, to help the mind be able to process, and remember it, as an important thing to learn." Many of participants' positive past experiences in museums referenced dynamic, hands-on museum environments (often in museums related to the natural sciences) that facilitated active learning while igniting a sense of wonder and excitement. For example, Landon recalled a story of a childhood museum visit:

> Back in New Mexico, they have the Earth and History Museum and you can kind of— the exhibit is a walk through time and so you kind of go through the historical hypothetical earth. And I find it— I thought it was really— it was like a ride, like an amusement park, you know… I learned a lot. I mean, instead of seeing stuff in a 2D, like in a book, I saw a lot of stuff that was interactive, 3D. Like, there was one exhibit where you could see through the eyes of an insect just kind of through the goggles, just kind of like a fly and its array of eyes and it was cool. I was fascinated by it.

Gloria recounted a visit to a nearby planetarium: "It was just awesome. It was great to just explore and be able to be hands-on and look at everything that surrounds you where you live." In another story, Carmen described an experience at a marine life museum that allowed visitors to feel an otter's fur.

> Carmen: When you touch it, you go "Wow!" It's like a cloud. And kids walk up to it and touch it and go, "Wow, it's so spongey!" You know, and they have the seals, it's much shorter, they have the different kind of furs, they have… little pools where the kids can actually turn the shell over and go, "Oh my god, there's a hermit crab in there!" You know, not that you'd have animals in there, but something for the kids to touch! And be a part of.
>
> Gloria: Like Legos. You can have Legos you can shape, "Oh here is what this person made with Legos, you try." Or, an artist, "Oh, this artist did it here locally, you can draw it." And have kids drawing it. And it's exciting to make 'em see that, how they see things differently. And so it will make you go, "Oh, my [child] did this, here, let's go." And see the actual picture they drew, or the actual Lego they tried to make, you know.

In this conversation, Carmen and Gloria highlight the ways in which interactive environments can afford visitors with efficacious, contributing roles that position them not just as consumers but as creators.

Like Gloria, many participants saw hands-on activities as particularly effective in engaging children:

> It is a way to also involve them, perhaps if something catches their attention. There are little boys that I see that like painting a lot. There may be an event in a museum, such as art or music, which, often children like to play an

> instrument. There can be music. That is, they can also involve the youngsters because it is really very difficult sometimes to involve them.

Similarly, Sofia commented:

> I think the total point is just to grab kids, 'cause kids are the ones who will bring out everything that we have here in Santa Cruz… It's like, it has to be a little bit more of a kid activity kind of stuff… And if it was fun for the kids then it can be fun for us. You know? So I know not everyone has kids but they know kids, and they know kids will tell them about it anyways 'cause my daughter, she loves to talk to everyone so like, she'll tell you, oh I went to this place, and this was awesome, and I did this, so it's like, I know they hear it from any other kid that you see on the street. So, basically, more kid-oriented.

Creating an active, entertaining atmosphere was often connected to informal, casual, and less controlled environments. One participant, Don, put it this way, "You don't cut through Spagos to go to Taco Bell." When asked to elaborate, he responded,

> Spagos restaurant? One of the highest end restaurants in New York City? It's, six months reservation you get to it, and if you don't have enough 0s behind your bank account, don't even think about ordering an hors'douvre because it's $300. But you don't cut through Spagos, a fancy restaurant, the highest end restaurant you can think of, to go through the back door to get to the parking lot so that you can go to Taco Bell. It's how the atmosphere makes you feel when you first walk in. The… atmosphere is what keeps you stand-offish about, if this is my first experience of this, I don't know if I'm gonna like this. 'Cause the first experience should be something that excites you and gets you wanting to go. It's like the first time to, first time going to the tidal pool at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and you get the little horse shoe crabs or the rays that swim around and flop their tail up and splash you in the face. There's an excitement.

Don's narrative communicates disdain for overly formal, sterile settings, and expresses a preference for a less regulated environment where the surprising and unexpected can happen. Instead of "children should be seen and not heard," he explained, children should be able to "run around, scream, crazy… go off the chain.

And they get to touch everything and learn about everything." "Museums should be a place where you're going to go and enjoy stuff," he asserted.

In providing enjoyment and opportunities to have new, engrossing experiences outside one's daily routine, the museum was perceived to have potential to promote not only mental stimulation but emotional restoration as well. Claudia shared,

> It is a place where you can go to spend an afternoon, that is, if you don't have somewhere to be, let's say you are taking care of some elderly person or something, that elderly person would have a good time, even you yourself would have a good time… It is a chance to get out of the house… staying at home, many people are depressed. And leaving gets you out, to learn something and get out of that funk like that.

Cristina related,

> Yes, well, also it can be relaxing, you can forget about your problems at least if just for a moment. Because when you are inside you are not thinking about what is going on in your life, you are concentrating on the works of art and the museum's exhibits.

Suggestions related to creating a more congenial, relaxing environment included offering seating, options for food and drinks, and playing music. This was articulated by Vanessa:

> I'm always looking for places where I can go destress to some extent, right? So I guess that's why I don't like going to museums, because it feels like I'm just walking through it, can't even sit, like why am I gonna pay $50 for something like this, right? But if someone's like playing music, right, then that just seems more relaxed and something that I'm more willing to do.

This feedback highlights multiple avenues for the museum to align with the needs, assets, and interests of marginalized community members. Notably, the Santa Cruz MAH's exhibits and programming actually include many of the qualities

suggested in the focus groups— such as bilingual materials and staff, interactive and participatory programs, seating, music, Latinx and indigenous art and performances, critical histories, child-oriented events, and socializing opportunities— but few respondents were aware of this before participating in this study. These findings largely affirm the relevance of the museum's programming, but illuminate a gap in communication, highlighting the need for more intentional collaboration and increased accessibility for historically marginalized communities.

