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Racialized Habitus: Cultivating Political Solidarity in East Los Angeles

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

Izul de la Vega

2023

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Racialized Habitus: Cultivating Political Solidarity in East Los Angeles

by

Izul de la Vega

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Professor Raymond Rocco, Chair

The process of forging Latino political solidarity requires the navigation of racial, ethnic, and generational differences that produce substantial in-group fragmentation. This dissertation explores that fragmentation by examining the spatial conditions that make political solidarity possible through a case-study of Boyle Heights, Los Angeles. Using the Bourdieusian concept of habitus, I argue that engagement with racialized habitus is a necessary step for cultivating a sense of political obligation among Latinos through an analysis of spatiality, racialization and intersubjective exchange. Specifically, I explore the how sociohistorical conditions create racialized networks that influence identity and raise awareness of the group's marginalized status. The findings from this study suggest that Latinos who engage with racialized habitus are more likely to engage in the type of political behaviors we associate with group solidarity. Moreover, the findings suggest that the relationship between race and space is critical for forging political networks in racialized groups. Symbolic interactions with these networks are critical for cultivating political solidarity among Latinos.

The dissertation of Izul de la Vega is approved.

Natalie Masuoka

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Abel Valenzuela, Jr.

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University of California, Los Angeles
2023

To my daughter,

Rowan,

who put up with my rambling and frustration for eight years straight.

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The UCLA Luskin Institute on Inequality and Democracy.

“Thick-Mapping Oaxacalifornia: A Technical Guide,” UCLA Labor Center manual.

WIWA: Where is West Adams digital collection, “Crossings” film, “Building Borders” thick map, “Deconstructing the Freeway” storymap, and “Archive” digital repository. UCLA Urban Humanities Initiative, co-developed with Hilary Malson and Neta Nakash.

Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

In November 2016, an unknown number of residents in Boyle Heights, a neighborhood in East Los Angeles, struck back at the encroaching gentrification in their community by protesting the development of art galleries in the area. At one of these locations, The Nicodim Gallery, the words “Fuck White Art” were sprayed across the front door, an action that was later labeled a hate crime by the Los Angeles Police Department.¹ This overtly racialized form of protest was not a new concept in the neighborhood, rather it is reflective of the long-standing and racialized political traditions in the area. The politics of East Los Angeles, a historic site of Chicana/o/x activism, are deeply embedded in the symbolisms and racialized frameworks associated with Mexican American identity. Boyle Heights, which began as a multicultural community but has developed into a Latino enclave, is also the site of numerous political movements that are inherently a process of spatial contestation. By framing the galleries as a consequence of white gentrification, the unknown protestors were invoking the same racialized frames that were targeted at other outsiders such as realtors, students from nearby colleges, and even opera groups.² Earlier that year, the experimental opera, *Hopscotch*, was driven from the area after they tried to perform at local Hollenbeck Park. In this instance, the Director of the program was told by protestors that the park was for “Brown people” and that white people were not allowed.³

¹ Brittny Mejia, “LAPD Investigating Boyle Heights Vandalism as Possible Hate Crimes Sparked by Gentrification Fight,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 2016; Cindy Chang, “Boyle Heights Activists Protest Art Galleries, Gentrification,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 5, 2016; Rory Carroll, “‘Anti-White’ Graffiti in Gentrifying LA Neighborhood Sparks Hate Crime Debate,” *The Guardian*, November 4, 2016, sec. US news.

² Rory Carroll, “‘Hope Everyone Pukes on Your Artisanal Treats’: Fighting Gentrification, LA-Style,” *The Guardian*, April 19, 2016, sec. US news.

³ *Ibid.*

Here again was another example of how political protest in the community had adopted a distinctly racialized discourse. Notably, these actions occurred during a period of increasingly racialized political rhetoric. In 2015, the same year the Nicodim Gallery opened in Boyle Heights, Donald Trump announced his candidacy in a speech that used xenophobic rhetoric in reference to Mexican immigrants, whom he described as criminals and rapists.

Although anti-Mexican sentiment was not a new political concept, this speech was a stark reminder of the marginalized position of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, who comprise more than 50% of the Latino population in the U.S. In addition to finding support among white Americans with his statements, Trump also garnered support from Latino Republicans across the country who shared his perceptions on immigration and border security among other issues. The xenophobic language in his announcement speech was directly targeting Latinos, however this did not stop members of the group from mobilizing *for* Trump, particularly in places like Florida where Cuban American conservatism is common. In addition, Trump found support among an unlikely group: Mexican Americans. In Zapata County, located in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, Trump became the first Republican to win the majority-minority community (95% Latino) in 100 years and this outcome was repeated in various Texas communities that traditionally leaned Democrat.⁴ Notably, the xenophobic rhetoric was not a deterrent for some Latino voters. On the contrary, a 2020 study of the 2016 election found that “denial of racism” was the strongest predictor of support for Trump among Latinos and more than quadrupled the probability they would cast their vote for Trump, regardless of generational,

⁴ Jack Herrera, “Trump Didn’t Win the Latino Vote in Texas. He Won the Tejano Vote.,” POLITICO, November 17, 2020.

national or religious differences.⁵ This suggests that among some Latinos, the rhetoric adopted by Trump in reference to Mexican immigrants was not being perceived as a racial attack. In communities like Boyle Heights, race and racialization are upfront and center as fundamental aspects of political behavior. In other parts of the country, these same concepts were being swept under the table as unimportant. Although other racial threats have previously mobilized the group, such as the 2006 Immigration Rallies, the xenophobic language used by Trump did not have the same effect and he performed better among Latinos than previous Republican presidential candidates such as Mitt Romney.⁶ This disconnect between the overtly racialized political discourse of the 2016 Election cycle, and the seemingly neutral way it was consumed by some Latinos, speaks directly to the gaps between our understanding of Latino identity as a racialized construct and the *practice* of Latino identity as a lived experience.

In particular, there is a significant dissonance between the construction of Latino as a marginalized racial group and the facets of racialized political solidarity that we often apply to non-white groups in the U.S. For example, Black Americans often learn about race and discrimination through engagement with spaces that privilege whiteness. Consequently, the political practices forged by the group are inherently rooted to these processes and experiences, such as the fight for desegregation. Moreover, they are linked to specific processes of racial identity formation where racial ascription is rooted to the corporeal, such as color of skin.⁷ In contrast, some Latinos are often able to navigate these same spaces with relative ease, and

⁵ Rudy Alamillo, “HISPANICS PARA TRUMP?: Denial of Racism and Hispanic Support for Trump,” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 16, no. 2 (ed 2019): 457–87.

⁶ Álvaro J. Corral and David L. Leal, “Latinos Por Trump? Latinos and the 2016 Presidential Election,” *Social Science Quarterly* 101, no. 3 (2020): 1115–31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12787>.

⁷ There are numerous studies that speak to this, for example see: Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

racialization is sometimes a question of cultural rather than corporeal difference. This distinction is important because it raises questions about *how* political practices are being forged by the group in the absence of a clearly identifiable shared experience of racialization. If we invoke a concept like Latino Politics, we are implicitly acknowledging some degree of homogeneity rooted to a shared racialized identity. However, we do not have a clear picture of how that sense of collectivity emerges, particularly when there are varying conceptualizations of racial identity within the group. The sociohistorical conditions that shaped, and continue to shape, the group are unique and have their own associated political practices. This suggests that there are distinct processes of racialization among Latinos that are not well understood. Moreover, it suggests that the conceptual linkages between racialization and racialized political solidarity have significant gaps that need to be filled. If Latinos can simply opt-out of racialization, then what motivates them to participate in group politics? If we view Latino identity as a political *practice*, as suggested by some scholars, then why are some Latinos participating in this practice while others are not?⁸ Although there are significant lessons that we can draw from the African American community, particularly the relationship between the sociohistorical conditions that shaped the group and their political behaviors, Latinos have their own unique history and set of racialization processes that need to be accounted for in order for us to understand why some Latinos set aside racialization, while others do not. The racial threats implied by Trump did have a mobilizing effect on some Latinos.⁹ However, they also had the opposite effect on other group members. Similarly, the racialized protests in Boyle Heights are supported by some residents and opposed

⁸ Cristina Beltran, *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity*, 1 edition, vol. v (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁹ Angela Gutierrez et al., “Somos Más: How Racial Threat and Anger Mobilized Latino Voters in the Trump Era,” *Political Research Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (December 1, 2019): 960–75.

by others. This fragmentation is a significant barrier for political solidarity and speaks directly to the influence of racialization on group politics.

In order for Latinos to forge a sense of political obligation with other group members they have to set aside national, ethnic, racial, generational, and place-based differences among others. More importantly, they have to develop an understanding about racialization that is *fundamental* to group-based politics in the U.S.¹⁰ Whether we are speaking to African American Politics, Asian American Politics, or Latino Politics, we are invoking a racialized concept of political action. Racialization overall is a political project and Latinos are a racialized group that is constructed as the non-white other, which places them at a systemic disadvantage. By extension, Latino politics are a racialized form of politics, regardless of whether or not we are speaking about Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, or any other ethnic group that falls into the category of Latino. Although Latinos do not share the same processes of racialization that forged political obligations among African Americans, they do have to navigate the same system of racialization, albeit on different terms. While many African Americans engage in group-based politics specifically because of the *experience* of racialization, many Latinos have to *learn* about racialization in order to forge any sense of racialized political solidarity. Moreover, they also have to negotiate various contesting forms of identification that are unique to the group. As a multiracial, multiethnic, multigenerational construct, the enactment of a *political* Latino identity is invariably the outcome of various different systems of symbolic exchange. This system of political socialization is complex and is also shaped by spatial factors, both abstract and concrete. How do Latinos who navigate white space with ease develop a sense of political obligation with group members who do not share that privilege? How can a diasporic

¹⁰ Juliet Hooker, *Race and the Politics of Solidarity*, 1st edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

group that is distributed across diverse spaces like the enclave, the border and the new destination build a common political vision given their fragmented networks? These differences produce a sense of distance between group members that needs to be reconciled in order for political solidarity to emerge. This dissertation argues that this distance can be minimized *discursively* through intersubjective exchange with racialized networks. These networks are inherently the outcome of *spatial* processes that are rooted in the sociohistorical conditions that have shaped racialized groups in the U.S. over time.

Theoretical Framework

The following chapter explains the frameworks that are engaged and problematized in this study as well as the methodological approach that was implemented to explain political solidarity among Latinos in the United States: racialized habitus.¹¹ Conceptually, habitus is defined as a mediating structure that shapes dispositions at the individual level.¹² Within a political context, mediating structures are the systems that we use to make sense of our relationship with the public sphere and they function as guides for explaining our individual position and relation with others.¹³ Mediating frames are often implemented in sociological

¹¹ Racialized Habitus is an understudied concept in political science although it has been implemented in various sociological studies such as: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Carla Goar, and David G. Embrick, “When Whites Flock Together: The Social Psychology of White Habitus,” *Critical Sociology* 32, no. 2–3 (2006): 229–53; Samuel L. Perry, “Racial Habitus, Moral Conflict, and White Moral Hegemony Within Interracial Evangelical Organizations,” *Qualitative Sociology* 35, no. 1 (March 1, 2012): 89–108; Dan Cui, “Capital, Distinction, and Racialized Habitus: Immigrant Youth in the Educational Field,” *Journal of Youth Studies* 18, no. 9 (October 21, 2015): 1154–69; Dan Cui and Frank Worrell, “Media, Symbolic Violence and Racialized Habitus: Voices from Chinese Canadian Youth,” *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie* 44, no. 3 (2019): 233–56.

