BELONGING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

by

JESÚS ALEJANDRO TIRADO

(Under the Direction of H. James Garrett)

ABSTRACT

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) connect the creation of a "good citizen" to the foundations of a "good society" (p. 238) as long as being a "good citizen" means being personally responsible, voting, or being active in one's community. In today's political climate, these seem like good starts and valuable endeavors, but they lack a critique on how we understand the different facets of our society and the unequal ways we get to belong in society. This dissertation begins by asking the questions how to do we belong and how do we learn that belonging? I will seek answers through research and investigation of the activities and on-goings in a social studies classroom and activist group in Georgia, the heart of the New South. Using a multi-sited case study method, I observed these spaces, interviewed participants, and considered how I was changing these spaces with my questions, my research, and my presence. What I saw in these spaces was dynamic, as students and teachers, youths and adults all exhibited elevated levels of understanding about the complex ways that membership is parceled out unfairly amongst people. In the classroom, I observed lessons about racialized injustices and violence where students pushed for a wide expanse of conversation topics and a white student-teacher struggled to find the best place for her in this conversation. At the activist group, I saw amazing testimonios that

taught the larger community, and me, about how my participants were experiencing the politics and rhetoric of the border and its divisions. These exhibitions of power, understanding, and learning were amazing to see and think about. Masuoka and Junn's (2013) concept of belonging and Butler's (2010) theory of precarity provided the theoretical lens to understand this data. This, for me, has resulted in new questions about how teachers can approach citizenship education and learning about the world, and how they can learn to use the opportunity they have with students to ask deep questions and think about the power they have as teachers to create a "good society". The fact that students and teachers are constantly confronting difficult issues of membership, citizenship, and belonging means that we should invite more complexity and thinking about these issues into the classroom instead of ignoring them. Inviting students and teachers to be complex thinkers and learners about the world needs to start with an acknowledgement and appreciation that they are already engaged in this kind of thinking of learning and need to prepare our classrooms to engage with these questions instead of thinking students aren't ready.

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DEDICATION

To Amy and Calliope, my greatest teachers and inspirations

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INTRODUCTION

One of the classes I observed was going through a PowerPoint presentation about migrations and cultural exchange in the wake of imperialism when they paused at the image below. As they examined the image to find details, the majority of the class focused on connecting the history of imperialism to the migrations and cultural mixing that followed. As they kept looking at the image, they found more and more details. The mix of cultures fascinated students as they found more and more symbols of African, Indian, and British cultures existing alongside each other. Sameer, a South Asian student in the class, chimed in, "I can see myself there…" He laughed and pointed at the board, asking, "How can white people allow this?" Students ignored the comments and the teacher brought the class back to the content on the board. The class then pivoted to reading primary sources about Japanese migrations to Brazil and Italian migrations to Argentina and left the image entirely.

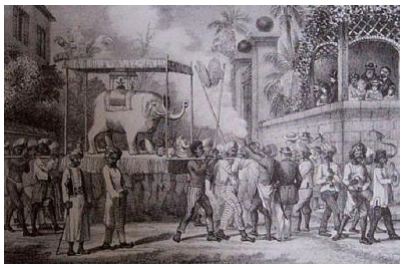

Image 1. Hindu festival for indentured servants, from the PowerPoint about 19th Century Global Migrations shown to class.

After the moment passed, I thought about Sameer and his place in this classroom, the school, and the New South. Why did he feel compelled to share these comments? What did that moment mean for him and his place in the class and the curriculum? What did this interaction teach, or try to teach, the classroom? Why did Sameer feel compelled to reference "white people" and how (inter)actions of nonwhites are often monitored or surveilled? This small moment teemed with information, enactments, references, complications, and challenges about how people learn about their place in the world and how they enact what they know about their place in the world.

Before starting this dissertation, I had many questions about belonging and citizenship given how I was seeing the world and my origins as the child of Mexican immigrants. Seeing the nation debate over police brutality, Black Lives Matter, free speech, the alt-right, and the Women's March displayed some of these controversies and fault lines over how people belong in this nation and what does that mean. Belonging, as a theory, means more than just being a part of a place or feeling comfortable as it refers to the political and cultural abilities that we have as we move through space and exist in that space and attempt to contribute as well. As the child of Mexican immigrants, these questions have also been very personal, as I witnessed my parents and I trying to find our places in the world. Formal education has been inadequate in answering this question and instead created more questions and concerns. Informal learning spaces offered many lessons and ideas, too, but I found the lessons here to be problematic as well.

It is clear to me that we are constantly working on how to belong in space with others. Masuoka and Junn (2013) define belonging as the "designations of some as deserving and eligible for membership and of others as unworthy and unwanted intertwined with how race perception has developed" (p. 1). These perceptions have cultural and political ramifications and

teach us about what matters in the world at large and where our place is in it. We are constantly trying to figure out where we fit in the world as individuals and with the others around us.

At the contentious border between the United States and Mexico these tensions are evident for Latinx people who find themselves caught between the two nations and the methods of attempted control. Near the political and geographic edges, there exists an enlarged "border zone" extending one hundred miles into the United States that grants American Border Patrol agents expanded abilities to invade people's rights (Misra, 2018). This zone excuses practices that target certain groups and disrupts basic legal practices and protections. There has also been a recent declaration of a national emergency to build a wall that aims to separate our nation from our southern neighbor (Taylor & Naylor, 2019), which draws lines through people, families, and spaces (Anzaldúa, 1987/2012). From the two women in Montana who were detained for speaking Spanish (O'Brien, 2019) to the tragic cases of family separation at the US-Mexico border (Lavandera, Morris, & Simon, 2018), questions about how we belong and move through the world are becoming more pertinent and, sadly, more tragic and dangerous. Beyond the issues associated with this particular border, these tensions appear as well in the several attempted Muslim bans in recent years. Questions about membership in the nation, and belonging, are constantly being asked and enacted, especially for those who find themselves minoritized.

Amid Black Lives Matter, family separations, walls, and bans, there lie important questions about how we move through the world and learn about our place in it. Like Sameer, we are all always pushing against and in how we fit in the world. This inquiry coalesced around two research questions: *How do we learn the curriculum(curricula) of belonging?* and *How is the curriculum (broadly defined) both constraining and enabling of particular versions and enactments of citizenship?* These questions reflect my curiosities about how the fault lines of

citizenship, belonging, and membership were impacting people and the spaces where we were meant to learn about these concepts. A lot of citizenship education takes on a universalistic and democratic sentimentality that reflects an aspiration and not the reality of how membership in a society works and is exercised. Somewhere between the universal message that we all belong and the reality that belonging is enacted unequally, there are questions about what kind of learning is occurring and what is having an impact on shaping how we see the world.

As I wondered about the connections between the controversies and how people were living, I looked to how social studies education and citizenship education were addressing this issue. Ladson-Billings (2004) made the claim that all education is citizenship education and argued that when we learn about our place in the world, we are learning citizenship. Ladson-Billings stated, "the basis of one's citizenship is an outgrowth of the prevailing worldview of his or her society" (p. 100) and "all education is citizenship education" (p. 120). Our many and varied identities, including ethnoracial, gender, sexual, and socioeconomic entangle and complicate this process. In her discussion of citizenship and civics education, Levinson (2012) challenged schools and teachers to provide an education "to teach young people knowledge and skills to upend and reshape power relationships, through public, political, and civic action, not just private self-improvement" (p. 13). Challenging schools and curricula to fashion and think about how they are presenting the world and how to change it is no small task.

To accomplish this, I paired the theory of belonging so that I could examine and gain perspective on the currents and trends of citizenship as I was seeing them in the field. Citizenship, as a legal concept, becomes entangled with the state and its mechanisms, whereas belonging allows for a more holistic approach that can help capture and theorize how people move through space. Belonging allows for an examination of the various social facets that

impact how someone moves through the world. It does not denote membership but rather it is part of a spectrum of membership and the different aspects of what Masuoka and Junn (2013) call the "conditional welcome" (p. 7) for immigrants, and it questions their ability to belong. For them, questions of belonging comprise more relevant concerns and more holistic ones.

What goes into this kind of learning? Is this describing something beyond citizenship education? While many teachers may sympathize with and strive towards Levinson's noble aspiration to create schools and learning that changes students' ability to see and reform the world around them, the actual task becomes complicated and teachers struggle with the realities of what that looks like. Students, and adults, are constantly being taught about our place in the world through different structures. All of these lessons come together to form a complex matrix and allow democratic aspirations, pragmatism, and the state to all coexist as teachers of how people belong and allows their lesson to occur concurrently.

I wanted to know more about people and how these lessons become assembled and teach us about our belonging and how it gets enacted. A complex view aims to capture how people are learning about their own belonging and how that connects to citizenship. Westheimer and Kahne (2004), in their seminal article, outlined three different kinds of citizens, which they call "Personally responsible citizen," "Participatory citizen," and "Justice-oriented citizen" (p. 240). These orientations of citizenship follow with liberal traditions of placing the individual at the center of the considerations. This liberal orientation places the onus of action on the individuals and their power to change and challenge the various problems they see around them. Knight Abowitz and Hamish (2006), in their overview of citizenship discourse, found this same bias toward a liberal orientation and seeing individuals at the center of conceptualization and action. Having individual-centered thinking limits the concepts and the range of thought that can be

considered as we consider how belonging allows to see individuals in the context of the society that they are learning and living in.

A different orientation acknowledges the forces that drive us away from participation and from being a full participant in political life. Levinson (2012) discussed the forces that push her inner-city Boston students from participation, which include "ethnoracial minority, naturalized, and especially poor citizens" (p. 32) that find themselves and their communities on the outside of power structures and conversations. Solving this gap does not require more liberal, individually minded civic education, instead there needs to be an examination of how difference and power create this gap and how they push future and current citizens away from getting involved. Learning, including the content, context, and community, forms how belonging and the citizen are both created and exercised. These factors—the content, context, and community—come together to orchestrate how we learn about the world and our place in it.

Schools provide a very important setting for this learning. Irizarry and Brown (2014) made the claim that schools are political and important places where learning occurs along with unfortunate social sorting. Collins (2009) made a similar claim, reminding readers that schools are political and charged with educating the future generations and act as important negotiating spaces for students as well. Highlighting the political nature of sharing space and learning together is important as it allows for a variety of experiences to be examined. Valenzuela's (1999) work on the elements that produce subtractive school show that these elements can also bring about a negative community. Students in the school that Valenzuela observed experienced feeling demeaned and that they undervalued their values and community. Experiences all add up to the political nature of schooling and learning.

Teachers and adults bring their own views and perspectives on politics and education to the classroom. Urrieta and Reidel (2008) discussed that teachers stress their world view and political knowledge with their students. The authors explain that white teachers would emphasize the structure of the government but would not teach about ways that citizens could bring about change because they were emphasizing the passive nature of whiteness and being white, which did not help most of their students in the long run. This means that teachers pass down mostly knowledge that fits with what Urrieta and Reidel called "spectator democracy" (p. 99) instead of sharing or providing information about the racial and cultural dimensions of democracy. What teachers carry with them creates the contours of the classroom and the ideas that flow through it. Understanding that teachers have an opportunity to provide their students with information to engage in politics and see the world differently, and the fact that most don't utilize that option, means that there needs to an examination of what is being said in classrooms and what students and teachers are taking away from these interactions.

What and how lessons and pedagogies work are important questions for this research project. Content and pedagogy create boundaries around the thinking students can achieve. Rubin (2012) illustrated that often the information presented in classes can seem like all the information one needs to know on a subject. This limits the available thinking and the imagination about content areas and can omit important parts of learning. Rubin, citing work by Bloom and Ochoa (1996), claims that the standardized curriculum often leads students to think there are "simple answers to those questions we have about the nature of society" (Rubin, 2012, p. 22) when in reality, complex answers provide the needed space for this discussion. Students, and most other people, only dive into the political process that generates the standards. Learning,

depending on where and how it draws and frames its focus, can become trapped or frozen by the perspectives of those sharing it and their lack of imagination.

Starting with the premise that all learning is citizenship learning, thinking about how social studies education engages in these conversations begins with thinking about the curriculum. The curriculum also provides a profound place of action (or inaction) about citizenship and belonging to be (re)considered, learned, and enacted. Brown and Brown (2015) stated that "curriculum is about memory making, or the way a nation imagines and shapes what people come to know about the past and present. In a society founded on the notion of racial difference and inequality (Goldberg, 2002; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), curriculum is an apparatus that informs the narrative of race in the United States" (p. 104). The attention here is to the fact that the curriculum does a great deal to reify the structural problems and injustices of the nation that adopts it, which can include the continued injustice of racism in the United States. As the curriculum constructs notions about people and belonging, it reflects important dynamics about people but also an opportunity for those engaged with it to make new meanings and dynamics.

Parsing how understanding and seeing with belonging complicates how we see citizenship, complicates both concepts and reflects missed opportunities. Benhabib (2004) explained that some different features of citizens are "collective identity, privileges of political membership, and social rights and claims" (p. 145). These features exceed the powers and descriptions that might match the definitions provided by a government or a nation that often draws legal lines around citizenship as a tool to strict a society and create the boundaries that it desires to define itself. While this work pushes into how the dynamics of citizenship change and become complicated as we consider using belonging as another lens to understand these

challenges, it would be a mistake to ignore or underestimate the power of the state in these conversations. Goldberg (2002) reminds us that "power is to the state and the state to power as blood is the human body" (p. 9), meaning that the state was born out of power and will seek to protect its power as best it can and thus uphold racism and other means of sorting and differentiating people. Breaking down these different concepts that share a complex web with ideas of collective membership, social rights, political and state power reflect how complicated belonging and citizenship can be.

The fact that state power does not protect all people equally comes to the forefront of how we exercise how we belong. Flores and Benmayor (1997) connect problems of citizenship to the realities of inequity and belonging. They cite the troubled (and racialized) history of Latinxs in the nation and assert that the:

> The traditional legal definition of citizenship, a status conferred upon individuals by place of birth or by decree of the state and implying membership, with all of its accrued rights, benefits, and responsibilities, was too narrow for our purposes. Instead, we found the sociological and political notion of the citizen as a political subject a broader and more useful concept to describe the current realities of Latino communities. (pp. 10–11)

The complexities of citizenship begin with the legal ramification and certifications by the state and they extend beyond that as politic and cultural aspects get involved. The complexity needs to be maintained as we begin to consider all the ways that individuals do become subjects of the state, but it is not only through this means that people become subjects as politics, culture, and society play a role as well. The legal experience of Latinxs, and other marginalized peoples and groups, cannot be compatible with the democratic idea of citizenship that we all get to belong and practice citizenship, participation, and being in the same way. Race, gender, and sexual

orientation are just a few of the identities that change the enactment of citizenship and how resistance to this marginalization forms. Recognizing that people do not experience the same kind of citizenship and that categorization coincides with these different experiences means that different lenses can shed a light on both the impact of these differentiated experiences and how people adjust to their impact.

Categorization reveals how people experience differences in their access and exercise of citizenship because of how close marginalization is practiced with categorization. Masuoka and Junn (2013), in their exploration of the politics of belonging, dive into how race continues to determine the power allotted to groups of people. While the rhetoric of full and universal citizenship may be present, the limits of this citizenship are also clear and learned by people who benefit and suffer from this marginalization. Bonilla-Silva (2014), in his work *Racism without Racists*, portrayed how marginalized communities see their efforts for equality become sidelined and demeaned through ideas and rhetoric associated with what he calls *color-blind racism.* Color-blind racism allows many subtle and easy to miss signs of racism to continue as people boast that they do not see color and thus cannot be racist because they are blind to the issues of racism. Color-blind racism allows for some exclusionary forms of belonging to persist in public spaces and for those with power to claim no harm as they practice dangerous forms of exclusion. Belonging provides a good term for this project because it allows for an exploration of the different contours of the exclusions through belonging being seen and understood.

These limits are important for considering how citizenship gets employed in spaces and how that teaches us about our belonging. Dabach (2015) wrote about how issues with universal citizenship were erased from schools and students facing issues with the legal constrictions of citizenship omitted from these important conversations. Living and learning in the wake of

Plyler v. Doe (1982) means holding the contradictions of what schooling and growing up can mean for a diverse community in a complex state. *Plyler* complicates because it both protects the ability of undocumented youth to get an education and yet provides no clear path for those children to become citizens. All students, and adults for that matter, are stuck in varying degrees of complication. These complications, and many more, all contribute to the vast multiplicities of how we learn where we belong and how that belonging functions.

This project inquiries about those complications and how we learn them in the many spaces we use. The questions at the heart of this project—*How do we learn the curriculum(curricula) of belonging?* and *How is the curriculum (broadly defined) both constraining and enabling of particular versions and enactments of citizenship?*—frame the different ways in which we learn how we do (not) belong in the spaces where we exist. To research these questions, this work starts with deep dives into the concepts of citizenship, belonging, and precarity, and the theoretical perspective about the political orientation of vulnerability for specific groups. These dives will explore the different facets and challenges that come with inclusion and exclusion, and the shared and yet inequitable vulnerability that spreads across society. This work will also question how the curriculum, and social studies in particular, contribute to our belonging and how we feel about that belonging.

Following this introduction there will be chapters that take deeper dives into the needed academic literature, methodology and rationale, and some perspectives that this project reviewed in working with students and adults in different spaces. These spaces included both formal and informal learning environments, and dimensions of public and private learning. Understanding these different dimensions aims to bring about a deeper, richer, and complicated conceptualization of how notions of belonging and citizenship formed.

The next two chapters, on theory and academic literature, will assess, categorize, and appraise the current state of citizenship in social studies and present how concepts from political science and sociology, like belonging and precarity, offer new possibilities for social studies education. This has come with struggles and challenges that stem from a lack of drive to reconcile the differences between participatory citizenship and normative citizenship. Theories about citizenship, space, belonging, and Latina/o critical race theory will be introduced and described as to how they all have shaped this work and inquiry. The literature about marginalization, race, precarity, and belonging add complexity to the questions regarding citizenship and its different facets. This section will present these different elements and show how they come together to expose the terrain of how citizenship and belonging form, are thought about, and taught across the different spaces we enter.

The methodology section (chapter 4) will explain how data was generated, the spaces where it happened, and how it was analyzed. Case study methodology informed these practices and Grounded Theory informed the analysis. There was also great concern to make sure this project worked to maintain the humanizing efforts for the people who participated in this research. This section will illustrate how the project sought to answer the questions at the heart of this project. The different limitations of this project will be explained as they pertain to different challenges of the work. There will also be a discussion about how the participants changed the study and how their resistance pushed this project to change to respect the different spaces that were created and that I wanted to observe. The methods section aims to connect the work that I did to answer the questions about belonging, how we come to learning about our own belonging, and how I responded to the people in the field who were helping me answer these questions.

The last chapters will explore the results of data collection and analysis. This project will explore how belonging and citizenship become limited and liberated by the barriers created of learning, the specter of violence, and the power and potentiality of relationships. These features of citizenship and belonging hold complex meanings and realities as we are all involved and implicated in the lessons that were learned and taught in various spaces. Diving into some of these spaces and lessons opens them up to an inquiry about how this occurs and how we learn in these spaces. These two chapters will dive into learning and schooling and how dynamic changes and the arrangements belonging can be unsettled and remade, how violence unsettles our spaces, and how relationships inform these lessons. This list is not exhaustive, but it opens a window into these actions and questions of belonging.

The last chapter will summarize this work, the thoughts and ideas I've had while pursuing this line of inquiry and potential future avenues of thought and work. While this work may be limited in scope and limited in its ability to address the multiplicity of concerns about the complexities of citizenship and belonging, I know that I worked with classrooms that were attending to the needs of the students and helping push the educators in these spaces to improve their practice. This chapter will conclude by asking what it means to start social studies education with questions about belonging and a full consideration about how imagination shapes our belonging here, and it present some of the possibilities for future research and questions.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

To examine how the inclusions and exclusions within the experience of belonging and its enactments in formal and informal education spaces, many theories provided an important framework and lens for understanding the premise, generating data, and analysis. The theories that this chapter will explore include Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit), belonging, precarity, and space. Each section will explain the roots of the theoretical concept and how it will be operationalized for this study. These theories provide important vantage points for examining and understanding the many ways belonging presents inclusions and exclusions that people experience and learn. As this project attempts to address how we learn and enact pedagogies of citizenship and belonging, understanding the different theoretical perspectives will help uncover the facets of belonging.

Latina/o Critical Race Theory

Given the different tensions, from discrimination, racism, and other modes of division and marginalization, that come with examining belonging in the world, having a strong theoretical framework is necessary to contextualize those tensions and provide a framework for analysis. Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) provided a large theoretical framework for structural view of the different facets of belonging while also allowing the stories of people to come to the front of the research process. With its emphasis on both wide-angle analysis and generating data from the ground level, LatCrit provided a good theoretical perspective for thinking about this research and the data that would need to be generated to start to answer this

question. This section will outline some of the more noteworthy features of LatCrit, its critique of Liberalism and the position that racism is ordinary, and how LatCrit can coexist and work with the other theories and concepts, chiefly belonging, precarity, and space, that project seeks to utilize to answer the research questions.

LatCrit has a theoretical perspective that allows for inquiry into the racial dynamics and politics of belonging. With its origins in Critical Race Theory (CRT), LatCrit follows many of the same traditions, the most important among these being the ordinariness of racism, a critique of liberalism, and a call to action instead of incrementalism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). LatCrit moves into its own territory with a focus on moving beyond the black/white binary, "issues of immigration, language rights . . . internal colonialism, sanctuary for Latin American refugees, and census categories" (pp. 90–91). Both LatCrit, and CRT use counter-storytelling to challenge hegemonic ways of knowing and belonging, which will be explored and used throughout this dissertation, and LatCrit emphasizes the power of the *testimonio*, a person's account of the structures and events that have impacted their life, as a pedagogical tool to help reveal the injustices and problems in the world. These critiques question the underlying pedagogies of belonging and create a theoretical framework for understanding, bringing new knowledge into the academic conversation.

LatCrit's Critique of Liberalism

LatCrit, like CRT, offers a critique of the liberal order, which helps push this work to think about the collective experiences and tension of citizenship and belonging along with the individual ones. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) describe CRT's perspective on racism as making it "ordinary, not aberrational" (p. 7), maintaining that racism is a force that creates exclusions, societal tensions, and questions how and who gets to belong. Positioning it as "ordinary", places

racism into a theoretical space, and a practical one, which allows for examination of close and small interactions. Racism needs examination through large societal and institutional perspectives but also in small actions that every day make up problematic behaviors, ideas, and culture. Structural forms create exclusion, but so do small forms that occur every day. LatCrit and CRT's ability to examine both make them powerful theories to examine belonging.

The ways to resist these conformist lessons can come from the contributions of CRT and LatCrit. LatCrit stems from the traditions of critical race theory (CRT), which critiques racial oppression and the inadequacies of liberalism to challenge racialized structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT challenges that racism "is so enmeshed in the fabric of our social order, it appears both normal and natural to people in this culture" (Ladson-Billings, 2016, p. 18). CRT does not normalize the vice of racism; rather, it seeks for us to recognize that racism is systemic and endemic to our culture here. Racism represents a systematic marginalization and affects the development and capacity of all schools across the nation. In order to challenge racism, CRT offers space for a "critique of liberalism" because of "its emphasis on incrementalism" (Ladson-Billings, 2016, pp. 18–19), instead of change and agents of change. These two facets of CRT, and there are many more, emphasize how marginalization has occurred and works through race. To examine the racial contours of belonging, LatCrit offers a more useful perspective to consider how conditional welcome works today and the more negative aspects of belonging.

CRT and LatCrit's critique of liberalism relates to how racism gets positioned in our society and also how it relates to belonging. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) write that CRT "questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law" (p. 7). The authors' specific attention to these concepts frame how liberalism isolates the individual with reason and

rationality from the world around them. The authors expand this idea, saying "but if racism is embedded in our thought processes and social structures as deeply as many crits [CRT thinkers] believe, then the "ordinary business" of society—the routines, practices, and institutions we rely on to effect the world's work—will keep minorities in subordinate positions" (p. 22). Liberalism, and the rational thinking it encourages, ignores the racism that is endemic to the system. CRT and LatCrit contest these values by placing an emphasis on the stories of those who are living these struggles. By contextualizing and understanding racism as ordinary and as a complex social process, CRT and LatCrit allow new voices and ideas to enter the conversation about the ordinariness of racism and the failures of liberalism to address it.

LatCrit's Claim That Racism Is Ordinary and Complex

CRT and LatCrit build on their understanding of racism as ordinary and their critique of liberalism to challenge incrementalism. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) describe ordinary racism as "one of those many sudden, stunning, or dispiriting transactions that mar the days of women and folks of color" (p. 2). An ordinary-orientated understanding of racism opens up examination of racism to everyday lived forms of oppression and not just the large systemic ones. Asking for incremental change, according to CRT and LatCrit, allows for racism to persist and its ill effects to continue. CRT and LatCrit call for a challenge to these paradigms and ideas that would ask for change to come in pieces, ignoring the injustices they allow. For issues of belonging, CRT and LatCrit's critique of incrementalism challenge how we think about change and how reforms can be enacted. CRT and LatCrit allow there to be more examination of how belonging gets challenged in the society as well.

LatCrit extends the work of CRT by moving beyond the black/white binary, issues around immigration and colonization, and legal ramifications and framing. Understanding how

racism works and affects society needs careful examination, and LatCrit extends this perspective. Raible and Irizarry (2015) comment that "LatCrit challenges the standard Black/White binary that tends to limit considerations of race and racism" (p. 77). This challenge reflects a complex society that includes many races and facets to that racism. Black, brown, and yellow people encounter racism in different ways, and LatCrit extends the perspective of how racism is seen being enacted in society. The reality of racism is that the politics of belonging have often seen the experiences of the groups linked and their struggle to be used to maintain racial hierarchy. The myth of the "model minority," described by Masuoka and Junn (2013), positions the different races to compete with each other to achieve favor with the powers that be, in this case white supremacy. This very much unsettles an inclusive belonging as groups compete. LatCrit allows racism to be studied across many groups that struggle for their place in America to be recognized and valued.

The valuing of immigration and the oppressions that target it also position LatCrit as an incredibly useful theory for this inquiry, especially as we think about the problems of belonging. Theorists and thinkers recognize that oppression comes in many forms. LatCrit seeks to "argue further that class and racial oppression cannot account for oppression based on gender, language, or immigration status" (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 313). Oppression based on immigration status shares similarities with racial oppression, but according to LatCrit theorists, the two need to be distinct. Legal and cultural norms create oppression based on immigration status. Gonzalez and Portillos (2007) describe how immigration status excluded people from access to resources, like student loans, and what that means for the wealth of groups who have immigrant members. Sadly, oppression occurs across multiple categories of identity, not just race, as oppression also tends to be a focal point for immigration. LatCrit extends the perspective of how these

oppressive forces combat inclusive pedagogies of belonging and reinforce exclusionary pedagogies.

LatCrit's Valuing of People's Words and Experiences

LatCrit's extension of looking at oppression remains rooted in understanding and building knowledge through experience and how that examination defies oppression and establishes new knowledges; both LatCrit and CRT refer to this as the counter-story. The counter-story challenges oppression through a powerful telling of a story by "those people whose experiences are rarely told" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). These stories open how oppression comes into view and gets comprehended. CRT and LatCrit challenge the forces of oppression but also open spaces for new stories to take their place and to promote understanding their experience. This is a complex task, and Solórzano and Yosso comment that "many would discount the histories, experiences, and lives of people of color through majoritarian stories. Revealing the deficit discourse in majoritarian stories reveals White privilege, and this often is perceived as a threat to those who benefit from racism" (p. 37). Understanding how counter-stories peel back the layers of oppression and reveal these forces requires listening to people and being close to the ground. LatCrit and CRT open these possibilities by confronting oppression, allowing it to be complex, and generating data close to the people experiencing oppression. These values allow this dissertation to examine how people experience belonging and how they combat the forces that restrict their belonging.

For research in education, these facets have proven to be extremely useful in analyzing demanding situations that people are going through. Perez Huber (2015) utilized LatCrit to research and analyze how students who were DACAmented, meaning that they had received documentation through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program,

experienced the continued problems with the stringent policies about the border and policing in the United States. The article describes the effects and struggles of these students using their language and words through the LatCrit theoretical framework. This framework's emphasis is on valuing what people say and building and structuring analysis of the types of oppression through their words and stories. Being able to access and analyze the words of students going through struggles in the classroom and still being able to address the oppressions that they face outside of school is important for this inquiry to gain the perspectives and generate the needed to data to provide answers.

LatCrit and Belonging

Through the critique of liberalism, racialization, and categorization, along with an emphasis on and valuing of the words and experiences of those living these conflicts, LatCrit provides a very apt theoretical framework for thinking about and analyzing the lessons of belonging that make up our world. Lessons of belonging, and their inclusions and exclusions, teach people about their place in the world and being able to access collective thinking, challenges the ways racialization does this work. In this work, LatCrit provides important insights for thinking about how these aspects come together.

Belonging

This section addresses the concept of belonging and what it offers for this study. Belonging comes from political science in an effort to encapsulate all of the inclusions and exclusions that people experience as a part of the membership assigned to them via the state. This section will discuss belonging as seen in the work of Masuoka and Junn (2013), who explored the facets of belonging, and the inclusions and exclusions, through a primarily racialized lens. Then this section will explore how the concepts of race and whiteness

specifically align with belonging and expose how race works and creates tensions and lessons of belonging.

Belonging challenges how our inclusion and exclusion in society gets enacted in the spaces we occupy. Both inclusionary and exclusionary elements of belonging constantly impact our lives and how we learn to see the world. This vision is shaped by our imagination as well, and how we see ourselves fitting into and moving through spaces around the world, spaces that can come through cultural and social norms and portrayals. Legal and political aspects also play a role in defining how we belong. Experiencing the inclusionary aspects of belonging comes with the privileges and rights that society grants to easily pass through the world and spaces and can be manifested through feelings of being welcomed and allowed to interact with others in a space. When experiencing the exclusionary forces of belonging, the ability to move through spaces and feel comfortable becomes mitigated and lessened. These exclusions can follow some of the same categorizations that cut across society, including race, sexual orientation, gender, and socioeconomic class. Belonging allows a perspective on both inclusions and exclusions that educated us about our place in the world.