Discussion

This analysis highlights barriers that exclude marginalized communities from accessing and participating in museums, and describes ways to reduce those barriers. The first two barriers identified— the museum as unknown and the museum as financially out of reach— conveyed meaning to participants about who museums serve. Respondents often perceived the museum as unknown, hidden, and private. Many were unaware of key details needed to visit the museum, which was linked to feeling "disheartened," "discouraged," and unwanted. As one participant put it, "They're not doing anything to tell me, 'Come, you're important to us.'" The required understanding of unspoken norms to find and utilize a resource, and the assumption that individuals will locate key details and come if they are interested (and if they don't come, they must not be interested) can work to privilege community members with higher levels of dominant cultural capital, a concept advanced by French sociologist Bourdieu to describe knowledge of the "rules of the game" transmitted through formal education and family upbringing (Bourdieu, 1979/1984).

The perception of museums as generally unaffordable also emerged as a major obstacle that limited access for low-income residents and residents of color. “The problem is the money,” as one participant explained. It is unsurprising that economic considerations weighed heavily on many respondents’ minds. Embedded within a national ecology of stagnating wages and job instability for low wage workers (Reich, 2015), and a local ecology of high rent burden, rates of homelessness, and food insecurity (Second Harvest Food Bank, 2017; No Place Like Home, 2018), research suggests that a large share of the population struggles to access affordable housing and nutritious food, let alone attend a museum. In short, entering the museum was often perceived as contingent upon the possession of economic and dominant cultural capital, and certainly, both are objectively necessary, as one cannot enter a museum without a) knowing about its existence, location, and hours, and b) paying the admission fee (with the exception of free days).

The other two barriers identified in this analysis— the museum as a white, elite space and a constraining space— touch on the structure of the museum and how included, represented, and comfortable one might expect to feel inside. Expectations and past experiences of language barriers, over-representation of white visitors, and a “snobby” or “bougie” atmosphere were associated with feelings of discomfort and intimidation and influenced considerations to visit a museum in the future. This reinforced a dominant narrative that the museum is “not for us,” not for everyday people or “regular joes,” but for an elite stratus of society. In addition, some focus group respondents described museums in general as constraining, cold, surveilled

environments that contributed to unease, fear, and a sense of being silenced and stifled. This sentiment was clear in moments when participants asked why they would go to a place "where I'm told I can't," or "not being able to really do anything besides watching or… not being able to talk."

Taken together, these findings further our understanding of how advantage and disadvantage are reproduced through barriers to resource-rich spaces. Perceptions of the museum as unknown and unaffordable reveal how barriers to access work to maintain class and race-based segregation by restricting entry for marginalized community members. Perceptions of the museum as an elite, white space demonstrate how barriers to representation construct marginalized community members as outsiders. Finally, perceptions of the museum as constraining reveal barriers to participation, in which museum visitors are constructed as passive consumers whose movement, speech, physical comfort, and enjoyment must be restricted.

These findings illuminate the intersection between individual perceptions and behaviors and master narratives circulating in broader culture, which mediate who can access resource-rich spaces, whose history and culture is represented, and what behaviors are permitted in such spaces. Historically, U.S. social and cultural institutions have functioned to impart authority, status, and value onto dominant cultural forms and practices, while simultaneously delegitimizing and devaluing non-dominant cultural forms and practices (Bourdieu, 1979/1984; Bourdieu & Darbel, 1997). Practices such as admission fees, surveilling visitors, valorizing formal and EuroAmerican-centric works, disseminating information solely through the dominant

channels, and maintaining leadership that does not reflect the racial and economic diversity of the broader community cannot be sustained alongside a genuine commitment to equity and public service because these practices rely on an ahistoric and monolithic understanding of the public. The public is not abstract, but composed people whose lives are differentially shaped by a profoundly unequal education system, legal system, and economic system. Disparities in attendance, in perceptions of relevance, and in feelings of belonging and familiarity in museums are not a reflection of natural differences in motivation, intellectual and aesthetic aptitude, or interest in education and culture, but rather provide evidence of the mechanisms that concentrate power and reproduce the dominant social order.

It is indeed true that historically, mainstream cultural institutions *have* been elite, white, sterile spaces which have served to reproduce rather than transform unequitable social relations. At the same time, participants' stories expressed a yearning for spaces where they are valued and enthusiastically welcomed. They envisioned the museum as a space of integration and community connectedness. They imagined the museum as a space that could represent the diverse histories, "beautiful stories," and contributions of the community, highlighting local assets, challenging dominant narratives, and connecting them to their roots. And finally, they envisioned the museum as an informal and participatory space that allowed for enjoyment and embodied, experiential learning. These stories convey what Eve Tuck calls narratives of *desire*, importantly going beyond the harms sustained by exclusionary structural constraints to include "the hope, the visions, the wisdom of lived lives and

communities… the *not yet,*" the longing, which acknowledges the complex past, present, and future of community members (2009, p. 417).

Limitations and Conclusion

There were several limitations to the current study. Focus group participants included low-income residents and residents of color living in three specific neighborhoods located within one mile of the museum, whose experiences likely differ from residents in other parts of the county or members of the general population. Thus, these results may not apply to other populations. In addition, although participants all identified as low-income and/or people of color living in a particular geographic region and thus shared some experiences in common, the broad range of social identities (e.g., gender, age, parent status, student status, etc.) may have limited the depth of conversations. More targeted feedback should be gathered from conversations held with specific stakeholder groups to better understand their shared interests and experiences, as well as points of tension in how they understand the museum's mission, function, and design. How might visitor experiences of and visions for the museum differ between parents of young children, university students, professional artists, tourists, individuals experiencing homelessness, business owners, individuals with disabilities, teenagers, recent immigrants, and local city officials? How could the museum work to navigate what are often competing and conflicting visions and interests?