¹² Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Reprint edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Loïc Wacquant, “A Concise Genealogy and Anatomy of Habitus:,” *The Sociological Review*, February 1, 2016; Pierre Bourdieu, *Habitus and Field: General Sociology, Volume 2 (1982-1983)* (Wiley, 2020).

¹³ Peter L. Berger, “In Praise of Particularity: The Concept of Mediating Structures,” *The Review of Politics* 38, no. 3 (1976): 399–410.

studies related to race and are not as common in political science.¹⁴ In this study, I am engaging with the concept of racialization as the mediating structure between identity and political solidarity among Latinos. Specifically, I argue that Latinos have to coordinate the numerous identity frameworks that shape the group via *intersubjective exchange* with racialized group networks in order to forge the racialized form of political solidarity that is common in the U.S. To illustrate how this process functions, this study adapts Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus to explain how the intersection of space, place and racialization produces contextually-bound processes of symbolic exchange that are critical for forging political solidarity among Latinos.¹⁵ In particular, I problematize the relationship between the foundations of Latino identity and the contextual factors that complicate political outcomes like political solidarity, arguing that racialized habitus functions as a necessary mediating structure between group identity and the political sphere.¹⁶ Given the dynamic nature of the group, the possibility for a shared experience among Latinos is small. As a result, there has to be a set of conditions that make political solidarity possible in the face of substantial group fragmentation.

¹⁴ Bruce Blaine and Jennifer Crocker, "Religiousness, Race, and Psychological Well-Being: Exploring Social Psychological Mediators," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21, no. 10 (October 1, 1995): 1031–41; C. Cybele Raver, Elizabeth T. Gershoff, and J. Lawrence Aber, "Testing Equivalence of Mediating Models of Income, Parenting, and School Readiness for White, Black, and Hispanic Children in a National Sample," *Child Development* 78, no. 1 (2007): 96–115; Robert M. Sellers et al., "Racial Identity, Racial Discrimination, Perceived Stress, and Psychological Distress among African American Young Adults," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44, no. 3 (2003): 302–17; Howard C. Stevenson and Edith G. Arrington, "Racial/Ethnic Socialization Mediates Perceived Racism and the Racial Identity of African American Adolescents.," *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 15, no. 2 (April 2009): 125–36; Stevie C. Y. Yap, Isis H. Settles, and Jennifer S. Pratt-Hyatt, "Mediators of the Relationship Between Racial Identity and Life Satisfaction in a Community Sample of African American Women and Men," *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 17, no. 1 (January 2011): 89–97; Maria J. Elias et al., "Cultural Socialization and Ethnic-Racial Identity Mediated by Positive and Negative Conversations about Race: Exploring Differences among Asian American, African American, Latinx, Multiracial, and White Students," *Identity* 22, no. 4 (October 2, 2022): 282–97.

¹⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Reprint edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

¹⁶ Other scholars have also problematized identity, for example see: Jorge J. E. Gracia, ed., *Race or Ethnicity?: On Black and Latino Identity*, 1 edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); Cristina Beltran, *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity*, 1 edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Space, Race and Intersubjective Exchange

In this section I will discuss how I define racialized habitus and how it is implemented in this study. Additionally, I will discuss why habitus is a useful framework for explaining how racialized political solidarity is forged in the U.S. One of the more prominent works that incorporates race and habitus is Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism & Racial Inequality in Contemporary America*, which describes how racial segregation and isolation have produced a "white habitus" that sustains and re-produces racial attitudes among white Americans.¹⁷ The habitus in question is one that emerged specifically from racial isolation and produced a system of white networks that sustained and validated group views and guided group actions. Using survey data and in-depth interviews with college students, Bonilla-Silva explained how whites reproduced their political and racial values through interactions with other whites. These interactions were crucial for reproducing the colorblind racism that hindered political progress for racialized groups, particularly Black Americans.¹⁸ As a mediating structure, white habitus cultivated a non-racial view of the political order, and individuals who engaged with white habitus were more likely to hold this non-racial sense of identity and obligation. This habitus was composed of the various familial, social, and community networks that had been produced over time due to racial isolation. Notably, this outcome is inherently a *spatial* product. White habitus emerges directly through *intersubjective exchange with white networks*, a spatial product. These networks emerged as a result of policies that produced isolated and segregated communities, yet another spatial product. Space is both the outcome and the mechanism that

¹⁷ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, 3 edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009).

¹⁸ Bonilla-Silva defined colorblind racism as an ideology that framed racial inequality as the outcome of non-racial factors and centered disparities on the perceived cultural limitations of Black Americans.

produces the symbolic linkages between the individual and the group in a racialized context. Among Latinos, this spatial negotiation is not well understood. Arguably, the idea of a Latino habitus would have to encapsulate the coordination of multiple group networks rooted to nationality and generation, as well as the racialized networks that inform on group status. Additionally, the degree to which spatial policies have influenced the production of racialized group networks also needs to be addressed. The key issue to draw from Bonilla-Silva's study is the understanding that habitus functions as the mediating structure between the individual and collective political practice. These collective political ideologies emerge specifically from intersubjective exchange with other agents and networks that share that habitus.¹⁹ Networks, a spatially produced system of meaning and dissemination, function as a sort of political solidarity maintenance system by informing on group status and transmitting and sustaining the symbols associated with a racial identity and racialized political solidarity.

This relationship between race, space, and collective political practice is where this study begins. The racialization of space in the U.S. context has produced geographies of difference with their own associated networks and political practices.²⁰ This spatiality functions as a process of symbolic production. For example, the white habitus described by Bonilla-Silva is a direct consequence of the racially restrictive policies that created segregated white spaces. By extension, the political practices we associate with Black Americans are often a contestation of that same white space. For example, the desegregation of physical spaces since the 1950s, or the application of Affirmative Action policies to reduce race-based disparities in higher education,

¹⁹ Wendy Bottero, "Intersubjectivity and Bourdieusian Approaches to 'Identity,'" *Cultural Sociology* 4, no. 1 (2010): 3–22. Wendy Bottero and Nick Crossley, "Worlds, Fields and Networks: Becker, Bourdieu and the Structures of Social Relations," ed. Marco Santoro, *Cultural Sociology* 5, no. 1 (March 2011): 99–119.

²⁰ George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).

which is a historically white space. Although Latinos have faced similar conditions, these vary greatly from place to place and group to group. The outcome is a patchwork quilt of identities and experiences that are subsumed under a panethnic label. This includes nationality and ethnicity, but also other forms of identification, such as Chicana/o/x and Boricua, or first-generation and undocumented immigrant. Given that spatial processes have directly influenced political practices among other racialized groups, Latinos have undoubtedly been influenced by these same processes. Since many Latinos *learn* about racialization and have the ability to opt-out of racialized frameworks, these processes need closer attention in order for us to identify how political solidarity is possible within such a fragmented group with so many diverse experiences.

Racialized Habitus Defined

Before moving on to the conceptual foundations for this study, I will briefly discuss how racialized habitus is defined and its relationship with racialized political solidarity. I define racialized habitus as a mediating structure that reinforces a racialized view of identity that is sustained through intersubjective exchange with racialized networks and cultivates a sense of political obligation among group members. A racialized view of identity is one where the individual can relate their own subjective experience to the larger systems of racial marginalization that produce disparities in the U.S. My central argument is that the various forms of identity that complicate the concept of Latino political solidarity, such as nationality and citizenship, can be resolved through symbolic exchange with others that validate a sense of shared racialization, regardless of cultural or ethnic differences. The concept of political solidarity in the U.S. itself cannot be detached from the racialized social injustices that motivate

political action in the first place.²¹ Thus, whether or not a Latino is more likely to prioritize their national identity is a moot point if they view that identity within a racialized framework. If a Latino views their identity as part of a larger marginalized system, then they will be more likely to see how others, despite their differences, share that position on the racial hierarchy. The concept of Latino political solidarity can only make sense within a framework where diverse points of view have been negotiated and differences have been set aside. Instead of framing Latino political solidarity as a reflexive aspect of identity, as group consciousness frameworks imply, we should reconceptualize solidarity as a discursive outcome that emerges via *intersubjective exchange* with *racialized* networks. These networks are produced and reproduced *spatially*. I argue that this engagement is a critical facet for building the type of psychological attachments that are necessary in order to produce a sense of obligation with others. Among Latinos, who do not experience racialization in the same way, the symbolic linkages with others have to be learned before they can be mobilized. Latinos have to “see” beyond their differences in order to embrace a sense of political obligation with other group members.²² These barriers that fragment the group have to be resolved *before* we can even begin to delineate the boundaries of group identity or a system of group consciousness.

Foundations of Habitus

For Bourdieu, the study of social groups as aggregates obscured the processes that originally produced the groups.²³ Social groups, along with their associated symbolism, did not

²¹ This will be discussed further in Chapter 2 but this study is rooted to the argument that racialized political solidarity is a necessity in the U.S. context, for more see: Juliet Hooker, *Race and the Politics of Solidarity*, 1st edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²² Hooker, *Race and the Politics of Solidarity*, 19.

²³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Habitus and Field: General Sociology, Volume 2 (1982-1983)* (Wiley, 2020), 30.

merely come into being, rather they were forged and imbued with meaning over time. Moreover, individual members of these social groups did not automatically inherit all of the sedimented knowledge that each group possessed. A clear example here is African American identity, which is a racialized ethnicity with deeply embedded symbolisms that are intergenerationally sustained by group networks. Identity and social groups are a direct product of socialization processes of acquisition and incorporation.²⁴ These outcomes are not static, rather they are consistently being reformed in relation to social structures, or objective reality. Similar to Latino identity, there is no static understanding of Black identity, which is also a panethnic racial construct.²⁵ For Bourdieu, this presented a dilemma for social scientists focused on identity or social groups because the methodologies they employed could not capture how individuals repeatedly confront their social world and remake their identities accordingly. Thus, he saw social groups as existing on two axes. First, social groups and identities were shaped according to objective macro-level structures such as class or race. Second, they were being consistently transformed by subjective experiences at the micro-level. Bourdieu argued that these two processes could not be easily accounted for and required a linkage between the two that helped the individual make sense of themselves in relation to their social reality. This linkage is *habitus*, or rather a set of sedimented dispositions that motivate a person to act, or not act, according to their own positionality in the social sphere, as well as the knowledge they have accumulated. As he explains:

It is obvious that engaging in social science - whether history, sociology, psychology or the like - is to undertake a philosophy of history and action, a philosophy able to explain or predict the principles that generate the function of social agents. What is it that makes social agents act rather than do nothing? This is a very important question because it is not self-evident. Why do social agents act in some spaces but not others? Why does

²⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Habitus and Field: General Sociology*, 122.

²⁵ Jorge J. E. Gracia, ed., *Race or Ethnicity?: On Black and Latino Identity*, 1 edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).

something that moves agents to act in a determined space leave other social agents indifferent?.....It is here that the notion of habitus becomes crucial (Bourdieu, 67, 1982).