Belonging provides an important analytical perspective to examine the contexts where citizenship occurs. As a theoretical concept, belonging helps to frame and analyze the different ways people relate to the cultural contours of their space. Microaggressions represent one example of how an exclusion of belonging can be manifested. Solórzano (1998) lists the impact of microaggressions as making people feel “out of place” and refers to them as “accounts of subtle and not so subtle racist and sexist incidents” (pp. 127–128), as they represent ways that people can become uncomfortable with how they fit in and see their place in space. Walking away from an interaction feeling “out of place” equates to experiencing an exclusion of

belonging, as it literally represents a way of telling people they do not belong. This only occurs because of the differentiated levels of membership that exist in the society and how those levels affect us and our ability to pass through spaces and engage in activities. Belonging, as a theoretical analytical tool, allows for an exploration of the context and the elements that emerge from that content.

The exclusionary practices of belonging can be seen in the immigration and racial history and policies of the United States. Masuoka and Junn (2013) align belonging with racial membership and how people become a part of the culture and society here. The authors comment that belonging in the United States "has long been a conditional welcome" and "designations of some as deserving and eligible for membership and of others as unworthy and unwanted intertwined with how race perception has developed" (p. 1). The use of "eligible" engenders thoughts about belonging, who is worthy of belonging, and how that belonging gets enacted. The struggle for belonging occurs as groups advocate for their worthiness and negotiate how people will take be able to utilize space and share it with others. This "conditional welcome" represents a way that belonging gets meted out to immigrants who are expected to meet certain requirements to ensure that they can access facets of belonging in the United States and have access to rights, goods, and services.

Inclusions of belonging can also provide moments and changes when people find themselves and their identities more included in the political and cultural processes of space they inhabit. One way that this examined is through how undocumented immigrants have received "legalizations" or amnesties granting them ability to gain legal status to participate more fully in society (Motomura, 2014). These acts of Congress changed the way that these people could move through the spaces that they worked and lived in. These acts of Congress did not invite

people to come, rather, they opened up the possibility of belonging more fully to those people who were living here already. They did require a working knowledge of English and American civics, but these were already requirements for citizenship, so they were aligned with already standing goals and premises of the naturalization process. Inclusions of belonging allow for easier and more fluid movement through space to allow people to participate more fully in the places and spaces they inhabit.

Categorization, through racism, sexual orientation, and gender for example, can be a means that one's experience of belonging becomes modified and changed. Racialized dynamics create a power hierarchy that limits how some are allowed to interact and creates expectations for their interaction. Presence and representation do not define how belonging works as race and other other-ing factors have acted as ways to exclude groups from being a part of the nation while still allowing them to be economic actors.

Masuoka and Junn (2013) explained that the racial hierarchy aims to keep certain groups on top and in power. The acts of classification and position occur through political, legal, and societal methods and means. Whiteness attained supremacy through legal acts as early as 1790, when the federal government made whiteness necessary for citizenship. The federal government made political and cultural moves, such as the establishment and perpetuation of slavery and the implementation of racialized policies in the aftermath of its collapse. Laws, throughout history, have created and reinforced prejudicial culture and legal action against marginalized groups, for example, laws surrounding racial profiling target the minoritized populations and mark those groups as different and dangerous, making how they experience daily life more difficult. Thus, their sense of belonging becomes less as those laws perpetuate and stigmatize their presence. Belonging comes from a variety of means and methods and has deep impacts throughout history.

Imagination plays a role in explaining how the facets of inclusionary and exclusionary belonging come together and help us see and understand our place in the world. Masuoka and Junn (2013) wrote how "'imagining' that leads to this collective consciousness does not arise naturally but must instead be outlined and cultivated politically" (p. 41), and the relation between the collective consciousness that people uphold and think with and politics is a deliberate relation. In an alignment with another thinker, Frost (2010) wrote "imagination is a form of memory that comprises past perceptual experiences, past affective responses, as well as current perceptual and physiological stimuli" (p. 162). The orientation of memory, the past, and current experiences and stimuli represent this orientation, which aims to get us to think about all the different facets of belonging and how complex this concept can be.

Enactments of belonging represent complex actions and negotiations that people and groups undertake to find their place in the world. The inclusionary and exclusionary aspects of belonging teach us every day through symbolic actions and systemic realities about how society values us and our place in that order. These lessons overlap for those who do not get the full benefits of membership and leave people feeling in flux and out of place. Finding a balance between how belonging is working through and around people needs to occur by inquiring into the spaces that people and these pedagogies use.

Belonging and Race

Marginalized groups face challenges to their belonging on an ongoing basis. New groups experience welcoming based on how they get framed in politics. Race has been one of most significant frames, with race being a factor in American citizenship and belonging since the founding of the nation (Masuoka & Junn, 2013). Different events, policies, and norms divide and frame groups as separate from each other. Difference becomes the means of intrinsic and learned

marginalization; this is a form of exclusionary practice of belonging and will frame how people understand their place.

Since "the boundaries the politics of belonging are concerned with are the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries which, sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into 'us' and 'them' " (Yuval-Davis, 2011), the things that divide and frame groups as different become very important. For this project, difference becomes the means of intrinsic and learned marginalization and will frame how people understand their place. Race is far from the only method or means of marginalization. Gender, language, and age have been used to marginalize people throughout history and today.

Race plays an important role in belonging as racial hierarchies form the most visible categorization and divisions within belonging and also form the modern state and society as they exist today. Goldberg (2002) claimed "race marks and orders the modern nation-state" (p. 4), and Omi and Winant (2015) supported this perspective, stating "racial politics are bigger than the state. They involve civil society, political socialization, and thus race-consciousness, racial identity-making" (p. 138). These scholars touch upon the reality that race and racism define much about the order and hierarchy of our society and government. The level of racism that restrains our society is extensive. Goldberg (2002) and Omi and Winant (2015) all marked this reality with precise language about how extensive this interaction is as racism becomes larger than the state. Through racism, race becomes a marker of the different modes of membership, and acts of racism serve subtle and constant reminders that we do not all get the same mode of belonging.

Belonging, the Racial Hierarchy, and Whiteness

Belonging, since it is intertwined with government and culture, needs to be understood in how it parallels the values of whiteness that remain atop of our national orientation. Masuoka and Junn (2013) explained, "people classified as white . . . are positioned at the top of the hierarchy" (p. 17). The acts of classification and position occur through political, legal, and societal methods and means. Two works on whiteness and immigration provide examples of how belonging can be utilized to expose the struggle of outsiders and immigrants. Goldstein's (2006) research on Jewish struggles with whiteness, and Ignatiev's (1995) work on Irish immigrants expose how racial and ethnic hierarchies not only work against the integration of groups into the United States but also make it clear that they are expected to assimilate to its culture and politics, especially the standards set by whiteness. As they worked for acceptance, they found themselves in the confines of the conditional welcome and were often asked to choose between their own culture and becoming "American." The tension between acceptance, maintaining a group identity, and becoming mainstream American provide a difficult negotiation and one that is at work for all marginalized groups in America. The fact that these groups are pushed to negotiate and often pushed toward assimilation, shows how whiteness dominates this process. Marginalization kept these groups away from full acceptance, and in some cases still does, and in order to gain acceptance and access to mainstream resources and membership, groups often had to abandon parts of their identity. As it becomes clear that belonging reveals the negotiation and bargaining for a fuller acceptance in this nation, understanding how modes of division lead to exclusion will become more important, especially to push citizenship education to consider more complicated origins and starting points.

Belonging as a Theoretical Concept

This research seeks to examine and analyze the different ways that we learn about and experience the facets of belonging. To do this requires an understanding of how the concept looks and can present itself in the categorizations of society. The different inclusions and exclusions of belonging fall along racial lines and support the fact that whites have been atop the racial hierarchy of this nation for its entire history. Looking at the ways that belonging gets taught and is learned means looking at these categorizations and how they teach us about our place in the world.

Precarity

Belonging needs to be contextualized alongside oppression, and how our vulnerabilities become explicit reminds people of their place and value in society. Precarity, a theoretical concept described by Butler (2004, 2010) allows for an examination of how oppression and vulnerability beyond our general human precariousness shapes how we move through the world and how we relate to the state that benefits from this heightened vulnerability. Butler (2004) wrote, "each of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies" (p. 20). This pushes for a consideration that our vulnerabilities might not be isolated to our bodies but are also the product of social pressures and process. While we are vulnerable as human beings, some people experience higher forms of vulnerability because of who they are and how that identity gets pathologized in our society, culture, and politics. Precarity also dives into the political and legal forces that make us more vulnerable. Precarity embodies political issues and conflicts that people experience. Belonging, the forces that restrict and exclude people, comes in tandem with precarity, while others might find that this is not the case. Belonging, from an inclusionary perspective, protects some people's ability to move through

society and live with the shared vulnerability. Exploring Butler's thoughts about precarity will clarify how precarity goes beyond vulnerability.

Precarity links those who are most vulnerable to the very state that has created and benefits from this situation. Butler (2010) noted:

> Precarity cuts across identity categories as well as multicultural maps, thus forming the basis for an alliance focused on opposition to state violence and its capacity to produce, exploit, and distribute precarity for the purposes of profit and territorial defense. Such an alliance would not require agreement on all questions of desire or belief or self-identification. (p. 32)

As vulnerability stems from the human experience, precarity can affect different identity groups as it stems from the state and does not have any basis in the identity of the group experiencing heightened vulnerability. Butler's point about political opposition needing not agree on all points to defeat/defuse the state-imposed precarity illicit thoughts about the power to democratic involved, there does not need to a universal experience but rather a mutual agreement to be civil to each other and respect the differences without exploiting them. This contrast, between state exploitation and democratic opposition, provides an important space for thinking about how groups, nations, and state coalesce and re-coalesce as vulnerability gets shifted around to different groups. As part of the pedagogies of belonging, precarity informs many that their weakness is purposeful, then asks that they seek political relief and a new political recognition from the state. While all groups share vulnerability, their precarity informs them about their place in our society and their standing in how they belong.

The forces of precarity have real effects on those who experience them. Butler (2010) commented that:

> [P]recarity designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. Such populations are at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to violence without protection. (pp. 25–26)

Here it is easier to find the impact of precarity as a political consequence and one that has a real and deep impact on those who suffer its woes. These dangers go beyond a shared human bodily vulnerability and instead constitute a political scenario in which people's lives become devalued. The state and its beneficiaries profit off the deaths and struggles of the precarious.

The control over the narrative, meaning the history and politics of the state, allows the state to pursue its agenda and frame the controversies however it needs and is fulfilling its needs and destiny. Butler (2004) wrote that states "preclude from the telling accounts that might involve a decentering of the narrative . . . [as] a narrative form emerges to compensate for the enormous narcissistic wound opened up by the public display of our physical vulnerability" (pp. 6–7). Controlling this narrative occurs in the media but also in schools, policies, and legal arguments. In schools, we have to pay attention to the narrative and who gets excluded from it. Following these stories not only reinforces the power of the state, but it forms part of the pedagogy of belonging teaching and reminding students who matters and who does not.

Precarious populations do not accept their precarity, as their resistance often goes through the state that benefits from their precariousness and vulnerability. Butler (2010) describes this contradiction:

> Precarity also characterizes that politically induced condition of maximized precariousness for populations exposed to arbitrary state violence who often have no

> other option than to appeal to the very state from which they need protection. In other words, they appeal to the state for protection, but the state is precisely that from which they require protection. (p. 26)

Forcing the precarious to appeal to the state for reform and change perpetuates the power hierarchy. To think about this through belonging, those who are precarious must convince others of their righteousness and that they do in fact belong. They appeal to those who profit off their precarity and who limit their ways of belonging to keep the power of the state central as the arbitrator of whose belonging matters and how that is determined.

Whereas belonging exposes the different facets of citizenship and the hierarchies, precarity provides a vantage point to explore the more violent aspects of marginalization. The concept of precarity, described by Butler (2010), contributes to how the creation of marginalization is understood and is exercised in public. Precarity argues that the heightened precariousness faced by marginalized groups is a consequence of the hierarchies from belonging. Precarity also describes how collective action can alleviate and address these concerns. Butler wrote "Precarity cuts across identity categories as well as multicultural maps, thus forming the basis for an alliance focused on opposition to state violence and its capacity to produce, exploit, and distribute precarity for the purposes of profit and territorial defense" (p. 32). This description implicates the state as a site where violence and precarity are created. The relations between people and the state emphasize how these forces create and reify marginalization. This places an importance on identity in connection to the state and the creation of precarity.

There is a paradox to how precarity works, as the state that creates and benefits from the precariousness of the marginalized also asks them to utilize their democratic power to end their precarity. Butler (2010) wrote "Precarity also characterizes that politically induced condition of

maximized precariousness for populations exposed to arbitrary state violence who often have no other option than to appeal to the very state from which they need protection" (p. 25). The paradox creates constant tension between the precarious and the state that creates their precarity. Precarity does not describe our shared human vulnerability but rather how vulnerability can become endorsed and utilized by the state for its own good. Precarity might be used to examine the emergence of the school-to-prison pipeline (Nolan, 2013), but there are many other ways as well. Curriculum and content expose precarity in the way marginalized and colonized people are framed and presented. Coates (2015) mentioned an example of this as he describes in his textbooks and classrooms that only people who look like him were getting beaten up in their appeal to the state. These instances of violence reflect the heightened precarity faced by marginalized populations and how that precarity gets showcased by the state.

Precarity illustrates the way people become subject to the powers and the apparatus of the state. Citizenship, education, and marginalization all carry with them the possibility of creating and exercising one's precarity before the state. Understanding how precarity is formed and learned, and how it might be mitigated, can provide the classroom with the tools it needs to change how it appreciates the challenges that we face.

Precarity and Violence

The connection between precarity and violence emanates from the forces that maintain power and the state. Precarity and violence connect to the power of the state as it maintains the hierarchies and control. Violence becomes the primary means by which oppression and dehumanization occur and are maintained. Butler (2010) reminded us that "we are at least partially formed through violence. We are given genders or social categories, against our will, and these categories confer intelligibility or recognizability, which means that they also

communicate what the social risks of unintelligibility or partial intelligibility might be" (p. 167). These labels and categories represent a violent limiting of people and forcing them to encounter their own precarity. Violence forces people into singular categories and perpetuates single-dimension identity. The different forces of violence that feed into precarity involve physical acts and threats, historical violence, and violence and erasure in the curriculum that enters the classroom.

Physical Acts and Threats of Violence. Physical acts of violence mark the ways that people feel precarity in the world. These acts and threats can take many different forms, but all seek to create and maintain the hierarchies of society. Violence maintains oppression and dehumanization. Freire (1970/2009) wrote:

> [W]hereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human. As the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized (p. 56).

Oppression, through violence, dehumanizes the oppressed and keeps them trapped in a reaction to an oppression. Through violence, and the precarity that it engenders, oppression becomes embedded in our society and in the practices that reify the nation.

Nations, specifically the nation-states of the world, use violence to maintain power and the hierarchies that support the state. Mamdani (1996) explained:

> [T]he unification of the nation led to the birth of the nation-state. Today, political modernity is equated with the beginning of democracy, but nineteenth-century political theorists—notably Max Weber—recognized that political modernity depended up on the centralized state monopolizing violence. (p. 5)

Democracy masks the violence inherent in the nation-state and allows for that violence to persist. Mamdani also presents a contradiction in the narrative of the history of the nation-state. Here, democracy acts as a response to the violence of the nation-state. As Freire demonstrated earlier, responses to violence by the oppressed seek to create spaces for humanization to occur, and we should see democracy as an attempt to humanize the nation-state and bring about humanization of the state.

The inclusion of democracy into the apparatus of that nation-state is not without contradiction. Agamben (1995/1998) explained this contradiction:

> "[I]f anything characterizes modern democracy as opposed to classical democracy, that, it is that modern democracy presents itself from the beginning as a vindication and liberation of *zoe* [life] . . . hence, too, modern democracy's specific aporia: it wants to put the freedom and happiness of men into play in the very place "bare life"—that marked their subjection." (pp. 9–10)

The connection between democratic nation-states and the ability to use, implement, and sanction violence creates a very undemocratic existence for those who face that violence, but protection for those who are invested in the nation-state.

Violence through History and Learning. The origin of the nation-state stems from a history and monopolization of violence that occurs through the power of the state and reaches into classrooms. De-colonial thinkers have addressed this power through the power of history. Fanon (1961/1963) makes the claim that "the colonist [the oppressor] makes history and he knows it" (p. 15). History becomes a weapon of the colonizer, and the oppressor uses this as a weapon against the oppressed. Through the use of history, the oppressor controls the narrative that enters and dominates public spaces.

The colonizer's history becomes what Takaki (1993/2008) named the *master narrative* that weaves across our society. He explained:

> [T]he master narrative is deeply embedded in our mainstream culture and can be found in the scholarship in a long list of pre-eminent historians. The father of the Master Narrative was Frederick Jackson Turner. . . . [he] explained that the frontier had been "the meeting point between savagery and civilization." (p. 4)

The master narrative keeps the power in the hands of the oppressors and keeps the boundaries in place for that power to continue. When the master narrative enters the classroom, it limits students and their possibilities, as some get the benefits of civilization and others are pushed into the category of savagery.

These tensions can be damaging for those who are left outside the master narrative and are stuck inside the classroom. Cridland-Hughes and King (2015) comment:

> [I]f teachers' instructional practices adhere strictly to the traditional curriculum, they enact a *pedagogy of violence*. These approaches simultaneously contribute to a psychological and spiritual suffering that Black and Brown youth experience through the curriculum. The *curriculum of violence* renders ideologies and discourses that imply Black and Brown youth are not and should not be valued, cared for, or respected. (p. 99, emphasis original).

The positionality of the curriculum as a force that dehumanizes stems from the fact that the curriculum originates from a history intended to keep the colonizer, the oppressor, atop the hierarchy. The curriculum, when left as created by the nation-state, reifies dangerous ideas and practices that continue dangerous power structures against all students and limit their capacity to challenge those narratives. Dehumanization from violence, and the precarity it engenders, does

not simply come from the real threats students and young people face, but also from the things they are learning in class and how that frames their ability to see and understand the world around them.

Space

Space, as a theory and concept, refers to the construction by people and ideas of a specific place. These places are imbued with meaning that we pass on through interaction and sharing. For this inquiry, the lessons and pedagogies of citizenship and belonging land and linger in spaces that we all pass through. Space becomes home to competing ideas that live, coexist, and create multiple concurrent realities that flow from interactions and how those interactions shape us.

To explore these dynamics, there needs to be an understanding of how important these interactions are. Massey (2005) wrote, "we recognize space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny. . . If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality" (p. 9). Massey's comments that space is the product of our interactions large and small matters for this inquiry, which seeks large and small interactions that create a space. Interactions can include large statements about political goals and structures, and smaller ones that can reify and defy these structures. Acts of creation and destruction can happen at the same time. This is the plurality that Massey refers to and frames how we think about space.

The interactions also build an imagination about how we belong and move through space. Said (1978/2004) described this best by saying "the objective space of a house—its corners, corridors, cellar, rooms—is far less important than what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel: thus a house may

be haunted, or homelike, or prison like, or magical" (p. 55). Said's quotation matters to this work because it is about what and how a space becomes endowed with our energies, beyond but not exclusive of the objective space. Interactions often create new dynamics and elements that push how we understand that space and our abilities to interact there. Without considering the ramifications of the interactions and imagination within the spaces we co-inhabit with ideas, the lessons about belonging and citizenship would be easier to miss, avoid, and overlook. Exploring these spaces open them, and their pedagogies, up to examination as these lessons are enacted over and over.

Conclusion

The theoretical frameworks of this dissertation open an opportunity to push how we think about and how conversations, debates, and ideas coalesce around citizenship. Belonging, LatCrit, precarity, and space provide tools to add a more robust understanding and contextualization of how we need to think about violence, inclusion, and exclusion and even how these forms appear directly through physical and verbal interactions and indirectly through literary and curricular actions and dictums. Being able to orient to belonging and how it seeks to educate and create us, we need to look at these elements complexly. The next chapter lays out how citizenship education needs to be pushed to incorporate these theories, which can add great complexity to how we think about and use the concept of citizenship. Theory adds to this debate by providing new tools and concepts for thinking about how we can add depth to citizenship and what it means to belong.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

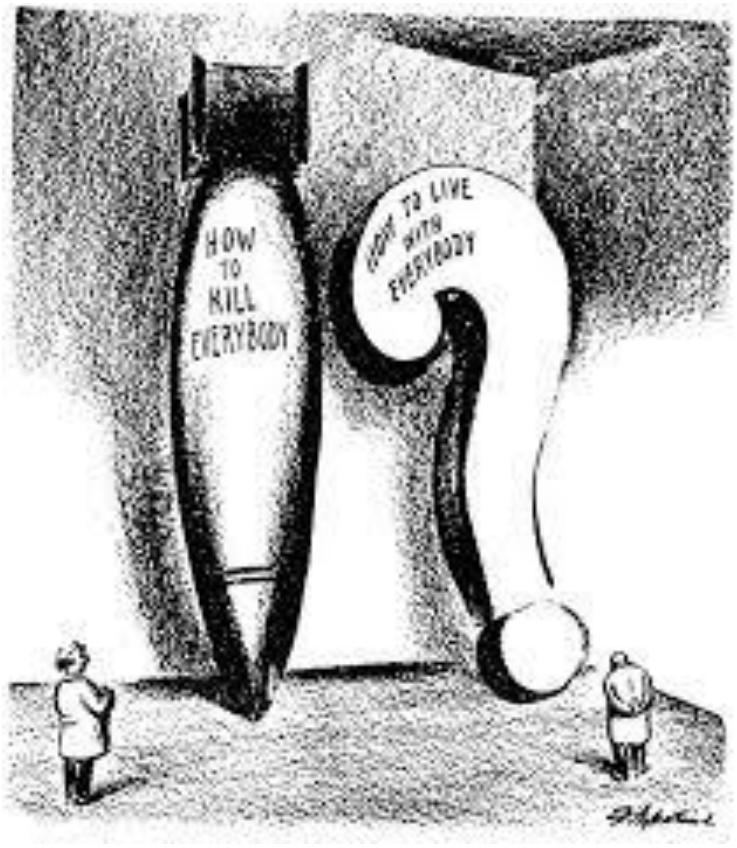

Image 2. Political cartoon about the atomic bomb, taken from Ms. Williams's class materials.

The class entered the room with the cartoon above being projected onto the board. A student asked Ms. Williams if the cartoon was connected to the atomic bomb, which they had talked about the previous class. Another student added, "It's like they are still wondering how we live together…" After some discussion, Ms. Williams and the kids agreed as they talk about the dangers of the bomb and the destruction it incurred. After a pause and consulting her lesson plan, Ms. Williams

turns to the class and informs them they are going to start their lesson about the atomic bomb. Students open their notebooks once the slideshow moved on.

Introduction

In their history of education, Tyack and Cuban (1995) framed schools as places where immigrants could prepare to become Americans citizens to participate in its democracy. They write:

> Educational leaders have tried to transform immigrant newcomers and other "outsiders," into individuals who matched their idealized image of what an "American" should be . . . but newcomers and "outsiders," of course, were not simply wax figures on which dominant groups impressed their values. Many groups have impressed their values. Many groups have contested with one another to define and create model citizens through schooling, and this political debate has shaped the course of public education (p. 2).

Describing school as a place where the "idealized" American can be made and resisted is a sign of how powerful, dynamic, and contested this space can be. This division places the political goal of schooling at the center of this experience. Although the specific goal of creating the "idealized" American has waned, schooling remains a place where inclusions and exclusions are created and re-created. Social studies education and research present a unique look into these facets as its content addresses the very notions of citizenship, America, and the world. This chapter will review the current state of social studies education research and how it approaches the forces of inclusion and exclusion in regard to citizenship education and how we think about this goal of the ideal citizen.

This is not the first work to challenge how we think about citizenship education. In their seminal piece on citizenship education, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) pushed readers and

researchers to think about how citizenship education is framed by the political goals of the educators who teach it. Their article described how "conceptions of 'good citizenship' imply conceptions of the good society" (p. 238) along with "a vast and valuable array of perspectives on the kinds of citizens that democracies require and the kinds of curricula that can help to achieve democratic aims" (p. 239). Westheimer and Kahne questioned the link between a "good society" and that "good citizenship," because the curriculum and aspects of citizenship need to be question and thought about. These curricula have political orientations that reflect an expectation of what the ideal American does and how it acts as apart from the groups who create the curricula and teach the classes. This opened the perspective that civics education depends on those who teach it, their experiences as a citizen, and how they envision that role. By privileging how citizenship looks at the end of the process and those teaching it, in lieu of the challenges lived by people facing the "conditional welcome," citizenship education attempts a top-down solution to a complex problem regarding how to get people involved.

The idea that the lessons learned from school derive much from the specific people, and their vision and perspective, involved in teaching presents an interesting dilemma as now we think about how education not only needs to inform but counter these predispositions. Levinson (2012) described "the gap between my students' thoughts and mine mirrored a nationwide racial civic attitude 'chasm' in individuals' trust in government (political trust) and their trust in each other (social trust)" (p. 37). The gap between trust reveals deep seeded problems between how learning is portrayed and how it is implemented. Levinson and Westheimer and Kahne (2004) introduced a reasoning for thinking about how citizenship education comes together and how political agendas frame the work of citizenship education. Beyond this question, though, lies a

concern about how citizenship is framed and enacted for those facing marginalization and the incorporation of their concerns and perspectives into the curriculum and the content of learning.

Social Studies Education

Social studies education and research values the position of citizenship education as a means to assess and comprehend one's place in the world and attempt to create active participants. However, it could use the concept of belonging to further push and analyze its efforts in this work. Citizenship education, and the pedagogical and curricular choices that come with that, reflect the different values of those who are doing this work. This section focuses on how citizenship education has been debated and considered in social studies education. This will begin with an exploration of the pedagogical and research choices, followed by a discussion of how curricular choices hold impact and sway, and will conclude with an inquiry about how belonging and understanding of marginalization about Latinxs and immigrant students has already changed this conversation.

Social Studies Education, Citizenship Education, and Pedagogical Choices

The connections between pedagogical and social implications are clear, and stem from how what we are taught becomes framed by the values of those doing this work. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) explained, "current efforts at teaching for democracy reflects neither arbitrary choices nor pedagogical limitations but, rather, political choices have political consequences" (p. 237). Their claim underscores that choices in teaching citizenship are deliberate choices that have profound consequences that need to be explored and appreciated, instead of assuming that there is some universally agreed-upon good and vision for the ideal society. Pedagogical choices can have serious implications, as this section shows, that range from the potential to create change to challenging (or not) the racial orders.

Choices in classrooms, both curricular and pedagogical, should be comprehended as purposeful decisions that aim to shape the future active citizen. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) said "decisions educators make when designing and researching these programs often influence politically important outcomes regarding the ways students understand the strengths and weaknesses of our society and the ways they should act as citizens in a democracy" (p. 238). Building the connection between how the curriculum looks, the decisions and vision of the educators, and the impact it has on students as future citizens allows for an understanding that the classroom is a dynamic space and one where teachers decisions and vision matter a great deal, as students are listening and interacting with their ideas. Making pedagogical decisions seen and understood as political decisions, creates all sorts of space to discuss and think about how teacher-student-content interactions form who we are and who we become.

In this more challenging view of the pedagogy of citizenship education and social studies, a more ambitious view of education and society are needed. Ross (2017) added to this by challenging educators and social studies "to envision an education that is free and democratic to the core, and to interrogate and uncover their own well-intentioned complicity in the conditions within the various cultural texts and practices, especially to the extent oppressive conditions create oppressive cultural practices, and vice versa" (p. 50). Ross placed indoctrination in conversation with the potentials for an active and engaged democracy. This conversation exposes the tensions between individual action, the reinforcement of social vices, and social action. Ross invites people to think and learn about their complex actions instead of just moving through the world and to question the assumptions that make it up and allow some people to pass through it more easily than others. Through confronting or ignoring these forces and lessons, social studies

teaches students to see the world and understand their place in it as a form of citizenship education.

Social studies education research promotes citizenship as something universal along with a call for wide-spread and mass participation. These calls are important, and as Ross (2017) asserted it should also provide the "capacity to encourage students and educators to challenge the implication of their own education or work, to envision an education that is free and democratic to the core" (p. 50). It is an approach that reveals some of the difficult tensions that arise from working with optimistic intentions and aspirations, and from the realities of how the state controls the conversation around citizenship and participation. Citizenship education has limits emanating from its connections to the American narrative. The current field has recognized this limit, but also identified places where it can be expanded to provide a more inclusive vision of citizenship. From expanding the very building blocks of the American narrative to pushing teachers and others to inquire into their role in reifying negative aspects of the curriculum, these ideas seek to push citizenship education and the future of the American citizenry forward.

Part of the need for reflection comes from the unexamined vision that teachers carry with them into the classroom. Urrieta and Reidel (2008) wrote, "most of the white preservice teachers in our study appeared to be uncomfortable when asked to talk about their own civic identities and about citizenship as a means for social justice and change. Most of our participants tended to think of themselves generally as 'good citizens'" (p. 100). There is nothing inherently wrong with thinking of one's self as a good citizen, but without considering the many ways society shapes and molds us, this felt like an incomplete assessment. Urrieta and Reidel explained, "ignoring the cultural and racial component of citizenship in civic education perpetuates the normalization of citizenship to whiteness" (p. 94). The normalization of whiteness in citizenship

is far from new, but it limits how change can come about, the lessons taught, and the invitations extended. As we considered the indoctrination of education, and citizenship education in particular, having whiteness at the center of this work presents a serious, but not unsolvable, dilemma.

Levinson (2012) built off this conundrum between teacher actions, content, and what students learn by reflecting on the students she taught in Boston and the work they did together, determining that there needs to be more direct education to help students see that they have the power to change the world. Levinson adds she is "convinced, schools need to teach young people knowledge and skills to upend and reshape power relationships directly, through public, political, and civic action, not just private self-improvement" (p. 13). This highlights the political nature of the choices that occur in the classroom. By challenging school to go beyond "private self-improvement," she is positioning the school, the classroom, and the teacher to be political and to confront the nature of society and politics in the classroom and how the students feel they can act. Levinson addresses how content and pedagogy have power to help students approach their society differently, much like Westheimer and Kahne (2004) mention as well. The claim here, that schools should be obliged to teach about these differences and offer students the means to create change through collective action, connects to how problems and challenges in marginalized communities continue.

Levinson outlined how the existence of the *civic engagement gap* limits marginalized communities' ability to act for reform. Levinson wrote that this gap is "as large and as disturbing as the reading and math achievement gaps have received significant national attention in recent years—between ethnoracial minority, naturalized, and especially poor citizens on one hand, and White, native born, and especially middle-class and wealthy citizens on the other" (pp. 31–32).