Future inquiry could also expand on this study by using participatory methods to examine how marginalized community members who have never visited the MAH

or other museums make meaning of the museum. A Photovoice study, for instance, could allow for marginalized community members to document key symbols and images of inclusion and relevance, as well as exclusion and irrelevance, encountered in the physical and social environment, and narrate their meaning in depth. These avenues for future research could shed additional light on barriers to inclusion in everyday spaces, and take advantage of empowering research methodology that positions community members not just as recipients or informants but as partners (Scott, 2010), moving from questions of dissemination within a client-based institutional logic to questions of participation within a cooperative institutional logic (Weeth Feinstein & Meshoulam, 2014). In other words, research is needed to explore how can museums and other cultural institutions can go beyond questions of outreach and attendance to questions of shared ownership and decision making.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the systemic barriers that exclude marginalized community members from accessing and participating in museums, and highlights community members' suggestions for enhancing inclusivity, equity, and relevance in those spaces. More than two decades ago, the American Alliance of Museums placed public service and education at the center of its mission and issued a policy for all museums to commit to promoting equity (American Association of Museums, 1992). Their report stated, "By making a commitment to equity in public service, museums can be an integral part of the human experience, thus helping to create the sense of inclusive community so often missing in our society" (p. 7). This signaled an intentional shift away from a historical legacy in which museums

functioned to harden class and race lines by conferring power and legitimacy to EuroAmerican-centric, elite conceptions of cultural and historical significance. Yet as long as museums provide enriching educational resources to a disproportionately privileged audience, they will not be perceived as an indispensable, financially sustainable public good (Scott, 2010; Weil, 2002), and they will continue to reinforce existing social inequities and exacerbate patterns of segregation. Amplifying the voices of marginalized communities in determining and evaluating the museum's goals and programs is a necessary step toward building truly public cultural institutions that reflect the assets, needs, and desires of all its members.

Chapter 4

> …Because of our individually limited and uncertain situatedness vis à vis discourse and experience, a broad inclusive community of inquirers is the best warrant for true and useful knowledge. …We are very much creatures of the world we are born into and subject to its institutions, exclusions, power relations, physical properties, and ways of thinking. Yet we remake ourselves individually and collectively (though not fully by intention) through modes of engagement with others that promote tolerant inclusive discourse, decision making and action. In this view, thought and feeling work together as intelligence. Thus democratic processes make room for emotional engagements that can interrupt existing patterns, challenge received representations, produce new sympathies and desires, and promote democratic processes. Over time, the hope is that these will leave their residue in history, practice, habits, discourse, institutions and power arrangements. (Saegert, 2014, p. 398)

Conclusion

In July of 2017, community members gathered inside a crowded gallery in the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History for the opening of *Lost Childhoods*, an exhibit centered on the experiences and issues faced by transition-age foster youth. Visitors conversed over photographs and personal stories of local young people and quietly contemplated their artwork. In one corner, visitors sat on benches watching videorecorded interviews with local foster youth. A mother and son explored a tunnel-like installation that displayed statistics regarding rates of homelessness and unemployment faced by foster youth and posed discussion questions. Friends wrote in journals soliciting stories about resilience and shared them with one another. Visitors took business cards from a "take action center" mounted on the wall listing different ways to get involved in improving the foster care system and the individual lives of transition-age youth.

Lost Childhoods was the Museum of Art and History's first community issue exhibition. One-hundred and twenty-eight local partners, including local foster youth, community organizations, service providers, advocates, and policymakers, collaborated with the Museum of Art and History over the course of six months to co-create the exhibit's goals and content (Benetua, Simon, & Garcia, 2018). *Lost Childhoods* aimed to highlight the challenges and accomplishments of foster youth, who number 60,000 in the state of California, to raise awareness, provide a platform for community dialogue, and catalyze action. During the opening, one of the youth community partners addressed the audience:

> I originally joined because I had seen many cases of organizations attempt to represent and support foster youth, LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, youth with disabilities, homeless youth, and again and again I saw youth being sidelined, being spoken over, being patronized and tokenized and left out from the very projects meant for them… From day one foster youth were brought to the forefront of every idea, every art piece, the setup of the exhibit—everything… To again put it simply, *Lost Childhoods* is an exhibit by, of, from, and for foster youth. (Benetua, Simon, & Garcia, 2018, p. 29)

The goal of this dissertation was to examine how engagement in open, community-oriented, bottom-up settings such as the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History impacts individuals, and how these settings can be made more accessible and participatory for underrepresented members of the public. Key concepts from environmental psychology, cultural psychology, and community psychology were utilized to consider the importance of bonds with one's environment (Low & Altman, 1992), the capability to exercise some degree of control over one's environment (Chawla & Heft, 2002; Dewey, 1927/2016), social interaction and community belonging (Perkins & Long, 2002; Putnam, 2000), and knowledge about shared social

issues (Freire, 2005; Martín-Baró, 1994). Settings that facilitate community and participation are central to human development and well-being (Chawla & Heft, 2002; Shinn, 2015). Chawla and Heft write,

> One essential quality of a fully functioning individual that transcends the range of expression of personhood found across different cultures is the propensity to engage with aspects of one's environment in a selective, self-directed, and purposive manner. Just as the biological well-being of the individual rests on adequate functioning of various organ systems, the psychological well-being of the individual rests, to some extent, on efficacious functioning in domains of reciprocal individual-environment processes… The hallmark of such settings would be information-rich conditions through which an individual can perceive the immediate effects of his or her purposive actions, and over time extend opportunities to refine those actions through continuous engagement. (2002, p. 208)

I argued that the exclusion of the majority of the public from authentic participation has historically been justified by a social construction of the public as untrustworthy and incapable of making informed decisions about their own lives (e.g., Bernays, 1928; Lippman, 1927/1993). The hierarchical distinction between the "masses" and "elites" has served to disenfranchise people of color and low-income people to prevent redistribution, so that wealth and decision-making—and, consequently, opportunities for well-being—are not shared in common across the population but concentrated in highly uneven ways (Beard, 1962; Gilens, 2012; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2011).