For Bourdieu, the ability to predict or explain actions relied heavily on our ability to decipher the habitus of any given space. The motivation to act was not simply about choice, rather it is a disposition that is cultivated, disseminated and sustained. Although Bourdieu dedicated a significant amount of his scholarly attention to the relationship between class and habitus, his basic premises are also useful for explaining how a person might navigate diverse systems of identification to produce a collective practice. The cultivation of political solidarity among Latinos, which is essentially a collective practice, also requires the coordination of multiple systems of sedimented knowledge such as race, class, citizenship, and nationality. Consequently, Latinos are a good case study for examining how spatiality and intersubjective exchange influences the processes associated with racialized political solidarity.

Conceptually, habitus is an amorphous framework with varying methodological approaches.²⁶ For the purposes of this study, I am adapting certain aspects from Bourdieu's approach, specifically the relational aspects of space and the influence of spatiality on producing collective outcomes. In addition, I am incorporating sociologist Wendy Bottero's *intersubjective* approach for understanding how habitus can reveal the processes and conditions that produce collective political practice. Bottero suggests that networks are a critical facet for understanding habitus because they reveal the ways that agents negotiate and coordinate the "calls to order" or sense of obligation that emerges among groups.²⁷ Specifically, she argues that intersubjective exchange via group networks is a necessary facet of collective practice because individuals have

²⁶ Mark Murphy and Cristina Costa, eds., *Bourdieu, Habitus and Social Research: The Art of Application* (Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

²⁷ Wendy Bottero, "Intersubjectivity and Bourdieusian Approaches to 'Identity,'" *Cultural Sociology* 4, no. 1 (2010): 3–22.

to navigate various forms of identification on a regular basis.²⁸ Bourdieu provides a general framework for how habitus functions in relation to social space, and Bottero suggests a specific approach for understanding how individuals interact with that same habitus to create a collective practice. If we return to the Bonilla-Silva study, we can see the facets of this approach in his study of white space, as well as his focus on discourse and symbolic exchange via white networks. The relationship between networks, social structures and political participation is significant, particularly among racialized groups.²⁹ Among Latinos, various studies have also found that networks have a substantial impact on political behaviors.³⁰ In a spatial framework, networks are blueprints for understanding how intersubjective exchange functions in any given social space and they are critical for producing and sustaining a racialized form of habitus. This relationship is also a significant aspect of the group consciousness measures that are often

²⁸ Bottero argues that other frames of identity such as gender and class can also be mobilized, thus any collective practice within a particular group implies that the individual has coordinated with others within the habitus to establish accountability, as she explains: “a community of shared dispositions cannot be assumed..the degree of network heterogeneity that surrounds agents will affect the manner in which any “sense” of how to be behave must be negotiated and operationalized.” See: Bottero, “Intersubjectivity and Bourdieusian Approaches to ‘Identity’”, 18.

²⁹ For more see: Peter M. Blau, “A Macrosociological Theory of Social Structure,” *American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 1 (1977): 26–54; Florence Passy, “Socialization, Connection, and the Structure/Agency Gap: A Specification of the Impact of Networks on Participation in Social Movements,” *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (2001): 173–92; Scott D. McClurg, “Social Networks and Political Participation: The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation,” *Political Research Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (2003): 449–64; Michael T. Heaney and Scott D. McClurg, “Social Networks and American Politics: Introduction to the Special Issue,” *American Politics Research* 37, no. 5 (September 2009): 727–41; Jan E. Leighley and Tetsuya Matsubayashi, “The Implications of Class, Race, and Ethnicity for Political Networks,” *American Politics Research* 37, no. 5 (September 2009): 824–55; Ellen Quintelier, Dietlind Stolle, and Allison Harell, “Politics in Peer Groups: Exploring the Causal Relationship between Network Diversity and Political Participation,” *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (December 2012): 868–81.

³⁰ Natasha Hritzuk and David K. Park, “The Question of Latino Participation: From an SES to a Social Structural Explanation,” *Social Science Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2000): 151–66; Antonio Rodriguez and Stella M. Rouse, “Look Who’s Talking Now! Solidarity, Social Networks and Latino Political Participation,” in *University of Maryland American Politics Workshop*, 2012; Angela X. Ocampo, “The Wielding Influence of Political Networks: Representation in Majority-Latino Districts,” *Political Research Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2018): 184–98; Sophia Jordán Wallace and Chris Zepeda-Millán, “Do Latinos Still Support Immigrant Rights Activism? Examining Latino Attitudes a Decade after the 2006 Protest Wave,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 4 (March 11, 2020): 770–90;

implemented in relation with racialized groups. If we reframe the concept of group consciousness within a Bourdieusian approach, then we could argue that habitus is the linkage between the subjective experience of group consciousness and the objective practice of political solidarity. As I will explain in more detail later on, the concept of linked-fate, a group consciousness measure, rests largely on the symbolic weight associated with Black identity and is its own type of habitus. However, like the many scholars who have stressed the *contextual* limitations of group consciousness approaches, Bourdieu also argues that there is no singular habitus, rather various forms that emerge in response to particular sociohistorical conditions. The outcomes associated with one type of habitus cannot be generalized and do not apply to all groups equally. Similarly, the limitations of group consciousness frameworks emerge specifically when we try to apply measures like linked-fate to groups who do not have the historical and symbolic foundations that produced that outcome in the first place. This contextual focus is the specific reason a habitus-derived framework can be useful in relation to Latino political solidarity. Similar to African American identity, Latino is also a construct with deeply embedded symbolisms. However, there is extensive fragmentation that has to be resolved for any sort of solidarity to emerge. I chose to focus specifically on how spatial context can influence the processes that shape racialized solidarity because racialization is inherently a spatial process, and Latinos are an inherently racialized group, regardless of whether or not any individual Latino believes in racism or not.

Why Habitus?

Habitus is fundamentally a *spatial* framework, and spatiality is a constitutive facet of our political reality. For example, racial isolation and segregation produced racialized spaces and cultivated norms and ideologies for the agents that inhabited those particular spaces. In the U.S.

race and space are co-constitutive and mutually reinforce racialization and racial disparities.³¹ If we return to the concept of white habitus, we see how agents within the field, or rather white Americans in their racially segregated and isolated spaces, navigate their own sense of identity in relation with others. The privilege of whiteness, which produced racially demarcated spaces in the first place, is reinscribed through symbolic exchange with white habitus. Among marginalized groups, this spatial demarcation simultaneously produced the counterspaces that make political solidarity possible.³² One prominent example of this theory in practice is the relationship between the Black Church and African American political solidarity.³³ The concept of the Black Church can only exist within a framework where space is raced. Racial segregation produced Black spaces, as well as segregated counterspaces of political action, and simultaneously created a need for group members to coalesce. Over time, the relationship between the spiritual and the political became intertwined and manifested as collective political practices, such as Souls to the Polls.³⁴ The spatial roots of these outcomes are generally not analyzed because the impact of racial segregation and isolation on African Americans is to some extent just plain common sense. Spatiality is so deeply sedimented in our understanding of racial group politics that it is often overlooked, even though it is a fundamental facet of African

³¹ George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).

³² See: Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, 1 edition (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1996); Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, Second Edition edition (London New York: Verso, 2011).

³³ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Duke University Press Books, 1990); Baodong Liu, Sharon D. Wright Austin, and Byron D'Andrá Orey, "Church Attendance, Social Capital, and Black Voting Participation*," *Social Science Quarterly* 90, no. 3 (2009): 576–92; Eric McDaniel, *Politics in the Pews: The Political Mobilization of Black Churches* (University of Michigan Press, 2009).

³⁴ Korie L. Edwards, "The Space Between: Exploring How Religious Leaders Reconcile Religion and Politics," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55, no. 2 (2016): 271–87.

American political solidarity.³⁵ Given the influence of African American political practices on our understanding of racial group politics, we should take some time to parse out the ways that spatiality impacts Latino political solidarity as well. Arguably, the spatial fragmentation that is inherent to Latinos overall presents a significant barrier for the type of political solidarity we associate with Black Americans. Black is an identity with sedimented systems of knowledge that were reproduced *spatially* and group political practices emerge from their navigation with racialized space. Alternately, Latino is an identity with multiple systems of sedimented knowledge that need to be negotiated. Spatially, Latinos also have the capacity to navigate white spaces without disruption, as exemplified by the various group members that adopt a white identity. In addition to nationality, generation, citizenship and proximity to whiteness, Latinos also have to contend with the long-term consequences of colonization. Thus, the navigation of racialized space and coordination of spatial networks is a key concept among group members that needs further development.

Latinos and Racialized Space

It is not my intention to fully incorporate colonization as a conceptual framework for analysis, but it is an important aspect that should be addressed before I proceed with explaining why habitus is particularly relevant for this group. Latinos negotiate dual-processes of racial formation that emerge from both the narrow Black/white binary that dictates racial norms in the U.S., as well as the more flexible, albeit similarly anti-Black and anti-Indigenous, categorizations that are produced in Latin America. Unlike the concept of Black identity, which we can trace through generations of sedimented knowledge and processes of racial formation that have

³⁵ There are dozens of examples of the spatial roots of African American politics, contemporary examples include desegregation, the fight against redlining and racially restrictive covenants, busing, and Affirmative Action among others. For more see: Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, Reprint edition (New York London: Norton, 2018).

inscribed race on the body, Latino identity has tenuous roots. Conceptually, we can identify various points of inception for the construction of Latino identity, ranging from the colonization of the Americas, to the struggles for liberation from Spanish rule in the 19th century.³⁶ However, in the U.S., our concept of what Latino means is inextricably linked to the construction of Mexican American identity.³⁷ Arguably, this process is one that varied significantly from place to place, thus the norms associated with racialized spaces were substantially different for groups across the Southwest. For example, Texas, a slave state, brutally suppressed racial difference through legal systems of violence and racial control.³⁸ Lynchings of Mexican Americans, which became a common practice in the post-1848 period, occurred with greater frequency in Texas (282) and California (188) than New Mexico (49) or Arizona (59).³⁹ In New Mexico, Mexican Americans often leveraged their proximity to whiteness by participating in the suppression of Indigenous groups in order to make any social or economic progress.⁴⁰ This process included cultivating an identity that emphasized their Spanish ancestry, a practice which is still common in the state.⁴¹ Each region experienced their own systems of racial oppression which suggests

³⁶ Gracia, *Race or Ethnicity?*

³⁷ This argument is supported by Cristina Beltrán in *The Trouble With Unity*, as well as various Chicana/o scholars, for example see: Laura E. Gomez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: NYU Press, 2008); Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Laura E. Gómez, *Inventing Latinos: A New Story of American Racism* (New York: The New Press, 2020).

³⁸ There are numerous examples of this such as the racial violence inflicted by the Texas Rangers, for more see: Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* (Harvard University Press, 2018).

³⁹ William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, “The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 2 (2003): 411–38.

⁴⁰ Gomez, *Manifest Destinies*.

⁴¹ Casandra D. Salgado, “Mexican American Identity: Regional Differentiation in New Mexico,” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 6, no. 2 (April 1, 2020): 179–94.

that there are systems of sedimented knowledge that are regional, and inherently *Mexican American*, that are reproduced and impact identity formation in significant ways. More importantly, these processes are the foundational roots of Latino identity. The initial practices of racialization imposed on Mexican Americans became a blueprint for the racialization of other similar groups categorized under the Latino umbrella, regardless of ethnicity. Given that sociohistorical conditions produced practices of racialization that manifested in diverse ways across Latino spaces, these spaces also developed their own networks, symbolisms and political obligations.