The gap concerns how racialized, with other means of marginalization as well, shaped American society and how these historical oppressions and marginalizations make their way into the classroom. The development of American civic and political life has been formed with marginalization from the beginning. Levinson's attention to the gap reminds us there are fundamental problems with how democracy in America is conceived, taught, and practiced.

The pedagogical choices of teaching citizenship education impact the culture of the classroom and how students think and learn about their place in the world. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) introduced us to the concept that pedagogical choices matter to students and reflect the political views of those teaching it. Levinson (2012) and Ross (2017) follow this idea, asking that teachers work to fix the engagement gap and help their students become political actors. Some of the problems with this arise out of the fact that most teachers are using white conceptions and notions about citizenship, as they are mostly white. This offers us an insight that most classrooms leave their students with long-lasting implications of how they teach their classes and the knowledge that students walk away with. Belonging might shift social studies education research's approach to pedagogy by pushing the approach to be more focused on learning about, understanding, and analyzing the current state of affairs and how it came about, instead of solely working toward an ideal society or conception of active citizenship.

Social Studies, Citizenship Education, and Curricular Choices

The selection and implementation of materials in the classroom plays a major role in how we come to see and understand the world and our place in it. We need to understand how curriculum is teaching students about their place and where they fit in. Just as pedagogy has been seen as an area where possibility can be expanded and limited, curriculum has the same rhythm. Curricular choices can create space and opportunity for learning, but they can also create limits

on how the world and our place in it becomes framed. This section will explore how curriculum has been discussed in social studies research and conclude with a discussion about how belonging can shift this current discussion.

Understanding the possibilities that come with curriculum, we need to see how curriculum can be an invitation for more thinking about a topic instead of just limiting it. Segall (2010) wrote, "texts act pedagogically by offering students specific locations from which to know and be in the world as they engage information about it" (p. 226). The specific locations are not problematic in and of themselves, as Segall called them "invitations" for learning about the world and our place in it. Curriculum, in the classroom, acts as an entry point to engage in learning about the world and how we see it. These invitations can teach the student far beyond the world and add more complexity to his or her worldview. The problems come when the invitations are ignored and any of the missing information and facets that text contains becomes more of an avoidance or an erasure, which also teaches students that "lost" history is not important. Segall closed this piece by noting, "we can't be expected to teach everything about everyone" (p. 232) which is a reminder that classrooms and teachers can only offer partial views of the world.

The curriculum, for social studies, has the potential to teach people a lot about the world and their place in it, but often only focuses on a few narratives. Rubin (2012) described this problem best stating, "students in most social studies classrooms study history chronologically, learn passively, and encounter the story of the United States as one that is already written, in which citizens are witnesses to history rather than active participants in the narrative" (p. 3). Rubin calls out two aspects of learning in the social studies classroom as concerning. This kind of classroom frames learning as passive, with students encountering history and their own

citizenship as static ideas. When learning about both history and the national narrative is passive, there is no place to see one's self in it or connect to it in an active method. Learning of this sort, Rubin notes, leaves no place for the student to take part, only to absorb. This vision of learning a set curriculum creates hard limits for students as they think about the world. Curriculum that claims to be authoritarian and exhaustive limits students' ability to see their place in the world and thus their ability to see and understand their own belonging and to challenge those ideas as well.

The consequences of this learning are serious, as teaching people about their place in the world needs to be taken seriously. Collins (2009) reminded us, "schools do more than teach. They control access to jobs, sort people into groups, attempt to control what we think and say, attach privilege to some and not to others, and these activities, perpetuate social inequalities" (p. 4). The activities schooling and learning emphasize result in "disempowered groups . . . [who] often mold their ideas and behavior to the expectations of more powerful groups" (p. 9), which reminds us of the ideas that Tyack and Cuban discussed before. As schools frame learning through power and limit the capacities of students to the narratives that already exist, limits on what is possible for students to learn and achieve. As Collins illustrated, the limits mean marginalized students and the groups often perform the roles they are accustomed to performing. This means the limitations persist despite students and teachers working and learning, and they have long-lasting implications on how students see themselves in the world and understand their capacity to change those orientations.

The social studies curriculum does not have to exist as this neutral, apolitical, or static entity in the classroom and can embrace its power. From outside the field of social studies,

Curricular theorist Schubert (2010) questioned the larger role of how curriculum allows us to see our place in the world. He wrote:

> I could see curriculum as problematic, oppressive, and detrimental, and was struck by the fact curriculum was not merely what curriculum scholars, policy makers, or educational leaders thought up and bestowed upon students. It was a societal and cultural construction that privileged some and hurt far too many." (p. 54)

The larger lens of curriculum theory is helpful here because it not only mentions how curriculum can be a harmful practice, but how it is connected to larger groups, institutions, and stakeholders, including teachers, community leaders, and local and state governments. Schubert frames the curriculum as a product of an official body, with unofficially endorsed social and cultural practices, and as something that needs to be seen and understood as a deliberate practice and entity, just as teaching citizenship education was framed as being political and reflective by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). When the curriculum hurts students, or anyone for that matter, it serves as a reminder of the various hierarchies of society and how being placed within those hierarchies contributes to how we are taught to see and experience the world.

Curriculum does have an impact on how individuals see the world, but there also needs to be consideration that as this type of learning occurs in classrooms across the nation, this is more than an singular event. Brown and Brown (2015) brought this challenge to the forefront of the field as they write:

> Curriculum is about memory making, or the way a nation imagines and shapes what people come to know about the past and present. In a society founded on the very notion of racial difference and inequality (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), curriculum is an apparatus that informs the narrative of race in the United States. (p. 104)

This memory making can link us to the past, as there are places for the minoritized to see themselves and for people to learn to question the dangerous assumptions that reify inequality. For racial marginalization, memory making reinforces narratives of exclusion, abuse, objectification, and suppression, as the abuse and oppression of marginalized people takes precedence over their resistance and political action. As we think about the lessons that are passed on through curriculum, what memories are being made and what imaginations are being limited in the American classroom? There is also a challenge in Brown and Brown's writing that is similar to Westheimer and Kahne's (2004), that the curriculum is a political entity just like the pedagogical choices are. Brown and Brown (2015) spoke to the fact the curriculum is a method by which racialization is perpetuated and that alienates many from enacting their citizenship.

There are, sadly, several examples in which the curriculum becomes a place of reifying negative racialization instead of democratic notions. King and Woodson (2017) stated, "the curriculum examines slavery through the eyes of the oppressor and lacks an exploration of slave life through the eyes of the enslaved. The narratives depicting slavery are narrow, typically focusing on the subjection of Black bodies while ignoring Black agency" (p. 4). The lack of agency not only allows the persistence of the objectification of racialized people but denies them to be seen as actors themselves and erases their histories of resistance. King and Woodson showed how the curriculum provided no clear space or orientation to imagine agency of those oppressed. This connects to the invitation Segall imagines, that teachers can offer and should take, is absent. There are few to no spaces for students to think about and imagine how agency can be enacted. The exploited can only exist as being abused and waiting for a savior to release them. Imagine slave narratives existing alongside stories of how the political abolitionist struggle

occurred across the globe, instead of just labeling Lincoln the Great emancipator and placing him in context with all the other activists and people who fought slavery.

For the purposes of citizenship education, the invitations of the curriculum can indeed provide an important space to rethink how we approach and consider what goes on in the classroom. Brown and Au (2014) wrote, "a retheorizing of curriculum history would require a reconceptualist approach to documenting how the past has wide-ranging origins, canons, synopses, or theoretical ideas within the contextually specific moments when curriculum was struggled over in the United States" (p. 382). The struggle for the American curriculum to become more inclusive and open to creating democratic citizens needs to expand to more principles that will emphasize these ideals. Widening the ideas helps create and shape curriculum and provides for more possibilities. Brown and Au sought to open up the curriculum and move away from seeing it as the static entity that Rubin (2012) described earlier. This is a more aggressive form of the invitation than Segall (2010) mentioned, one that seeks to open invitations to push certain kinds of thinking instead of dealing with the possibility. Thinking about the curriculum as a political actor with political ramifications can open up the classroom to more engaged thinking about the students' and teachers' places in the world and how they get to belong.

As the invitations in the classroom need to be more open, for students to learn from them and see what is best for them to learn from, the classroom needs to be more open and responsive to the needs of the students. Urrieta and Reidel (2008) wrote, "civic education typically focuses on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and attributes students need to effectively participate in society. Often missing in civic education, however, is attention to the ways in which citizenship is inextricably tied to culture and racial identity" (p. 92). While echoing the same problem

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) alluded to, Urrieta and Reidel made it clear there is missing attention to issues "tied to culture and racial identity." Like Segall (2010), the assumptions and thoughts of the teacher influence the student and construct how learning occurs and takes shape in the classroom. The lack of ties to the means of marginalization and difference can create tension in the classroom and beyond—especially as incoming social studies teachers continue to be mostly white while their students are not (Busey & Waters, 2016; Levinson, 2012). There is a missing extension to understanding how the differences shape the experiences of students, and classrooms miss out on understanding their place in the world more richly and what their students need to become active citizens who can explore and shape their world instead of being passive in it.

The curriculum, like pedagogy, of social studies and citizenship education offers many opportunities to think about how the world is being shaped and the possibilities that we are creating and shaping. This section explored how social studies education sees and frames curriculum and its impact on the classroom. Curricular choices offer visions of how we can see and understand the world, just as pedagogical choices do. In order to consider bringing about a more active and more engaged democratic citizenry, we have to consider the work that curricular choices are making and their impressions on students, and how those impression frame students' understanding of how they belong in the world.

Social Studies Education, Citizenship Education, and LatCrit

Social studies and citizenship education can challenge belonging in the classroom to help create space when marginalized people and their stories can find opportunities to fit in and belong. To examine some of the issues and concepts of belonging, a few social studies researchers used LatCrit to provide a framework to challenge this view, especially in regard to

incorporating new stories and elements of curriculum. Salinas, Fránquiz, and Naseem Rodríquez (2016) wrote, "we found that a LatCrit lens facilitates the tracing of the majoritarian tales that have subordinated the identities and histories of the study participants and their Latina/o communities" (p. 266). Research has been moving to address how belonging influences and shapes our education and even where that curriculum is not addressing the concepts of belonging. This research opens the door to seeing how social studies can work toward a more comprehensive view of belonging and how students see their place in the world.

In her research about how curriculum frames new immigrant arrivals in Texas, Salinas (2006) discussed how the social studies classroom can help connect students to their nation and place. Salinas positioned social studies and citizenship as having the ability to help the mostly Latinx new arrivals to enter and become participants in American society. This potentiality represents an inclusion of belonging, as even the author notes that the classrooms had signs of integrating the cultures in the room and represented a hope that the immigrants would become active Americans. But the lack of critical examination of problems in the curriculum and the needs of these newcomers meant that these spaces underserved the students. From using an outdated curriculum that maintained an Anglocentric historical narrative, newcomers are exposed to certain ideas and concepts in class that reinforce the concept of conditional welcome and a more exclusive sense of belonging.

In another example of how the curriculum presents exclusion, Salinas and Alarcón (2016) found that most of the curriculum being used continued to marginalized students, but a change could alter those outcomes. In this study, Salinas and Alarcón found that many of the same problems with curriculum that Salinas (2006) had uncovered were still creating exclusionary belonging in the classroom. They found that altering the curriculum, around inquiry and primary

sources, allowed students to build deeper understandings about the concepts of citizenship and their place in citizenship discussions, which expands how these students come to understand their belonging. The authors call specific attention to the fact that changing the curriculum can eliminate the idea that citizenship needs to be limited to a select few or that a few are privileged with the option of having citizenship. Curriculum holds a lot of power for helping students see themselves and their possibilities and thus helping them navigate the politics of their own belonging.

The curriculum not only provides a space for students to imagine their possibilities, but it also provides teachers with a sense of their profession. In their study of two Latinx male teachers, Salinas and Castro (2010) broke down how these two encountered the curriculum and challenged how it was implemented in class. Both of the Latinx males in this study had to pull from their personal experiences in order to find the motivation and ability for this challenge. Their classrooms were able to experience more equitable encounters with the curriculum and an inclusionary curriculum in lieu of the typical exclusionary belonging. The authors end their work with the question, though, of how to get more teachers to do this work of challenging the curriculum in their own class. Salinas and Castro saw that the challenges emanated from the teachers' personal experiences of marginalization and their own education, and they leave the article with the question of how we get more teachers to make similar challenges and push curriculum taught in classrooms away from exclusionary senses of belonging.

In a similar discussion about the curriculum, Jaffee (2016) wrote about how transforming the social studies curriculum to be more culturally and linguistically relevant can provide space for students to feel more welcome in the class and, later in life, to become more politically active. Like Salinas (2006) before her, Jaffee observed the social studies education of newcomers

in the northeastern United States and found that when teachers and schools employed Culturally Relevant Pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and Linguistically Relevant Pedagogies (Lucas & Villegas, 2010), they treated their students as more than just beings ready to learn and absorb information, and instead as assets and participants in the process of learning. Like Salinas and Castro (2010), Jaffee (2016) commented that the drive of the teacher to challenge more negative aspects of schooling led them to create a pedagogy that helped their students find a place instead of saddling them with a curriculum that would limit them and their belonging.

In her work on Latinx females' concepts of citizenship, Bondy (2016) presented how notions and concepts of citizenship emerge from both schooling and cultural values. In the article, learning comes from the content discussed in schools and the interactions that occur there. Beyond the content of schooling, Bondy (2016) noted that her participants, Latinx females, were learning about their place in the world through interactions with other students. Due to the nature of these interactions, which included bullying and hypersexualization, her participants expressed that they were learning about their tenuous place in the world and the limits of their belonging in those spaces. Bondy suggested schools should care about the lives and challenges that their students face outside of school and use classroom time and curricular space to allow for the creation of complex identities. This work illustrates how schooling works to provide several different lessons about belonging and to inform marginalized people about their place in the world and the limits they face.

Social Studies and Citizenship Education with Belonging

For social studies education, the incorporation of the theoretical perspective from belonging can help better frame these questions for this research project. There is an optimism found in a lot of social studies education and research that embraces a universal approach to both

citizenship and democracy. Gutmann (2004) relayed this is an effort to embrace some of the more positive aspects of democracy and the belief that everyone in our democracy is equal or at least should be equal. She wrote, "democratic education should both express and develop the capacity of all children to become equal citizens" (p. 71). Gutmann wrote that "all children" should both be able to "express and develop" in a democratic society, implying that all children deserve this opportunity. Participation is neither naive nor idealistic; rather, it encapsulates how this idea works in our society, research, and education. The universality of this belief, that all people can and should participate, matters, as it draws a wider network about how lives of participation are created.

Citizenship beyond Education Research

As a concept, citizenship is typically defined as either being centered on legal and state-centric actions or around democratic and participatory ones, although sometimes the two are too hard to parse separately. This section explores the definition of the citizen and the border, the political lines that mark who belongs and who does not. Coates (2015) wrote, "Americans deify democracy in a way that allows for a dim awareness that they have from time to time, stood in defiance of their God" (p. 6). Coates's emphasis on the American veneration of democracy relates to the conflicts that place belonging and marginalization in tension with each other throughout our history and in our classrooms. Despite the promise of democracy, realities of the state and its borders shape how we think and define citizenship and call into question how the forces of belonging shape citizenship.

Borders as Pedagogy

In their review of research about the citizen and citizenship, Knight Abowitz and Harnish (2006) used the border to frame legal citizenship and how it is challenged. The border plays a

role in defining citizenship as it complicates people's relationship to space and their ability to access belonging. Borders play a significant role in how we perceive the state and community we live in. Anzaldúa (1987/2012) wrote:

> Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. (p. 25, emphasis original)

Anzaldúa's words explored some of the tensions surrounding the creation of borders and how they define areas and groups. Through terms like "*us* from *them*" and "safe and "unsafe," borders label their own territory but also the areas outside the lines. Inside the border, it is safe, and the space belongs to a group, to an *us*. Outside of the group, it is unsafe, unknown. Bhabha (1994) commented that borders are pedagogical structures that teach "the process of identity constituted by historical sedimentation" (p. 219). Borders define the limits of where and how the state exists and where the state can exercise control. These facets of living engender questions of belonging as people find themselves on different sides of the border.

Borders delineate the lines of what and who belongs to a state, area, and place. These lines are neither static nor impermeable, as the law might suggest and the needs of the state might say; rather, they are places that change those who move through it. Schmidt Camacho (2008) wrote, "at the Mexico-U.S. frontier, the fiction of a regulated border has long sanctioned the violent conversion of poor, working class, and exiled peoples into persons without a place" (p. 2). The border transforms people as it removes their belonging, making them stateless and pushing them into a new context with new challenges associated with belonging. Transformation changes how people relate to the state and the rights and privileges they can access, reflecting

their belonging in the hierarchy of the nation. While addressing the politics of the US-Mexico border, people find themselves divided from their own power by crossing into spaces that they do not have an established sense of belonging. Mamdani (1996) described apartheid in similar terms, as people being separated from political power through the drawing of borders. Borders, as Anzaldúa (1987/2012) reminded us, create and reinforce the divisions and hierarchies of belonging in our society.

Immigrants have long challenged and confronted the politics of belonging through societal definitions and status with their efforts to become American. Ignatiev (1995) illustrated throughout his seminal book about the Irish transition from immigrant and other to whiteness that their transition depended on their ability to "subordinate county, religious, or national animosities, not to mention any natural sympathies they have felt for their fellow creatures, to a new solidarity based on color—a bond which, it must be remembered, was contradicted by their experience in Ireland" (p. 96). The subordination of "natural sympathies" for "a new solidarity based on color" elicits the reality that an active trade was occurring. In exchange for a better sense of belonging, the author said Irish immigrants surrendered their traditions to belong to an America that had already drawn color lines around citizenship and belonging. Whiteness, and the associated values and power, have remained at the top of the American hierarchy and thus have controlled how belonging became sought by those deemed outsiders, and the marginalized confront a limited belonging and even bargain within those structures.

Citizenship across Categories

The tensions between the color lines of America and its democratic ideals are fundamental in how the narrative of the state and the nation originated. In discussing how nations and states unify, Bhabha (1994) wrote:

> "[W]e may begin by questioning the progressive metaphor of modern social cohesion—*the many as one*—shared by organic theories of the holism of culture and community, and by theorists who treat gender, class or race as social totalities that are expressive of unitary collective experiences. (p. 205)

Questioning the assumption that difference can and should be erased by universalism puts the two forces in competition and contradiction with the underlying question of why it must be one or the other. Covering difference through unitary experience with a universal message and orientation limits how these differences matter in the democracy and society. Furthermore, the social cohesion that Bhabha questions is not necessary. Sandel (2012) added to this, saying "democracy does not require perfect equality, but it does require that citizens share in a common life. What matters is that people of different backgrounds and social positions encounter one another, and bump up against one another, in the course of everyday life" (p. 203). Sandel and Bhabha argued that difference is not the bane of democracy and democratic practices, so when people and experiences are pushed into unnecessary conformity, inquiring into why this universalist messages exists, and what it means to take it away, serves as an excellent starting point for this research. Questioning the universalist message of citizenship and society brings belonging into the conversation, as hierarchies and levels of membership would be revealed by the erasure of a universal message of citizenship.

For many in America, when the systems of control about citizenship and those of dialectic citizenship come into friction, the people stuck in the middle find themselves between two powerful forces. Ladson-Billings (2004) described how "participating in collective goal attainment, at the societal level, in the process of government. Although the average citizen is not a government functionary or a totally controlled subject of the government, she does have rights

of participation in the governmental process" and "the societal aspect of citizenship concerns having access to society's resources and capacities that allow for social mobility and comfort" (p. 101). A belonging-centric view of citizenship encapsulates the ability of people, both as individuals and groups, to participate more fully in society, politics, and government. For this view, it is important to understand how people's ability to access their rights and participate in society are controlled, mitigated, and surveilled.

Much of the dialogue about belonging-centric citizenship centers around not only belonging but also democracy. This kind of citizenship connects to the democratic imagination of many of the aspirations referred to above. Brown (2015) commented "inclusion and participation are certainly important elements of democracy, to be more than empty signifiers, they must be accompanied by modest control over setting parameters and constraints and by the capacity to decide fundamental values and directions" (p. 128). In contrast to how belonging outlines the forces of exclusion, democracy sketches the way inclusion works and can be incorporated here. Brown's commentary said inclusion and participation are important but need to be more than just hallow signifiers of how to partake in society and political life. These interactions need to mean something and carry political weight with them.

Citizenship in a Democracy

Democratic thought does not make the connection between belonging and citizenship any clearer as it represents how we are taught to interact and not necessarily how to change the world around us. Stanley (2015) wrote:

> [D]emocratic thought and action (citizenship) must be learned, and schools are places where children receive formal training as citizens. Democracy is also a process or form of

> life rather than a fixed end in itself. Thus, democratic society is something we are always trying simultaneously to maintain *and* reconstruct. (p. 18, emphasis original)

Stanley drew out the fact that much of citizenship and democratic education occurs in schools, but also that this learning is also laying the foundation to how our democracy will work as students learn what to enact as continue to engage with society. The inherent duality that this kind of education aims to maintain and reconstruct reflects the difficult process that goes on in classrooms around the nation. This reflects a complex reality where democratic thinking and belonging-centric citizenship ask more than just legal-centric thinking. Coates (2015) was accurate when he wrote that Americans think of democracy as a godly force, but obedience to a deity is neither simple nor implied. Stanley correctly reminds us we need to learn democracy and it is constantly being made and remade in our actions. Belonging helps frame how membership in the state and society needs to be practiced as all peoples need to be given the space and the ability to access space in these conversations.

From examining the history of the Irish in America or listening to public debates over immigration, belonging has always existed through the filter of marginalization and hierarchy. Masuoka and Junn (2013) described the "conditional welcome" to the United States "takes as axiomatic the unequal structural context of the racial hierarchy in the United States and models the significance of group position" (p. 16). American racial politics welcome immigrants into the United States and prepares them to engage and learn the different facets and not-so subtleties of the American racialized order. Belonging becomes mitigated through this racialized hierarchy and the American values that promote it. Outside groups become locked in a struggle that asks them to abandon their values and culture for a chance at partial whiteness and belonging, at best.

The other definition of citizenship comes from the political boundaries and interactions between the people, ideas, and the state. Citizenship, of the legal kind, connects people to the structures and power of the state. Ladson-Billings (2004) noted, "the civil or legal evolves first. It involves security of each individual and of property, as well as individual freedoms such as speech, religion, assembly, and association, and equality before the law" (p. 101). Legal citizenship connects strongly to some of the basic forms of liberal participation in society and the economy. The right to own land and exercise basic acts are important and valuable, and having legal protections for them is valuable and signifies involvement in the politics of the state. These legal representations of citizenship represent how legal citizenship protects those who have been drawn inside it and receive the benefits of high levels of belonging.

The rituals or rights of the state are valuable, not only for individuals, but also for the state itself. Benhabib (2004) wrote, "citizenship and the practices of political membership are the rituals through which the nation is reproduced spatially. The control of territorial boundaries . . . is coeval [equal to] with the sovereignty of the modern nation-state" (p. 18). Benhabib connected the acts of individuals and the practices of their rights and membership to the sustenance of the state and its structures. These rituals, in some cases legal ramifications and implications, produce the workings of the nation and maintain a static frame of who is and who is not part of the nation. Legally centric citizenship connects individuals and their practices to the state and how the state is maintained and determine how belonging comes to be distributed.

Citizenship through Learning about the World

Parallel to learning, much of this conversation occurs around the task of learning about one's place in the world and the world itself. The curriculum creates spaces for depicting people, which can include or exclude people similar to ourselves, and experiencing rules and values

along with practicing what those rules mean. The curriculum is not simply a static device but one that teaches us multiple lessons about how to move through and value the world. The implications of this reframing unsettle learning, because now the teachers, and thus the learning spaces and the students, become unsettled. The purpose and the learning itself become distorted, which can lead to questionable outcomes for these spaces.

Narrative-centric learning, simple learning from the teacher, alludes to the "banking concept of learning" that Freire (1970/2009) outlined and questioned in his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Learning centered on the narrative and the essentialized versions of what students need to know limits their abilities to know the ideas and topics that make their world, as there is no opportunity for that learning or thought. Freire stated, "education is suffering from narration sickness" (p. 71). This sickness reifies structures and keeps student passivity as a key aspect of their learning. To create and perpetuate a space where the narrative is overemphasized omits the students and their ability to engage in the narrative.

For democratic learning to function, it must work toward the liberation of ourselves. Freire (1970/2009) wrote, "authentic liberation—the process of humanization—is not another deposit to be made in men. Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (p. 79). Here Freire reminded us that education places us in the world with others and extends this to say this image of ourselves and the world needs transformation through action and reflection. Understanding of the self and the world does not occur independent of each other and needs to happen in the world. To be in a classroom like the one Rubin (2012) maligns, we would find ourselves separate from the world, and the world has no place for us and our ideas in it. If we were to focus only on the individual skills and goals of

our learning, we would find them to have little place in the world and we would lack a vision of world. The two need to occur together so we can reimagine a new world with ourselves in it.

Citizenship as a Metaphor of Belonging

Citizenship presents many opportunities for learning and thinking about the world and our place in that world. From presenting the specific legal orientation and obligations that people have and their duties, citizenship also represents the obligations that the society has for the people it deems worthy. This section outlined the different facets of the world that citizenship shapes and influences and how it impacts us and our lives. Belonging frames this work and conversation by contributing a complex and valuable method for seeing these facets and fault lines of citizenship and people's place in the world. Adding belonging, with its inclusions and exclusions, allows for a critical and thoughtful examination of these facets of citizenship and how we all fit and work together.

Conclusion

Inquiring into the facets and fault lines of citizenship and belonging requires a comprehensive and complicated look at how people learn and come to understand these lessons. Citizenship relates to a complex set of relations that tie people to the state and the others around them, and belonging and social studies are not too far from this standard. Our place in the world is made up of a variety of different means and markers—our legal status in society, the languages we speak, and how we look and pass through space all contribute to the complex way we come to understand our place in the world. This understanding of the world comes to us from different places, and this work seeks to inquire into just some of those spaces.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Due to the chaotic nature of the testing schedule, for our last session the focus group and I had to meet in the storage room of the library. As we were wrapping up, I shared with them how impressed I was with their ability to stay focused and engaged throughout the interviews. As I had many times before, I asked them "Do y'all have any questions?" Sameer piped up, "Yeah, so what are you going to do now?" He laughed, and the group joined in. I told them I would read and reread all the conversations, type out the interviews and everything else I've collected, and then analyze them for themes. Amelia said, "Oh that sucks" and then she, along with the rest of the group, laughed. I explained how this was the best way to get to the themes and ideas. They nodded their heads as I spoke. We started to pack up and get ready to leave the library storage space. As we did, Sameer asked "Are we going to see you next year?" I told them I'd be around and would look forward to seeing them.

Introduction

As this dissertation inquiries into the curricula of belonging, figuring out ways to examine how these lessons work and people enact them requires a method that includes listening to people and putting me in the spaces where these lessons are occurring. To address the questions at the heart of this dissertation—*How do we learn the curriculum(curricula) of belonging?* and *How is the curriculum (broadly defined) both constraining and enabling of*

particular versions and enactments of citizenship?—I had to see people living, learning, and working in different contexts to catch a glimpse of how different the kinds of learning could look. Researchers often struggle to make the best methodological choices to design and implement the best research project they can. This is a serious challenge given that this research attempts to look at the way people move through the world and how they learn those lessons that can lead to unengaged civic mentality. This chapter will share my process as I designed and implemented this dissertation using case study methodology and analyzing the generated data using the theoretical lens of LatCrit, belonging, and precarity.

Lessons and enactments about belonging occur every day in our complex lives; finding instances where we can see these in action requires a close watch and eye. For this reason, case study methodology presented the best fit to generate data to answer this question. Case study methodology can be a useful method when looking at something that exists in the field. Case study scholar Yin (2014) mentions that case study is the best method for working in the field and responding to contemporary events in a nonlaboratory and experimental approach. Given that these questions have important ramifications for how people are living and treated, the ability of case study to address current issues makes it an important method for this research. Useful for these concerns, Lashua (2015) mentions that case study has a flexibility and can incorporate many different methods and tools of data generation, but this is meant to focus the questions as the research occurs in a specific space. As I was in the field, I wanted to be able to respond to the things I was seeing but also to the people in the field and their values and experiences, especially if they desired not to be researched in certain ways.

This chapter will address how case study methodology informed the design and implementation of this dissertation. The first section will walk through how the design of this

research project used case study to generate data. The next section will describe how I chose the locations that I worked in and the people I interviewed and who participated in my focus groups. After that, a description of different methods used for data generation for this dissertation will follow. The methods and approach of data analysis will follow that. Subsequently, a discussion about how my participants pushed, resisted, and changed this research throughout the life of this project will examine how the participants changed this work. The last section will be a description of my own biases and positionality going into this project. Each section aims to contextualize the research design and decisions that were made in the field and how they reflect an attempt to answer the research questions as well as reflect the needs of the people in the field and my own efforts to treat them ethically.

Research Design

To address how belonging is learned and enacted, I designed a qualitative case study to generate data about how these interactions were occurring and looked at 2 different and distinct social settings. To see how people were engaging and enacting notions of belonging, I had to be with and talk to people. Using a research design in 2 different spaces allowed for data generation in multiple spaces and listening to people in many ways was essential and necessary to follow the tenets of LatCrit that emphasize privileging voices that are often ignored and omitted. Case study also presents a method that seeks to provide the research with the opportunity to learn and discover how these engagements and enactments occurred. This section will explain why these facets of case study design were important for this research.

Case study method provides a means to research in multiple spaces and talk to several people while maintaining the vast complexities that exist in the field. Stake (1995) wrote, “qualitative researchers have pressed for understanding the complex interrelationships among all

that exists" (p. 37), and while this claim is lofty and ambitious, it represents the fact that all qualitative research, including qualitative case studies, seeks to investigate the (inter)relationships that people have with others and the world and how that builds understanding. Case study provides an invitation to explore this complexity and these interrelationships by using a bounded and structured "case" as means for this work. Finding a good place to do case study research is important, as a well-done study, in Stake's words, "is patient, reflective, willing to see another view of [the case]" (p. 12). Being able to examine how people relate to how they belong requires a bounded case to provide a structure to ensure mindful observation and reflection on the part of the researcher.