In contrast, the concept of placemaking conceives of everyday community members as experts with valuable knowledge and lived experience who have a right to access and transform the places they inhabit (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Webb, 2013). This conception resists the dominant construction of the public as incapable,

ignorant, and in need of control, and enables the possibility for residents to practice active participation. In this chapter, I outline the implications this study holds for considering placemaking as a tool for resisting privatization, assessing and evaluating placemaking processes, amplifying the input of community members who have been historically underrepresented in decision-making, and considering the value of public institutions and spaces for civic life.

Placemaking as a Tool for Resisting Privatization

In an era of private affluence and public impoverishment (Judt, 2010) with escalating levels of economic inequality (Wolff, 2017), economic segregation (Reardon & Bischoff, 2016), loneliness (Cigna, 2018), and antidemocratic attitudes (Foa & Mounk, 2017), attention to bottom-up community spaces is needed. This study points to the potential for placemaking to resist processes of privatization by facilitating place attachment, sense of community, civic responsibility, and civic engagement.

First, in facilitating place attachment, contributing to a sense of embeddedness and bondedness to place, placemaking runs counter to processes of privatization characterized by the commodification of place. Commodification occurs when a good is constructed as an object to be sold or traded (Arfken, 2017). While public interests conceptualize place and its associated resources by their *use value*, or ability to meet material needs and support community values and activities, private interests conceptualize place in terms of *exchange value*, or ability to generate profit (Harvey, 1978). An attachment to place asserts use value over exchange value, resisting the

neoliberal market logic that incentivizes disinvestment of public places and programs (Boggs, 2000; Dirlik, 1999).

Second, in facilitating a sense of community and civic responsibility, placemaking resists the alienation that stems from dominant neoliberal values of hyper-individualism and self-reliance. Cultivating a sense of connectedness and belonging to other individuals in a shared place and a developing a commitment to collective welfare is critical for solidarity and cooperation (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Drury & Reicher, 2005). Research also suggests that social capital contributes to higher quality intergroup contact conditions and leads to more positive attitudes towards out-groups (Fisher, 2015), paving the way for more inclusionary social structures and policies. Whereas fragmentation and segregation degrade opportunities for collective knowledge and restrict access to resources and social life for marginalized communities, sense of community and civic responsibility provide an important pathway to collective mobilization (Christens, 2012).

Finally, in facilitating intentions for civic engagement, placemaking processes resist the passivity and depoliticization associated with privatized settings. Scholars suggest that everyday environments are rarely designed to be responsive to the needs and interests of everyday people (Mitchell, 1995; Whyte, 1980; Zukin, 1998). Instead, they are frequently designed to avoid uncertainty and minimize the possibility of encountering difference (Reed, 1996; Low, 2001). Public participation is reduced to passive observation and consumption, while decision-making is left to policymakers, planners, and investors. Environmental psychologist Reed (1996) argued that our

environments are becoming increasingly automatic, prescribed, and pre-packaged in order to “fit people into place” for the sake of productivity and control, rather than respond to the needs and assets of their inhabitants. He writes,

> In urban, rural, and suburban American, we are decreasingly capable of organizing environments that afford either a supportive surrounding for our work or a convivial surrounding for other forms of human interaction. Worse, few of us have had the experience of trying to make and shape such places; therefore, fewer and fewer of us cherish the hope that we might work toward the goal of making better places." (1996, pp. 66-67)

This study’s finding that participation in an interactive, responsive museum setting was linked to intentions for civic action provides evidence for the potential of placemaking to pave the way for social change. By increasing intentions to vote, write letters to public officials, and participate in community meetings about social issues, a civically engaged public has the potential to create more equitable places and policies that better reflect the needs and desires of everyday people.

Assessing and Evaluating Placemaking Processes

The relationship between people and place shapes access to resources, interactions between people, and the opportunities of residents to participate in the decisions that affect their wellbeing. Placemaking is rooted in the simple but radical notion that everyday people, places, and actions matter, and that the public is fundamentally agentic, relational, embodied, and emplaced. This study provides empirical evidence for “critical placemaking” (Toolis, 2017) as a way for everyday people to connect to place and to each other, and to strengthen their civic voices to make change in their communities. These findings elucidate the theorized relationships between psychosocial processes and outcomes for those engaged in

community-oriented, participatory settings, and advance understanding of how these placemaking processes—which remain understudied despite receiving a great deal of funding and attention outside academia—actually work.

This study holds practical relevance for community organizations and policymakers interested in funding or developing more inclusive and participatory community settings. By collecting feedback regarding barriers, needs, and assets from community stakeholders and measuring processes and outcomes informed by the theoretical framework for placemaking and the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History's theory of change, this study offered data-driven insight into the effectiveness of placemaking processes in a particular context, and highlighted areas for improvement. As federal funding agencies have increasingly called for evidence-based reporting for interventions implemented by researchers (National Science Foundation, 2010) and community organizations (National Association for State Community Service Programs, n.d.), psychological theories and methods offer valuable tools for evaluation and assessment. Assessment and evaluation are important in ensuring that institutional goals, practices, and outcomes are in alignment and that public programs are accountable to the community. Assessment involves identifying community stakeholders' needs and assets, while evaluation involves measuring and analyzing performance indicators that map onto an institution's theory of change (National Association for State Community Service Programs, n.d.). If cultural institutions claim public service as a central component of

their mission, it is critical that their programs are informed by and created with the public, and that they regularly collect data to reflect on outcomes.