This spatial fragmentation will be discussed further in Chapter 2 but I want to stress that, conceptually, this fragmentation is one of the more substantial barriers for producing the type of political solidarity we associate with racialized groups. The various spaces that Latinos inhabit, such as the enclave, the border, or the new destination, have their own associated norms, networks, and political practices. When we place this spatial fragmentation in conversation with racialized habitus, we have to take a critical look at the space in question before we can assess how the associated networks cultivate or sustain a sense of obligation with others. Racialization cultivates a sense of marginalization and is a necessary facet of forging a sense of obligation and accountability with other racialized groups in the U.S. Given that Latino spaces are potentially cultivating networks in contestation with one another, spatiality is an important facet of examining the conditions that make solidarity possible for the group. Before moving on to the final section I want to review the key concepts that have been discussed and their relationship with the project overall. The main point of the first section was to highlight the salience of race as a mediating construct for individuals who are negotiating their position in the political sphere. In the next section, I briefly discussed how spatiality sustains and re-produces the practices we

associate with racialized politics. In particular, I highlighted how racialized space is sedimented in the field of U.S. politics and influences our intersubjective exchange with others. This exchange is critical for producing the sense of obligation and accountability that emerges among racialized groups. Overall, I argue that racialized political solidarity is the outcome of sedimented spatial processes that are consistently re-inscribed via intersubjective exchange with racialized networks. This process is particularly important for Latinos who negotiate dual-systems of racialization and spatial fragmentation. One way of understanding how all of these conflicting frameworks can be resolved is through an analysis of habitus. Theoretically, habitus minimizes social distances. Racialized habitus in particular not only reduces social distances but also cultivates a racialized sense of obligation that is inherently political.

This argument requires that I take specific positions on the nature of race, identity and political solidarity. First, similar to other scholars I argue that race is one of the more significant factors that influences our navigation of the political sphere. In addition, I argue that identity should only be assessed through a contextualist lens and we should not presume any psychological attachment based on the outcomes of different groups. The contributions of African American Studies are critical for understanding how race impacts political behaviors, however, these outcomes are not generalizable. Measures like linked-fate are a reflection of how African Americans have mediated their relationship with the political sphere, but these measures are not designed as a catch-all for racialized group politics. Second, I argue that the roots of political solidarity in the U.S. emerge via the interaction of race and space. Consequently, it is difficult to make sense of political solidarity without a critical understanding of how spatiality hinders or facilitates this outcome. Finally, I am setting aside the concept of Latino as a static identity. Instead, I suggest that we think of Latino political solidarity as a mobilized disposition

that was cultivated via intersubjective exchange with racialized habitus. The negotiation of nationality, generation, citizenship, regionalism, racialization, sedimented knowledge and the various other factors that shape Latino “identity” is a practice with varying outcomes. There is no singular form of Latino politics and the construction of a Latino “group” is currently in progress and should not be presumed.

Research Design

To explain how habitus functions in relation to Latinos, I posed these research questions:

1) How does racialized habitus cultivate and sustain a sense of obligation among Latinos in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles? 2) How does racialized habitus cultivate and sustain a sense of racialization among Latinos in Boyle Heights, Angeles? and 3) Do Latinos in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles with a racialized sense of identity feel a sense of political obligation with other Latinos outside of their community? As explained earlier, my argument is that racialized habitus is the outcome of specific sociohistorical conditions and functions as a mediating structure between the individual and the political sphere. This process cultivates a sense of political obligation that is sustained by racialized networks that are similarly rooted to sociohistorical conditions. In order to illustrate how this process functions among Latinos, I chose the community of Boyle Heights given the extensive documentation available on the political activism in the neighborhood, as well as the large population of Latinos (~93%).⁴² Given that there is a sustained practice of political activism among Latinos in Boyle Heights that dates back more than 50 years, I believe this community is the most likely place for a dense system of racialized networks to exist. In addition, the greater Los Angeles area is also a historically-Latino community where broader systems of symbolic production have been in place for hundreds of years. In terms of *spatiality*,

⁴² Los Angeles Department of City Planning - Boyle Heights Demographic Profile, 2021.

Boyle Heights is both a physical site of racialization resulting from exclusionary policies, as well as a *discursive* space where racialized identities are negotiated. Latinos who live in Boyle Heights are consistently navigating an inherently racialized community with a strong commitment to political activism, thus, this site is a strong case study for how racialized habitus functions.

In order to answer my research questions I adopted specific aspects of habitus as my theoretical framework, *spatiality* and *intersubjective exchange*, and incorporated *racialization* as a third node for analysis. This study is a two-pronged design. If we return to the research questions posed above, each of them presumes that racialized habitus is already a concept in play in this community. Notably, there are various forms of habitus: class-based, gendered, racialized, etc. However, my argument is that there is an inherently *racialized* form of habitus, or a set of sedimented dispositions, that are symbolically linked to the practice of racialized political solidarity among Latinos in this community. In the first part of this study, I explain how that habitus was cultivated. Specifically, I examine how race and space intersected in this community to produce systemic disparities that directly impacted the Latino residents. To address this part of the study, I used archival data, secondary sources, and oral histories to reconstruct a sociohistorical narrative that traces the production of racialized group networks in the community. In the second part of the study, I conducted interviews with local residents and activists to examine how they negotiate their political obligations *discursively* through interactions with these racialized networks. As a spatial framework, studies of habitus often focus on the ways that sedimented knowledge and symbolic associations are cultivated, disseminated and sustained via group networks.⁴³ Similarly, this study examines how familial,

⁴³ Mark Murphy and Cristina Costa, eds., *Bourdieu, Habitus and Social Research: The Art of Application* (Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

social and community networks sustain or hinder a sense of racialized political solidarity. Using the diachronic approach to studying habitus, I engage with historical methods to trace the development of racialized narratives in the community that are explicitly linked to Latino identity.⁴⁴ Given that the concept of racialized habitus is relatively new, I also adopted aspects of case study process-tracing methodologies and adapted them to my study. Specifically, I trace how processes of racialization are implemented *spatially* over time. My underlying argument is that racialized political solidarity is an outcome that cannot be detached from the sociohistorical conditions that *necessitate* collective political action. For Latinos, awareness of racialization might emerge through an experience with racism, but it still needs to be validated, sustained and *politicized* by group networks. The racialization of space is a process, and the cultivation of racialized political networks is a process. Similarly, the cultivation of political obligations via intersubjective exchange with these networks is a process. Using the concept of habitus, this dissertation explains how these processes function in this particular racialized space.

Significance of the Research

One of the key reasons I chose to pursue this study is the disconnect between some of the aspects of critical race theory that have filtered into Political Science, which are understandably rooted to the African American experience, and the way these frameworks have influenced our approach to the question of Latino political solidarity. Blackness and Latinidad are not co-extensive. Although there are many ways that we can complicate Black identity, there is an overwhelming amount of empirical evidence that points to the significance of race as a mobilizing aspect for individual group members. Regardless of where a Black American lives,

⁴⁴ Loïc Wacquant, “*Homines in Extremis* : What Fighting Scholars Teach Us about Habitus,” *Body & Society* 20, no. 2 (June 2014): 3–17, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X13501348>.

they will be presented with the consequences of the *corporeal* racialization that has marked race on the body. During the Civil Rights Movement, there were particular political practices that emerged in the Jim Crow South that were not visible in the North, however, that does not imply that racism stopped at the Mason-Dixon line. On the contrary, the North had their own forms of marginalization that mimicked some of the patterns in the South. Moreover, in addition to the various ways that Black identity has been racialized and marginalized in the U.S., there are global patterns of race-making that have further marginalized members of the African diaspora.⁴⁵ In contrast, Latino marginalization is a homegrown problem that does not necessarily extend too far beyond the borders of the Americas. Moreover, there is a specific practice of *spatial* racialization that is uniquely American. The segregation of spaces, places, and people has manifested in diverse ways that have produced specific political practices. We cannot presume that these practices are a guaranteed outcome for all groups. This is particularly true for Latinos, whose multiracial foundations imply that group members can opt-out of racism, assimilate to a white identity, and reject racialization as a whole. Moreover, interrogating this relationship between spatiality and racialization is critical for a group that negotiates so many diverse spaces.

Given the fundamental relationship between racialization and political solidarity, we need to take a critical look at how those patterns have influenced Latinos, rather than relying on measures and theories that are rooted in other groups. What is Latino linked-fate in the absence of a shared sense of racial identity? There are so many ways to complicate those foundations that we are better served by seeking new theories and measures that are derived from the Latino experience. As mentioned earlier, spatiality shaped U.S. racialization, however, it is largely absent from the scholarly discourse on Latino racialized solidarity. Although this study is only

⁴⁵ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, 1 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

designed to analyze the process of racialization in one specific space, interrogating the relationship between racialized discourse and group networks is a necessary step toward forging a more comprehensive understanding of Latino group politics. Latinos live in diverse spaces where the density of racialized networks varies from place to place. If Latinos in a community like Boyle Heights are forging political solidarity by engaging with sedimented networks, then how are Latinos in new destinations accomplishing the same goal? Boyle Heights is a Latino community that is embedded in a larger Latino city where race, identity and politics have undergone various transformations. How do Latinos who are living in historically white spaces mediate their relationship with the political sphere in the absence of racialized networks that are necessary for mobilizing the group? If we take a critical look at the influence of space on racialization, then we can better address the barriers that limit the potential for political solidarity.

Study Limitations

As noted above, this study adopts a historical and process-tracing approach in order to explain how processes of racialization produce the sedimented dispositions, or habitus, that Latinos need to engage with in order to cultivate a sense of racialized political solidarity. In general, habitus research is not designed for large N studies. Although Bonilla-Silva's approach to white habitus engaged with various databases in order to support his hypothesis, the overarching argument in his work is colorblind racism, which he traced with survey data and interviews. Moreover, there is substantial scholarship on white identity that supports his approach. In contrast, this study is embarking in a largely untested arena and the purpose of this study is *theory development* and not theory testing. Given the contextual focus of Bourdieu's approach to habitus, I focus largely on illustrating how dispositions have been sedimented over

time, which requires a historical lens. In addition, I conducted a limited number of interviews with local residents and activists to further illustrate how racialized habitus functions in a contemporary setting. The purpose of the interviews is to detail the *process* of forging political solidarity. Although the number of interviews is smaller than Bonilla-Silva, it is consistent with the majority of habitus studies that reject the large N approach. Habitus was not designed to test a causal relationship and a small N study is the most appropriate approach. As I discuss in detail in Chapter 3, the question of replicability is important for certain positivist methodologies, but does not align with the aims of this study. In addition, this study has undergone various changes as a result of COVID-19. The pandemic displaced residents that I previously built a relationship with and also created ethical boundaries in terms of data collection. Seeking a large sample size would require a new process of building rapport within the community, which is understandably defensive given the vulnerable population, and would not improve the study in the long term. Again I must emphasize that I am trying to illustrate a process rather than test a theory through causal argumentation.