Case study method allows for a broad range of definitions about what a case can be, as long as there is a boundary that contains the case. The case for this study needed to be specifically bound arenas where people were engaging and enacting belonging in diverse ways and methods. Yin (2014) wrote that the case "can be some event or entity other than a single individual" and that this case "is related to the way you define your initial research question(s)" (p. 31). For this research, being able to generate data where questions about belonging were being taught, engaged, and enacted was necessary, and they needed to drive the process as well. For this project, this meant that two cases could be studied and compared in relation to how belonging is taught, learned, and manifested. The two cases I selected, a high school US history class and a civic group, which I will describe more fully and why they were selected in the next section, provided spaces where belonging was being encountered, learned, and even resisted in ways that emphasized why these questions were important.

The cases of this particular study provided a structured place for thinking about and observing the diverse ways that we belong. Cases need to be both bounded and specific, as both

Stake (1995) and Yin (2014) attest. Stake said, “the case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing” (p. 2). Both of the cases in this study were specific and complex entities, as one was a class and the other was a civic group. Both entities have specificity of purpose and rules that make the cases suitable for study. Having the two cases helps make this inquiry more complete, as it provides two different contexts for seeing how the diverse ways of belonging that we experience unfold and are enacted.

With the cases considered and eventually selected, the next consideration needed to be what data would be generated to learn about and address the research questions. This is an important challenge because the case, as described above, can have a wide range of definitions and possibilities and so can the methods that are used to learn more about the case. Lashua (2015) wrote, “methods are not chosen capriciously, with merely ‘whatever’ might work. Rather, methods should be selected with due care and consideration of which approach will best fit to explain the case and the issues that circumscribe the case” (p. 169). After bounding and framing the case, being selective about how we act and generate data has profound effects on the space that we share with our participants. This gives researchers the time and opportunity to consider the different ethical concerns and dilemmas of doing research with people and respecting their rights as individuals.

Case study method presents a flexible and useful approach to generating data for the research questions at the heart of this dissertation. This flexibility, though, is not without rigor and should not be seen as a weakness; rather, it should be understood as a means to design a research project around the questions and the spaces in which this project needed to take place. Case study also allowed the researcher to be a learner and to discover more and more about how we see and understand how we belong in society. The bounded case also provided a structure for

thinking about how to conduct research as well. This project worked to address how we are learning and addressing the diverse ways that we come to understand how our belonging is constructed and exercised.

Where I Did This Work

Place matters a great deal and affects both how research is conducted and the very questions we ask. In this case study, the place where I did my research mattered to me. This section will explain the choices behind the selection of the sites. For me, it was important to recognize the larger context of where this work takes place, in the New South. This is because the New South, and the demographic changes it encompasses, do much to create the space where this inquiry is happening. Within that context, the selection of the two cases will be explained in this section as well and why they are good cases for this inquiry. I will also explain how interview participants were selected and why that process matters. Picking the place to ask these questions and the people to talk to about these issues are important concerns for research and shape the data that gets generated. This section will explore how those decisions were made and why they matter.

New South

Choosing to work in the New South was not a matter of convenience but one that was rooted in my learning as a student and developing researcher in Georgia. Having lived in this state, I've been able to witness the demographic changes firsthand, and how belonging gets enacted and where questions of belonging and citizenship occur alongside these changes. This makes the decision to work in the New South one that reflects the importance of the New South. Odem and Lacy (2009) describe the South as a historic place with deep roots of conflicts over belonging and power, noting that the region is home to both Segregation and the Civil Rights

Movement. A historic home to these conflicting forces, tensions, and trends, the South currently has seen a demographic change with a large influx of Latinxs to the region, but other groups as well, and especially in Georgia. According to the Migration Policy Institute (2018), the overall foreign-born population of Georgia has grown since 1990 from under twenty thousand people to over one million, with truly global representation in the state. With this growth, Georgia has experienced different shifts within the notions of belonging across the state.

Immigrants have pushed and changed the state in many different ways. In the 1990s, due to a rise of immigrants to work in the carpet factories, an international teacher exchange, called the Georgia Project, occurred between Mexico and Dalton, Georgia, transforming the local schools and community (Hamann, 2008; Zúñiga & Hernández-Léon, 2009). The 1996 Olympics in Atlanta brought in an influx of workers that came to build the different venues and necessary expansion for the city to host the event (Odem, 2009). Georgia has several traditional "pull factors" that attract immigration, most notably the fast-growing agricultural sector of the economy that demands workers and participants (Ribas, 2015). Weise (2015) explored how the growth of urban construction and agriculture sectors has led to massive growth in North Carolina, and the same could be said for Georgia.

This research project occurred not too far from Atlanta, in Carter County and the city of Alexandria. Along with three chicken-processing plants, other forms of agriculture, and some industry, Alexandria also benefits from hosting one of the state's largest universities. Alexandria is also close to I-85, which has been described by Portes and Salas (2010) as one of the most active "corridors" for Latinx population growth and expansion. Transformation and change are the new norms for the area. Knowing that this is part of the New South means that questions about citizenship and belonging are being asked and engaged in on multiple levels.

The spaces chosen for this study were deliberate, as they reflect the dedication of the people who worked in them. Their commonalities include a strong attention to education, and the spaces exhibit an attention to the needs and demands of educating youth. The class and two teachers I observed worked at Carter Central High School, one of the two high schools that served Carter County. LUCHA was a civic and activist group committed to supporting undocumented students by hosting tutoring sessions and supporting students applying for higher education and scholarships, as well as helping them with applications regarding their legal status. Both cases were bounded by structures and rules that made them specific and complex which will be discussed later.

The spaces I chose reflected a vision that emphasized learning and caring centered on the youth who populated them. I did not want to engage in evaluative work, which might be seen as determining the quality or character of the work that was going on, but rather I wanted to dive into a space I saw as working and valuable. This also meant I wanted the denizens of these spaces to feel included and valuable as part of this research and to choose how much they wanted to be participants or not.

The Cases

Both of my cases find themselves within the New South. The first case was in a classroom in a local high school, Carter Central, and the second was a civic group in the same area. I chose to work in spaces that I was familiar with. The classroom was one that I had been visiting for a few years as a field instructor, and I felt very comfortable in the space with the teacher, Ms. Brooks. The civic group, LUCHA, was also a space that I was familiar with as a volunteer. Both spaces had rules and were complex, making them suitable cases for research and

working with. They both were also suitable cases to generate data to answer the research questions at the heart of this study.

The Classroom. Classrooms are not the only spaces dedicated to learning, but their pervasiveness in our society means that they matter a great deal, as they represent a very common format where learning occurs. Students and teachers only make part of the classroom, and content, pedagogy, and politics as the state also feature heavily in everything that happens here. The classroom stands as a formal space of learning, where people have their roles outlined for them, but also what they learn and how they get assessed are pre-prescribed. This arrangement does not mean all classrooms are boring (re-en)actors of everything that has occurred before; rather, this inquiry seeks to provoke thinking about what teachers, students, and the content are all teaching. Rubin (2012) addressed how standardized curriculums and testing have placed limitations on the students who are emerging as complex thinkers and doers. Rubin notes "such methods reflect the notion that at the core of social studies learning is student accumulation of the facts and sequence of history, with the textbook as the primary organizational tool" (p. 22). As the materials, with the progression and build of the class, frame how students see and understand history and social change and participation, they also teach students about how they belong in society and what that belonging should look like. Examining the content of what students are learning means that we can examine one aspect of how their belonging is being taught to them.

The Civic Group. The group I worked with, LUCHA, borrowed its name from the Spanish meaning "fight," and has been active in the area for a few years. They focus on children from families impacted by immigration, or immigrants themselves and getting them into higher education. They first organized as response to Georgia's decision to deny undocumented

students' ability to enroll in the state's top five, not four, public institutions in 2014 (Goodrich, 2016). LUCHA has grown since this start and continues to help with the college admission process, scholarship applications, and homework for a myriad of grade levels, a support network for parents, its own college scholarships, an arts project, activism and education campaigns, and an annual arts and activist event, called Sueños, to promote awareness of the struggles of immigrant communities in Alexandria. LUCHA stands out not only for its work, but also for how it has cultivated youth and helps them become a strong community of leaders, activists, and college students.

LUCHA's ability to cultivate activists and leaders overwhelms me because they do not hide from or ignore the challenge of working with youth, but instead made it a strength. A few students sit on the board of directors of LUCHA, and Sueños is directed by the student leaders with support from adults. Having been a volunteer with the group, before doing my research with them, I am aware of much of the work they are doing to build a better immediate future for their community and schools, and I also see them taking an active role in shaping the New South.

The People. Not all the people that were involved were interviewed or participated in focus groups, because I wanted to let the participants self-select as much as possible. This was not only because I did not want to impose on my participants, but because I wanted them to know that I would value their time as much as possible. Paris (2011) wrote about valuing the time we have in the field and the people we meet and listening to them and sharing ourselves is not something to be blithe about. For this reason, I wanted my interview participants to self-select to participate in interviews.

Table 1.

Key Participants

Name:	Role:	Demographics:	Location:
Ms. Brooks	Mentor Teacher, US History	White, Female	Carter Central
Ms. Williams	Student-Teacher, US History	White, Female	Carter Central
Rose	Student, US History	Black, Female	Carter Central
Mike	Student, US History	Black, Male	Carter Central
Carrie	Tutor/Leader	White, Female	LUCHA
Angela	Alum/Leader	Latinx, Female	LUCHA
Mark	Alum/Leader	Latinx, Male	LUCHA
Marta	Student	Latinx, Female	LUCHA
Luis	Student	Latinx, Male	LUCHA

Summary. The selection and the cases of this inquiry were tied to the research questions at the heart of this project. The larger context of where these cases were situated, in the New South, came with all of the demographic changes and challenges to belonging in that place. The cases, a US History class and a civic group, were specific entities within the context of the New South. Understanding these entities as spaces where the research questions about learning and enacting belonging can be addressed and investigated also means looking into the methods that this inquiry utilized to access the ongoingness of these cases and why they provided a useful location for asking these questions.

Data Generation

With the cases defined and the spaces contextualized, I had to figure out what kind of data would help answer the questions of this inquiry. Data generation in this study sought to investigate how people were enacting and learning about their modes of belonging in the spaces they occupy. Given the theoretical tenets of LatCrit, that the oppressed should be listened to and given space to tell their stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), I wanted to use methods that would allow me to tap into their enactments, words, and experiences. With this in mind, participant-observation, to see how people were enacting and experiencing belonging in the different spaces, and interviews and focus groups, to access how people were understanding these experiences, provided the best tools. This section will explain how I used those tools and how I responded to ethical concerns of being in the field. This research endeavor did not adhere to a static plan but responded to the people and their requests. How the plans changed and evolved will be reflected in this section, with a longer description of how I responded to the people and their needs in another section on refusal.

Participant-Observation

Time in the field serves as a way to explore and see glimpses of the culture and learning that occur. For this research inquiry, seeing and being with people was instrumental to observing the micro-interactions that taught us about our place in the world. Participant-observation provides an important method for qualitative and ethnographic researchers who seek to inquire and understand a culture (Stacey, 1988; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Foner (2009) said participant-observation "brings people—their perspectives, social relations, and problems—to life. Ethnographic studies can also reveal subtleties in meaning and behavior that large-scale surveys often miss or, in some cases, get wrong" (p. 27). This inquiry examines the subtleties of how we

learn in organizations and institutions, looking into these relationships and how they function. Looking into these relationships can be hard; Geertz (1973/2000) wrote that researchers must work toward building a "thick description" of their work and what they are observing. While observation and being able to write a "thick description" does not eliminate the possibility of doing bad and harmful research, it shows that the researcher attempted to understand the field as a complex site of a "multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another" (Geertz, 1973/2000, p. 10), instead of a simple reduced space easy to understand. Being in space and immersed in the classroom and group, I sought to examine how the people were managing and learning about their own belonging.

I spent three days of the week observing and participating in a US History classroom at Carter Central. Using Evernote, I followed a writing protocol in order to ensure that I was capturing moments and interactions. This allowed me and the teachers to have equal access to my notes at all times and even allowed them the ability to see and redact anything they might not want included in the notes. At first, I was writing down interactions without any information about the people who were saying them. Realizing that would actually lose important facets of the interactions, I began keeping some demographic notes, mainly about race and gender, so I could capture some of the other aspects of the interactions that were occurring in the class, especially given how they might reflect aspects of society. As I became more immersed in the field, students began talking to me more and more; this sometimes distracted me from note-taking, but I took it as an opportunity to interact with students, answer questions about my study, and help them with their classwork if they asked. When I was done, I would quickly return to my notes and try to write down what I had been asked about.

At LUCHA, since I was there as a volunteer, I did not write notes or formal field notes so as to not make participants self-conscious. Given the precariousness of undocumented students and families (Nienhusser, Vega, & Saavedra-Carquin, 2016), I did not want to add to their tensions and how they were moving and acting at LUCHA. So I kept my role as volunteer and member at the forefront. After major events, I would write down thoughts and reactions in my journal at home as a way to keep myself present at LUCHA and not as a researcher.

Being a participant-observer, to me, meant being conscious about how I was sharing space with people. I wanted to see how they, and I, were learning and enacting the lessons of belonging in the different spaces. While I know that my presence was altering the spaces I was in, I hoped that I didn't make them too conscious of those changes. By being open about my intentions and always being available to answer questions and contribute, I hoped that I was negatively changing the space as little as possible.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Talking to participants, the people living these experiences, provides another important venue to learning about the case, but only if we engage with them honestly. Connecting to those people and sharing ourselves with them can provide an important part of this work. Being open to talking and listening to participants serves an important purpose, and when my participants asked me questions, whether related to the study or personal, I strove to be honest and my full self. Interviews present important opportunities for this to happen, but not the only. Paris (2011) addressed this in a letter about research, saying "although I am careful to remain focused on learning from participants in interviews, I resist the notion that sharing about parts of ourselves during interviews attains less genuine and valid responses. In many research contexts, the opposite is often true: we must share of ourselves as we ask people to share of themselves" (p.

142). Paris reminds us we are in the field with people, not just with phenomena or concepts. The people are easier to see than the concepts. They become familiar to you, their senses of humor, their laughs, faults—all start to feel familiar. Concepts of citizenship and belonging can be invisible, too, but my goal here was to peel back that cloak of invisibility and think about and theorize how we as individuals interact with these ideals. These ideas and concepts are present everywhere, and it is hard to have a clear conversation with them. Peeling back the layers and putting people in conversation with the concepts that move through space with them needs to be considered as deliberately as possible, as this most often occurs tacitly in our daily lives.

To do this, talking to people felt like a necessary approach in order to hear their voices and ideas. I conducted three one-on-one interviews with each teacher and five focus groups with the students who were in the class I observed, one being a large focus group and the other four being smaller group protocols. For my participants from LUCHA, I conducted just one interview, given their time and availability. The goal of these interactions was to tap into how people thought about and saw their learning going on around them. I didn't want my participants to feel that I was testing them or that I had a desired performance for them to do while I was interviewing them (Barton, 2015). Questions were designed to be open-ended and descriptive to get participants talking about themselves and the world around them. There was a semi-structured aspect for each interview as I planned and outlined questions (see Appendix 1), but these were only adhered to with an informality and not as a structure. It was more important to keep conversation flowing and to be able to press and ask participants for more details than to stick to a specific set of questions. I wanted my participants to feel comfortable talking to me as much as possible and tried to avoid having them feel like they owed me a performance or a

correct answer, especially with the students. I ended each focus group with some time for them to ask me questions, and I tried to be as honest as possible.

Sharing and contributing to the forces that make up space are one aspect of how we interact; another key aspect is how we talk to people. Following many models, such as Paris (2011) and Kirkland (2014), I wanted to be open and honest when talking with my participants. There were several reasons for this, but one reason was I wanted them to make as much sense of what I was asking them as possible. Paris (2011) commented, "one key to this opening up, I believe, was Ela's ability to place me within the ethnic, linguistic, and racial world I was asking her and her peers to reveal to me" (p. 144). Sameer and I had a moment that touched upon this in one of our interviews. We were discussing origins and how his parents immigrated. Feeling like we were talking about him too much, he joked with me that I sounded like "an immigration officer," followed by laughter. After we laughed, I told him about my parents and how I was asking because it sounded similar to my experience. He then launched back into the origin story and discussing his family.

Being open with the people I talked with was a big concern for me. I didn't want my presence or our conversations to change my participants. However, I wanted to be open with them about what I was doing and who I was. My honesty and openness helped my participants understand where I was coming from, what I was looking for, and helped them place me in their own understanding. I hoped our conversations did at least provide some answers. The young people I spoke with often included questions about my past and my involvement with schools and activism. I found this to be an encouraging sign that they were engaging with me and my topic.

Concerns about Research

Being in the field with people allows a glimpse into the imagination that helped create dynamic spaces and groups. Said (1978/2004) stated, "space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning" (p. 55). I know being in the field was important for me, and it was something I was glad and honored to do. It was also exhausting. Time in the field equaled lots of energy that went into making observations, conducting interviews, and reviewing artifacts. Being in the field as a researcher adds a whole new dimension of what we bring to space. As a researcher, I noticed things the teachers themselves did not due to the processes and ideas I brought to the space. I also believe I helped participants reflect on what their participation in spaces meant to them and the people they interacted with.

Space is always meaningful with people and can be very exciting. When I first observed in a classroom, I felt like I had to have a quiet presence. The students were already used to visitors and having several adults in the classroom, as Carter Central was the site where several student teachers worked and practiced before certification. My presence was, initially, not any different. In fact, students did not even notice me or ask me anything until my second or third week there. For the teachers, we had worked together before and they were also very excited about the project and the research, so they were happy to have me there.

Data is not found nor is it chanced upon. It comes from how we see and understand the world. Instead of seeking and pursuing objectivity, I sought to make sure I was working to understand my participants in the best ways I could, although this was not without problems. I wondered if my presence in the classroom and civic space as a researcher would change the way the people behaved. Participant-observation always changes a space and makes the facets and

shortcomings of this research more obvious. I wanted to be open and forthright about my research and what I was hoping to do. This resulted in different tensions around this work. With the civic group, their right of refusal changed the way we worked together. The classroom was changed by my presence, and students were curious about what I was doing. I know I was changing the dynamic of this space. My efforts to generate data were not neutral, and I can only hope I was not a detrimental force.

Right of Refusal

When I asked LUCHA leaders for permission to observe the participants and their leadership, they told me no, they didn't want me there as a researcher. They did it to protect the spaces of empowerment for their students. They apologized about their decision, since I had been a volunteer there. I felt guilty about the apology, since I created the scenario in which they had to reject me. As a researcher, I have to respect their capacity to reject my interest in their group, and as someone familiar with the group, I knew their intentions were to protect the group. They explained that this space was a youth-dominated space and that they feared that my presence, no matter how familiar I was with the group, would be disruptive. I did not want my curiosity to disrupt a valuable space for them.

After my rejection, the work by Tuck and Yang (2014) helped me reflect about what I had done and needed to do. They identify the three axioms to reflect the problems with doing research through the concept of the subaltern, Spivak's (1994) exploration of how marginalized peoples become framed and received. Tuck and Yang (2014) write:

> The axioms are: The subaltern can speak but is only invited to speak her/our pain; there are some forms of knowledge the academy doesn't deserve; and research may not be the intervention that is needed (p. 224).

These axioms speak to the issues that arise in working with marginalized populations and groups. The ability of the subaltern to speak on its own terms has been hampered historically and continues through the means and structures of research and other forces, too. I did not want my work to violate these axioms, even as I recognize I may have done so. I hope that in addressing each of these axioms, I will expose my thinking but also how I worked to repair the issues confronted by this project.

Tuck and Yang's (2014) third axiom is a declaration: "research may not be an intervention that is needed" (p. 224). In the scope of this research, while I had not proposed any experimentation, my presence presented a possible intervention. I would be entering and existing in a space I was not privy to before and would change it with my presence. Given that our participants were doing amazing things and didn't need our interventions to make them better, we needed to be mindful about how we approached research. We could only hope they'd agree to share their exceptional spaces with us.

The second axiom revolves around two facts: knowledge is precious and valuable, and the academy has no right to access all knowledge. Tuck and Yang (2014) explain:

> Research is just one form of knowing, but in the Western academy, it eclipses all others. In this way, the relationship of research to other human ways of knowing resembles a colonizing formation, acquiring, claiming, absorbing, consuming. (p. 237)

This explanation shows how research can become a colonizing form of investigation by placing its own needs above all else. Placing the needs of research second to those of the people inhabiting the space needs to be a priority. When I heard my presence and my work would change the space of LUCHA activities, I thought not only of the impact of doing participant-observation research, but also that I had no right to be there, to occupy space with them. Being

told that I had crossed some lines hurt me because I did not want to be one of those researchers, and I wanted to do better. The group's generosity surprised me by their effort to educate me and also help me. Their desire to help me see and understand their decision highlights how research can take over space and how groups need to protect their space.

The first axiom about pain holds tremendous value for researchers, as it questions how we move through spaces and inquiries with our researchers. Kirkland's (2014) commentary about working with black men like him resonated with me here. The goal was not to share painful stories of exclusion and other traumas. His work centered and focused on the abilities of his participants and what they were doing. The painful stories, which also carry meaning, cannot be the only way the stories of the subaltern find their way into the academy. There must be stories of success and other facets of being. While Spivak (1994) questions whether the subaltern can speak, one step is to declare the work the researchers do as separate and distinct from our participants. If we are only capturing painful stories, we must step back and ask ourselves if we are speaking for our participants. My study seeks to capture exceptional spaces and the practices, and not emphasize pain or evaluation, which can cause pain and misrecognition. The question of whether the subaltern can speak or not is one to which we need to constantly attend; we must also ask if we are only allowing the subaltern to speak painful stories and exist in pain. This axiom questions how we represent our participants and if we capture their stories and the emotional complexity they deserve.

Being denied into the room meant I would have to change my project, and the fact that the denial also came with opportunity to revise my ideas meant that I could continue to work with LUCHA. The invitation to work on this more was exciting for me because it indicated that I had made meaningful connections within the group and that my research mattered to this group.

While I cannot pretend that I am a full member of this group, their invitation to work with me and help cannot be underestimated or ignored. Pulido (2008) wrote about working within the group confines, but also helping the group in ways they identify. Refusal can be final but should not also exclude our ability to respond to invitations for more research. We should take these invitations and see them as an opening to a conversation and not just a request or dictation. Working within their wishes and desires, I would continue to be there as a tutor, but I could use the group to recruit interviewees. They would even allow me time during meetings to share and discuss my project so that everyone could be aware of what I was asking. I had to make it clear that participation was voluntary. From here I began to do interviews with LUCHA volunteers and graduates.

Data Analysis

After all the planning, being in the field, and data generation, the next step in this project was to analyze everything I had generated. Analyzing data can be a difficult process and especially since all time in the field generated a large volume of records and transcripts for me to go through. This section will explain how I approached analyzing data, including the tools I used in that process and how that helped me answer the questions at the heart of this research project. The first section will describe the first steps I took with the data I generated, to gather them and begin reading them. The next section will focus on how coding emerged during the second reading and what that meant for the research. The last section will illustrate how organization of the codes assisted and shaped my thinking about the spaces I researched in.

Gathering and Reading the Data

The first thing that I did with my data was to gather it and read through without worrying about codes and analyzing it. Analyzing data is an intense process and one where the researcher

shapes how the data presents and how the theories look. Noted grounded-theory scholar Charmaz (2014) said "through coding, you [the researcher] *define* what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means" (p. 113, emphasis original). This responsibility was concerning for me, especially as I wanted to remain true to the tenets of LatCrit that emphasize the words of the oppressed and allow them to have access to the knowledge-making of academia. I did not want to rush into coding and beginning the process of grappling with what things mean.

Delaying the coding process was about honoring the words and ideas that my participants allowed me, to spend time just reading. This was not an easy process, though. As I read through my field notes and transcripts of interviews and focus groups, I was constantly pushed to consider how my participants and their actions were providing interesting discussion points for answering the research questions at the heart of this research project. To satisfy my drive but also to keep myself centered on the words of the participants, I began to think about large categories of ideas that data could be sorted into and used as potential future answers to my research questions. The large categories that I thought about turned into the first charts and graphs that I created. The purpose of charts and images were to help me think about how I might go about writing and answering the research questions at the heart of this project.

Coding the Data

After the initial read and the creation of the charts, I began the process of coding by rereading the generated data and coding it. Through coding, according to Charmaz (2014), "you may gain surprising insights about how people's actions fit together or come into conflict" (p. 133). This makes coding a crucial step in this process, as I sought to investigate and answer the research questions that are embedded in how we interact with each other and learn from one

another. I needed coding to have this impact on how I was seeing the data and the people I worked with in the field.

To start this coding, I began with a deliberate reading of my field notes. While this was the largest body of work, a reflection of the five months I spent in the field, it also made the most sense to begin here. Reading the field reports offered me an opportunity to refamiliarize myself with the spaces in which I had invested the most time. Charmaz reminds us that "the coding process is interactive. We interact with our participants and subsequently interact with them again many times over through studying their statements and observed actions and re-envisioning the scenes in which we know them" (p. 115). Similar to Charmaz's statement above, coding with diligent practice brought about new ways to see and understand the data, and I worked to keep my codes close to the data. After reviewing the field reports, I reviewed the transcripts for the interview and followed the same coding process there.

Keeping codes close to the data meant that the codes were partially descriptive, but it also gave me an opportunity to start interacting with the data I generated with my participants. Coding allowed me to record my initial thoughts on the events I had observed and the people I spoke to. In the data-analysis software NVivo, I utilized the node feature to place codes alongside data and attach it to specific phrases and incidents. I made an effort, as I stated before, to be more descriptive, as I wanted the words and interactions of my participants to provide the answers for my research questions. When the coding was complete, not only had I (re)read quite a bit of data, but I also had over three hundred codes and descriptors that now needed to be organized and categorized into larger thoughts to help the data answer my questions.

Organizing the Data

After generating the data and coding it, there was still a lack of organization about how I could approach it, and this needed to be resolved. Here, looking over just the codes I had generated, I began to think about how they might be organized and categorized to answer these research questions. Freeman (2017) wrote, "categories do not create themselves and are often made up of other identifiable categories" (p. 7), and this was true for this project. NVivo was particularly useful here as it allowed the codes, as nodes, to be organized without any impact to how they had been associated with data. This section will describe how I organized and categorized the codes to provide more robust insights into the data and how that shaped my answers to the research questions.

The first step was to read the codes that I had generated to see and address how they answer the research questions. Reviewing the codes, through NVivo, allowed for quick and easy access to the data itself so that organization and reading would not occur without consulting the data. This reading of the codes helped me to consider how the codes and the data might be organized to help me think about potential answers for my research questions. There were some initial categories that were too broad for use. The specific locations, for one, as codes did not provide any useful thinking about ways to answer the questions, nor did they teach me anything about the space. The organization of codes needed boundaries, and the questions themselves would help with that.

Reviewing the research questions provided a framework for seeing and reseeing the interactions in the spaces and the codes they generated. NVivo allowed an organization to take shape and for codes to be placed in groups without any impact on the data they represented. This is how the categories took shape. Going through and sorting the codes provided many

opportunities to think about and interact with the ideas that my participants shared with me. It also provided an opportunity to compare interactions across the different spaces as I examined and reexamined the data. After going through and sorting the codes, I had categories that stretched across the different spaces, and that felt like these categories were helping me think across those different spaces and come up with some real answers to the research questions for this dissertation.

My Positionality and Biases

This research project and the questions at the heart of it are ones that I have been asking my whole life in many ways. As the native-born citizen child of immigrants, I have always struggled with the different notions of belonging that exist in this world. Being a native-born citizen, I never had to struggle with the rigmarole of US immigration law and protocol, but I have had to endure exclusion and the problems of racial politics, even hearing national politicians attack the idea of native-born citizenship. The protections of citizenship do not extend to preventing damaging rhetoric or ideas from being spread or heard.

I cannot ignore the fact that my work begins with the immigration of my parents to the United States. They came to the States looking for a better future through education; they were able to move over the border from Mexico. Being the child of Mexican immigrants shaped many aspects of how I grew up. I had cultural experiences that bridged both US and Mexican cultures, and I often had to navigate both. Even though I was born in the United States, my life has not been immune to the different challenges of immigration. I had to witness the challenges and several different tribulations my parents went through. At the same time, I saw them prosper and succeed despite these challenges.

I have stood with my parents and waited with them at the immigration offices, waiting while they interviewed several times, watching them swear multiple oaths to this nation and even once to swear against the nation of their birth. I was also with them on long car drives to find the closest Mexican grocery stores to help carve out a home that spanned long distances and several cultures and languages. I saw and experienced a fluid border that bridged vast geographic and cultures. While legally we belonged, we experienced the "conditional welcome," with legal obstacles, and were forced to navigate the cultural norms of our mother culture and our new home. We were expected to do all the work, as we were being told that we were all equals.

From the beginning, I have been navigating the difficult waters of belonging in this nation. I have belonged here legally, but I have seen, firsthand, how difficult it can be to navigate the legal aspect of belonging. At the same time, I have also seen the difficult path that comes with being different. This means that I am familiar with the goings-on associated with these research questions, but that is not necessarily a negative for me. Being familiar with the problems and issues of belonging means that I am well situated to see them in spaces where they are occurring and are being asked. Since the "conditional welcome" posits that only those out of power are asked to accommodate and meet the expectations of the other, being familiar with this struggle means that I am privy to how these questions are being asked.

Conclusion

This process(es) sought to create a robust set of data, codes, and analyses to connect the work participants and I to the larger body of work that exists and was covered in chapter 2. From discussing the tools of data generation, observation, interviewing, and artifact collection, to the methods and processes of analysis, coding, and theme generation, the goal has been to chart how the work has taken place and what it has meant. These methods attempted to address the research

question about pedagogies and lessons of belonging in a way that addresses how we learn and respond to these learnings.

CHAPTER 5

BELONGING IN CARTER CENTRAL'S SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

The class came in and prepared for a test. This was one of the rare days when Ms. Williams was absent during her student-teaching because she had to do some work on her master's degree with her professors. Students were slow to get ready and kept moving about the room getting their supplies. One student asked about Ms. Williams, and Ms. Brooks explained that she was out to do some of her classwork to become a teacher. Another student noted under her breath that Ms. Williams would be a bad teacher because she gave out tests. Ms. Brooks interceded that all teachers give out tests and she should calm down. She turned her attention to the whole class and began to give out instructions on how to take the test. Students opened their computers and prepared to take the test. But before beginning, one student asked if they would get their scores when the test was done. Ms. Brooks said they would, and they all began to take the test. The room was silent as the students focused on their test. The sounds of keyboards clicking and clacking filled the room. After some time, students began to finish the test and looked around to see who else had finished. Ms. Brooks warned them not to talk until everyone finished so she could grade their tests and share their scores with them. Students silently got some work out and passed a bag of chips around the room. Ms. Brooks sat at her desk, working quietly while some students ate chips and others finished their test. Finally, she announced to the class that since

the last test was submitted, the grades were available on their computers. After checking their scores, one student jumped in the air with joy. She shouted, "Thank you, Ms. Brooks!" Ms. Brooks told her to calm down and reminded her that Ms. Williams had been her teacher for the past few weeks so to thank her as well. Another student stood up and moved next to Ms. Brooks and told the class how proud he was of all of them and that he was excited to move closer to graduation. Ms. Brooks laughed and said, "I can't wait to read about this in Mr. Tirado's notes!"