Amplifying the Voices of Underrepresented Community Members

Empirical research on attendance and leadership in cultural institutions shows that the benefits of these spaces are enjoyed primarily by a privileged segment of the public, while historically marginalized communities continue to face barriers to access, inclusion, and participation in resource-rich settings (NEA, 2015). This disparity contributes to diminished visibility of the concerns and goals held by marginalized communities. In addition, community organizations often gather feedback measuring program outcomes and satisfaction from current users, which neglects the perceptions of non-participating individuals, who may be most likely to perceive the institution as unfamiliar, unwelcoming, or irrelevant. Input must be sought outside the walls of the institution to consider the needs and assets of the broader community. In this study, community conversations with low-income residents and residents of color brought these needs and assets into sharper focus, illuminating the ways in which dominant cultural narratives and patterns of exclusion rooted in past experiences worked to limit their access and participation. These conversations emphasized the importance of intentional outreach for underrepresented populations, diverse cultural and linguistic representation in institutional leadership and content, affordability, and informal, hands-on learning.

It is important that all stakeholder groups who inhabit and use a place or program are engaged as partners in the process, and that steps are taken to identify and amplify

the voices of marginalized communities. After all, they are the ones who possess first-hand experience and knowledge of exclusion, and their expertise is necessary in enhancing equity. As Dewey put it, “The man who wears the shoe knows best that it pinches and where it pinches” (1927/2016, p. 223).

Considering the Value of Public Institutions and Spaces on Civic Life

These studies offer a reflection on the value of public institutions and spaces for civic life. As the public realm continues to be defunded and disassembled by privatization, what do we stand to lose? Are these spaces worth saving? Are museums and cultural institutions, purportedly public goods, really “public” and are they really “good”?

Scholars have long theorized that dominant cultural institutions such as museums have served an inherently exclusive function, imparting value onto elite cultural forms and practices and devaluing non-dominant forms and practices, and portraying these distinctions as natural and deserved (Bourdieu, 1979/1984; Bourdieu & Darbel, 1997; Stephen, 2001). In so doing, these institutions have established a hierarchical distinction between “low culture” and “high culture.” The former is characterized by accessibility, usefulness, and embodied participation and enjoyment. Ryan Fedderson, an artist of American Indian heritage, noted,

> In most indigenous cultures, art… was something that you touched, it was something that you used, it was something that was part of a ritual or an action, it was something for the community and it wasn't for one person to collect. (Walsh, 2017, para. 4)

In contrast, “high culture” is characterized by restraint and detachment, what Bourdieu describes as “the negation of the world” and “the refusal of any sort of

involvement, any 'vulgar' surrender to easy seduction and collective enthusiasm…." (1979/1984, p. 35). Such an orientation is evidenced in marginalized participants' experiences of museums as constraining, stifling, sterile, and intimidating.

The privileging of form over function that defines high-brow culture is used to enhance the status of the elite by signifying an excess of time and material resources enabled by a "distance from necessity," a freedom from the immediacy of attending to basic needs. Bourdieu writes, "The aesthetic disposition is one dimension of a distant, self-assured relation to the world and to others" (1979/1984, p. 56). This analysis resonates with the work of cultural psychologists Adams and colleagues who trace the origins of Western values of individualism and autonomy to a separation from context that accompanies wealth accumulation, extracted from a disenfranchised majority (e.g., Adams & Estrada-Villalta, 2017; Adams & Salter, 2007). In this view, freedom is defined as independence from material and social constraints—an escape from the bonds to place and relationship to fellow humans (Dewey, 1927/2016). Achieving this freedom is only possible for a few at the expense of the rest, thus requiring the production of an alienated, docile majority to exploit, as well as settings that will promote individualism and passivity to make this possible.

A contrasting view of freedom, advanced by Dewey (1927/2016), Freire (2005), and Martín-Baró (1994), is defined by escaping the bonds of dominant ideology so as "to read the surrounding reality and to write one's own history" (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 40). Achieving this freedom is a collective undertaking, and only possible *through* relationship with place and fellow humans, as well as settings

that will make this possible. Dewey writes, “Fraternity, liberty, and equality isolated from communal life are hopeless abstractions” (1927/2016, p. 176). This study speaks to the potential of local, experiential, bottom-up, community-oriented settings to constitute more rooted, dialogic, socially responsible, active members of the public, who can in turn shape those settings to be more responsive to their needs and interests.

Conclusion

In the face of growing economic inequality and widening social divides, it is critical to understand how public places and programs can work to cultivate individual and societal well-being by promoting equity, inclusion, and participation. This research shows how placemaking processes link individuals to place, to each other, and to opportunities for action. Although the public realm has yet to realize full inclusion and participation, placemaking aims to create sites of common ground where community members can jointly construct knowledge beyond their individual experience to consider the shared problems and solutions to the issues they face, allowing them to construct new stories of “us” and stories of “here.”

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Appendix A

Questionnaire administered to museum visitors

Intro text:

You are invited to take part in a research survey conducted by Erin Toolis from the department of Psychology at UC Santa Cruz. Eligible participants include people over the age of 18 who live in Santa Cruz County.

The MAH strives to be a welcoming place for all members of our community, and the purpose of this survey is to get a snapshot of who is coming to the museum today. This brief questionnaire asks about visitors' sense of place, social ties, community participation, attitudes, experience with the MAH, and basic demographic info. You can skip any questions that you don't want to answer, and you can quit at any time without penalty.