Dissertation Roadmap

In this section I will briefly explain how the rest of this dissertation is organized. In Chapter 2, I explain how the concepts of *spatiality*, *racialization* and *intersubjective exchange* are supported in the extant literature. Specifically, I focus on aspects of spatial theory, critical race theory, and studies of political solidarity to explain how the concept of racialized space emerges in scholarly work. In Chapter 3, I explain how these theoretical frameworks were applied in this study. This includes a discussion of the methodological choices I made when organizing this study, as well as the aspects of process-tracing that were implemented. Specifically, I explain how the concepts identified above (spatiality, racialization, intersubjective

exchange) were defined and analyzed, why Boyle Heights was chosen as a site for analysis, and what methods were used to analyze the narratives in the archival data, oral histories and interviews. In Chapter 4, I explain how sociohistorical conditions have shaped this space and how networks in the community became racialized over time. In addition, I explain how this racialization is disseminated *discursively* by diverse networks and how engagement with these networks can cultivate a sense of political obligation with other Latinos. This chapter contains the findings from the archival research that was conducted, as well as the data that was collected from the interviews and oral histories. In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings of the study, as well as the research questions I detailed earlier. This includes a discussion of where racialized habitus was a helpful framework, and where it still needs further development. In addition, I explain how further research is necessary for comparing the concept of racialized habitus across diverse spaces.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Overview

The following chapter details the bodies of literature that are implemented in this study. The first section describes the background research that initially motivated this research. Next, I review the genealogy of spatial theory as a framework for understanding political behaviors. Overall, spatial theory is vast and can be applied in diverse ways. However, the main purpose of this study is to understand the political implications of racialized space. The theorists that I engaged with are specifically focused on the relationship between the individual, social space and the political sphere. In particular, I focus on the contributions of geographer Edward Soja. In the first section, I discuss the relationship between space and racialization, as well as the key issues that need to be addressed in this study. This includes the processes of racialization that impact Latinos, as well as the overall systems of racialization that impact minorities as a whole. Next, I review the literature related to racialized political solidarity, as well as the relationship between Latino political solidarity and racialization. In this section I also highlight the relationship between solidarity and spatiality as a whole. Finally, I review the literature related to habitus and intersubjective exchange to explain how it links to the concepts that shape racialized political solidarity overall. This includes a discussion about the relationship between networks and political action which is central to this study. Each section is a building block for explaining how racialized space and political solidarity are inextricably linked, as well as the relationship between spatiality and political practice. In the last section of this chapter I discuss some of the critiques of habitus and how I address the gaps that have been identified by other scholars.

Background

Conceptually, Latino identity is a multiracial, panethnic construct that subsumes various nationalities into a homogenized category that is often operationalized as an explanatory variable for political action.⁴⁶ These studies are often influenced by frameworks rooted to the African American experience and presume psychological attachments that may or may not exist among Latinos due to the complex foundations of the group.⁴⁷ Concepts like group consciousness are not forged in a vacuum, rather they rely on particular sociohistorical conditions that produces a sense of political obligation among group members.⁴⁸ Notably, Latino group consciousness studies have varied outcomes and the measures often do not reflect the same level of statistical significance as they do with Black Americans.⁴⁹ Additionally, other forms of identity such as nationality, generation or immigration status also have a tendency to influence Latino political behaviors.⁵⁰ This study emerged specifically in response to this complicated relationship between

⁴⁶ There are a significant number of Latino group consciousness studies. Some of these include: Atiya Kai Stokes, "Latino Group Consciousness and Political Participation," *American Politics Research* 31, no. 4 (2003): 361–78; Gabriel R. Sanchez, "The Role of Group Consciousness in Political Participation Among Latinos in the United States," *American Politics Research* 34, no. 4 (July 2006): 427–50; Zulema Valdez, "Political Participation Among Latinos in the United States: The Effect of Group Identity and Consciousness*," *Social Science Quarterly* 92, no. 2 (2011): 466–82.

⁴⁷ For example, there is a significant body of literature that examines the relationship between racial identity and African American political behaviors, see: Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Michael C. Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1995).; Dennis Chong and Reuel Rogers, "Racial Solidarity and Political Participation," *Political Behavior* 27, no. 4 (December 1, 2005): 347–74.

⁴⁸ Arthur H. Miller et al., "Group Consciousness and Political Participation," *American Journal of Political Science* 25, no. 3 (1981): 494–511.

⁴⁹ In a multidimensional study that analyzes group commonality, collective action, and perceived discrimination, Sanchez and Vargas (2016) found that African Americans report higher levels of group consciousness across the board in comparison with Latinos.

⁵⁰ See: Michael Jones-Correa, *Between Two Nations: The Political Predicament of Latinos in New York City* (Cornell University Press, 1998); Adrian D. Pantoja, Ricardo Ramirez, and Gary M. Segura, "Citizens by Choice, Voters by Necessity: Patterns in Political Mobilization by Naturalized Latinos," *Political Research Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (December 1, 2001): 729–50; Lisa Martinez, "Flowers From the Same Soil," *American Behavioral Scientist* 52 (December 1, 2008): 557–79; Melinda S. Jackson, "Priming the Sleeping Giant: The Dynamics of Latino Political Identity and Vote Choice," *Political Psychology* 32, no. 4 (August 1, 2011): 691–716; Rodolfo Espino,

Latino identity and political solidarity. In particular, I was interested in learning more about how outcomes like linked-fate could be produced in a group with so many conflicting identities.⁵¹ Linked-fate was conceptualized within the field of African American politics and is deeply rooted to the sociohistorical conditions that shaped the group and produced a collective sense of obligation.⁵² As a group consciousness measure, the concept of linked-fate implies that there is a group identity, with a psychological attachment forged through shared struggle, that has been *politicized* and can be mobilized to produce a collective political outcome.⁵³ Additionally, the linked-fate measure is one that is inherently racial. Michael Dawson defines linked-fate as an output of a “black utility heuristic” that serves as a cognitive shortcut for individual utility. Among African Americans, their sense of collectivity is rooted specifically to the shared experiences of racial discrimination that have produced various disparities within the group. The logic of linked-fate is that regardless of how much an individual African American tries to

“Immigration Politicking and the Perceptions of Latino Voters in Arizona,” in *Latino Politics and Arizona’s Immigration Law SB 1070*, Immigrants and Minorities, Politics and Policy (Springer, New York, NY, 2013), 27–41; Jan Leighley and Jonathan Nagler, “Latino Electoral Participation: Variations on Demographics and Ethnicity,” *RSF*, 2016.

⁵¹ For example, see: Gabriel R. Sanchez and Natalie Masuoka, “Brown-Utility Heuristic? The Presence and Contributing Factors of Latino Linked Fate,” *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 32, no. 4 (2010): 519–31; Jon Hurwitz, Mark Peffley, and Jeffery Mondak, “Linked Fate and Outgroup Perceptions: Blacks, Latinos, and the US Criminal Justice System,” *Political Research Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2015): 505–20; Edward D. Vargas, Gabriel R. Sanchez, and Juan A. Valdez, “Immigration Policies and Group Identity: How Immigrant Laws Affect Linked Fate among U.S. Latino Populations,” *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 2, no. 01 (March 2017): 35–62; Todd C. Shaw, Kirk A. Foster, and Barbara Harris Combs, “Race and Poverty Matters: Black and Latino Linked Fate, Neighborhood Effects, and Political Participation,” *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 7, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 663–72; Gabriel Sanchez, Natalie Masuoka, and Brooke Abrams, “Revisiting the Brown-Utility Heuristic: A Comparison of Latino Linked Fate in 2006 and 2016,” *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 7, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 673–83.

⁵² The linked-fate measure is derived from: Michael C. Dawson, *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1995).

⁵³ See: Paula D. McClain et al., “Group Membership, Group Identity, and Group Consciousness: Measures of Racial Identity in American Politics?,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (June 2009): 471–85 or Gabriel R. Sanchez and Edward D. Vargas, “Taking a Closer Look at Group Identity: The Link between Theory and Measurement of Group Consciousness and Linked Fate,” *Political Research Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (March 1, 2016): 160–74.

progress, they are hindered by group barriers. Thus, the easiest way to achieve any personal goals is by aligning with the group to reduce those barriers for everyone as a whole. For Dawson, the conditions that produce a sense of shared destiny for African Americans are contextually-bound to the history of racialization and are not generalizable.⁵⁴ More importantly, the sense of linked-fate that emerges is one that has to be sustained by group networks⁵⁵. Fundamentally, the concept of linked-fate is one that implies a sense of obligation and accountability between group members that is sustained over time by group networks and is directly rooted in sociohistorical context. Arguably, linked fate is also the output of the mediating structure that facilitates the relationship between the individual and public sphere in the United States for Black Americans: race.

When we apply this approach to the study of Latino Politics, the conditions that shape political solidarity are diverse and require many conceptual leaps. Given the theoretical conditions that we associate with group consciousness, it is also possible that individuals could forge a psychological attachment to national identities. These identities could hypothetically produce a sense of obligation that is in direct contestation with perceived group priorities. An example of this conflict within the Latino community are the conservative politics in the Cuban American community, particularly among those who arrived after the Cuban Revolution in 1959 or via the Mariel Boatlift in 1980.⁵⁶ These members of the Latino community have produced

⁵⁴ In *Behind the Mule*, Dawson notes that the idea of a heuristic is technically possible for other groups besides African Americans but the conditions and outcomes would be different.

⁵⁵ Dawson states that in-group networks such as kinship networks, community networks, civil rights organizations and media outlets serve to validate and sustain a sense of racialization. Networks are an important facet of political solidarity in the African American community, for more on this relationship see: Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁵⁶ Benjamin G. Bishin and Casey A. Klofstad, "The Political Incorporation of Cuban Americans: Why Won't Little Havana Turn Blue?," *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (September 1, 2012): 586–99.

their own sense of political identity that is decidedly Republican and at odds with the majority of group voters who support the Democratic Party.⁵⁷ Returning again to the concept of habitus, we could argue that the mediating structure for these groups is their relationship with communism and anti-Castro exile ideology. The collective political practices associated with Cuban Americans in Florida, which are rooted in U.S. forms of conservatism, are cultivated as a direct response to the perceived leftist tendencies of the Democratic Party. If we are trying to conceptualize a political framework that encompasses the entire group, we have to make room for group members with the potential to develop completely conflicting political ideologies. This is a significant break from the conditions we associate with group consciousness. In addition to Cuban Americans, both Central Americans and Puerto Ricans also have their own sense of collective identity and set of political priorities.⁵⁸ Even within the larger Puerto Rican community there are significant differences between those born on the mainland and those who were raised on the island.⁵⁹ Moreover, the relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico is one that has cultivated various antagonisms which need to be resolved for a concept like Latino Politics to make sense.⁶⁰ The question of statehood, which is a long-standing political concern in Puerto Rico, would also be a political issue that needs to be resolved among group members. If we return again to the concept of habitus, the mediating structure that cultivates a sense of

⁵⁷ Leonie Huddy, Lilliana Mason, and S. Nechama Horwitz, "Political Identity Convergence: On Being Latino, Becoming a Democrat, and Getting Active," *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 2, no. 3 (2016): 205–28.

⁵⁸ Arturo Arias, "Central American- Americans: Invisibility, Power and Representation in the US Latino World," *Latino Studies* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2003): 168–87; Jorge Duany, "Nation, Migration, Identity: The Case of Puerto Ricans," *Latino Studies* 1, no. 3 (November 1, 2003): 424–44.