Introduction

Researching in classrooms is important because they function as a space where learning is directed to occur by the local and national governments and where students and teachers are learning about themselves. Tyack and Cuban (1995) and Collins (2009) have all illustrated why the classroom is an important space to work in and how they represent important opportunities for sorting and social organization that extend beyond the school. These authors also note that resistance begins in the classrooms as groups and people try to carve out their own spaces. Generating data in classrooms felt necessary given how many lessons of enactments of learning occur here, as students, teachers, communities, and the state all converge here. I was excited to be researching in a classroom and with a classroom teacher that I knew fairly well, as I hoped that would help everyone feel more comfortable with my presence. This chapter will explore the different forms and ways that belonging is learned and enacted in a school setting, which I learned in generating data in the classroom and analyzing it. This first section will outline and describe what the space was like and how I researched. The next sections will explore the themes that came together to teach me about the lessons of belonging that were occurring in those

spaces. Finally, the conclusion will remind us of how this data and analysis contribute answers to the research questions of this dissertation.

Description of the Space

Carter Central High School felt hidden among the houses, university properties, and businesses as it lay tucked back from the main road. With a population of about fifteen hundred students, the halls of Carter Central were full of bodies, posters, and student art. Carter Central was also a diverse school with under 50 percent of the student population being black, 24 percent Latinx, and 21 percent white (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).[1]

Ms. Brooks's classroom was filled with materials, items, and things that mattered to her. This resulted in a space packed with desks, papers, filing cabinets, and various writing utensils. She covered the walls with posters about history, Disney images, and memes about teaching. One of these memes featured Beyoncé and said, "If you want a grade, you shoulda put your name on it." The board in the classroom was full of writing that conveyed information to students, with each of her five classes having its own space with curriculum updates, homework, and a few vocabulary words, too. The room felt cavernous because there were no windows. Students would keep their notebooks in bins at the front of the classroom and would pick them up on the way in. A table at the front of the classroom housed handouts that the different classes would use throughout the day and some extras from previous days. There were a few bags of softball equipment piled behind Ms. Brooks's desk, as she was the coach of the softball team.

The students in Ms. Brooks's classroom were not an accurate representation of the whole school. It was a smaller class with sixteen students; three were Latinx, with one of those being a new arrival from Venezuela, and thirteen were black students. They all sat near the front of the

[1] To protect the participants and the school, the name of the school and county are pseudonyms.

classroom, with the back row only being used when students were making up tests or work that the rest of the class was not doing. This class was an on-level US history class that was driven by a set of standards approved by the state of Georgia. These standards appeared on the board, but students never wrote them down, as far as I knew. Instead, students wrote a table of contents that Ms. Brooks, and later Ms. Williams, organized for them.

Ms. Brooks is a white woman and a native Georgian who grew up outside of Rome, a small metropolitan area in the northeastern part of the state. I first met Ms. Brooks almost two years prior to beginning this project, in my capacity as a field instructor working with teacher-candidates. Ms. Brooks always welcomed student-teachers into her classroom throughout the year. Even though she was not an alumna of the University of Georgia, she was always willing to take students in and provide them a space to practice under her own mentorship. I found working with Ms. Brooks to be easy, as she was very willing to let student-teachers try new things and offer constructive feedback after every lesson. As I began this research project, I found that Ms. Brooks had welcomed another student-teacher into her room, Ms. Williams, who is also a native Georgian, although from Metro Atlanta, and a white woman and was a student (although not mine) in the program I worked with at the university.

Description of the Research

To see the lessons and enactments of belonging in the classroom, I wanted to observe the space and interview a few self-selected students about how they moved through and understood their space. Wanting to see the different enactments of belonging, I knew, meant spending time in the classroom so that students would be comfortable with my presence in that space. While Carter County students were used to having people in the classroom, as there were constant streams of people coming in and out of the classrooms, student-teachers, university, and district

personnel continuously filtered through the space. I knew, though, that my presence would be different, as I would stick around and not just disappear after a few weeks. After a week of being in the classroom, I introduced myself and my research project to the student so that they would know why I was sticking around and what I was doing there.

Because of this project, I wanted to spend a lot of time in Ms. Brooks's and Ms. Williams's classroom. I visited the class about three times a week which amounted to forty visits during my research time, with thirty having Ms. Williams leading the class, and ten with Ms. Brooks. I would sit in the mostly empty back row of the classroom as I took notes during my observations. Students became more familiar with me after two weeks, as they started to say hi to me and ask me how I was doing, something they usually did with both Ms. Williams and Ms. Brooks. These brief greetings helped me feel like I belonged in that space, and what I will describe in this chapter is how the belonging often contained contradictions, as invitations and forces of inclusion and exclusion acted concurrently in this classroom and other spaces.

Results

This chapter will use the data generated in Ms. Brooks's and Ms. Williams's classroom to illuminate struggles and tensions when we think about them with belonging and precarity. The sections that follow will explore how these two theories provide a different way to see classroom management, politics in the classroom, being a student-teacher, controversy, social studies content, and violence. The words and ideas of participants will be central to this process, and introduction of theory to the analysis provides a basis for thinking with theory in this classroom. Each section will ground itself with data, either from an observation, interview, or both, and then introduce theories of belonging, precarity, and LatCrit as tools to see interactions in a different

light and learn about how they might teach us about how this class worked with these tensions and relationships.

Belonging and Classroom Management

This first section will explore some facets of classroom management that Ms. Brooks talked to me about in an interview. During the interviews, I spoke to Ms. Brooks about how she saw herself as a practitioner of pedagogy and how she managed her classroom with the different people and ideas that filled it. By examining a quotation of Ms. Brooks about how she handles disagreement in her class, we will see how she thinks about conversation in her class and the role of discussion and sharing, and I will use theory to show how politics plays a role in the classroom.

Ms. Brooks's Views about Her Classroom

Amid a conversation about standards, norms, and practices, Ms. Brooks and I talked about navigating different ideas of the people in the classroom. She told me:

> I think that it's important for them [the students] to be able to say what they want to say, but I also think that sometimes you have to have them think about it first so that it comes out in a more tactful way, because they're not going to be able to say some of the things they want to say in the real world the way that they just come to mind. I think that helps them form their opinion in a more eloquent way, because I ultimately want to promote bipartisanship in this room. If another student has a different opinion on civil rights, yes, you should be able to vocalize that. However, it needs to be brought up in such a way that it may not be offensive to somebody else. (interview)

There are many facets of this quotation that stick out to me, but mostly how classroom management was being used and emphasized and placed freedom of expression in opposition to

control. Even as democratic principles and ideals emerge in the classroom, as we see in "to be able to say what they want to say," keeping the peace emerges as more important, with tact and aversion to offence being placed as even more important. This emphasis on a controlled classroom space reflects Ms. Brooks's views of how conversation should occur and reflects the controversy of her students. Thinking about who gets to say what and how they get to say it presents an element of control and management that Ms. Brooks is exercising over the class.

There are two other elements that stand out in this quotation by Ms. Brooks. The first is that Ms. Brooks uses a specific vision for what the real world is and how it operates. Here, Ms. Brooks might reflect about how she passes through the world and how she sees controversy move through it. Not wanting students and conversation in her classroom to "be offensive" means she is assuming that her students have the same thresholds about what is and isn't offensive as she does. This brings up the other element here that stood out to me, as there is an element of respectability here being verbalized by Ms. Brooks. This verbalization amounts to another facet of her attempt to control the classroom and the conversations inside. Maintaining the order of the space and elements of control are the most important things that Ms. Brooks talks about as we discussed classroom conversation, specifically political control. This control equates to who can and can't voice their politics, how that voicing and discourse are controlled, and how LatCrit and belonging help us to see these elements.

Control of Political Discussion and Belonging

The tension between wanting students to speak their minds but also maintain an orderly classroom creates an interesting set of values for Ms. Brooks as she tries to navigate control over her classroom and freedom of discourse and how belonging can shed light on this discourse. Ms. Brooks does not put the two ideas in direct conflict in her phrasing, but she definitely does not

want kids saying things that will upset other students and potentially create problems. The tension between control and expression and using theory to peel back the layers to examine the tension will provide an insight into how this orientation is constructed, sustained, and potentially shapes the students who learn in that space. This section will explore that tension in her statement and how she is visualizing and thinking about conversations in her classroom.

One phrase best exemplifies this tension with Ms. Brooks's pedagogy as to why limiting the freedom of students is good for their learning. From the quotation above, the phrase that best highlights this tension is "I think that it's important for them to be able to say what they want to say, but I also think that sometimes you have to have them think about it first so that it comes out in a more tactful way" (interview). This quotation contains aspects that show Ms. Brooks's support for free speech, and how her quest for control affected how the class is managed. There is a clear importance placed on having students say what they want to say. This controlled-centric thinking employs "tact" to justify control and to limit that speech and help certain people feel comfortable and avoid certain controversial topics. Keeping people comfortable by avoiding political discussion means that the rules and enactments of classroom management are maintaining political boundaries.

When we use the theory of belonging to examine this quotation, we can see this behavior as something more than a management tool and how it is teaching an orientation to control and restrain oneself. As in most American classrooms, Ms. Brooks is a white woman teaching in a classroom of black and brown students (Busey & Waters, 2016). Masuoka and Junn (2013) write about how belonging often comes with a place in the hierarchy, noting that "minorities and whites are, to varying degrees, aware of their position in the American racial hierarchy, and the recognition of both racial-group consciousness and the parameters of what constitutes an

American are relevant to political attitudes on immigration" (p. 88). Masuoka and Junn were referring to the contours of immigration discourse and how people learn to think about their place in the nation through the discourse and discussion of the politics of immigration, but the divide that they describe extends far beyond this one topic of debate. Ms. Brooks, with this orientation, provides a learning environment that places complicity, compliance, and holding back over freedom of expression.

Belonging, as a theory, reflects that everyone gets to take part but that not everyone's participation is equal. Ms. Brooks, by evoking "tact," provides a means and system of control over how people may converse and share ideas in the class so as to not offend or hurt anyone around them. This tension needs belonging to be seen and understood well, because of how first Ms. Brooks opens up the classroom as a space for conversation, but then restricts it in the name of getting along. By looking at this restriction through the theoretical lens of belonging, we can see an act that teaches students about what is and what isn't permissible and, thus, what the expected forms of behavior and enactments of belonging are. Ms. Brooks teaches her students about what enactments of participation are permissible and possible. Even in her quotation, she advocates having students "think about it first" to emphasize the limit she's putting on them, as they are meant to think about being more tactful and perform in more expected ways. This restriction comes out of the drive to perform in certain ways and keep her classroom looking a certain way, which teaches her students about how they are to perform and act.

Ms. Brooks's goal was not just to teach her students about how to act in her classroom, but also how to act in the real world. She said in that same quotation that her students "[a]re not going to be able to say some of the things they want to say in the real world the way that they just come to mind" (interview). Just as before, Ms. Brooks's perception of "real world" and how

students will be expected to behave in it represents how she is framing belonging for her students. The "real world," like "tact" in the previous quotation, promotes a certain set of values over someone else's conception and perception. If we could return to the previous quotation by Masuoka and Junn (2013) about belonging and consider how Ms. Brooks uses the "real world" as a stand-in for "the parameters of what constitutes an American," we can see how there is a clear promotion of a certain behavior and maintaining a distance from controversial topics or at least in how they are presented and discussed in the classroom.

Ms. Brooks cares deeply about having an ordered classroom; things have to get done and work needs to get accomplished. But when we look at the way she discusses and describes classroom management through the lens of belonging, the consequences of her actions have more depth. Even as democratic actions are being described and protected in her statement, the elements of control weigh in and frame and describe a space where more than classroom management is being prescribed, but so are the boundaries of belonging and hierarchy. This is how we expect these boundaries and lessons to be enacted, though depending on how we belong, the expectations are different. Ms. Brooks, through her work on classroom management, also teaches a lesson about expected behaviors and how people are expected to move through the world.

Freedom of Speech, Respectability, and LatCrit

As the previous section described how classroom management could be seen through belonging, LatCrit can also provide a useful framework for thinking with this piece of data. Classroom management can teach students about how they are expected to belong and act in the world, but here the emphasis on "tact" also creates a limitation on how students learn and can react to certain situations. Ms. Brooks wants her students to get along and her classroom to

function well, and she expects her students to play a role in that work. When we talked about classroom management, exchange of ideas butted against how those ideas would flow and affect others in the room. While, before, we discussed a general sense of how "tact" and "thinking" should affect and reflect the students' understanding of their and others' place in the classroom and the "real world," eventually Ms. Brooks named some specifics about what that controversy looks like. LatCrit provides an opportunity to think about how classroom management is addressing change and difference for students and how it is being framed for them, as LatCrit allows us to examine how this classroom management limits experiential knowledge and an ability to challenge the dominant ideas of the classroom space.

This tension can also be seen in Ms. Brooks's quotation about classroom management and decorum. She told me, "If another student has a different opinion on civil rights, yes, you should be able to vocalize that. However, it needs to be brought up in such a way that it may not be offensive to somebody else" (interview). Similar to before, there is a structural tension here that parallels previous parts of her statement. The value of free speech comes first and is followed by limitation on that speech. The mention of students being able to differ on how they view civil rights history comes with a limitation that those views cannot "be offensive to somebody else," and this tension about maintaining a free classroom discussion without offending people could use a LatCrit analysis to help expose some other things that this limitation imposes. The back and forth between difference and getting along highlights the tensions between freedom, change, and incrementalism that LatCrit helps researchers to see with analysis.

LatCrit and CRT challenge thinking about the dominant ideology and how people enact and address the problems that this ideology reinforces. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) write:

> [C]ritical race theory challenges the traditional claims that educational institutions make toward objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity. Critical race scholars argue that these traditional claims act as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society. (p. 26)

This critique is a wide-ranging accusation about how systems of oppression and power are maintained. Ms. Brooks evoked objectivity and neutrality in her classroom for maintaining her own power in the classroom but was not acting in the interest of an institution or a specific oppression. LatCrit and CRT allow us to see this move for classroom management in terms of a large impact. By stressing values like objectivity and neutrality in the name of classroom management, Ms. Brooks is trying to make sure her class follows an order, but unfortunately it also means that students are being stifled and being exposed to values that have systematically promoted oppression.

There is no evidence or inclination to think that Ms. Brooks sought or intended to support forces that would oppress her students. Although this is the case, she was re-enacting a dangerous lesson of how people should behave. Classroom management turned into a tool for silently perpetuating damaging values of neutrality and objectivity. For Ms. Brooks, her ideas on classroom management not only reveal a strong attachment to order and democratic values, but in that orderliness, there lies a hidden reification for oppression.

Summary

Ms. Brooks's statement about her class and her style of management reveals an interest in democratic values, orderliness, and unfortunately also reveals hidden lessons of belonging and power. The different elements of these tensions come through and exhibit how we belong in the world and how freedom and power lie side by side. Ms. Brooks sought to create a classroom that

placed her students' learning as the most important thing, and she didn't want an incomplete thought or something that wasn't well fashioned to offend her students. These lessons came with the best of intentions and shaped her classroom.

Belonging: Student-Teacher Struggles with Her Place

About a month into her student-teaching, Ms. Williams was ready to really try to extend herself and her class to maximize her learning. She had pushed herself and her teaching through different activities in the classroom. Two weeks into having taken over the classroom, Ms. Williams took her first risk when she attempted to teach about the 1920s using music as the content. The lesson that is the focus of this section was more ambitious than that. She wanted to plan a lesson that would incorporate more contemporary issues and share how civil rights history mattered in today's age. Her plan was to begin class with a discussion and exploration of the lives and deaths of Emmett Till and Stephon Clark, the latter a victim of a police shooting in Sacramento, California, who garnered national attention when video evidence was released across several news channels. Ms. Williams would then segue the class into reading and analyzing information about the murders and how they affect the civil rights efforts of the students' own times.

The Class's Response to the Lesson

During the lesson, students expressed a great deal of anger, and the energy that filled the classroom caught Ms. Williams off guard. As the class engaged in the lesson, their energy felt unfocused as comments came from all over the room and covered a variety of topics and events. As the class tried to have a discussion, Ms. Williams made many adjustments in the face of this energy. Her first change was to make her planned discussion an ungraded writing activity. She told the class, "I am not comfortable grading this right or wrong; I just want you to write down

your thoughts" (field notes). Her shift from how she would assess her students and track their thinking represented a change that came from her own discomfort. This feeling persisted as the class members continued to express their thoughts. She pivoted the class back to a different assessment, telling the students, "Let's do this as a discussion" (field notes). The back-and-forth between assessments, in response to student energy, reflected a discomfort with the students' responses to the killing of black men, a discomfort that sat poorly with her as she attempted to address her whiteness in her practice and help her students.

The students responded to Ms. Williams's lesson plan by pushing toward activism and turning a critical eye to the larger forces that produced the Till and Clark murders. One student, a black female student, Janet, remarked during the class, "This hurts me to my heart; you have to hear me when I say this shit. . . . How can you have this much hate in your heart . . . ? I want to write a speech" (field notes). This student's statement encapsulated the emotion she and the others were feeling and how they wanted to create change. This emotional outcry caught my attention because of how the student embodied it and her desire to share that pain and use it to teach others. Solórzano and Bernal (2001) write, "although some social change is possible through conformist resistance, without a critique of the social, cultural, or economic forms of oppression, it does not offer the greatest possibility for social justice" (p. 319). Asking "How can you have this much hate in your heart?" she pushed against how these murders and acts of violence were supported with hate. By questioning and inquiring into the foundations of hate, Janet asked a powerful question, and when we consider how this hate has been exercised to keep people down and enforce a racial dominance, she felt the need to share. This racial dominance in turn shapes how belonging is exercised in the space, and this student named and questioned the role that hate played.

Another student, a black male named Miles, questioned the motivation of the killing, stating about Emmett Till specifically, "He whistled, he didn't even talk to her, and there's no evidence that he did that" and added that "neither had weapons" (field notes). Here we see another pointed critique of society that Solórzano and Bernal (2001) refer to as part of change and resistance. This student, through critique, regarded how justice was enacted in both cases. Evidence again both Till and Clark, as the students learned, was circumstantial and represented grave injustices. Faced with this, Miles asked tough questions about justice. He continued to do that throughout class, later asking, "Who was the black woman killed in Texas . . . ? Sandra Bland, I knew that" (field notes), as he worked on the writing response Ms. Williams assigned. By continuing to raise issues of justice and the killing of black people, he brought his belonging into focus, as the injustice amounted to a very low level of belonging. Making these claims in class, he brought up the mitigating status of his own belonging, but also, by sharing his politics and ideas with his class, he exercised a sense of where and how he belonged.

In this US history classroom, discussion of racial violence spilled out from the original topic to a wide range of topics. As shared in the anecdote that opens this chapter, the discussion about racialized violence veered off the initial topics and covered a lot of territory. In the middle of this discussion, Rose, a black female, exclaimed, "I am tired of this shit. Do you think this happens to white people? No, I am not calling the police" (field notes). This outburst exposed Rose's ire and irritation at the system that allows racialized violence to persist, and her calling out dangerous and fatal law enforcement practice provides a specific context for thinking about this violence. Further, it shows a disconnect between Rose and the police, an arm of the local polity, which unsettles how she belonged in the locality if she expressed a distrust of its ability to

enforce laws. Seeing how Rose was orienting her place in relation to local law enforcement practices elicited questions about how she belonged and moved through her own community.

Rose's belonging endured racialized experiences every day and in turn impacted how she saw the world. Her critique—"Do you think this happens to white people? No"—centers the racialized inequity of violence and how that changes belonging. Rose's exasperated statement expresses how upsetting racialized violence and inequality were for her. And when Rose shared her anger, another student, Yasmin, also a black female student, added to this ire, calling out in class "Did you know the guy who shot Sterling got nothing?" (field notes). As Rose and Yasmin expressed and discussed the different racial injustice and racialized violence, they were exposing the racialized forces that create exclusions to their belonging. The awareness makes the connection between Till, Sterling, and Clark appropriate and depressing and reveals how racialized these two students understood their belonging to be.

As the class continued, all the students partook in this melding of current events with the historical content. When Williams asked the class to name the connections between Till and Clark, Yasmin started the conversation with "Both were accused of something"; Mike added, "Neither had weapons," and Rose said, "Both didn't do anything." Ms. Williams asked the students, "What does this say about justice?" to which Yasmin responded, "Nothing changes" and Rose added, "We get stupider." More discussion followed and students wrote down their answers. Amid the silence, Yasmin asked, "Who was that woman in Texas? . . . Sandra Bland" (field notes) before she returned to her work. The initial discussion reveals how students associated the violent events and the lack of a justice with how the state operates and how the violent episodes of Clark, Till, and Bland all reverberate together to reveal a systemic orientation to minoritize certain people in the state. Students' understanding of their own precarity comes

through here, as they described how actions of these people resulted in violence and also sanctioning, at least a tacit sanctioning, by the institutions of the state. Their knowledge of their precarity means they understood their vulnerability and how the state sanctions violence. Their sense of belonging becomes troubled when they see and comprehend how violence on the part of the state frames and affects minoritized groups.

Seeing a Classroom through Belonging

While the truth that we all belong here may be a comforting one, the reality is closer to what these students and Ms. Williams encountered in this lesson. At the core of the lesson were the racialized means of discrimination and how different people move through the world. Masuoka and Junn (2013) write, "the persistent power of the American racial hierarchy in creating distinctions between Americans is evident in the everyday constructions and perceptions of group difference" (p. 23). While everyone experiences belonging, the ability to easily belong and how that looks can be very different for different people in different groups, as it is affected by the racial hierarchy. When we examine the lesson through the lens of belonging, these differences become brutally clear for everyone in the classroom.

The students saw the different behaviors that emphasize the power of the racial hierarchy and how it can be seen throughout history. As we think about how the impact of "the persistent power of the American racial hierarchy" is reflected in the deaths of black bodies, we not only see a consistent history, but one that the students were aware of. The students went beyond the content presented to them by Ms. Williams and mentioned other killings, specifically those of Sterling and Bland, as they continued the conversation about deaths. The inclusions of these other deaths reveal that these students were already thinking about how they could move the world and ramifications when those rules were bent. Students made the connection between

Till's and Clark's murderer going free and saw Bland's and Sterling's as a historical pattern running through all those events. Belonging helps us see this connection not just as an acknowledgment of the ongoing crisis over racism but as a sign that they were learning about their own belonging and the racial hierarchies that govern their lives.

The governing notions of belonging here regarding racial hierarchies came through in many ways beyond the mention of the black deaths. It also came through in how the students reacted to the injustices across history. These injustices remain sad reminders of how race influences inequity and discrimination. Masuoka and Junn (2013) write, "members of groups classified as nonwhite have been granted incomplete membership, their political experience mediated by de facto and de jure discrimination" (p. 2). As the students discussed and expressed their anger about the injustices, belonging framed their response as one where they were recognizing the discrimination that governed their society. Their emotional output revealed a strong connection and anger to this lesson of belonging. Recalling statements like "nothing changes" and "people get stupider" brought their anger and acceptance to light. The injustices were very visible, and the fact that students were already well versed in these crises becomes an unfortunate acknowledgment when we examine these incidents through belonging.

The Aftermath for the Student-Teacher

Ms. Williams, the student-teacher in Ms. Brooks's classroom, struggled to find her place in the classroom as she was coming into her own practice, but she also struggled to understand her role as a white person teaching in a classroom full of minority students. She told me:

> In terms of my place as the teacher in that classroom, I guess that I kind of did lose control [during the Stephon Clark lesson]. I was on the spot very much trying to figure

> out my place as the white teacher talking about the killings of unarmed black men in a class full of minority students. (interview)

Ms. Williams acknowledged several struggles she was having, with the biggest being with her own whiteness in the classroom, although these were ambiguous. This was not unexpected, as whiteness can be difficult to grasp and understand. Ahmed (2007) describes whiteness as being almost unreachable and unknowable, as it permeates everything. Ms. Williams's struggles to understand her whiteness are not unique, as the concept itself aims to be hard to wrap our heads around. For Ms. Williams, her own implications with her whiteness were hard to grasp as well, but she wanted to figure out what she could do to ensure that this idea did not dominate her thinking and alienate the mostly nonwhite students she was teaching and would teach.

These conflicted feelings lingered for Ms. Williams long after this lesson ended, as we talked about it in our interviews. As we reflected on the classroom in an interview, she told me, "I did feel a little bit like I had almost lost control because there was a lot of passion, mostly I think fueled by anger" (interview). I could describe the energy as chaotic, but that diminishes the focus that occurred in the classroom. As a student-teacher, being in control felt important to her as she sorted out and learned about her professional and teacher self. She did not want to just create ambitious lesson plans, she wanted them to go smoothly, but that didn't seem to be the case with this lesson, and students connected to the content and made several connections she hadn't expected. She read the room to be filled with "passion" and "anger," which are not unexpected reactions to a critical examination of Emmett Till's and Stephon Clark's murders.

The class was fueled with passion and anger, but that may have been the most expected reaction, given the topic. The class was not actually chaotic; it was filled with sense-making and anger about an injustice they saw affecting their communities. During the class, students drew

smart comparisons between the killing of Emmett Till and Stephon Clark, as the lesson intended, but they brought in other stories of violence, like Sandra Bland's tragic story. It would be impossible to say Ms. Williams's whiteness did not change the class or guide their conversation, but the students moved through the classroom space and made connections about two (really several) acts of violence that defined racial tensions in history. She told me after the class:

> Going back to that Stephon Clark lesson, that was something that I was trying to do, but at the same time, I was the teacher in the room. It was turning into chaos and I had to reign that in. It's like I didn't want to stifle voices or feelings, but it had to be a productive or at least constructive learning environment. I think that listening in an ideal world, when we talk about facilitating discussion, I would be doing the least talking, just kind of prompting students, just kind of working the space and letting students talk with each other. (interview)

What Ms. Williams communicates above are how her whiteness, the content, and the needs of her students created tensions for her and her ability to teach. This tension for Ms. Williams came from trying to control a lesson, create a learning environment, and not let her whiteness obstruct that learning. Her unease with the class, using the word "chaos" again, come from the energy she saw from the students, but also her unease in this lesson about the killing of black people. It is impossible to remove the whiteness from her practice and how she teaches, but to not let it be nameless, even in her own head and processes, changed how she connected to the lesson. Making this troubled connection clear meant that Ms. Williams was grappling with the whiteness of herself and the curriculum, and she felt uneasy about the teaching of these killings and being a white person herself. Expressing this concern about her whiteness changed her relation to it, and although she could not revoke or dismiss the benefits of this whiteness, she put herself into a

different conversation with it and pushed how she used her membership in society, not unsettling her notions of her own belonging, but rather pushing how she saw it.

A Student-Teacher Grapples with her Whiteness

Of the many ideas that govern our world, few are as far-reaching, powerful, and invisible as whiteness. DiAngelo (2011) describes whiteness as having the ability "to elevate white people over people of color" and "a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically and culturally produced, and which are intrinsically linked to dynamic relations of domination" (p. 56). With this in mind, the dynamics of whiteness becomes associated with spaces and hidden processes that aim to keep white people on top of the power hierarchy and in full control over the politics of belonging. For Ms. Williams, her own whiteness served as a point of tension for her in the classroom as she recognized that she was teaching students with very different backgrounds and experiences than her own. By planning a lesson that put the murder of Emmett Till in conversation with the murder of Stephon Clark, which had occurred a few weeks before the class, Ms. Williams approached controversial and difficult topics and brought them into her classroom and practice. Ms. Williams took on an ambitious challenge being a white teacher with a classroom full of black and brown students, a demographic dynamic occurring in classrooms around the nation (Busey & Waters, 2016). Ms. Williams explored how a white teacher can prepare for teaching in a diverse classroom that takes on the dangerous, and hard to locate, idea and provides an important conversation about how white teachers can think about the orientation that their whiteness brings to the classroom and how that shifts the belonging for the nonwhite students.

Ms. Williams's acknowledgment of her own whiteness stood out to me as we talked about this lesson, because of how difficult this recognition can be and how much it matters to her

planning and how it affected her students. Urrieta and Reidel (2008) found that white preservice teachers typically try to teach only white forms of knowing, which can create a divide between them and their students as the class tries to cover and learn complex ideas and practices. They write about two of their white preservice teachers that "have the luxury of taking for granted and trivializing the fact that they 'belong'" (p. 91) and how their ideas stem from their selves without much reflection. The authors describe that their white preservice teachers' "luxury" of taking their citizenship status and belonging for granted reflects their privileged status in the system. With a strong and invisible sense that "they 'belong,'" the preservice teachers are actively enjoying whiteness and will not address how they belong and how it affects their students.

Ms. Williams did not want her whiteness to be invisible nor to take her place for granted, as she hoped to help her students by bringing complex and contemporary issues into the classroom. She told me, "I was on the spot [while teaching] very much trying to figure out my place as the white teacher talking about the killings of unarmed black men in a class full of minority students" (interview). She started by considering her place as a white teacher and how it would frame the content and her students' learning while figuring out her place in the conversation and how to best serve her students. As a student-teacher, authority was already an issue she was dealing with, but that authority carried another weight with it, intertwining her membership as a white woman into the conversations about racialized violence. She told me about how she even reached out to a black classmate who told her, "When you're talking about race, just listen, make sure you are listening" (interview). Her struggle evoked Ahmed's (2007) explanation of how "whiteness could be described as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space" (p. 150). Being concerned about how her whiteness might control and "'take up' space" could trivialize the

tragic killing of these black men and their historical connections. Instead of backing away from this difficult task, Ms. Williams took on this ambitious lesson that unsettled her membership as a white person and a white teacher.