This survey will take about 10 minutes. As a thank you for sharing your feedback with us, you will receive a gift card for a free scoop of ice cream or a free slice of pizza.

Your answers to these questions will be confidential. At the end of the survey, we will ask if you're interested in being contacted for a follow-up conversation in the future. However, your answers will still remain anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts!

Please click "next" to continue the survey.

To be asked by survey administrator before beginning:

1.	Date & time recorded by survey program	
2.	Do you currently live in Santa Cruz County?	Yes……..……..…1 No……..……0 (→ TERMINATE SURVEY)
3.	Are you over the age of 18?	Yes……...…1 No……..…0 (→ TERMINATE SURVEY)
4.	Are you just arriving or just leaving the museum?	Arriving……..…0 (→ BEFORE CONDITION) Leaving……..…1 (→ AFTER CONDITION)

First, we'd like to ask a few questions about your visit today.

5.	Is this your first time visiting the MAH?	Yes……..……..…1 No……..……0

6.	(IF NOT FIRST TIME VISIT) How often do you visit the MAH?	About once a year or less…1 Several times a year…….2 About every two months…..3 About once a month…….4 About twice a month…..…..5 More than twice a month….6
7.	(IF NOT FIRST TIME VISIT) Are you a member of the MAH?	Yes……...…….…1 No……..……0
8.	(IF "AFTER" CONDITION) During your visit, did you: [Check all that apply]	Watch a performance…….1 Create something……..…2 Spend time with family or friends..3 Have a conversation with someone you didn't know before……..…4 Have a conversation with someone of a different cultural background than yourself.....…..5 View one or more exhibition …..6 Encounter any art, history, ideas or experiences that were new or unfamiliar to you….……..…7 Visit Abbott Square ……9 Something else: _____ …10
9.	(IF "AFTER" CONDITION) How long did you spend in the museum today?	Less than 15 minutes……...…1 Between 15 – 30 minutes .....….2 Between 31 minutes – 60 minutes…….…… 3 Between 61 minutes – 1 ½ hours…….……..4 Between 1 hour 31 minutes - 2 hours…….…….5 Over 2 hours…….……6
10. 11. 12.	(IF "AFTER" CONDITION) One a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not at all and 5 being a lot), to what degree did you: Feel comfortable being here? Feel comfortable asking questions about the exhibitions or activities? Feel able to express yourself through the activities offered?	1 – Not at all……1 2……2 3 - Somewhat……..…3 4……4 5- A lot……..……5
13.	(IF "AFTER" CONDITION) Are you leaving the MAH with an impulse for being more creative in your own life or work?	Yes ……... 2 No ……. 0 I'm not sure ……. 1

Now, we'd like to ask about your attitudes, beliefs, and engagement in the community.

First, we'd like to ask about your feelings about Santa Cruz as a place.

Rate how much you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
14. I like living in the Santa Cruz area.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I feel attached to the Santa Cruz area.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I would be very sorry if I had to move to another area.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. When I've been away for a while, I really want to come back.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I really feel at home in the Santa Cruz area.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. When I'm away, I miss the Santa Cruz area.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. This is my favorite area to live in.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. When I'm away, I'm happy to come back.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

These next questions will ask you about your sense of community in Santa Cruz.

Rate how much you agree with the following statements about Santa Cruz:

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
22. This community helps me fulfill my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23. I feel like a member of this community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I belong in this community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I have a say about what goes on in my community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I feel connected to this community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I have a good bond with others in this community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In this section, you will be asked about your community involvement and attitudes.

In the next 3 months, how many times do you think you will:

	Not at all	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5+ times
28. Sign a petition?	0	1	2	3	4	5
29. Write a letter or make a telephone call to influence a policy or issue?	0	1	2	3	4	5
30. Attend an event sharing information about community services?	0	1	2	3	4	5
31. Have an in-depth, face-to-face conversation about an issue affecting your community?	0	1	2	3	4	5
32. Attend a public meeting to advocate for a policy change?	0	1	2	3	4	5
33. Attend a meeting to gather information about a neighborhood issue?	0	1	2	3	4	5

Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
34. I feel responsible for my community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. I believe I should make a difference in my community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. I believe that I have a responsibility to help underprivileged community members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. I am committed to serve in my community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. I believe that all citizens have a responsibility to their community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. I believe that it is important to be informed of community issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. I believe that it is important to volunteer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate the level to which you agree or disagree with each statement:

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
41. I enjoy meeting people who come from backgrounds very different from my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. It is hard for a community to function effectively when the people involved come from very diverse backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	*REVERSE SCORE							
43.	I prefer the company of people who are very similar to me in background and expressions. *REVERSE SCORE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44.	Cultural diversity within a group makes the group more interesting and effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45.	I find it difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture. *REVERSE SCORE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Next, we will ask you a few questions about American society and social issues that you may agree or disagree with. Please tell us how you feel about each statement.

		Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
46.	Resources are distributed fairly in our society. *REVERSE SCORE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

		Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
47.	Societal forces (e.g., public policies, resource allocation, human rights) affect individuals' health and well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48.	State and federal policies affect individuals' access to quality education and resources.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

49. State and federal policies affect individuals' access to social services.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. Societal forces (e.g., public policies, resource allocation, human rights) affect individuals' educational performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To close, please tell us about yourself by choosing the option that best describes you.