⁵⁹ Jorge Duany, "Nation on the Move: The Construction of Cultural Identities in Puerto Rico and the Diaspora," *American Ethnologist* 27, no. 1 (2000): 5–30.

⁶⁰ David A. Rezvani, "The Basis of Puerto Rico's Constitutional Status: Colony, Compact, or 'Federacy'?", *Political Science Quarterly* 122, no. 1 (2007): 115–40.

obligation and accountability among Puerto Ricans could be colonization. In order to argue that there is a sense of obligation and accountability within the group that is on par with group consciousness, we have to make room for ideologies that are in direct opposition and political priorities that do not impact everyone in the same way. The logic of group consciousness is that there is some degree of similarity in relation to experiences or identity. There are so many variations of the Latino experience that a shared understanding is difficult to trace.

This lack of shared struggle or shared experience is precisely where more gaps begin to emerge. Even if we choose to set aside the complexities associated with national identity, we still have various issues that complicate Latino political participation. There are diverse ways that Latinos are incorporated into the political sphere such as naturalization, perceived group threats, a sense of discrimination, co-ethnic candidates on the ballot, or engagement with community organizations among others.⁶¹ These diverse outcomes indicate that there is no singular process that produces and sustains a sense of obligation within the group. The multiracial, multiethnic and multigenerational foundations of the group preclude the possibility for shared experiences. Thus, the idea of system blame, which is central to studies of group consciousness and implies some shared understanding of marginalization, cannot emerge among Latinos as originally

⁶¹ For examples see: Louis DeSipio, "Making Citizens or Good Citizens? Naturalization as a Predictor of Organizational and Electoral Behavior among Latino Immigrants," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 18, no. 2 (May 1, 1996): 194–213; Natalie Masuoka, "Defining the Group: Latino Identity and Political Participation," *American Politics Research* 36, no. 1 (January 2008): 33–61; M. A. Barreto et al., "Mobilization, Participation, and Solidaridad: Latino Participation in the 2006 Immigration Protest Rallies," *Urban Affairs Review* 44, no. 5 (March 28, 2008): 736–64; Melissa R. Michelson, "Majority-Latino Districts and Latino Political Power," *Duke J. Const. L. & Pub. Pol'y* 5 (2010): 159; Corrine M. McConaughy et al., "A Latino on the Ballot: Explaining Coethnic Voting Among Latinos and the Response of White Americans," *The Journal of Politics* 72, no. 4 (October 2010): 1199–1211; Melinda S. Jackson, "Priming the Sleeping Giant: The Dynamics of Latino Political Identity and Vote Choice," *Political Psychology* 32, no. 4 (August 1, 2011): 691–716; Ricardo Ramírez, *Mobilizing Opportunities: The Evolving Latino Electorate and the Future of American Politics* (Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2015); Álvaro J. Corral and David L. Leal, "Latinos Por Trump? Latinos and the 2016 Presidential Election," *Social Science Quarterly* 101, no. 3 (2020): 1115–31.

conceptualized.⁶² As I explained earlier, the concept of linked-fate, a group consciousness measure, is one that is inherently racial. African Americans are not cultivating political solidarity in a vacuum. Instead, this outcome emerged from generations of exclusion and marginalization that occurred *specifically* because of their shared racial identity. Linked-fate is a “Black utility heuristic” because it explains the relationship between individual utility and political outcomes among Black Americans. If we apply this measure to Latinos, we have to presume a shared process of racialization that does not align with the multiracial roots of the group, or we have to ignore the importance of racialization, which does not align with our understanding of systemic racism in the U.S.⁶³ The concept of system blame in the U.S. can only make sense in a racial framework and the remedies to the disparities this system causes are similarly rooted to race. In the simplest terms, linked-fate is a type of group consciousness that emerged in response to racialization in the U.S., which is inherently anti-Black and privileges whiteness.⁶⁴ Where do we situate the foundations of linked-fate for Latinos? Here again the multiracial roots inherent to the group complicate the possibility for shared system blame.

⁶² Arthur H. Miller et al., “Group Consciousness and Political Participation,” *American Journal of Political Science* 25, no. 3 (1981): 494–511.

⁶³ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁶⁴ See: K. Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann, *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race* (Princeton University Press, 1996); Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 1st edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics, Revised and Expanded Edition* (Temple University Press, 2009); George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).

Latino Identity and Racialization

Although Latinos are often racialized as the foreign “other” group members do not develop a sense of racialization in the same way.⁶⁵ Historically, some Latinos have been able to navigate racial barriers by aligning themselves with a white identity.⁶⁶ This practice of white identification is often framed as a survival tactic in a rigid racial hierarchy, however, there are strong indications that this association with whiteness is an inherent part of Latino identity formation throughout Latin America as well.⁶⁷ The U.S. has a very narrow understanding of race that is generally rooted to a black/white binary.⁶⁸ In contrast, the processes of racial formation in Latin America stem from what is often referred to as *mestizaje*.⁶⁹ While racial mixing in the U.S. was prohibited by law, in Latin America it was encouraged in order to reduce racial difference.

⁶⁵ Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Tanya Golash-Boza, “Dropping the Hyphen? Becoming Latino(a)-American through Racialized Assimilation,” *Social Forces* 85, no. 1 (September 1, 2006); Jorge J. E. Gracia, ed., *Race or Ethnicity?: On Black and Latino Identity*, 1 edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); Natalie Masuoka, “Defining the Group: Latino Identity and Political Participation,” *American Politics Research* 36, no. 1 (January 2008): 33–61; Chris Zepeda-Millán and Sophia J. Wallace, “Racialization in Times of Contention: How Social Movements Influence Latino Racial Identity,” *Politics, Groups and Identities* 1, no. 4 (December 2013): 510–27; Sophia J. Wallace, “Examining Latino Support for Descriptive Representation: The Role of Identity and Discrimination,” *Social Science Quarterly* 95, no. 2 (2014): 311–27.

⁶⁶ Ian Haney Lopez, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (NYU Press, 2006); Edward M. Telles and Vilma Ortiz, *Generations of Exclusion: Mexican-Americans, Assimilation, and Race* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2008); Laura E. Gomez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: NYU Press, 2008); Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

⁶⁷ Mónica G. Moreno Figueroa, “Distributed Intensities: Whiteness, *Mestizaje* and the Logics of Mexican Racism,” *Ethnicities* 10, no. 3 (September 1, 2010): 387–401; Edward Telles and René Flores, “Not Just Color: Whiteness, Nation, and Status in Latin America,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (August 1, 2013): 411–49; Mónica G. Moreno Figueroa and Emiko Saldívar Tanaka, “‘We Are Not Racists, We Are Mexicans’: Privilege, Nationalism and Post-Race Ideology in Mexico,” *Critical Sociology* 42, no. 4–5 (July 1, 2016): 515–33.

⁶⁸ Linda Martín Alcoff, “Latino/as, Asian Americans, and the Black–White Binary,” *The Journal of Ethics* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 2003): 5–27.

⁶⁹ Juliet Hooker, “Hybrid Subjectivities, Latin American *Mestizaje*, and Latino Political Thought on Race,” *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 2, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 188–201; Juliet Hooker, *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos*, 1st edition (Oxford, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Both processes are rooted to anti-Black and anti-Indigenous practices but they have produced starkly different outcomes in terms of identity formation.⁷⁰ There are many definitions for *Latino* and they vary in terms of their relationship with racialization, colonization, and nationality. For example, the construction of Black identity and Latino identity in the U.S. lacks the convergence that has occurred in parts of Latin America.⁷¹ Black Latinos are not a concept that fits neatly into our understanding of racial identity because of our rigid processes of racialization. Notably, Black Latinos in the U.S. have reported feeling a stronger sense of affinity with Black identity specifically because they feel marginalized from other Latinos.⁷² Hordge-Freeman and Veras found that Latino families often engaged in colorism and criticized the skin color, hair texture and facial features of Black family members. In contrast with African Americans, who find support and validation from family networks, Black Latinos experience disidentification with Latinidad. If we return to the idea that race operates as a mediating structure then we can see how racialized habitus functions in order to cultivate psychological attachments, however, the outcome is not Latino solidarity. Instead, a feeling of belonging and affinity is forged with other Black Americans. This is just one small example of how practices of racialization can vary among Latinos. In reality, there are dozens of ways that we could complicate the concept of identity within the group.

⁷⁰ Critics of mestizaje often point to the obfuscation of African and Indigenous contributions to producing the cultural traditions and norms we associate with Latino identity, for more see: Juliet Hooker, *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos*, 1st edition (Oxford, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Marcelo Paixão and Irene Rossetto, “Mestizaje, Racial Discrimination, and Inequality in Latin America,” Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, February 28, 2020.

⁷¹ Michael Hanchard, *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil* (Duke University Press, 1999); Monika Gosin, “Afro-Cuban Encounters at the Intersections of Blackness and Latinidad,” in *The Racial Politics of Division*, Interethnic Struggles for Legitimacy in Multicultural Miami (Cornell University Press, 2019), 158–92.

⁷² Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman and Edlin Veras, “Out of the Shadows, into the Dark: Ethnoracial Dissonance and Identity Formation among Afro-Latinxs,” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 6, no. 2 (April 2020): 146–60.

If we circle back to the concept of group consciousness, we have to re-assess how that could possibly emerge within a group with so many diverse identities, political priorities, and processes of racialization. Latinos are not a homogenous group and there are significant divisions in terms of self-identification.⁷³ In *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles*, Lisa Bedolla examined how context influenced political engagement in East Los Angeles and Montebello, California. Notably, respondents in this study had conflicting understandings of their identity. The majority of Mexican American respondents identified as Mexicana/o and used Latina/o in relation to Latinos who did not have Mexican ancestry. All of the Central American respondents referred to themselves as Latino and did not use national identifiers. In relation to Latino overall, there was significant generational fragmentation. The first generation defined Latino as people who speak Spanish; the second generation defined Latino as people who speak English and Spanish; the third generation and beyond defined Latino as people of Mexican descent.⁷⁴ These distinctions are specifically why Latino is such a complicated identity.⁷⁵ Returning again to the concept of mediating structures, we have to acknowledge that nationality also functions as its own form of habitus and cultivates a relationship between the individual and political sphere that is rooted to national identity.

⁷³ Michael Jones-Correa and David L. Leal, "Becoming 'Hispanic': Secondary Panethnic Identification among Latin American-Origin Populations in the United States," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 18, no. 2 (May 1, 1996): 214–54; Lisa Bedolla, *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Mark Hugo Lopez, Ana Gonzalez-Barrera and Gustavo López, Pew Research Center, "Hispanic Identity Fades Across Generations as Immigrant Connections Fall Away", December 20, 2017.

⁷⁴ Bedolla's study (N=100) was comprised mainly of respondents of Mexican origin (83%) which reflects the demographic breakdown of the U.S. Latino population. Ages ranged from 16-68 with a majority of 1st and 2nd generation respondents.

⁷⁵ Cristina Beltran, *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity*, 1 edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Bedolla's study indicates that even Latinos who have been here for over three generations cannot detach their national identity from their understanding of Latino. None of the respondents defined Latino the way it is operationalized by scholars. Although this is just one study of many, it is emblematic of the way that the concept of Latino identity itself lacks the political weight of other racialized groups. There has to be a function that mediates the relationship between Latino individuals and the political sphere, but it remains obscured by the presumption that Latino identity is a meaningful category for analysis on its own. If a concept like linked-fate exists among Latinos, what produces and sustains this sense of obligation and accountability? How does an identity that cannot hold up under scrutiny simultaneously produce psychological attachments and political obligations? My suggestion is that we re-conceptualize how we approach political solidarity among Latinos by focusing specifically on the mediating structure that shapes political perceptions and attitudes among other marginalized groups: racialization.