The class members' feelings and passions reflect a class and a teacher grappling with the different feelings of inclusion and exclusion. The teacher was struggling with how her whiteness framed these feelings for her. Ms. Williams found herself and her efforts being framed by her whiteness as she struggled with seeing the students' passions, and she changed the lesson plan on the fly twice. Far from being invisible, Ms. Williams named one way that dominance has been exerted in the class, and even though she was not disavowing her own whiteness, which would be detrimental and impossible to do, she made the facets of how belonging is enforced clear, which opened up a space for discussion.

Ms. Williams's struggle with her whiteness represents the conflicted nature of how she was working through her relation to this issue and her own belonging. Urrieta and Reidel (2008) comment that the white preservice teachers they worked with were "trivializing the fact that they 'belong'" (p. 91), which is a great reminder that whiteness is difficult to name and understand. Ms. Williams confronted her whiteness and then struggled to understand the full implications of what it means. This confrontation exposes the inclusionary and exclusionary aspects of her belonging, as her whiteness—which exposes one way she is included in society but excluded from her students, as they are not white—comes into view. Her participation in the class and her students' including her in their conversation is a result of her providing the space for them to be part of a conversation. It isn't a complete effort, and it did not cast off the veil of whiteness, but for Ms. Williams, it exposed some of the frames of how whiteness shapes the world.

Summary

The tensions in the class that erupted over a discussion about black deaths also exposed a lot of student understandings about their place in the world. The class was full of energy and tensions as students shared their emotions and thoughts about what they were seeing in the world. Belonging helps us to see their actions as enactments of their understanding of belonging and how they fit in the world. The classroom's energy emanated from connecting to dangerous forms of violence across time and space and wanting to see change in the world. The students wanted the violence to end, as they talked about sharing their pain, and Ms. Williams wanted to confront her own whiteness more and understand it better, even as she lacked the tools to do that. Seeing this enactment of belonging and being able to dissect it with Ms. Williams in an interview helped me to understand how that class represented the tensions of belonging that are constantly being expressed in our classrooms.

Belonging and Controversy with Black Lives Matter

One day in February when I was not at Carter Central High School, there was a black history assembly planned for the school. Students had been excited about the event, which would showcase an opportunity to talk about black history but also see some student performers that they thought were really good. One of these students was a rapper, Green Astronaut,[2] who was gaining some notoriety around the local music scene. The student performers were asked during the event to steer clear of controversial topics, specifically to avoid anything about President Trump and Black Lives Matter. Green Astronaut's performance did not follow these guidelines as he performed a rap that discussed police brutality, Black Lives Matter, and a tribute to the

[2] A pseudonym

black power movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Johnston, 2018[3]). This caused Green Astronaut to get a day of in-school suspension, which spurred many students to protest, and they staged a walked out. By the time I returned to Carter Central, students who had walked out of their classrooms were being interviewed by the administration to see if they had protested the suspension or were trying to avoid their classwork.

Following the Assembly

As teachers were dealing with institutional, political, and cultural struggles in the school, students also dealt with similar controversies that revealed how they were thinking and learning about their belonging. Rose, a black female, was open about political issues in class and during our focus group interviews. She would not hesitate to talk in class about the problems she had with President Trump or the school administration. This section follows how Rose reacted to the Black Lives Matter song that occurred during the black history assembly. Along with a discussion about how this incident and Rose's reaction to it reveal parts of her belonging, this section will also seek to reveal how incidents like these reveal facets of the precarity that marginalized communities and their members feel.

After the assembly and the protest occurred, the administration dealt with the situation by suspending students, some for the performance, which upset Rose, and others for skipping class, which she understood. While her history class was midway through covering notes about World War II, Rose returned from a meeting in the office about the protests following the assembly. Rose reported to the class that the school "organizes a black history assembly, but no one can talk bad about Trump or say Black Lives Matter; what is that?" (field notes). It seemed to me that she felt betrayed by the school's lack of attention and their inability to address the politics

[3] To protect the participants, the author, title, and place of publication of this article have been changed.

that mattered to her. As membership reveals how we belong, learning that her and other black students' membership in the school merits no ability to influence or talk about important topics and politics, she was learning that she did not have the full weight of belonging in school. As belonging grants everyone a place but is influenced by the oppressive racial hierarchy, Rose found her experiences as a student and a black female being punished and pushed aside by the school. The silence, or rather desired silence, of BLM within the school and specifically at the assembly informed Rose directly about how she mattered and how her politics mattered within the school.

Students' Belonging and Controversy

For Rose, the school's response to the song and politics of BLM served as a reminder of the reality of how precarity shaped her world and her community. Having the singer reprimanded, and the students investigated and punished created a realization for how black politics were excluded and reminded her of her precarity. Butler (2010) wrote:

> precarity designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death. Such populations are at heightened risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to violence without protection. (pp. 25–26)

The last phrase of Butler's quotation about violence illuminates Rose's thinking and feeling about the suppression of this political discussion. Seeing how Rose talked about the violence and vulnerability of her community through Butler's lens helps us to see how she understood her own precarity. From how she participated in Ms. Williams's discussion, Rose was connected to and aware of the violent events that black men and women faced.

The other aspect of Rose's precarity that theory illuminated was the political discussion aspect of the controversy. Understanding how the students of the school were forced to talk to and discuss the issues of their political precarity exposes the exclusions of their belonging. Rose's disappointment stemmed from how the school handled the controversial song and clarified that they did not want to talk about BLM. When Mr. Baker, another teacher at Carter Central, stepped in and advocated for her ability to speak, Rose found the act reassuring and supportive. The tension over the ability to speak and share in political discussion reasserted Rose's precarity as a black student finding her politics controlled and policed. The tensions of BLM represent a precariousness, but the debate and controversy over whether to have that debate in school expresses the students' precarity as they debated with the very organization trying to silence them. Resisting this action reveals more aspects of Rose's own and her community's precarity and how they may belong in the larger society.

Controversy and Belonging

As previous sections explained, belonging was not simply a feeling or an acknowledgment that we all have a place, rather it reflects a complex spectrum that while all the groups that live in America have a place here, controlling that place remains inequitably distributed and exercised. Within this inequitable distribution of belonging, whiteness remains the chief criteria of distinguishing who gets marked with otherness within belonging. Masuoka and Junn (2013) write "the persistent power of the American racial hierarchy in creating distinctions between Americans is evident in everyday constructions and perceptions of group difference" (p 23). These distinctions and perceived differences allow for differences in how belonging gets exercised and understood by different groups in the United States. Seeing Rose's

anger through belonging allows us to frame her response as an understanding and resistance to these differences and perceptions.

Looking back to Rose's statement to Ms. Williams about the permissibility of discussing topics and thinking about it with belonging, we can see a questioning of the racial hierarchy and how we get to belong. At the heart of Rose's statement there is a question about who has been given power over these discussion topics. She said, as a reminder, that the school "organizes a black history assembly, but no one can talk bad about Trump or say Black Lives Matter; what is that?" (field notes). At first, her anger is about who is determining the permissibility of topics and her inability to influence those decisions, as they don't reflect topics relevant to her and her community. When we look at this quotation through belonging, group identities and differences stand out, as Rose's references to blackness, Black Lives Matter, and the ire over President Trump come to the forefront. The need for permission to broach topics and have school-wide discussions shows the students were living under a controlled dialogue they were expected to perform and conform to the rules and expectations pushed upon them.

Rose's statement ends in a rhetorical question and one that clearly addresses the power structure of the school and the assembly. She asked Ms. Williams, "what is that?" in her final appeal to the teacher and the people listening in. I would call this rhetorical because she was not asking for an explanation but used the statement to continue expressing her discontent and ire at the lack of freedom in the assembly, but also to rally other students and potentially the teacher to join in her outrage. This appeal expressed anger but also tested out how the people around her felt and were responding to the situation. She was fighting the system, while making sure that her classmates and White teacher would go along with her. It was a challenge to the system's rules of the specific but also reified the power as she tested out her resistance.

Summary

This section followed the happenings and aftermath of an all-school assembly for Black History Month that featured a protest song about topics that had been banned. While the ban may have been in the best interest of the school and student body, not wanting to get students angry and all riled up, it also represents how the racial hierarchy influences how people experience belonging in spaces. The racial politics of Black Lives Matter was deemed too controversial for the school assembly, and when the students took matters into their own hands, they were punished for their actions. This left students, like Rose, to navigate their own belonging anew, and Rose's statements in class expressed an acknowledgment that she was angry at the powers that be but also was trying to find out how others, including the nearby authority figures, felt about the incident. The assembly and its aftermath express how the spectrum of belonging works in schooling while also allowing us to see how students can sort their way through these chaotic and complex events and find their own way through them.

Belonging and Social Studies Content

One of the main functions of a class is to convey information and content for students to learn. For students, content represents topics and material by which students encounter the world and, in the social studies classroom, it presents the different historical events and social trends that outside factors have determined to be important. These encounters determine a lot for students who are learning about the world through what they encounter and learn in the classroom. Rubin (2012) wrote about how the content and materials in class can be confused with the entirety and the importance of what matters about a topic. During one of the focus groups, Rose told me about how angry she was that her learning about civil rights history, what they had been discussing in class, was so limited. This section will examine her words about this

limited view and then use belonging to see how we can understand how this learning is influencing her understanding of her place in the world.

Student Learning, Civil Rights, and Belonging

During the interview, Rose expressed a lot of anger about constantly learning about the history of Dr. King. At least, that's how I thought about it at first, but she was asking for a wider view of Dr. King and his moment and movement in history. During the interview she told me:

> I just feel like we shouldn't still be talking about Martin Luther King, not feeling that type of way, or not judging anything, but I just feel like we talked about Martin Luther King in middle school. And you really start learning about it in elementary, so why are we still learning about it in high school? It's like, we know it. They done taught us. You feel what I'm saying? In middle school, they teach you about segregation. They teach you about racism, so why are we still learning about it? (interview)

Rose's tirade reveals two interesting thoughts and ideas about her relation to the curriculum. She was tired of learning the same thing repeatedly. In her explanation, she laid out the content she was tired of—Dr. King, segregation, and racism—and all the times she learned about them, in elementary, middle, and high school. The repetition felt exhausting instead of exhaustive for Rose, and the fact that she was not only telling me but also saying this within earshot of another teacher, means she was communicating to us about how she was tired of learning the same thing about these topics. Learning the same material repeatedly did not create depth for Rose, it created a limit on what she knew. A lack of knowledge stifles the imagination that feeds into the modes of belonging that can be exercised, as there were fewer and fewer ways for her to find herself and different parts of herself in class.

Rose made this clear when I asked her to clarify why she was tired of learning about Dr. King. Her answer, which once again was for me and audible by the other teacher, revealed wanting a more robust knowledge about the whole civil rights movement and Dr. King's place in it. She said:

> I just wanna know like why did he actually start? It can't just be because of what he went through. It gotta have back history. You feel what I'm saying? Like ain't nobody just gonna start something. Like who was in his group before everything started? Like before the march and all that, who really helped him? Because you can't just be this big ol' person over just one speech. You can't be that. What was he doing before that? How many speeches did he have? (interview)

Rose clarified that she was not tired of learning about Dr. King, rather she was tired of covering the same ground repeatedly. She made this clear by asking very pointed questions about Dr. King's origins, other parts of his group, and his entire career. These broad questions reveal exactly what Rose wanted to know about the civil rights movement and adds depth to what she was missing. More than that, she was providing a window to what she wanted to know about American history beyond what was being taught, and she hoped that would provide her some knowledge she knew was missing and yet was out there.

Student Learning and Their Belonging

The curriculum provides an opportunity to learn about the world and, but it can also create limiting boundaries that frame how we see and know about the world. For Rose, her disappointment over learning about Dr. King repeatedly reflects a disappointment in how the class was portraying black history. When we examine her ire through belonging's theoretical perspective, we can find certain elements of how the curriculum charts out how people can see

themselves. Masuoka and Junn (2013) write, “Blacks are included as citizens of the United States and have been recognized as such for more than a century, but their second-class status has led to an incomplete inclusion and shows a far from perfect connection between citizenship and equality” (p. 60), as blacks have gained the legal right to belong but struggle with belonging. This inequitable distribution can be found in the curriculum as well, and sparked anger about how she saw things and history.

Rose’s anger was seeded in how her community’s history was being portrayed and reflected in the curriculum. Her ire over how teaching about Dr. King was only limited to a moment, his March on Washington, comes through as a lack of context around that moment. Her plea to learn more about who taught him and the surrounding people of the movement exposes, when we examine this quotation with the lens of belonging, the inequitable portrayal of this moment in history. Masuoka and Junn name the civil rights era as one of those moments when blacks had “the most success in gaining equal rights,” but all Rose could say about the time was that Dr. King gave one speech. Her knowledge and desire to know more reflects the partial status that blacks have been given and her desire to change that situation. In asking for more information about the life of Dr. King and the people also striving for change, she was asking to know more about a moment that brought about the most success in changing the inequitable status of blacks. By examining how Rose called attention to it, we can see more than a plea for a better curriculum, but also a plea for a better nation.

This means that education wasn’t giving Rose what she needed to change the world around her, as Levinson (2012) said education should do. Without the information and time to think and process how the civil rights era changed and attempted reform, Rose missed out on an important learning opportunity. Instead, she learned and relearned all about the March on

Washington several times, and this does not represent a robust education about a movement, but a repetition on a moment, a moment that meant a lot to the nation and the history of that nation. But learning about the road and struggles that lead to that moment would have made all of her learning more impactful. It would also have represented more opportunities for Rose to see how change occurs and how blacks came together across different spaces to create change and push the inclusions of belonging.

Summary

This section sought to push our thinking about how people connect to the curriculum. By examining how Rose, a black female student, pointed to the lack of comprehensive education about civil rights in the context, and then reexamining it with belonging, we can see an anger about a curriculum that was not helping students to connect to their history and their potential place in the United States. Instead, Rose had to settle for learning about the March on Washington again and again, which did not teach her how to create change but rather isolated a moment of profound importance from the ideas and people who made it possible. These connections to the curriculum provided learning moments about one's own belonging in the curriculum, as Rose saw no place for herself in learning about the March on Washington and Dr. King's speech, because the event was removed from the people who made it happen. Rose was learning about her belonging in the world, as this important moment in history became reduced to a speech.

Belonging Disrupted by Violence

Violence presents one way in which belonging and precarity are reified through large, sweeping events. While I was doing research there, Carter County schools had to deal with threats of violence against their students, including one at Carter Central. Just the threat of

violence on this scale unsettles the school community and normalizes how violence enters the school, and the threat at Carter Central was no exception. Mass shootings present a form of violence that draw clear lines around priorities and who is valued across these spaces. While the incident at Carter Central was an unsubstantiated threat over social media, the impacts of the threat were very real. During the event, the threat of violence transformed the school culture, created tension, absences surged, and it left lingering questions about the values of the space and the institution. For this community, this threat was real and transformed the entire day, creating tensions over how belonging would be understood, and taught students about the role of violence in the school. This section will not attempt to discuss how the community tried to bounce back, rather, how the community hurt from that day and how the threat reverberated through the community. As we consider the different facets of violence, we will think about, what Guidotti-Hernández (2011) said, that violence is "one factor that determined how racial positioning, gender, and class alliances played themselves out in constraints over citizenship and resources" (p. 4).

Violence That Day

For the students, the threat of the mass shooting reified many facets of their place in the community. Being connected to social media themselves, they knew the threat was out there and that the school was attempting to proceed as normal under these circumstances. During that day, everyone was tense. When I walked into their room, the teachers told me about an email from the principal detailing the threat and that the news spread on Facebook (see image below). Whether or not the threat was real, it unsettled the school community and put everyone on edge. In telling me about the email, Ms. Williams said that it also assured teachers that the threat was not credible and was being investigated. Neither of these warnings eased the tension throughout the

school, however. The hallways had been more silent than I had ever experienced before and felt almost abandoned. Williams told me that kids were getting pulled out of school. At this moment, the collective vulnerabilities were plain to see across the school, and evident as well were the kind of tensions that Butler (2010) describes: "living socially, that is, the fact that one's life is always in some sense in the hands of the other . . . implies exposure both to those we know and to those we do not know; a dependency on people we know, or barely know, or know not at all" (p. 14). The threat of a mass shooter, whether it was substantiated or not, unveiled many of the tensions of the school.

Image 3: Facebook post by the Carter County Police Department about the threat. (The author modified image to align with pseudonyms.)

In Ms. Williams's classroom, the change in culture and routine due to the threat of violence stood out. One of the few students left said, "Everyone's going home early today, but I will get work done" (field notes). At first the statement threw me off, as I was uncertain about its function. Both parts of the statement felt grounded in the unsettled nature of the day. In a reminder about all the absences, along with a call to work, the student's comment tried to define what would occur that day. This utterance, so-called because it made no clear mention of the violent threat, clarifies that as the violent threat changed the school, that would not deter the focus of this student. Ms. Williams began the class by telling them they will have a "nice, calm,

and cozy day" (field notes), to which the students assented and even checked in with her to see how she was doing. The check-in by the students was not unusual, as this was their third period of going through the tensions from the threat of violence, and though they felt more comfortable with the goings-on of the day, it pushed them to check in with their teacher. The reality of "living socially" took on a more caring perspective and shifted belonging to be more inclusive, as students attempted to take care of their teacher.

The other facet that made this easier was that in the middle of class, there was an outpouring of emotional utterances about violence they had seen and they shared a connection. This began with one student sharing how his church hosted a funeral the previous weekend. Another student added that a classmate of theirs was also hurt that same weekend. These utterances felt disjointed, but they came when the class was focused and working for a while. These utterances interrupted the work flow but refocused the attention of the class on what they were going through. This became obvious as they shared several of the rumors they heard on different social-media platforms. One student asked, "Should I have my dad come pick me up? He read about all this on Facebook?" (field notes). Williams reminded the students that there was no credibility to the threat and that they needed to stay calm. The utterances of these events during a day when the school was under threat may have been a call to help process what was going on, helping them find a sense of belonging and community in a place that was upended and unsettled by a violent threat.

The rest of Williams's class was quiet and filled with hard work by the students. When the bell rang, Williams told the students to stay calm and collected through the rest of the day. As students filtered out when the bell rang, one lingered. She told Williams, "All my friends have gone home, and I am all alone here" (field notes). This statement channels the realities of

Butler's struggle of "living socially", which comes to light here as this student felt vulnerable with all the surrounding people, more so as her friends had left, and she was trusting her life to people she didn't know. This unfamiliarity makes her precariousness come alive, as she wanted to go home but was stuck at school. As the school faced a threat, this student felt that her life was in the hands of others she did not know. The precariousness of living by others they did not know must have been relevant for a whole school feeling under threat. These threats unsettled this student's sense of belonging and pushed her to question how she fit in. The absences of her friends served as a reminder of how vulnerable she was and how there was a reliance on others. A heightened moment of precarity because of an unsettled community equally unsettled the students' sense of belonging in the community.

Violence Riverboats

During our interviews, students all shared how the threat had changed their behavior and thoughts about the school. Rose, in our interviews, told me about how the decision to keep school open upset her. She said:

> Because I just feel like, for example, about the threat about somebody supposed to be bringing a gun to school or whatever. That happened. Why didn't y'all cancel school? 'Cuz y'all knew. Y'all knew before we even got here that this was gonna happen. And I feel like if y'all care about us, y'all would want us to be safe instead of bringing us to a school where you know somebody could possibly be shot. (interview)

Rose's precariousness is evident here as she mentions the possibility of someone getting harmed, however, this emphasis comes with a critique of the decision to keep the school open. As Butler (2010) explained "survival depends less on the established boundary to the self than on the constitutive sociality of the body" (p. 54). Butler helped frame how the individual body is

connected to the social meaning of the construction of the body. For this case Rose's plea for the safety of her body, and her fellow students, was not deemed important by the governing locality for a variety of reasons, the credibility of the threat being one of those. But for Rose, she saw her body being placed as disposable that day to the threats of violence against her and peers. Rose's statement acknowledges the vulnerability she felt during the day of the threat but also a recognition of the role that the polity played in promoting that vulnerability by keeping the school open. Rose did not critique the larger polities, as Williams had seen in her classroom, but she wanted to know why the local officials did not ensure the safety of the students. As Rose recognized that her precarity made her feel she was not a priority in the school, this realization added to how she felt excluded from the structures in the school.

Violence Changes Belonging

Butler's (2010) reminded us that the violence benefits the state, but we also need to consider how violence shapes our identity. We visit another part of her work where Butler wrote:

> [W]e are at least partially formed through violence. We are given genders or social categories, against our will, and these categories confer intelligibility or recognizability, which means that they also communicate what the social risks of unintelligibility or partial intelligibility might be. (p. 167)

These identities become the basis for precarity reified by violence and dehumanization. Freire (1970/2009) explains that violence dehumanizes the oppressor and the oppressed, saying, "the result of an unjust order . . . engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed" (p. 44), and "as the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized" (p. 56). This dehumanization allows violence to wield a tremendous amount of influence and led American and Latino-studies scholar Guidotti-

Hernández (2011) to label it as "one factor that determined how racial positioning, gender, and class alliances played themselves out in constraints over citizenship and resources" (p. 4). Constraints include discrimination and violence that restrict how people move through the world and experience the difference facets of society. These theories frame how violence affects students and structures their existence.

As students felt an increased visibility to their precarity, their responses reveal a desire for safety and recognition of their lives. In the moment, students made appeals for their families to pick them up, inquiries to Ms. Williams about their safety, and a desire to focus on their work. Afterward, Rose, in this study, asked questions about her and her fellow students' value to the school. The increased visibility of their precarity taught them about their place in the state as expendable, even as that violence was just exercised through a threat.

Belonging in Silence

One thing that occurred throughout my time in this Carter County classroom was that some of the students were quiet most of the time. The three Latinx students in the classroom spent most of their time quiet, all the while doing their work and learning and enacting very different lessons of belonging. Their belonging is evidence of lessons they had learned and strategies they had learned outside of the classroom and was exercised by how they acted in the classroom. This section will explore how that silence exhibited the lessons that they were enacting and had learned while in that classroom, and then it will use precarity and belonging to show how that silence revealed difficult lessons about how we belong.

Silence of the Students

The silence of the students is hard for me describe because very little occurred. They were not rude or obstructionist during their periods of silence, but rather they just attended class

and then moved on. They did their work and were rarely spoken to for missing work. When Ms. Williams or Ms. Brooks would ask for different students to participate, then one of the three Latinx students would contribute. I had a question about their participation, but they didn't opt to participate in my focus groups. I wanted to respect their decision to remain silent, but their decisions also revealed lessons that they had learned and were learning about how they were expected to act and what was permissible for them. Given what I learned about them, their silence became more than just a vacuum; it showed signs of how they understood their belonging.

I did manage to learn a little about the Latinx students in the class I observed. The most vocal of the Latinx students was a recent arrival from the refugee crisis in South America. She rarely spoke up in class and completed her work, but she struggled with tests, and given that she had been in America for only a few months when I observed her, she was working hard to catch up on a lot of history and content. She did not seem to have any major language issues, and when she spoke with her teachers, she was very clear and precise in her language. Another student confessed in an assignment that he did not want to participate in an assignment because he was undocumented, although I did not recognize the student from my work with LUCHA. Of the Latinx students, he participated the most in class and was often correct as well. The third student never really spoke up, and I didn't learn about her. She would interact with her classmates when they asked her questions, but she rarely offered up answers to the whole class. These three students combined for a subtle classroom presence and one that was easy to miss among the activity produced by the other students.

Silence and Precarity

Seeing these three students through the theoretical lens of precarity allows for a vision of their actions in a complex manner. Precarity is particularly important because it helps us in our analysis think about how people have been shaped to feel and be more vulnerable because of their difference. Butler (2010) wrote that state action "seeks to deny the ongoing and irrefutable ways in which we are all subject to one another, vulnerable to the destruction of the other, and in need of protection" (p. 43), and as we frame their silence through the lens of precarity, their heightened vulnerability comes to light. At least two of the students were being made extremely vulnerable by state actions as rhetoric, as one, the refugee, had to leave her home and come to a place where she was new, and the other, an undocumented student, was constantly under threat and stress of deportation. Their silence may have been an acknowledgment of this vulnerability, as they lacked the ability to interact with the social studies content and were more accustomed to denying attention and wanting to stay in the background.

Precarity is connected to state action, and Butler points out that "war and heightened nationalism" both create scenarios that make certain groups of people feel excluded and left out through attention and vulnerability. For these two Latinx students, the state very much created their situation and their silence, along with how they would slip in and out of the classroom and quietly get work done. Their silence, when we examine it through precarity, is a direct result of state action and nationalism that creates and shapes exclusions and inclusions for certain groups.

Silence and Belonging

Belonging also provides a useful theoretical frame for examining the Latinx students' persistent silence in class. For them, the election of Trump to the presidency has been followed with xenophobic heightened attention to issues of undocumented immigration and refugee status

(Southern Poverty Law Center, 2018), which puts these students' ability to easily pass and move through spaces at risk. Masuoka and Junn (2013) write, "whites and racial minorities do respond to messages that highlight illegality or race in systematically different ways. This further shows how consequential the racial hierarchy is in individual attitude formation" (p. 158). The Latinx students' silence, remaining at least somewhat hidden in the classroom, may have been a response of some sort to the tensions and rhetoric that they had learned to deal with outside the classroom. The xenophobic rhetoric, in some ways supported by state power, was teaching these students that their presence was conditional, that they were not wanted, and their silence was a way for them to hide themselves and their families.

Their response in silence, when seen through belonging, reveals a self-subjectification to the rhetoric that aimed to limit them. They had learned outside of school that their presence was temporary and that elements of the state did not want them and thought that they were dangerous. Their ability to combat, though, was limited by legally tenuous status for at least two of them. Silence may have been their best strategy, given what they had available to them and how they could move through and belong at school.

Summary

This section dealt with the silence of three Latinx students who spent most of the time , quiet and to themselves when I observed their class. They did not show any sign of linguistic challenges, as they spoke to the teacher and responded to being called on. Nor did they exhibit any issues with the content as they completed their work and were rarely called upon for missing work. Instead, their silence troubled me as I struggled with how to approach it in this work. Their silence was telling of larger challenges in the Latinx community as it attempts to fit in and fight for a broader base of belonging in the United States. Using the theoretical frames of belonging

and precarity, we can see how this silence could be a coping mechanism to deal with legally tenuous status and a hostile national rhetoric, but one that they exercised throughout their time in Ms. Brooks and Ms. Williams's classroom.

Conclusion

This section sought to expose the different ways that students were learning and enacting different lessons of belonging. Common across the chapter are episodes of students and teachers grappling with difficult lessons and enactments of belonging that occur in the school and classroom. Whether it was about preparing a class for political conversation, engaging with controversy, dealing with the curriculum, violence, or remaining silent-— all exposed different lessons of belonging that shaped the people and the spaces, including the class I observed. The different lessons that include precarity and belonging as theoretical can be seen.

The different lessons of belonging that we encountered in this chapter were all expressed in different ways, and when we think about them together, they all portray a complex learning space. Both teachers and students were facing tough issues about how to get along with each other and how to manage being with others. Butler (2010) wrote about the difficulty that we have in recognizing that we are living socially, together, and that we share our vulnerabilities with each other. In sharing space, teachers and students shared parallel struggles to find and navigate their place. These struggles reveal that classrooms are complex places where learning occurs alongside the struggles of how we belong.

If we were to return to Levinson's (2012) question about how we provide an education that helps students change the world around them, it is important to note and understand that students are already grappling with these issues. Preparing students for this kind of education needs to have a robust understanding of the challenges of belonging that students and classes are

experiencing, but also an acknowledgment that they are experiencing these conflicts. Levinson's kind of social studies and civic education already has a foundation, as students are already grappling with heavy issues of how they belong and how they exercise their place. A new vision of social studies can start from there and turn acknowledgment of curricular issues into changes in the content and challenge how standards are created or how to turn silence into purposeful action. Beginning with where the students are and how their classes are confronting these challenges makes the most natural starting point to bring about Levinson's call for educational change.

CHAPTER 6

BELONGING AT LUCHA

LUCHA existed in Alexandria, Georgia before I came to study there. It wasn't the first organization founded in the area to help undocumented youths find their way into higher education. This first group, Monarch College, began in 2011 as a response to the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents' policy that required proof of citizenship and residency to enroll in all of the state's institutions and banned students without any paperwork from attending the top five institutions (Goodrich, 2016). As Monarch College became more and more political and embraced activism as a primary goal of their organization, they moved to Atlanta. One of the founders of Monarch College, Dr. Lucie, a foreign professor at the nearby university, decided to stay in Athens and begin a new group, LUCHA.

LUCHA came together in 2014 following the community's demand for a local group and some rallies and panels indicating the need. With a group of local leaders at the helm, LUCHA came together with the mission of helping students gather, connect, and get into college. One of their new leaders had a connection to a local church that provided their parish house as a meeting space, which they still utilize today. The parish house held LUCHA for the next few years as they focused on tutoring, activism, and helping the local community. LUCHA would grow slowly over these few years until the election of 2016. Trump's victory, and the rise of racism and xenophobia that came with it (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2018), spurred a major growth for LUCHA. More volunteers and students began to show up and helped LUCHA expanded beyond Carter County to the neighboring areas.

I became involved with LUCHA after the 2016 election. I remember the night well as I entered a small house that was overloaded with people. There was hardly space to move. The meetings began with dinner, as they all do. People ate and socialized as latecomers sneaked in and tried to find a table to join. Across the crowded house, Dr. Lucie and the other leaders called everyone to attention so that announcements could be heard across the house. They assigned rooms for specific tasks, including college-prep help and homework tutoring, and welcomed the students who were visiting from college. Once the announcements were over, people moved into different rooms and quickly got to work. New volunteers were gathered in a room off the hallway. There we were told about the history of the group and things we could expect when working with these students and in this community. As we sat and listened, tutors and students were moving about the entire building. When our training ended, we observed pairings at work. When it was eight o'clock, the LUCHA meeting ended and I stuck around to help clean.

The group continued to grow, and LUCHA moved from the parish house to using the main church building. The larger space allowed for more students to attend and assisted with the expansion of middle school tutoring. College prep help got its own room and space to keep files. Academic tutoring and help with scholarships would occupy the main room. Other tasks would be taken up by students and volunteers in this main room, which could include writing thank-you cards for donors and letter-writing campaigns to elected officials. Space in the main room would also be dedicated to working on other legal applications for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and occasionally TPS (Temporary Protected Status) with a few tutors who had been trained to help with these forms.