51. What is your age?: _____	52. What is your gender? Man…….....…1 Woman…..……...….2 Non-binary..…….....3 Different identity:_____... 99
53. Which of the following describes your race/ethnicity? (Choose all that apply)	Asian-American or Pacific Islander……..…1 Black/African American…….….2 Latinx/Hispanic.....……..…3 Native American, indigenous, or Alaskan Native……..…4 White/European American……..…5 More than one race……6 Or, if you don't see yourself in the list above, write in how you prefer to identify:_____…….99
54. What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Less than 5th grade……1 Completed between 6th and 8th grade…….…..…2 High school diploma or GED…….....3 Technical, trade, or vocational school after high school…….……4 Some college but no degree……..…..….5 Two-year Associate's degree……..…..6 Four-year Bachelor's degree……...…..7 Some postgraduate or professional schooling after graduating college, but no postgraduate degree…….8 Postgraduate or professional degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD)…….9

55. What is your household income?	Less than $10,000……..……1 $10,000 to $14,999……2 $15,000 to $24,999……3 $25,000 to $34,999……4 $35,000 to $49,999……5 $50,000 to $74,999……6 $75,000 to $99,999……7 $100,000 to $149,999……8 $150,000 to $199,999……9 $200,000 or more……10 Prefer not to answer……77
56. How long have you lived in Santa Cruz county?	Less than a year.....1 1-5 years…….....…2 6-10 years…….....…3 11-15 years…….....…4 16-20 years…….....…5 21-25 years…….....…6 Over 25 years…….....…7
57. Do you own or rent the house/apartment in which you live?	Own……..1 Rent……..…2 Other……..…..99
58. How would you identify your general political outlook?	Very conservative……1 Moderately conservative……....2 Middle-of-the-road……...3 Moderately liberal…….……4 Very liberal……5 Other:_____.....99 Prefer not to answer……..77
59. What is your zip code?	95060……....1 95062….....2 95065……3 Other:_____....99
60. (IF ZIP CODE = 95060, 95062, 95065) What neighborhood do you live in?: _____	
61. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your visit to the MAH today?	

Appendix B

Focus Group Screener

Welcome page:

Thank you for your interest in the Museum Experiences Project. We would like to ask you a few questions to see if you might be eligible for our research study. We are holding a series of conversations with residents of Beach Flats and Lower Ocean neighborhoods who have not visited the Museum of Art and History in over 5 years in order to learn more about perceptions of the museum, what reasons make you more or less likely to visit the museum, and how the museum can be improved.

It is very important to the success of this research that we get input from a wide variety of people. If you are eligible and volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 1 ½ hour group conversation with other community members and a UCSC research team, where we will guide a conversation about perceptions and experiences of museums. Participants will receive a $30 gift card. Free childcare and snacks will be provided at the focus group.

If you are not eligible for the study, we will not contact you again for this project.

The screening will take about five minutes. We will ask you basic demographic questions like how you identify in terms of age, race, and gender, and also about the neighborhood you live in. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or are uncomfortable answering, and you may stop at any time. Your participation in the screening is voluntary.

Your answers will be confidential. No one will know your answers except for the research team.

If you are interested in completing the screening survey, please fill out the following pages.

If you are not interested in completing the screening survey, we thank you for your time and interest.

Please click "next" to continue the survey.

What is your age? : _____	
In the past 12 months, have you ever visited the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (MAH) located downtown?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
What is your gender?	☐ Man ☐ Woman ☐ Non-binary ☐ Different identity:_____
How do you identify your race/ethnicity? (Choose all that apply)	☐ Asian American or Pacific Islander ☐ Black/ African American ☐ Latinx/ Hispanic ☐ Native American, Indigenous, or Alaskan Native ☐ White/ European American ☐ Other: _____
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	☐ Less than 5th grade ☐ Completed between 6th and 8th grade ☐ High school diploma or GED ☐ Technical, trade, or vocational school after high school ☐ Some college but no degree ☐ Two-year Associate's degree ☐ Four-year Bachelor's degree ☐ Some postgraduate or professional schooling after graduating college, but no postgraduate degree ☐ Postgraduate or professional degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD)

How long have you lived in Santa Cruz county?	☐ Less than a year ☐ 1-5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐ Over 10 years
Please choose the neighborhood where you live: 	☐ Lower Ocean ☐ Beach Flats ☐ Other: _____ ___
If eligible, you will be contacted to participate in a 1 ½ hour focus group in English or in Spanish. What is your language preference?	☐ English ☐ Spanish

Please provide the following contact information:

Name: _____

Phone number: ( ) - _____

Email address: _____

Thank you for answering the screening questions. We will review your responses and contact you if you are eligible to confirm your interest in participating and set up a time to schedule the focus group. If you are not eligible for the study, we will not contact you again for this project.

If you have questions about this research, please contact Erin Toolis, Graduate Student, 1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064, eetoolis@ucsc.edu. You may also contact the faculty member supervising this work: Dr. Phil Hammack, at hammack@ucsc.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Compliance Administration at the University of California at Santa Cruz at 831-459-1473 or orca@ucsc.edu.

Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire for Focus Group Participants

1. How long have you lived in Santa Cruz County? :	What is your age? :
2. Have you ever visited the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (MAH) located downtown?	☐ Yes, over a year ago ☐ Yes, over 5 years ago ☐ No, I have never visited ☐ Unsure
3. What is your gender? ☐ Man ☐ Woman ☐ Non-binary ☐ Different identity: _____	
4. How do you identify your race/ethnicity?	
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?	☐ Less than 5th grade ☐ Completed between 6th and 8th grade ☐ High school diploma or GED ☐ Technical, trade, or vocational school after high school ☐ Some college but no degree ☐ Two-year Associate's degree ☐ Four-year Bachelor's degree ☐ Some postgraduate or professional schooling after graduating college, but no postgraduate degree ☐ Postgraduate or professional degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, MD, JD)
6. What is your yearly household income?	☐ Less than $10,000 ☐ $10,000 to $14,999 ☐ $15,000 to $24,999

	☐ $25,000 to $34,999 ☐ $35,000 to $49,000 ☐ $50,000 to $75,000 ☐ $75,000 or more ☐ Prefer not to answer
7. Are you the parent or caregiver of any children (under 18) who regularly live with you?	☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix D

Focus Group Semi-structured Protocol

INTRODUCTION

Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with us - we value your time and opinions. We are holding a series of conversations, like this one today, to learn more about residents' familiarity with the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, what they think of museums, reasons that make you more or less likely to visit the museum, and ideas about what activities, programs, and partnerships could make the museum a better community space for everyone.