Race as a Mediating Structure

Conceptually, racial identity and processes of racialization can be framed as sociohistorical products that are contextually-bound.⁷⁶ As discussed previously, Latino identity faces unique complications as a racialized identity because of the varying interpretations of what being Latino entails, as well as the dual processes of racial formation that produced the identity in the first place. Racialization is a complex process that produces racial categories, ascribes particular qualities to those categories, and cultivates a symbolic association between race and

⁷⁶ Linda Martín Alcoff suggests that we use a “contextualist” approach to understanding racial identity. This approach frames race as “socially constructed, historically malleable, culturally contextual, and reproduced through learned practices”. For more see: Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 182.

identity.⁷⁷ In the context of the U.S., racial categories are more generally conceived on the basis of a white/black binary, as well as the “othering” of various ethnic groups that fall somewhere between the two.⁷⁸ What this indicates is that there is a particular system that shaped and reproduced racial meaning in the U.S. and produced symbolic associations among Black Americans that are rooted to race. As a contextually-bound, sociohistorical product, African American identity is unique. Although there is a larger connection among the African diaspora, the roots of African American political solidarity are not generalizable.⁷⁹ Arguably, taking a contextualist approach to race implies there is no process of race-making that is generalizable. The experience of race is a patchwork quilt; each individual piece is unique even if it is linked through a singular process. In the U.S. context, one significant process that impacts identity formation, with each group experiencing its own particular form, is racialization.

Scholars cannot detach subjective understandings of racial identity from the objective systems that shape and reproduce racialization. Both the subjective processes of racial identification, along with the various macro level structures that reproduce racial disparities, are inherently political. For example, the racial isolation that cultivated a white habitus and reproduced a system of colorblind racism had political consequences.⁸⁰ Similarly, the racial

⁷⁷ In addition to Alcoff, see: K. Anthony Appiah, “Racial Identity and Racial Identification,” in *Theories of Race and Racism*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2009).

⁷⁸ The roots of U.S. racialization are more generally linked to anti-Black practices like the one-drop rule, for more see: Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2 edition (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁷⁹ For more on the genealogy of African American political practices see: Michael C. Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African American Political Ideologies*, 1/30/03 edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁸⁰ Other studies of white habitus beyond Bonilla-Silva include: Meghan A. Burke, “Discursive Fault Lines: Reproducing White Habitus in a Racially Diverse Community,” *Critical Sociology* 38, no. 5 (2012): 645–68; Jennifer C. Mueller, “Producing Colorblindness,” *Social Problems* 64, no. 2 (2017): 219–332; and Margaret Ann

segregation that isolated and marginalized Black Americans produced its own political system of networks, ideologies, and practices, albeit with vastly different outcomes. For white Americans, white habitus cultivates a de-racialized sense of identity that simultaneously sustains a de-racialized political outlook. As a result, white Americans who consistently engage with this form of racialized habitus are more likely to support political narratives that minimize systemic racism and link racial disparities to individual or cultural failings. In contrast, Black Americans have forged a racialized practice of political solidarity specifically because of their segregation and marginalization. If we were to place African American politics in conversation with habitus, then we would focus on the ways that individuals in the group mediate their relationship with others as well as the social sphere. Given that the roots of this group are explicitly racial, this particular form of habitus would be inherently political. Black Americans do not have the privilege of disassociating from their racial identity, thus their particular form of habitus is one that validates a racialized sense of identity.⁸¹ The linkage between both white and Black Americans is racialization, however, the impact of those processes have varying effects. Both groups navigate the political sphere according to their own understanding of their position in relation to others and produce collective actions accordingly.

Hagerman, “Reproducing and Reworking Colorblind Racial Ideology: Acknowledging Children’s Agency in the White Habitus,” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 2016): 58–71.

⁸¹ Studies of Black habitus are common in education studies, some examples include: Erin McNamara Horvat and Anthony Lising Antonio, “‘Hey, Those Shoes Are Out of Uniform’: African American Girls in an Elite High School and the Importance of Habitus,” *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1999): 317–42; Kimberly Griffin et al., “‘Oh, of Course I’m Going to Go to College’: Understanding How Habitus Shapes the College Choice Process of Black Immigrant Students,” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 5, no. 2 (2012): 96–111; David M. Merolla, “Oppositional Culture, Black Habitus and Education: A New Perspective on Racial Differences in Student Attitudes and Beliefs,” *Race, Gender & Class* 21, no. 1/2 (2014): 99–111; Richard Lofton and James Earl Davis, “Toward a Black Habitus: African Americans Navigating Systemic Inequalities within Home, School, and Community,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 84, no. 3 (2015): 214–30; Martin P. Smith, Louis Harrison Jr, and Anthony L. Brown, “The Misintegration of the Negro: A Historical Analysis of Black Male Habitus in Sport and Schooling,” *Urban Education* 52, no. 6 (2017): 745–74; Pere Ayling, “Frantz Fanon: Whiteness, Colonialism and the Colonial Habitus,” in *Distinction, Exclusivity and Whiteness: Elite Nigerian Parents and the International Education Market*, ed. Pere Ayling (Singapore: Springer, 2019), 31–43.

In contrast, our understanding of how racialization impacts Latinos needs more development. My focus up to this point has been to highlight the various ways that race and political practice develop within a particular context. Just as African Americans have produced their own unique political practices as a result of their interaction with our system of racialization, Latinos have arguably done the same. This is precisely where this study fills some gaps. Instead of trying to make sense of all the various systems that define Latino identity, this study focuses solely on the relationship between Latino political solidarity and racialization. As I explained earlier, the concept of habitus can be framed as a mediating structure, or a construct that mediates subjective experience with objective reality.⁸² Within the racialized context of the U.S. this mediation requires a navigation of race in addition to the various other constructs that inform our identity. In order to understand how Latino political solidarity is made possible, we need to re-examine the concepts and theories that shape our understanding of the group. This is particularly true if those concepts are rooted in the sociohistorical conditions that shaped other groups, such as the linked-fate measure. Latino political solidarity has its own unique conditions and requires the navigation of generational fragmentation, a proximity to whiteness, regional and spatial variation, and various ethnic and national ties that shape individual perceptions. In order for any Latino individual to engage in a collective act like political solidarity, they will need to mediate all of those linkages through a system that cultivates an understanding of racialization.

In this section I discussed the relationship between identity, group consciousness and political solidarity, as well as the conceptual gaps that emerge when we apply these concepts to Latinos. In particular, I explained how concepts like linked-fate are contextually-bound and lack generalizability. Additionally, I explained how racialization factors into these concepts and is

⁸² Loïc Wacquant, "A Concise Genealogy and Anatomy of Habitus:," *The Sociological Review*, February 1, 2016.

also rooted to sociohistorical conditions. The key purpose of this section was to explain how the system of obligation and accountability that underlies political solidarity in the U.S. is rooted in a relationship with the political sphere that is mediated through race. One of the ways that this relationship is mediated is via intersubjective exchange with familial, social and community networks. This exchange is critical because it produces a sense of obligation with other group members. Moreover, these networks sustain that sense of obligation over time. Among racialized groups like African Americans, the process has cultivated a sense of racial group consciousness that is often framed as linked-fate. Among white Americans who benefit from the racial status quo, intersubjective exchange with group networks produces a de-racialized sense of identity. For both groups, race functions as a structure that mediates their personal relationship with the political sphere. These concepts will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 but for the purposes of detailing the theoretical background of this study, I wanted to highlight three main points: *spatiality*, *racialization*, and *intersubjective exchange*. Racialization is inherently a spatial practice of marginalization. Political solidarity cannot be forged in the absence of a shared sense of marginalization among group members.⁸³ Most importantly, this process needs to be racialized to produce the psychological attachments that we associate with racial group politics. In order to explain how this racialized political solidarity can emerge among Latinos, this study implements the concept of racialized habitus.

⁸³ A sense of obligation among group members is a critical facet of building political solidarity among racialized groups, for more see: Juliet Hooker, *Race and the Politics of Solidarity*, 1st edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Allison P. Anoll, *The Obligation Mosaic: Race and Social Norms in US Political Participation*, First edition (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2022).

The Foundations of Racialized Space

Spatiality and Racialization

The study of habitus emerges from a broader understanding of critical social theory that emphasizes the vital role of geography in shaping and cultivating our social conditions. Geographer Edward Soja situated the origins of critical human geography in the works of Michel Foucault and John Berger, although he states that the “most persistent, insistent and consistent of these spatializing voices” was French philosopher Henri Lefebvre.⁸⁴ Soja argued that geography was subordinated in the study of critical theory as a direct result of an overreliance on historicism for explaining our social condition. He notes that from the early 20th century until the 1960s, geography was conceptualized as an outcome of historical processes rather than a constitutive aspect of our social conditions:

Modern Geography was reduced primarily to the accumulation, classification, and theoretically innocent representation of factual material describing the areal differentiation of the earth’s surface - to the study of outcomes, the end products of dynamic processes best understood by others. Geography thus also treated space as the domain of the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile - a world of passivity and measurement rather than action and meaning (Soja, 2011, 37).

Critics of this approach argued that the focus on historicism concealed the spatiality of social life and its influence on identity, consciousness and subjectivity. In particular, Marxist philosophers such as Lefebvre argued that spatiality was central to the perpetuation of capitalist systems of exchange. For Lefebvre, the history of space was one that could not be detached from the modes of production that dictated the norms of society over time.⁸⁵ He argued that the concept of absolute space, which emerged via human interaction with nature, did not account for the

⁸⁴ Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, Second Edition (London New York: Verso, 2011), 14.

⁸⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, 1 edition (Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992).

abstract spatiality that emerged as a result of the rise of capitalism which had reconstructed space into a site of domination.⁸⁶ Among critical theorists concerned with spatiality, this capitalist turn in society was precisely why historicism was not a sufficient measure of social reality.⁸⁷ The modern mode of production reorganized our social order, cultivated networks of interconnectivity in order to maximize exchange, and molded spaces in order to reduce difference and resistance.

Social Space

Lefebvre's overall contributions to philosophy are substantial and expansive. In addition to his development of spatial theory he developed theoretical frameworks for understanding "urbanism" and "the right to the city" that are highly influential.⁸⁸ However, for the purposes of this study I am focusing solely on his development of space as a site of social production, particularly his theory of the spatial triad, which he describes in detail in *The Production of Space*. This triad of perceived-conceived-lived space (Figure 1) represents his general framework for explaining the influence of spatiality as both an abstract and concrete system of production.⁸⁹ For Lefebvre, the capitalist mode of production was one that organized our daily routines and spatial practices (perceived space), cultivated representations of space that sustained this

⁸⁶ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 48-49.