As I continued going to LUCHA, I found myself helping many different students with several assignments and tasks. I got to know many students and became tutor to helping with

writing essays, helping with their social studies and English homework, and sometimes for SAT prep. I also became friends with many people in the group and started to see many of them around town. Working with LUCHA became a weekly ritual for me that I really enjoyed. I only pulled back when family changes required me to be home on the day that LUCHA met.

Sueños, a large educational event and fundraiser, was one of LUCHA's most dynamic and anticipated productions of the year. It was completely planned by the students with a lot of adult support. This planning included everything from finding a venue, sponsors, food, and planning the entertainment, speakers, and art exhibitions. The event usually occurred in an arts space in Carter County with a large outdoor area. This outdoor area was an area for kids, with face painting, games, and art projects. LUCHA students volunteered to work in this area and with the kids. The inside space had food, art, and T-shirts for sale, along with different speakers and performances. Sueños brimmed with excitement and energy from beginning to end, as students shared important ideas and experience and people from Carter County filled the space with support and by listening.

I wanted to research at LUCHA because it was a group that was openly contesting the strict legal boundaries of belonging and citizenship and that cultivated and practiced student leadership. I witnessed examples of students organizing large events, like Sueños, and playing a large role in guiding the group, from serving on the governing board to running fund-raising campaigns and participating in speaking opportunities. Student involvement and leadership permeated the space, and students were treated like full partners in the organization and expected to be the leaders. LUCHA felt like a space with a strong political agenda, active members, and a strong community presence, one that I wanted to work in. The group also rejected my initial

research request and helped reformulate an inquiry that would be less disruptive to their group and their community.

In this chapter, I explore how LUCHA functioned as a site of exclusion and inclusion. Belonging functions as a framework to better think about the ways that people participate and resist policies and practices that impact how we move through the world. Starting with observations of speeches from the Sueños event and then moving on to interviews with one of the leaders and some of the older students, this chapter will use belonging as a framework for thinking about how people learn to participate when there are open structures that discourage their involvement and participation. As in the previous chapter, there will be attention to the complexities of belonging and how we move through the world.

How Borders Shape the World

Violence reminds us that the national border can take large or small forms as it shapes our world that extend far beyond their physical location. Bertelsen and Murphie (2010) described how the 2001 events of the MV *Tampa* carried Afghan refugees to Australia and was denied entry. The denial of the ship reified the borders of the Australian state as the refugees were deemed unworthy of entry and pushed away to another island, and so did the media coverage that allowed the entire nation, and world, to watch and learn about how these borders would be drawn and enforced. Events, large and small, reify the border and activate policies and imagination about how the border works. This can best be examined using the concepts of belonging and precarity, which provide a structure to analyze this event and the student speeches. This section explores how policies and actions define the border for the students who spoke at LUCHA and how the border defines several aspects of their lives.

The "Conditional Welcome"

Fear and conditioning emanate out of the exclusionary and restrictive "conditional welcome" that Masuoka and Junn (2013) use to illustrate how membership in America has been meted out to only those deemed worthy. Borders, and the areas attached to them, often serve as places where distinctions begin. This is illustrated well by Anzaldúa (1987/2012) when she wrote:

> Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them.* A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. (p. 25, emphasis original)

The distinction here between *us* and *them* matters as it designates some as worthy and others not which parallels the struggle of the conditional welcome that those who are here having to prove and reprove that they are worthy of remaining. These distinctions get fashioned and then refashioned constantly as people struggle to make their lives here under these shifting expectation and stark distinctions. The border, according to Anzaldúa, draws clears lines around these concepts of belonging and membership, but these acts are not natural and leave some people caught in between the lines in the borderlands. The students, families, and communities that make up LUCHA find themselves caught in these borderlands, living the tensions between belonging, partial memberships, and challenging the exclusions of their belonging.

The "conditional welcome" and the borderlands provide ways and spaces to teach people about where and how they have access to membership and belonging. Bhabha (1994/2006) wrote, "the boundary becomes the place from which *something begins its presencing*" (p. 7, emphasis original). Similar to Anzaldúa's (1987/2012) writing, Bhabha placed the border as the

start of something important, namely the start of an inside group and a member that will exercise control over a space. The use of the phrase "*begins its presencing*" evoked the nation in an ontological mentality, that the borders create the group, but it is also the group that creates the borders. The borders are places where the lines are drawn between who gets to belong and who doesn't. Masuoka and Junn (2013) argue that is "symbolized by the vision of a fence stretching across the southern border of the United States" (p. 1), as this fence, now wall, are drawing clear lines over who the nation wants here, who it doesn't, and what the history of borderlands means for this place. LUCHA pushes against this definition of the nation and argues against the conditional welcome, and Sueños made these stories clear as well.

The Precarity of the Undocumented Community

The condition(s) of precariousness of the undocumented community can best be viewed through the theoretical lens of precarity. According to Butler (2010):

> Although not all forms of precariousness are produced by social and political arrangements, minimizing the condition of precariousness in egalitarian ways remains a task for politics. War is precisely an effort to minimize precariousness for some and to maximize it for others. (p. 54)

Considering the role that politics and state action plays in either minimizing or enhancing precariousness, and thus leading to a state of precarity for some, there can be no way to underestimate the power of the state and how it creates precarity. If we consider war to be a form of state sanctioned violence and action against another group or people, then the tools and power of the state extend far beyond declarations of war and acts of war, but to border maintenance and policing of that border as well. For the undocumented community, this comes together and can be seen in their ability to move in the world and the particular limitations they face, including

their struggles to find employment, drive safe, and attend school and higher education. These limitations were created by political actions and laws passed and enacted that targeted this community and made them vulnerable, addressing their ability to live comfortable lives. These limitations on the undocumented community frame how they live and create the precarity that they experience.

These conditions make daily living difficult for the undocumented community. Gonzales (2016) describes the challenges facing undocumented people, ranging from simple things like driving and working, and how they open up the possibilities for surveillance and detention from police and frame their precarity. He wrote, "like many other undocumented immigrants, they [his participants] conditioned themselves not to make long-term plans or invest too much in their jobs, friends, or material possessions" (p. 189–190). This conditioning relates directly to the undocumented community's ability to move through the world, as their ability to drive, work, and attend school are limited through policies. As explained above, these policies create a precarity for the undocumented community, but it also places them in an exclusion of belonging, as their lives fall under increased scrutiny. This scrutiny, and the exclusions of belonging and precarity it creates, became a focus for LUCHA's activism and efforts to get students into higher education and build a resistance to these exclusions. This comes with a risk for these communities, as they are forced to challenge the state that places them in this orientation. Butler (2010) wrote that groups with precarity "often have no other option than to appeal to the very state from which they need protection" and that forms part of their precarity. The limited conditions come with a limited ability for political appeal and participation. LUCHA and Sueños push these boundaries but also push the politics by using *testimonios* to provide for an education for the community at large and not just talk to the state.

The challenges of the border and the conditional welcome cut deeply across mixed-status families, in which some members of the family have legal status and others are undocumented. Mangual Figueroa (2016) wrote, "family members in mixed-status households face a constant tension between guarding against the detention and deportation of undocumented members and working to integrate family members into the communities where they live" (p. 66). She specifically describes the pressures created by deportation and how these families live in constant fear. She explains that two of her participants "asked me to consider adopting their two sons as a way of helping them to prepare for the constant threat of their own deportation" (p. 67). These fears create tensions and concerns about how people move through space and become conditioned to live with that fear and feel the pressure of the conditional welcome. Sueños welcomed all families and discussions about how these pressure and challenges were being exerted on people and placed names, faces, and stories to struggles to change how people thought about the policy.

This fear affects all members of the family, not just the ones who might be deported. US-born actress Diane Guerrero (Guerrero & Burford, 2016), in her memoir, wrote about her fear of having her parents deported, which she experienced every day with her family. She wrote, "with every ring of my family's doorbell, with every police car passing on the street, a horrifying possibility hung in the air: My parents might one day be sent back to Colombia. That fear permeated every part of my childhood" (p. 2). These fears control how families live and how they interact with the environments and institutions around them, and this came through during the speeches at Sueños in which students shared their fears about their families. The ways the undocumented community and their families experience fears of deportation represent one of the ways that they experience institutionalized violence. Deportation illustrates an example of state

violence, as it represents a method of how the state would exercise control over who is allowed to stay, and that fear of deportation is constant, as Guerrero wrote, “it hung in the air.” This fear of deportation makes the conditional welcome clear as family members’ status is constantly under threat.

Violence Draws the Border at Sueños

Sueños created a space that challenged the state and the narrative of the state with its own narrative and information about what the undocumented community was going through and surviving. The whole goal of Sueños was, and is, to teach the larger Carter County community about the experiences of the undocumented community and to frame this work as resistance, serving as a *testimonio* about these struggles and challenges. The two speeches at Sueños provided a perspective of how violence moves and teaches people about their place in the world. Through examining how they explain and teach us about the violence in their lives with the framework of belonging and precarity, the elements of exclusions and inclusions in belonging can come into view in this research.

Sueños activated a lot of energy and excitement for students and youth activists as they prepared to speak and share their arts to educate the public about the challenges facing the undocumented community and their family and friends, the divisions and conditions that limit the undocumented community and how they live their lives. LUCHA sought to challenge the conditional welcome of America that seeks to keep the “dregs” and “peasants” out of the nation and is currently “symbolized by the vision of a fence stretching across the southern border of the United States” (Masuoka & Junn, 2013, p. 1). LUCHA’s desire to resist the conditional welcome, against exclusion and to work toward inclusion motivated much of their work and why

they wanted to reach out the community at large. Sueños was a time for the undocumented community to educate the community about these challenges.

Students' Accounts of the Border

This section will present and analyze the speeches that two students, Marta and Luis, gave at the Sueños event that exemplify some of the issues involving the border and belonging. Their speeches each serve as a kind of *testimonio* as each "is the first-person account, delivered by a member of a historically marginalized group, of an individual's participation in a community-led struggle challenging the social and economic order that denies his or her fundamental human and civil rights" (Mangual Figueroa, 2013, p. 513). The speeches given at Sueños definitely were semiautobiographical, challenged the narratives that existed about the border and the lives of immigrants, and represented a community-led struggle for rights. Seeing these speeches as *testimonios* makes sense, as they were given to make social problems and conditions clear in a public forum.

A Student Questions How the Border Is Drawn. There were many speeches given at Sueños, but Marta's speech really struck me because of how clearly she connected the larger political struggles to her family life and made the problems of the national border feel like they were occurring in the community. Marta was born in the United States and her parents had emigrated from Honduras before she was born. She did not fit the stereotypical appearance for an immigrant from Central America, as she had fair skin and light-colored eyes. Her speech began with a broad statement about how we don't understand the invisibleness of undocumented immigration and how easy it is to not notice or think about who might be undocumented or not. She told us "these are our neighbors" (field notes) to illustrate her point as we were all members of the Carter County community. By emphasizing how close this was to our homes and

communities, she was illuminating a social issue about how undocumented immigration cuts across our society. Marta's speech lasted about ten minutes. Due to the nature of the space, a local art studio, there was no formal dais or platform, just a microphone that she used to speak. Before she began, one of the adult organizers introduced Marta to the crowd, and people gathered in the studio looking for a seat along the wall or on the floor.

We can also see this moment through the lens of precarity and the need for social interdependency can illuminate this educational moment in Marta's speech. Butler (2010) wrote:

> The call to interdependency is also, then, a call to overcome this schism [between national subjects] and to move toward the recognition of a generalized condition of precariousness. It cannot be that the other is destructible while I am not; nor vice versa. (p. 48)

Butler reminded us here that as the narrative of the state separates us from each other, the counter call needs to recognize the humanity of the other and our mutual interdependence. Failing to recognize our shared humanity leads to divisions between nations and groups that benefit the powerful and create precarity for the other. As a person who had a family divided by border politics, Marta placed herself and her family in the spotlight and under scrutiny where everyone could see them and how they were living. As she was speaking about undocumented issues, she was calling attention to her closeness with this community and to her family members who were undocumented. In this way, she put their lives, and parts of her own, into our hands, hoping that they were safe. The idea that our lives are always in the hands of others forms one part of our precariousness as humans. Thinking about Marta's assertion that undocumented people are our neighbors questions the rhetoric around undocumented migration, that it is paired with crime and danger, evoking that they are neighbors and we have nothing to fear from this group that is

already here. Thinking through this assertion with Butler's description of "living socially," Marta's claim is that we are all safe together as a united group, and that fearing the undocumented community is unfounded and the members of that community should be seen and included as upright and valuable. The fear that she addresses pushes the undocumented community to reveal themselves as present here. They are our neighbors and we lack awareness of their presence because most of us do not ask or look for this tension. Instead, our undocumented neighbors slip through and hide their reality and are excluded from belonging in our society.

A Story about Her Cousin. After telling us that undocumented immigrants are our neighbors and already a part of our community, Marta changed gears to talk about her family. Sharing a little bit about her family and her parents, who were now American citizens, she then talked about her cousin. She shared, "My cousin, Carlos, looks like my brother, but there are some differences between us; he's better at soccer than me and he's also undocumented" (field notes). She goes on to describe how the differences of being undocumented completely changes and drives his life. As a high school student, she's excited and looking forward to college, but he can't share that joy with her. She sees an exciting future ahead of her, but all he sees are complications and troubles that come with his legal status. She asked those listening to think about the lines being drawn and what they mean for people like Carlos but also for these hidden parts of our community. Her *testimonio* makes these differences clear to an audience open and willing to listen and hear about these injustices and to think about how the reality of this struggle will forever shape Carlos's life and how he fits in and belongs in this country. In sharing this story, Marta exposes how the inclusions and exclusions of belonging affect her family. Inclusions of belonging are featured because she gets to attend college and fulfill those

expectations of adulthood and growing up. Exclusions occur because of how Carlos will be denied those same experiences, but also in how Marta sees his exclusions. Given their similarities, the difference because of the border, and thus the exclusion, stands out as arbitrary for Marta, who does not want to see this exclusion cut out her cousin.

Part of the goal of a *testimonio* is to share injustices and create an awareness about them and how they affect marginalized communities. Marta's cousin Carlos's struggles could be described as the precarity that Butler (2010) offers us to think about as injustice. Thinking about the precarity of the undocumented as a "politically induced condition" orientates the approach of this issue around the political failure to address the needs of this community and their possible political actions. The lack of action keeps this community politically vulnerable and conditioned toward vulnerability. The policies of the state keep this group in the position of being marginalized and maintain their precarity while at the same time keeping them advocating for their rights; this keeps the groups belonging just out of reach, as they can express the changes they want but continually need to express to the state what those changes need to be.

The story about Marta's cousin also exposes how precarity cuts across lines of identity. By proclaiming that there is no difference between her and her cousin, she is highlighting how arbitrary precarity can feel. Butler (2010) wrote, "precarity cuts across identity categories as well as multicultural maps" (p. 32) because the precarity need not target the whole group or population to remind them of their vulnerability. Marta and her cousin both grew up in Honduran families in the United States but experience different forms of precarity. Her speech describes how Carlos lives with the fear and she felt it and sees how it is forming the world for her family. Precarity cuts across her Honduran family, and while she has not found herself in a vulnerable politically induced condition, she serves as a witness to the pains of the condition that her cousin

experiences. While everything about her experience and her political condition teaches her that she belongs and she gets the benefits of inclusive belonging, seeing what her cousin goes through reminds her that belonging was not a given, that it can be exclusionary and that people, including her family, can find themselves on the wrong side of that condition.

A Student Finds the Border in His Home. After Marta's speech, Luis gave a speech that evoked the sentiment of how the politics of immigration cuts across his family. He started his speech by telling us that he was born in the United States but that the rest of his family wasn't. After this, he paused, then said, "you never stop being the child of an immigrant" (field notes). The speech touched upon how anti-immigrant rhetoric affected his life, hearing how people talked about his family, his parents, and siblings, who were all immigrants. The juxtaposition of his life as a citizen and the reminder that he will always be the child of an immigrant presents a painful reality that many mixed-status families experience. This legal surveillance over their family ignores the humanity of his family, and he knows that this vision will always shape him and how he sees the world. Luis put a voice to the pain and anxiety created by violence and policing that dehumanized his family's presence here and destabilized their sense of belonging.

As a native-born member in a mixed-status family, seeing and understanding the pain from the precarity levied against undocumented immigrants was not something he can forget. Butler (2010) wrote, "perception and policy are but two modalities of the same process whereby the ontological status of a targeted population is compromised and suspended" (p. 29). Butler paired perception and policy to talk about how communities experience precarity and are made to feel excluded. Policies create exclusions that directly shape the fears that the undocumented community and their families and allies feel. Perceptions attempt to limit and shape their experiences as well. These two arms, perception and policy, frame Luis's parents and are also

teaching Luis, as "the child of an immigrant," about how his family does not matter in the scheme of these two forces and the state.

There were also very visceral ways that this fear manifested itself as the speech carried on and revealed more of the tensions in his family. Luis talked about the fear of coming home and not finding his parents or his sibling there and fearing that authorities had taken them. This fear reflects the systemic violence that targets mixed-status and undocumented families. Anzaldúa (1987/2012) notes that the border aims to "define the places that are safe and unsafe, distinguish *us* from *them*" (p. 25), and that finding his family and himself on different sides of that border is a constant pain. His parents, as undocumented immigrants, are labeled as belonging somewhere else, and as he acts to change this scenario, he watches this border run through his family. He finds himself on one side of the border, with citizenship and all the rights that come with that. He sees his family on the other side and affected by policies that limit how they move through the world and that mark them as the other. Luis was not immune from his family being marked, and this teaches him that while he may belong, the inclusions of belonging can feel random. This violence, and the fear associated with it, becomes embodied in him and how he learns to see the world. It is an unfortunate part of his citizenship education, for while he gets the protections due to the location of his birth, he has to witness his family's struggles, and while he supports them, he struggles to know what to do to support them. As their son, he knows that the experience is teaching him about the differences between us and them and the realities of seeing the exclusions of belonging.

Luis's speech, like Marta's, felt like a *testimonio* that shares a part of his life story and seeks to educate others about the conditions that his family faces. By sharing this story, Luis makes his pain known and hopes the people will be aware of what is going on in his family. The

political tensions and pains in his family can be understood better by examining them with Butler's (2010) precarity, which frames pain through political conditioning. For Luis, this condition creates a powerful lesson of how his family was not wanted here and how it falls on the wrong side of the conditional welcome of the United States. As a citizen himself, the lesson felt arbitrary and one that will "always" be with him.

Belonging at Sueños

The two speeches at Sueños offer insights into how people like Marta and Luis were experiencing the policies, politics, and policing of the American border and the exclusionary aspects of belonging that it represents. For Marta, her speech about Carlos helped teach and expose how arbitrary these politics and policies can seem. While they seek to define a nation, they work to deny Carlos a future where he grew up, while Marta gets to dream and enjoy. For Luis, the pain of these policies and politics affects his very home. His speech provides a heartfelt and authentic assessment that his understandings of his place here are marred by these political overtures. Both Marta and Luis let us see the exclusionary aspects of belonging. Masuoka and Junn (2013) write, "members of groups classified as nonwhite have been granted incomplete membership, their political experience mediated by de facto and de jure discrimination" (p. 2), and both Marta and Luis experience this discrimination and how they are excluded from the full effect of belonging in their family.

By aligning these speeches with the power of *testimonios*, Marta's and Luis's speeches present us with personal accounts of the ways that oppression is felt by their mixed status families. Just like LatCrit emphasizes a look to immigration, both speakers expressed how being near immigration issues impacted them and their lives, the fear that it invokes in them, and how they express the arbitrariness of these issues. Evoking the racialized history of immigration

policy and enforcement, they also point towards how race has been used to mark some as worthy and others as not, as their families fall of the other side of being included. Both speakers made the means of oppression clear and pointed out how it affected and impeded their daily lives. Just as Perez Huber (2015) points out in her article on living with DACA, the impacts of immigration law affect how people move through the world and experience discrimination and rhetoric.

Luis and Marta, through their *testimonio*-style speeches at Sueños, open a space for a new kind of interaction and place their pain into a space that can create change, they hope. The educational mission of Sueños, coupled with the community support of LUCHA, allows for a more inclusive sense of belonging to be created. By naming the "de facto and de jure discrimination" that mitigates belonging, there can be a community-led effort to change it, as well as by hearing and engaging in that community's efforts to teach us about their status. By sharing the discrimination facing the undocumented community, Luis's and Marta's *testimonios* offer an insight into how belonging becomes more inclusionary. These *testimonios* represent the two sides of belonging, inclusionary and exclusionary, as they both represent a challenge to the politics of exclusion and the violations that brought on them. Marta and Luis shared a lot of pain that shapes their lives and families with the hope that in doing so they would find a way to alleviate those problems and secure a better grounding for their families.

Learning to Build Belonging

At the heart of LUCHA was the weekly tutoring in the basement of the church. These weekly meetings were more than just homework help; they were signs of a commitment to students and a community facing an injustice that excludes them from the higher education and from their ability to advocate for their own belonging in the state of Georgia. Education was not a trivial matter. Justice Brennan, in his opinion for *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), a case that granted

undocumented children access to K-12 schooling, wrote, "by denying these children a basic education, we deny them the ability to live within the structure of our civic institutions, and foreclose any realistic possibility that they will contribute in even the smallest way to the progress of our Nation" (p. 224). Brennan's statement emphasizes the importance of education for today's society and belonging to the nation, by demonstrating how education leads to all the other kinds of involvement in the society.

For undocumented students, the *Plyler* ruling defended their right to attend K-12 education, but it was silent on higher education and what would happen to students after they completed their K-12 education. Noting that higher education is becoming more and more important to having a life and being a secure adult in the twenty-first century, Gonzales (2016) wrote, "for undocumented youth, the transition to adulthood is accompanied by a *transition to illegality*" (Gonzales, 2016, p. 11). Illegality represents all the different processes that mark someone as being the other and on the wrong side of the border and shares many similarities to Butler's (2010) precarity, which also emphasizes the "politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer" (p. 25) for this community. In Georgia, that has also come with restrictions on higher education (Goodrich, 2016). LUCHA challenged this damaging practice with proactive college counseling to get students into higher education, a clear defiance of these expectations, and also with teaching the next generation of activists who will continue the struggle and take it into new spaces.

This section will explore how LUCHA's college support helped students and how they engaged in the training of the next generation of activists. Through interviews with one of the directors of LUCHA, Carrie, and one of the students, Mark, this section will argue that the act of tutoring and learning resulted in access to college, but also expose how precarity helps us to

understand LUCHA's actions and influence. Following that, this section will talk about Angela, a student who made the transition to becoming an activist and a leader with the help of her mentor, Dr. Lucie. Angela's passage, seen through the concept of belonging, frames her work as an emerging activist and shows how it expands the civic imagination and the possible inclusions of belonging.

Learning and Mentorship

Learning, tutoring, and mentorship at LUCHA was more than just the transmission of information; it was part of finding a way to help a community suffering from a politically induced precarity. LUCHA's strength started with their mission to help undocumented students access higher education after being banned from the public institutions in Georgia. Its mission brought in members of the community, volunteers, to power this mission. People who organize the programming, the activism, and tutor the students all play a role in shaping how the culture of LUCHA becomes a place to resist these discriminatory practices, which mark the undocumented community's precarity. This precarity, best described by Butler (2010) as the "politically induced condition of maximized precariousness" (p. 26), keeps undocumented students from assessing higher education and from finding more space for them to contribute to this nation. Higher education has been placed at the forefront of the progress to adulthood and finding employment. By banning undocumented students from higher education, the state denies them access to this important part of becoming an adult.

Doing this research at LUCHA was more personal than it had been in the classroom. I first met Carrie when I started volunteering at LUCHA. She had been a long-time member of LUCHA and began to change the way that college prep was done and administered to students. When I first met her, she was wrapping up her own PhD, which focused on the potential futures

of small colleges and their investments. As she took the task of improving college prep at LUCHA, the organization asked her to serve as director. Mark and Angela were both outstanding student leaders at LUCHA who both were attending college outside the state. From a methodological perspective, the LUCHA interviews were very different because I had worked with these people and this group prior to beginning this project. Looking at this data felt different from the data I collected in schools, because I was more familiar with these participants' struggles than those of the students in the high school classroom. The interviews with Carrie, Mark, and Angela all took about an hour each, and analyzing them felt different than analyzing those from the classroom, partially because I knew the space and I valued and liked the space and the people who made that space count. The challenge of looking at this research reminded me that this was personal work, and these were personal questions that I was tackling.

Given the political pressures explained above, students at LUCHA benefit from having tutors there who help the students see more and learn more. Carrie told me in an interview "it's really important to have a mentor there [at LUCHA] to help and also just to help see things that you might not see yourself" (interview). Carrie's statement evoked the desire to channel change through commitment to helping the undocumented students, and there is stress placed on the ability to help these students see things about themselves that they may have missed. Carrie hopes that mentors will help students make deep dives into their own experiences and desires. Centering the student experience, with good mentor pairings, means that students can really learn a lot about themselves without all of the exclusionary facets of belonging that kept them out of college.

The other aspect of Carrie's quotation is that the mentor helps ground the students at LUCHA and understand their place. Belonging, according to Masuoka and Junn (2013), depends

on “how race perception has developed in the United States” (p. 1), and these race perceptions can push people to feel excluded in some spaces. At LUCHA, mentors form strong relationships with students with the intent of working against the systematic discrimination that affects and shapes the undocumented community. By volunteering to do this work and coming back, mentors are helping these students resist the “politically induced conditions” (Butler, 2010, p. 26) of the way that the border has been drawn and has put many of the students and their families on the wrong side of the border. Tutoring and mentoring become political acts as they seek to help students feel valued and help them challenge the exclusions that keep them out of higher education.

Learning with Complex Student Lives.

But the commitment to work with these students was not enough to completely transform the problems created by the exclusions of belonging. Given the precarity of their students’ lives, mentoring and learning at LUCHA are no simple tasks. Carrie describes one of their biggest challenges:

> We have a lot of things going on the side that are very important: activism, middle school programming, homework tutoring, but I find my role is really to provide order and structure to that college counseling and college search process, especially when they’re not getting it at their own schools. We’re trying to standardize some processes, but also realize that every student’s journey is unique, and so it’s about greeting them at the door, especially if they’re new, figuring out what is their situation, what are their limitations: can they leave the state, what are their grades, what do they know?—but then figuring out those next steps. They walk in the door knowing a fraction of what their nonimmigrant or wealthier friends know. (interview)

Carrie's response about tutoring and the mission of college prep support seeks to alleviate an injustice that is going on. She said that when students "walk in the door knowing a fraction of what their nonimmigrant or wealthier friends know" and she wants LUCHA to be aware that not all students have the needed information and family resources to be fully informed about the college admissions process. Carrie's grasp of the inequity and maldistribution of knowledge in the college application process was something that reflected the different levels of status for the students. The conditions and policies that made them and their families experience precarity and an exclusion of belonging can be seen in the denial of their access to information about higher education, even extending her point that "they're not getting it at their own schools." As belonging correlates to the different levels of membership, pressure for conformity and having certain kinds of knowledge can be important. Knowledge, in this case, signifies their marginalized membership and their marginalized belonging.

Especially for adolescent youths, the pressures and struggles of getting into college and enacting that part of the journey toward adulthood can be great (Gonzales, 2016). Carrie's concern about how undocumented students, as well as students from mixed-status families, lack the information marks their "*transmission to illegality*" (p. 11) as they seek to transition to college. The lack of information is a sign of the history of the family and the way that they have been separated from their ability to move through society easily and accomplish something as complex as applying and going to college. Teaching and learning cannot undo the vulnerabilities these students face, rather, it presents a place to challenge those vulnerabilities and take on political challenges against the conditions and prejudices that kept these undocumented students in the dark about college. LUCHA stated that their goal was to help students apply for college, but in doing so, they helped these students challenge the conditions of their world.

College-Bound–ness Is Cultivated

This section will explore the main focus of LUCHA, which is to get kids into college. In Georgia, college admissions were already openly political with the ban on undocumented students (Goodrich, 2016). By examining an interview with Mark, a student of LUCHA and now a college student, and using the concept of belonging, we can see how tutoring changed how Mark understood his belonging. Along with being based in prejudice and the racial hierarchy, belonging also depends on how we see, understand, and imagine our place in the world. Masuoka and Junn (2013) write how "'imagining' that leads to this collective consciousness does not arise naturally but must instead be outlined and cultivated politically" (p. 41). This "imagining" opens a complex space for how people see themselves in the space and their possibilities in that space. At LUCHA, when Mark opened up about his situation and was able to get help to get to college, his possibilities also opened. Mark's relationship with Patrick, his tutor, exposes how relationships can change the features of belonging and precarity. For LUCHA, college admissions were part of its mission to change how undocumented students relate to the world, and Mark's journey reflects that power, but also how the political actions were having profound effects on the community around them.

A Tutoring Pair Gets to Work. Mark and Patrick also engage in an expansion of Mark's imagination, in this case, focusing on college admissions, which can change how he sees and understands his future. College admissions and higher education can provide access to an array of economic possibilities, and for kids with immigration issues, more barriers to that education stand in their way (Gonzales, 2016; Motomura, 2014). When reflecting on their work together, Mark told me:

> They [LUCHA] explained in detail the college process. I did alumni interviews, which I didn't even know were a thing until coming here, because Patrick was telling me, *Your applications look way better if you do alumni interviews.* So, I did a few of those. I don't know. I guess what really helped me here was the fact that they aim for students to strive for a higher education. I was kind of really lost in the college process, because I'm a first-generation student, so I didn't have family who ever went to college or older cousins who went to college, so I was really lost in how this college process worked. (interview)

Being introduced to the idea of doing alumni interviews as part of the college admissions process was an immediate addition to Mark's knowledge about college admissions and how the process worked. Patrick's advice added to how Mark imagined applying to and pursuing higher education. Mark expresses that his own family did not have the knowledge to navigate the difficult steps of college admission, describing himself as "really lost" in the college admission process. Patrick's guidance helped Mark go from lost to being able to see himself in higher education, and now he attends one of the best liberal arts colleges in the Midwest. Their relationship leads to a real expansion of Mark's imagination and how he understood and contextualized his belonging, and the inclusions and exclusions that come with it, especially as he now attends a college to continue his education.

The barriers for Mark to get a higher education highlight his place in the world and his belonging. As a self-identified "first-generation student" with no close family who "went to college or older cousins who went to college," Mark describes a real gap that exists in his family between how they lived and higher education with all of its possibilities. For Mark, the immigration status of his family meant that he did not have firsthand access to the knowledge of how to apply to college, so Patrick was offering a valuable tool for this reimagination to occur.