After all of our discussions are completed, we will identify common patterns in the responses. This information will be used to inform research papers and presentations, and will help the Museum of Art and History to improve its programs.

Before getting started:

- This conversation will last about 1 ½ hours.
- We value everyone's perspectives and want everyone to feel comfortable sharing as little or as much as they want to. You can skip any question that you want to but if we haven't heard from you, we may check in to see if there is anything you'd like to share. To make sure that everyone has a chance to talk, we might ask you to wait if you've shared a lot.
- There are no right or wrong answers. Feel free to share your view even if it differs from what someone else has said. Everyone's experiences are important and we are interested in hearing diverse perspectives.
- You can skip any question that you want to and stop participating at any time. Regardless of how many questions you answer or whether or not you complete the discussion, you will receive a gift card.
- We will record the audio of our conversation and will be taking notes to help us remember everything, but no one's real names will be used. Quotes from this focus group might be used in reports, but they will not be associated with your real name.
- This conversation is confidential and private. We ask that you respect the confidentiality of everyone here by not repeating what is discussed outside this room.

Questions

1) Ice breaker
    a. What is your favorite place to go in Santa Cruz to relax or have fun when you have free time, and why?
2) General perceptions of museums
    a. [General perceptions of museums] What comes to mind when you think about museums? How would you describe museums?
        i. When you picture visitors at museums, who do you picture would be there?
        ii. When you picture staff working at the museum, what do you imagine that they are like?
        iii. What do you think the goal of museums should be?
        iv. Do you think museums have anything to offer your community? What do they have to offer?
    b. [Childhood experiences] Did you ever go to a museum growing up?
        i. [If yes] Was it a positive or negative experience? Why?
    c. [Recent experiences] In the past few years, have you visited a museum with your family, either in Santa Cruz or another community?
        i. [If yes] What was your experience like?
        ii. [If yes] Have you ever visited a museum and had a positive experience?
        iii. [If yes] Have you ever visited a museum and had a negative experience?
3) Perceptions of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History
    a. [Familiarity] Have you heard of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (located downtown) and their programs?
        i. Where did you hear about it?
    b. [Perceptions] What are some of the stories you have heard about the MAH? What do you think about the MAH?

i. [Friends/family] Do you have friends or family who have gone to the MAH? What were their experiences like?

ii. What are some positive things you have heard about the MAH?

iii. What are some negative things you have heard about the MAH?

iv. If you went to the MAH this Friday, what are some of the things you would expect to see there?

v. If you went to the MAH with your friends or family this Friday, do you think they would enjoy it, or not? Why?

vi. When you imagine the MAH, who would you expect to see there? Would you expect to see members of your community there?

4) Barriers to access, representation, and participation

a. [Previous interest in museum] Have you ever thought about going to the museum? What are some of the reasons that made you think about going?

b. [Barriers] What are some of the reasons that have made it difficult, uncomfortable, or not at the top of your list to visit the MAH?

i. [Comparison] If you had a few hours to hang out, what are some of the reasons why you would choose to go to [place named at beginning as enjoyable, e.g., Boardwalk, movie theater] rather than the MAH?

ii. [Probing inclusion] When you imagine the MAH, would you expect it to be a place where you would feel welcome? Why or why not?

iii. [Probing relevance] When you imagine what is going on at the MAH, would you expect it to be interesting or meaningful to you? Why or why not?

iv. [Probing community] If you were to go to the MAH, would it easy or difficult to find friends or family to go with you?

v. [Probing cost] What is your guess as to how much it costs to visit the MAH? [After participants answer, let them know that the cost to get into the MAH is $10, $8 for students, free for children under 5, and free for everyone on the first Friday of every month.] What do you think of this cost? Is it lower or higher than you think it should be? Is this a price you feel okay paying?

vi. [Probing time] If you have a limited amount of free time during your week, would you see going to the MAH as a meaningful way to spend your time?

vii. [Probing location] Is the location of the MAH accessible? Is it easy for you and your friends or family to get to? Why or why not?

5) Suggestions to make the museum more relevant, welcoming, and empowering

   a. [Enhancing inclusion] What kinds of things could the museum do to make you feel more welcome and comfortable going to the MAH?

   b. [Enhancing relevance] What kinds of events and activities and programs could the MAH offer that would be meaningful and exciting to you and your friends and family? What would grab your interest?

      i. What kind of arts, crafts, music, and activities do you participate in with your friends and family?

      ii. Where do you go to practice or experience creativity, arts, and music?

      iii. What kinds of cultural festivals are valuable to you and your community?

      iv. Where do you go to take part in cultural practices and activities?

      v. What are some things that you do or places where you go to connect with your history?

      vi. What are some of the things that you do or places where you go to connect with your friends and family?

   c. [Enhancing partnerships] What are organizations, programs, centers, or groups that you participate in that you think the MAH should partner/collaborate with?

6) Do you have any questions for me? Is there anything I missed?

7) Closing

   a. To close, I want you to think about your favorite places in Santa Cruz. Think about a place in the city where you feel valued and you feel like you belong. Now, tell us about that place and why it makes you feel that way.