Learning about the whole application process and highlighting alumni interviews with Patrick shifted Mark's sense of belonging and how he fit in with the rest of the college process and performed in it. While sharing this might seem like a small feat for Patrick, it transformed Mark's ability to perform and succeed in the process and determined how he could fit in and belong.

Precarity as a Barrier. Even as it was clear that his work with Patrick helped Mark to apply to college, he also outlined how his precarity had created a barrier to his thinking. Later in the interview, Mark told me more, saying:

> I remember before LUCHA I was really shy, even with the learners here. So, it kind of took a while for me to finally open up to them and talk about my situation. I feel like LUCHA helped me become more of an extrovert and be more socially comfortable talking to strangers, because I've always been in this secluded circle where I will only talk to the people I know and don't actually reach out to people I don't know. I felt like LUCHA pushed me a little in that direction as well.

The admission that he was shy and reluctant to open up to even to other peers frames how tutoring helped Mark shape and grow. Even opening up about his "situation" took a real effort and investment on Patrick's part. Hiding the source of his precarity was a logical move, especially as sharing it opens him up to targeting by the state as he becomes subject to harsher laws and exclusions created with the purpose of harming and limiting his community. When he opens up to LUCHA, and in particular Patrick, about his place in the world he can receive the best support he can to be successful.

Given the precarity of the undocumented community, sharing one's precariousness was risky and stress-inducing. Mark comments that he was unwilling to share his status with people,

even at LUCHA. Butler's writing on precarity helps us to understand this particular move by Mark. Butler (2010) wrote, "precarity also characterizes that politically induced condition of maximized precariousness for populations exposed to arbitrary state violence" (p. 26). Exposing himself and his family to the dangers of "arbitrary state violence" is no small challenge, especially as that could result in deportation. By opening up, Mark was not only transforming how he thinks about his status, he was also engaging in work to transform how it affects him. Butler (2010) later wrote that large multicultural groups are "the basis for an alliance focused on opposition to state violence" (p. 32), meaning that large coalitions of different kinds of people need to see the problems in how the state uses violence and profits from it. Mark's work with Patrick may feel small, but it is part of a move away from the fear of precarity and has helped Mark learn how to build these coalitions.

Belonging in Tutoring. The relationship between Mark and Patrick shifted the reality between them and allowed Mark to expand his imagination. This expansion had very real consequences, including the matriculation to a top-tier liberal arts college. The political consequences of this expansion also shift how Mark saw himself and his reality. Mark's imagination expanded as a result of his work with Patrick and LUCHA. By framing the importance of membership, Masuoka and Junn (2013) write, "members of groups classified as nonwhite have been granted incomplete membership, their political experience mediated by de facto and de jure discrimination" (p. 2), and a group like LUCHA openly combats that discrimination. The tutoring Mark received addresses the institutional failures of the education system to provide him with meaningful help to get to college, and, by attending a college, he defies the attempts to exclude him from higher education. He is participating in civic institutions and proving that he is an adult in twenty-first-century America.

Learning Activism

The section is about how Angela, a student at LUCHA, became an activist with the support of her mentor, Dr. Lucie. The goal is to illustrate how mentorship at LUCHA expanded imaginations and outcomes of the students, especially those who engaged in activism. These students, including Angela, were appealing to the state to change their politics, a problem for communities experiencing that precarity, as they must appeal to the state that is endangering them. Butler (2010) wrote, "they [people experiencing precarity] appeal to the state for protection, but the state is precisely that from which they require protection" (p. 26). By setting up an appeal to the state that created the problem, Butler adds that communities facing precarity, like the undocumented community, are locked into a relationship with a specific state and political orientation. Activism seeks to transform this relationship with the state with mentorships that help students best move into this role and push the state, which they want to feel comfortable doing.

Angela, a LUCHA student, described how her relationship with Dr. Lucie, another director, helped pushed her to become an activist in her community. During our interview she told me all about a massive event she had participated in. When I asked her about how she prepared, Angela told me:

> Dr. Lucie was like, *Hey, I would really encourage you to do this, no pressure at all*. I wasn't forced to do anything. She was like, *I think this is a great speaking opportunity for you and I think that you would feel very comfortable speaking at this event.* Needless to say, I never imagined the magnitude of that event. There were a lot of people there. So then that led to even more opportunities like later on down the road. So that was also really neat. (interview)

The encouragement from Dr. Lucie helped Angela find the ability to participate in such a large event. Angela's comment "I never imagined the magnitude of that event" helps frame that she had not seen herself in an event or space like the one in which she spoke. Angela could not imagine herself in the role of activist and speaker in the larger community because of how membership had been framed for her, how precarity how framed it for her. Breaking through these restrictions took great support from Dr. Lucie. Angela's imagination pushed through against the barriers of precarity and the limits of her belonging so that should could become an activist, and Dr. Lucie's support helped her to imagine that.

Angela's use of the phrase "never imagined" resonates here because it shows how her lack of imagination had framed action for her. We need to think about political imagination as a means of understanding one's place in the world and see how they move through it as well. Imagining, here, relates to how people see themselves in space and how that was not an incidental occurrence but rather explicitly political. Being able to see oneself in a role and in space is the first step to being and entering that space, especially when there are political barriers to passage and moving through space. For the undocumented community, there are serious barriers to their participation in spaces including fear of policing and economic stress (Gonzales, 2016). These barriers constitute the "politically induced conditions" (Butler, 2010, p. 26) for the undocumented community and for Angela, pushing these boundaries with more effectiveness, given Dr. Lucie's support.

Belonging in Activism

Public speaking and activism are no easy feat for undocumented students as they carry their own host of dangers. Revealing one's immigration status can expose one to many state-sanctioned dangers as being open about this status makes one more visible. These students'

precarity emanates from the policies and powers of the state that have targeted undocumented community members and manufactured their precarity (Gonzales, 2016; Motomura, 2014). None of this would be news for Angela, who was speaking out against that precarity and hoping to get others to do the same. When Angela told me "I never imagined the magnitude of that event. There were a lot of people there," she divulged how the event created a group push against the political norms that restricted her. Butler (2010) describes precarity forcing those who experience heightened vulnerability to appeal to the state that created the situation. Angela's expression and assessment of the event presented a response to this precarity. This expands Angela's sense of belonging and pushes the sensibilities of belonging into space around her, and all because a teacher engaged with her and helped her grow.

The relationship between Angela and Dr. Lucie represents an insight into how activists have to be cultivated. As precarity is challenged by the relationship between the activist and her tutor, a relationship that cultivates a person's strength through support, this does not mitigate or nullify the dangers of precariousness, but it prepares people to confront and take on the situations that make them more vulnerable. This section exposed how relationships changed Angela's imagination about her place and her ability to push that place.

Conclusion

The facets of belonging that I observed at LUCHA, chiefly how people get excluded from their communities and spaces and how some can be brought back, provide frank reminders about the state of belonging in contested spaces. In large overtures, like the Sueños event, and smaller ones, like the weekly meetings, LUCHA resisted the state-sanctioned precarity by forming and exercising large multicultural groups. Students at Sueños gave *testimonios* to share their experiences and have people listen to them, while at the weekly meeting, volunteers,

students, and leaders got together to practice "forming the basis for an alliance focused on opposition to state violence" (Butler, 2010, p. 32). Even though "alliance" felt like too formal a word to use to label LUCHA, it provided students and volunteers an incubation space to think about and plan ways to challenge the "politically induced condition" (p. 26) that limited undocumented students.

For social studies education, precarity helps us to see and understand the role that the state plays in creating and sanctioning how violence is used against students and communities. There are various tools for this work, and Butler (2010) reminds us that "perception and policy are but two modalities of the same process whereby the ontological status of a targeted population is compromised and suspended" (p. 29), meaning that we do not need to look beyond rhetoric or policies to see a wider image of the different ways in which precarity is formed. LUCHA, through providing space for *testimonios* and teaching relationships to form, offers a space to model how we teach youth about taking up these challenges and to utilize their own voices to do so. Marta, Luis, Mark, and Angela offer very different insights into how they took up this challenge and how they are embodying their resistance to the tools and arms of precarity in their community.

The work at LUCHA holds implications for embracing a complex approach to how we consider teaching students about the world and preparing teachers to take on ambitious lessons and goals with their students. Marta, Luis, Mark, and Angela all experienced adversity and difficulties in their lives, and they all seem to understand how that adversity framed them and how they were resisting it. Levinson (2012) challenges that "schools need to teach young people knowledge and skills to upend and reshape power relationships directly, through public, political, and civic action, not just private self-improvement" (p. 13), and perhaps what we should

consider is that students, young people, are already engaged in this work. They are trying to make their way through the world and not only survive but prosper. As social studies educators, we should embrace Levinson's call with the mind-set that students are already doing some of this work and what is needed are teachers who will listen and who will support them. Educating teachers and preservice teachers on how to understand the different inclusionary and exclusionary facets with their students might offer the best avenue to understanding and providing the kind of education that Levinson challenges us to think about.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Early into my observations, I walked into Ms. Williams's and Ms. Brooks's room, where students are moving in and out. On the board was a warm-up about the causes of the Great Depression along with other writings. Some students were sitting down; some were talking in the front of the room as they picked up their notebooks for the day. They asked Ms. Williams about the lesson for the day. A few students checked in with Ms. Brooks, who was sitting at her desk. Students were curious about that was happening. While the students were talking, Ms. Williams took attendance. After she finished, she directed the students' attention to the opening on the board. As the students worked, one student asked her to erase the board with the old class's work, which she did. After about five minutes, Ms. Williams told students to put away their laptops while they talked about the causes of the Great Depression. After some discussion, Ms. Williams talked about the New Deal agency project and how it was due that night at midnight. She then went on to talk about the photo essay that was also due soon. The class felt like it was getting more and more tense. One student told another to be quiet while Ms. Williams talked about all of these projects. As she's handing out the assignment and rubric for the photo essay, one student mentioned out loud that school was making them work too hard. He said, "This is child labor, just like the Great Depression, and I ain't getting paid." A

few students laughed, and Ms. Williams walked through the assignment handouts with the students.

Introduction

This moment resonated with me because it reminded me of the times when students and the student-teacher were pushing and helping each other out with humor. The reminders to clean the board and about all the projects relate to Ms. Williams becoming more of a teacher, and the student's humorous interjection expresses resistance to all the work he has but does so in a way that relates to content. All of these interactions occur in a space alive with the issues and currents that make up citizenship and belonging. Inquiring into these convergent processes could only happen when I spent time with my participants and listened to them. My research took me into a classroom and a civic space to see how these questions played out on a daily basis. I was (and still am) curious to see how we live questions about citizenship and belonging out, especially as many of these lessons on how to move through spaces and our lives remain unexamined.

My research inquiry coalesced around these questions:

- *How do we learn the curriculum(curricula) of belonging?*
- *How is the curriculum (broadly defined) both constraining and how is it enabling of particular versions and enactments of citizenship?*

These questions probed the different ways we move through spaces as well as the belonging and precarity that we embody. During this research, I found moments when the boundaries of exclusionary belonging seemed to melt away because of how relationships built new connections, and other moments when these boundaries and exclusions became reified through interaction. The flow of violence provided reminders of our vulnerability and our place in the world, which reflect the precarity of many communities and belonging. These divisions reflect

the many problems and complications that exist in our current world. Family separation at the border and walls are new symbols and tools of division and categorization that have (re)emerged in the nation in recent times. There are countless other examples, but the general crises around belonging comes out in political debates and in how we people live their lives.

Being in the classroom and at LUCHA, viewing the students' work, and interviewing participants allowed me to catch glimpses of what and how they were learning. Doing ethnographic research and sharing space with my participants helped me to build trust with them and to see the passive lessons that were shaping their world. Gaining these insights and glimpses into the lived experiences in these spaces was essential to this work and instrumental, as I attempt to highlight the dynamic experiences that emerged out of sharing work and space while encountering different facets of belonging. This last chapter will summarize the ideas that emerged out of the classroom and LUCHA, reminding us of the role these ideas play in the ongoing debates in social studies education and how we think about the concept of citizenship.

The State of Social Studies and Citizenship

The facets of belonging and precarity can be seen throughout the data generated in this dissertation. Questions about citizenship hold an important place in social studies education, as the curriculum can shape how that citizenship gets envisioned and presented in the classroom. The different visions of citizenship all present an ideal that aims to get more and more people involved, to have more participation. That goal of higher participation in citizenship reflects the idealistic and democratic principles that have become synonymous with current thoughts about American citizenship. Along with valuing this work, social studies education questions the political nature of this work and the types of citizenship that are produced and how citizenship

gets distributed across differences. Understanding how social studies takes on these challenges creates a conversation for how this work contributes to the field of social studies education.

Describing what citizenship is to the general population has many meanings and takes on several different dynamics. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) created an important link between how curriculum aims to create the different kinds of citizenship that they found in different classrooms. They found civic-minded curricula aimed to create three kinds of citizens who would improve society, albeit in different ways and through various methods. These curricula stressed a variety of concepts, from individual action and character, participation, and critical examination, all with the goal of improving society. They end their article with the thought "it is not enough to argue that democratic values are as important as traditional academic priorities. We must also ask what kind of democratic values" (p. 263). I was particularly curious about how we create justice-orientated citizens, who ask deep questions of our society and engage in different forms of participation and belonging as they strive to create a better society. Despite this, belonging does fit into the notion of democracy, as it inquires into the different facets of who has and who gets the different layers of membership that exist, to paraphrase Masuoka and Junn (2013, p. 1).

The goal for more participation is sadly met with problems and challenges that parallel marginalization. This marginalization shapes students' ability to think through and engage in the larger society. Levinson (2012) wrote:

> Whether my students were misguided or prescient, whether their life experiences blinded or exposed them to the true character of our political leaders, there is ample evidence that they are unlikely to become active participants in American civic and political life. As a result, they are unlikely to influence civic and political deliberation or decision making.

> This is because there is a profound *civic empowerment gap*—as large and as disturbing as the reading and math achievement gaps that have received significant national attention in recent years—between ethnoracial minority, naturalized, and especially poor citizens, on the one hand, and White, native-born, and especially middle-class and wealthy citizens, on the other. (pp. 31–32, emphasis original)

The *civic engagement gap,* as described above, has many implications for how citizenship is exercised. Levinson described the gap through how marginalization has progressed and affects the ability of her students, and their peers, to engage in politics and civic life. While some might excuse the gap, since her students have had experiences that may have either "blinded or exposed them to the true character of our political leaders" the concern is that they remain unengaged in politics. The lack of concern and lack of engagement becomes the *civic engagement gap* "between ethnoracial minority, naturalized, and especially poor citizens, on the one hand, and White, native-born, and especially middle-class and wealthy citizens, on the other." The fact that this divide follows ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic class lines presents major concerns about how citizenship gets exercised. This gap represents a failure to get more people involved in improving their situation and the society at large. Levinson's commentary about this gap and the lines of marginalization it represents and embodies expresses how much more work and attention needs to be given to this topic and the work of creating more opportunities for citizenship.

Between curriculum's push for more involvement and the reality that involvement falls along the lines of marginalization, this work asks the question about how we can better understand where students are coming from and how we get them better prepared to be involved. Levinson (2012) said, "schools need to teach young people knowledge and skills to upend and reshape power relationships directly, through public, political, and civic action, not just private

self-improvement" (p. 13), and as we think about the specific "power relationships" that prevent them from being engaged and getting involved, both concepts of belonging and precarity inform this work and help us think about how students encounter the lessons that surround them.

Belonging and precarity can both offer ways to think about and consider democratic learning and civic education so that they will help create opportunities to get students to learn about the structures that impede their involvement and their community's growth. Belonging, according to Masuoka and Junn (2013) explained how students from marginalized communities have "their political experience mediated by de facto and de jure discrimination as a function of their racial categorization" (p. 2), meaning that the racialization informs their understanding of place. Students are aware of the things that make them precarious and of their place in the world but know that their precarity stems from a political condition and not just a social condition and creates new spaces for change. Going forward with that idea, thinking about how we can change social studies education so that it begins with this acknowledgment, instead of ignoring it and hoping that more participation will fix everything, means that we see an education that addresses students and the political conditions that make up their world.

Summary of Findings

The results from this research address the concerns of how civics education can change and adapt to answer Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) concerns about the nature of democracy and Levinson's (2012) demand for schooling to prepare students to change the world. Basing the curricula on conceptions of belonging and precarity would provide a basis for helping readjust and provide that critical edge for schools and classrooms. My research aims to exhibit that students were already addressing and learning with these concepts in classrooms and civic

spaces. Only by spending time in the classroom could I see how these lessons and learning moments occurred and shaped student understanding.

Data was generated using multi-sited case study method and seeks to inquire into the properties of how citizenship is being sorted out and learned in these spaces. Uncovering how these spaces work and deal with the inequities and marginalization also reveals how they teach about these issues. This section will examine and summarize the results and remind us how they impact the ongoing conversations of social studies. First, the results from the classroom will be summarized in the context of their importance to social studies education. Second, the results from LUCHA will also be summarized, with the hope that the readers will be reminded of its importance to the social studies.

Results from the Classroom

The research that occurred in the classroom revealed that there were many lessons about belonging going on for students and adults. These lessons taught and retaught the participants about how they were expected to move through the world and act in it. Seeing this unfold unveiled how powerful these deliberate and intentional lessons can be, along with how hidden lessons move through this space. Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) and Levinson's (2012) calls for deliberate thought about democratic values and schooling that teaches about power and change were not met 100 percent, but teachers cared about their students and how they learned about the world. While not a complete step to revolutionizing how we think about teaching and schooling, it taught me that these values do have a home in the classroom.

I found this to be particularly true of the journey of Ms. Williams and her struggle with her whiteness and what it meant to teach mostly black and brown students when you come from such a different perspective. Given how whiteness utilizes passivity and university to hide itself

and the privileges it offers, the task for Ms. Williams was daunting as she would try to peel away these layers in the classroom where she was learning to be a teacher. As Ms. Williams struggled with her own whiteness and the needs of her students in her class, she found herself becoming a very complicated practitioner but also one that was increasingly aware of the struggles of her practice and her profession. She exhibited a desire to know her students better and teach them about the world as best she could while coming to terms with her place in the world. Grappling with large concepts lies at the heart of finding and learning about our place in the world.

These lessons are important to value as they add meaning to the space in which they occur. Space, according to Said (1978/2004), "is far less important than what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel" (p. 55). For the classroom, these values included student success on an extended time scale, the ability to wrestle and learn from tough topics and content, and to understand the world better. Teachers and students were all working hard to add value and success to the spaces that they worked in. And while they did not exactly meet the demands that Westheimer and Kahne (2004) and Levinson (2012) lay out, the research exposed that this work is occurring and providing engagement in these debates.

Results from LUCHA

Like the classroom, LUCHA provided a place for students and adults to work together, although their challenges to the oppressive aspects of society were more open. LUCHA was founded as a result of practices that excluded undocumented students of Georgia from institutions of higher education and sought to help them find success in higher education and beyond. The mission of LUCHA intertwined this goal with lessons about belonging and precarity, as the purpose of the group sought to help students resist damaging policies by the

state. This research followed the LUCHA students as they put on large events to challenge these policies and reframe the politics that sought to marginalize them, as well as how the weekly tutoring events also provided this resistance.

The stories of Angela and Mark, both successful students at LUCHA who now are college students, provide examples of how commitment to learning helped provide these challenges. For Mark, LUCHA offered information and a road map to apply for college, which was information that he lacked due to the legal status of his family. LUCHA, through tutors, taught this information and provided support to help him become a successful college student in the face of damaging policies and politics that sought to keep him from those spaces. For Angela, her time at LUCHA not only helped her become a college student but also helped her activist-self emerge.

As we think about the education that LUCHA gave Mark and Angela, it is important to see their growth as embodiments of the challenges from Westheimer and Kahne (2004) and Levinson (2012). The challenge that education needs to not only question what kind of democracy we want but how education and learning embody those challenges, came through in strides at LUCHA. The group saw the policies of excluding undocumented students as unfair and worked to change them. The volunteers, including myself, committed our time, resources, and knowledge to challenge these policies and help students become successful. Just as we saw in the classroom, the concepts of precarity and belonging have a role to play in helping provide students the education they need to challenge the powers that control and shape their world.

Future Questions

As we think about how the concepts of belonging and precarity can integrate into social studies education, it is important to consider who is doing the teaching. Teachers are learning,

thinking, and strategizing around their classrooms' activities and learning, especially as the population of students continues to become more diverse (Busey & Waters, 2016). For schooling and curriculum, the future questions about how knowledge and concepts arise need to coincide with the questions about place that are moving through those spaces as well. Bringing in questions of precarity and belonging help to shift how we think about social studies education and where we start our conversations about curriculum and learning goals.

Future Questions for Teachers

For teachers, in-service and preservice, there are many questions about how to approach the role of teaching and the task of education. The questions of belonging and precarity hold deep significance for these spaces as students and teachers struggle with learning in the world. For this work, there are many lines of inquiry that examine how teachers are thinking about learning, history, and the places in which they are teaching. These lines of inquiry push into how teachers are thinking about and interacting with the students in front of them and the goals of teaching that lie before them. Balancing these inquiries within the content of teaching experiences questions how the approaches for ambitious education can come to the forefront and be understood in a more professional context.

The other question about this work is how we teach relationships and how we teach relationship building to teachers. For preservice teachers, this question takes on a practical aspect as we think about and consider how they build their practice and prioritize certain skills over others. Given their own concerns about learning the basics of lesson planning, classroom management, and gaining certification, teaching them about concerns and facets of belonging needs to be effectively added to their practice and not treated like an add-on. For in-service teachers, this question balances concerns over how they are thinking about their students and

their professional concerns, preeminent among them testing. From there, finding ways for them to think about the relationships they are forming and creating in the classroom can become a more poignant conversation and one with professional ramifications, instead of an overly idealistic and theoretical concern.

Future Questions for Curriculum

For the curriculum, the most potent lingering questions surround how to expand the curriculum and content so that students and teachers can find more reflections of themselves and the world around them. Curriculum, in particular social studies, provides a place for thinking deeply about the kind of democracy that we desire (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), and this opportunity needs to be questioned. How are teachers taking advantage of this opportunity? Are they planning for it or just marching through the curriculum? Talking to teachers about how they plan and strategize their material and content can yield important questions and realizations about how ideas are flowing through the classroom and how social studies is being utilized, or not, for the opportunity to find reflections and images of the other.

Future Questions for Schooling

For schooling, the questions that remain revolve around how to make schools into places where belonging can be shifted. This is an ambitious task and there are serious cultural questions at work here. Ms. Brooks commented in one of our interviews that "sociocultural" concerns are beginning to count for more in districts, as schools are asking tougher questions and getting tough questions back from society. We must find a way to continue observing in schools and learning about how teachers, and other school personnel as well, think and strategize about the culture of their schools and how it is shaping the people who are learning and working there.

Future questions for education

One of the main takeaways that I had from this project is that our classrooms are already tackling difficult issues of belonging and citizenship all the time. Instead of imagining the classroom as a space devoid of these issues or worse immune to them, we should instead imagine that the space is teeming with these issues and realities. Teachers need to be ready to take on this challenge and they need to be ready to deal with students who are grappling with tough issues, then adjust a curriculum and make it appropriate to the needs of the classroom and where they need to grow. As we think about Levinson's (2012) challenge to create schools that help students change the world around them, the motivation for making these changes is ready there and students are waiting for others to take up the challenge. Seeing students taking on difficult challenges and teachers striving to meet their needs during my research makes me confident that the challenge we need to overcome is not one of motivation or political interference, but one of communication and connectivity between the diverse groups who exist in school. If we could see the kind of communication and caring that I observed LUCHA in the school, that space could also become transformational for those students.

Concluding Thoughts

As I think back to many of the events, ideas, interactions, and concepts that have shaped this project, I owe much to my participants, who all worked hard to make their spaces dynamic and alive. The teachers and students, adult and youth activists were all strong and passionate people who did the most with their time and created amazing spaces where belonging could be questioned and then shifted to incorporate more people. With them the standards were floors to achievement and not the ceiling or the pinnacle of learning.

At a time when kids can both be locked in cages for attempting to find a better future or reduced to only a test performance, it is important to reflect on spaces where our youth, and

adults for that matter, are actively addressing these concerns about how to belong and fit together in this society. Earlier in this dissertation, the words of Coates (2015) were addressed in relation to how they frame Americans attitudes to democracy. He wrote, "Americans deify democracy in a way that allows for a dim awareness that they have from time to time, stood in defiance of their God" (p. 6). Understanding this tension opens up new avenues for seeing into how Americans live the tensions of citizenship, belonging, and the democratic principles that underpin much of these tensions. These struggles and tensions have root beyond theoretical concerns about precarity and the power of the state and have an impact on how we are seen and understood by the state. Coates continues: "the question is not whether Lincoln truly meant 'government of the people' but what our country has, throughout its history, taken the political term 'people' to actually mean" (p. 6). This question remains at the forefront of our politics today as we consider who belongs and how we learn about our own belonging from the world around us.

This brings us back to how we see and value people in our democracy. While we work toward equality across our society, the reality of our politics is that we still strive to make sure that everyone is counted as human and that human experience is valued. Introducing belonging into social studies allows for a direct confrontation of these controversial topics and for there to be a more comprehensive approach to how citizenship is taught and how activism is addressed. Instead of starting with a universalistic approach to citizenship and citizenship education, education and the curriculum should begin with an understanding of where our students are and what they need to learn in order to understand the world better so they can improve it instead of just relying on an aspiration that it may become better with the hope of equality.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

For Students:

Interview Stage 1:

- What is your community/neighborhood like? How would you describe it to someone who doesn't live there?
    - What's your favorite thing about it? Why?
    - What makes your community work? What are some of its challenges?
    - Do you feel welcome in your community?
    - Are there parts of Athens that you don't feel welcome in? Why?
- Do you feel welcome in school? Why?
    - Are there parts of school you don't feel welcome in? Why?
- What's one thing you like about your classrooms? One thing you don't?
- What is your favorite class?
    - Why is it your favorite?
- List the ways you feel included in class/?
    - Can you think of a story about a moment in class that you felt included? That you felt excluded?
    - What do you think lead to those moments?

Interview Stage 2:

- Tell me about some of the groups/organizations/activities you are a member of?
    - How do you know that you are a member of them?
    - What does it mean to be a member?
    - What does it mean to not be a member?
    - What are the component parts? Who is included?
- We have many different identities and facets to our identities; I want you to take a moment and think about some of yours:
    - Can you list your group memberships/identities?
    - Which ones are the most important to you? Why?
    - Does their relative importance change by where you are or who you are with?
- Sort these terms from most to least important to you -OR- can you broad describe these terms to me?
        - Citizen

        - Member
        - Nation
        - Activist
        - Country
        - Border
    - Why did you put this term on top? Why is it important? Can you tell me about why you think this is important?
- How do you know that you are part of a nation?
    - How do you describe your nationality?
    - What country do you feel like you belong to?
        - What's your relationship to US/Mexico/Other nation?
        - How do you know?
    - Can we be a part of more than one? What is that like to be a member?
- How have you learned about nationhood in social studies class?
    - About immigration?
    - About the border?
- Do you think school is an appropriate space to learn about the nation?
- What does the word citizen mean to you?
- What have you learned about what it means to be a good citizen in class?
    - What do you think is missing from what you've learned?
    - What would you like to see happen in class?

Interview Stage 3:

- What have you learned about the world?
    - What's your place in it? How do you know?
- What do you think leads groups of people and nations to have borders/barriers?
    - Why do some nations get along?
- What do you know about U.S. border policy?
    - How does that make you feel?
- Look at these pictures, tell me what you see and what you think of?
    - Images here
    - What story(s) are these images telling?
    - Which image stands out to you the most?
- Have you heard the word citizen before?
    - What does it mean to you?
- How would like your classrooms to work?
    - How do you think your teachers can improve?
- List 5 things a good citizen does. Which is the most important?

For Teachers/Facilitators:

Interview Stage 1:

- What's a moment that you are really proud of in your class?
- How would change your classroom/group if you could?
    - Explain this change to me.
- List the different ways that you make your classroom inclusive.

    - Tell me about a success.
- How do you help and frame student learning?
- How do you think about teaching/working in Athens is important to your work? How is the community important to your work with the students?

Interview Stage 2:

- How do you think about and change the curriculum in your classroom?
    - List the different ways you think about your students when planning a lesson.
    - What are somethings you want to see added to the curriculum?
- What do you think the curriculum teaches students? What ideas/messages does it give them?
    - What are some ways that you think we can change the curriculum?
- List some of the most important concepts in teaching social studies
    - Which of these is the most/least important? Why?
    - what you hope your students take away from your classroom beyond the formal curriculum?
    - How do you teach about citizenship?
    - How do you teach about the border?
        - Do you adapt the way you teach about these concepts based on who is the classroom with you?
        - Can you think of a moment that made you think about changing and adapting your teaching?
        - Have you learned anything in your teacher education about how to teach an inclusive classroom?
        - How does the district teach about these issues?
- List some of the things you want your students to walk away from class with.
    - Which of these is the most/least important? Why?

Interview Stage 3:

- How do you think they are learning about their place in the world?
    - How do you think this is shaped by their own place in the world?
    - Where else do you think they are learning these things?
- If you had free reign to teach in your classroom, what would you teach?
- How do you think students are learning about their place in this nation?
    - Do you feel like there are conflicts with that?
- How would you teach about the nation? The local community?
    - How do you think students think about these lessons?
- Look at these pictures, tell me what you see and what you think of?
    - Images here
    - What is the story here?
- How do you do you imagine students think about their learning?

For LUCHA Students:

- How long have you been coming to LUCHA?

- Why do you come to LUCHA?
- How do you describe LUCHA to people who don't come?
- Have you told people to come to LUCHA? How did you (try to) convince them?
- Can you share a LUCHA memory that you really enjoy?
- What are some of the things you've learned at LUCHA?
- What are some of the ways that LUCHA helps you in school? Beyond school?
- What brings you back to LUCHA?
- Do you feel welcome in LUCHA? Why?
- What do you like best about LUCHA?
- What are some things you'd like to see LUCHA do?
- What are some ways LUCHA has helped you?
- What are some of the ways that LUCHA helps you beyond school?
- What are some of the biggest differences between LUCHA and school? Can you give me an example?

Appendix 2: Writing Protocol

Date:
Location:
People in the room:
Topic in the class:

General Notes and Observations

In this section, notes will be taken down as they happen, times will not be recorded. While many notes will be taken during the class, the researcher will review these notes and add to them to make them more coherent and fill in any gaps.

As note, as the data generation continued, I changed the process of taking notes to include race and gender information to help with analysis later.