⁸⁷ In addition to Lefebvre, geographer David Harvey has also produced a substantial amount of work on the relationship between economic structures, spatiality and social conditions. For example, see: David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital*, Reprint edition (London: Verso, 2018); and David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, Revised edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

⁸⁸ For example, see: Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, 1st edition (Cambridge, Mass, USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996); Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, First edition (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2003); Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays* (U of Minnesota Press, 2009); Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. Gerald Moore and Stuart Elden (London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

⁸⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38-39.

production (conceived space), and shaped the representational spaces (lived space) where symbolism and meaning is passively consumed. He observed that prior to the rise of capitalism, representations of space were more largely influenced by Classical and religious conceptualizations, as he explains:

In the Middle Ages, spatial practice embraced not only the network of local roads close to peasant communities, monasteries and castles, but also the main roads between towns and the great pilgrims' and crusaders' ways. As for representations of space, these were borrowed from Aristotelian and Ptolemaic conceptions, as modified by Christianity: the Earth, the underground 'world', and the luminous Cosmos, Heaven of the just and of the angels, inhabited by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. A fixed sphere within a finite space, diametrically bisected by the surface of the Earth; below this space, the fires of Hell (Lefebvre, 1974, 45).

These representations of space, which dominated our understanding of social relations for centuries, were figuratively and literally inscribed in physical and abstract space. For example, the road to Santiago de Compostela, a final stop for Christian pilgrims visiting the burial site of the Apostle St. James, was designed to mimic the route from Cancer to Capricorn in the cosmos. These representations of space, and the spatial practices they cultivated, derived directly from the ideological imperatives of the Church. In contrast, the capitalist mode of production had produced entirely new systems of social space. One example of this concept is the relationship between a company and the spaces it occupies and produces.⁹⁰ Lefebvre noted that historically, companies would produce an agglomeration that was designed to serve the needs of the company, such as a mining village or a company town. Within this space, concrete and abstract spatial practices are coordinated around labor and a dependent relationship with capital. In this context, both the conceived and perceived representations of the triad, which are derived from

⁹⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 318-319.

the company's dominance over space, shape the lived experience and social spaces of the workers who inhabit the town.

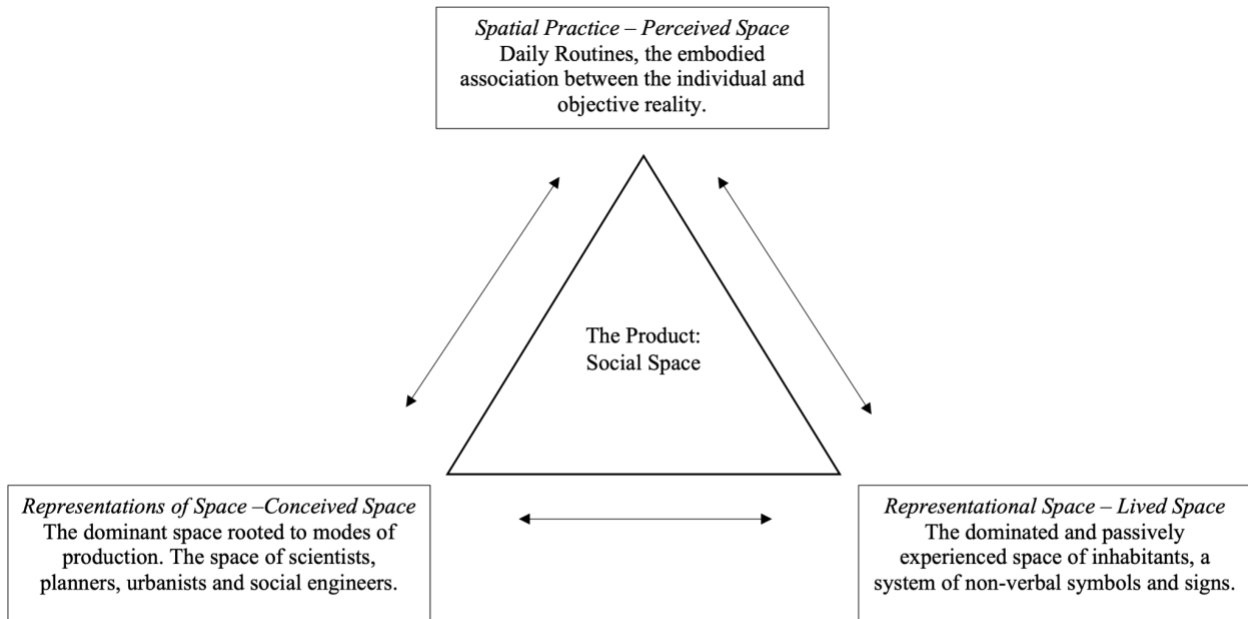


Figure 1: Lefebvrian Triad
Derived directly from Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38-39

For Lefebvre, analyzing these distinctions between modes of production was important because they revealed the spatial codes that determined the organization of cities, the development of social structures, and the signs we use to interpret our position in these spaces. Moreover, he argued that these spatial codes revealed how power was constructed and disseminated. The organization of space was not an outcome of historical processes, rather it was a strategic system of social production and an inherently political project. As he explains:

Space is not a *scientific object* removed from ideology or politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be “purely” formal, the essence of rational abstraction, it is precisely because this space has already been occupied and planned, already the focus of past strategies, of which we cannot always find a trace. Space has been fashioned and molded from historical and natural elements, but in a political way. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally populated with ideologies (Lefebvre, 2009, 170-171).

In particular, Lefebvre noted that macro-level spatial strategies of social organization, such as urban planning, or decentralization, manifested directly as ideological practices. The political aspects of these strategies made themselves visible in practices that were generated within these constructed spaces.⁹¹ For example, there are inherent ideologies in urban planning that produce specific political outcomes, such as the right-wing conceptualization of the “private” which leads to strategies that shape the boundaries of land, homes, and the real estate market.⁹² These ideologies become sedimented over time and are sustained through the mediation of networks, groups, and actors who facilitate the exchange of symbolic meaning. One of the key arguments to draw from Lefebvre, in addition to the spatial triad, is the *relational* aspect of space that is implied by his approach. Spatial projects are not simply constructed, disseminated and devoid of meaning, they are political projects that are sustained and reproduced through social interaction.

This relational dimension of social space is where we can situate the foundations of this study’s theoretical framework. Space is simultaneously the mechanism of social production *and* a social product. It is consistently being remade according to macro-level rules and norms while producing practices that sustain that particular system. For Lefebvre, this process was overwhelmingly a consequence of capitalism. This approach has been echoed by various other scholars such as David Harvey, Doreen Massey, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, as well as geographer Edward Soja who further expanded on the political facets of social space in his research.⁹³ This includes works such as *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in*

⁹¹ Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays* (U of Minnesota Press, 2009).

⁹² *Ibid*, 175.

⁹³ For example see: Doreen Massey, *World City*, 1st edition (Cambridge u.a: Polity, 2007); Doreen B. Massey, *For Space*, 1st edition (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2005); and Ruth Wilson Gilmore,

Critical Social Theory (1989) and *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Places* (1996). In *Postmodern Geographies*, Soja traces the development of space in critical theory, arguing that the “instrumentality” of space in political discourse was obscured by the dominance of historical materialist interpretations that ignored the dialectic relationship between the spatial and the social.⁹⁴ Similar to Lefebvre, Soja rooted his analysis of space to Marxist conceptualizations of production and social organization, arguing that there is a *geographic* materialism that reinforces social conditions, conflicts, and crises..⁹⁵ As he explains:

Concrete spatiality - actual human geography - is thus a competitive arena for struggles over social production and reproduction, for social practices aimed either at the maintenance and reinforcement of existing spatiality or at significant restructuring and/or radical transformation. The temporality of social life, from the routines and events of day-to-day activity to the longer-run making of history is rooted in spatial contingency much in the same way as the spatiality of social life is rooted in temporal/historical contingency (Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 130).

In his work, Soja specifically engages with the concept of a *sociospatial dialectic* to reconcile the social and spatial through an analysis of capitalist spatialization.⁹⁶ He applies this framework in a case-study of Los Angeles, which he describes as a “mesocosm” where the concrete and abstract aspects of spatiality manifest empirically.⁹⁷ In this analysis, Soja traced the development of industrialization and urbanization in the city from the 1940s-1980s, noting that the spatial restructuring of Los Angeles aligned with the economic conditions of the nation, shifting between a practice of decentralization and recentralization over time. These processes had

Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California, 1st edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

⁹⁴ Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 34.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 129.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 34.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 191.

produced entire municipalities, such as the cities of Vernon and Commerce, that were devoted completely to industry. For example, more than 50,000 people worked in Vernon, but the city only had 100 residents.⁹⁸ In addition, the racial divides that limited access to employment were also visible in the landscape. Cities with mixed-purposes and attractive neighborhoods were overwhelmingly white, while racial minorities were segregated in areas that lacked these benefits.

This spatial restructuring had also decimated labor unions and weakened political resistance while simultaneously empowering centers of wealth. Soja argued that the outcome of capitalist spatialization was a disempowered working class that could not compete with the growth-minded imperatives of industry. In the face of economic downturn and recession, the city shifted toward a technological agenda that was concentrated in wealthy communities. In contrast, racial minorities were more commonly employed in ‘low-skill’ sectors like the garment industry which was “weakly organized” as a result of decades of union fragmentation.⁹⁹ The key argument from this study is that *we cannot detach historical conditions from the spatial practices they engendered*. The ideological foundations of industry, which did not reconcile with the needs of labor, had been sedimented over time in the city’s landscape, social structures, and political networks. For Soja, the role of spatiality as a constitutive facet of social production was clear in the dismantling of the labor networks that existed in the pre-war period. As industry reinforced itself *spatially*, labor declined. Soja argued that the restructuring of Los Angeles was an extreme example but that it reflected the general relationship between the social and spatial as a political project. He further explores this argument in *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other*

⁹⁸ Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 201.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 207.

Real and Imagined Places, where he elaborates on the concept of lived space and argues that it is the primary locus of political production within a spatial framework. In particular, he reframes the spatial triad into the “trialectic of being”, arguing that the sociospatial dialectic informs our sense of self and our obligation to others.¹⁰⁰

Expanding on Lefebvre, Soja argues that if we accept the idea that space is a political project, then we have to assume there is a relationship between spatiality and lived experience. To explain how this process works, Soja develops his own triad and highlights the production of counterspaces as a consequence of sociohistorical conditions (Figure 2). Soja theorized that the roots of political resistance were most likely to be found in the margins, or the spaces of difference that inevitably emerged from spatial subordination. He noted that Black intellectuals like bell hooks and Cornel West, who were pushed to the periphery of the political sphere, framed their marginality as the site of radical subjectivity where oppositional practices could be cultivated.¹⁰¹ In particular, he highlighted the critical relationship between racialization and spatiality, arguing that the outcome was a new system of cultural politics where power reinforced itself through fragmentation, exploitation, and the essentializing of space. As he explains:

Growing out of this view of power, differences that are ascribed to gender, sexual practice, race, class, region, nation, etc., and their expression in social space and geohistorically uneven development are appropriately viewed as ‘brute fashionings’. Like social space itself, they are neither transhistorical nor ‘natural’. This brute fashioning, as the social and spatial production of difference, becomes the catalyst and the contested space for both hegemonic (conservative, order-maintaining) and counter-hegemonic (resistant, order-transforming) cultural and identity politics (Soja, *Thirdspace*, 88).

Similar to his work in *Postmodern Geographies*, Soja engages with the city of Los Angeles in *Thirdspace* to further explain how spatiality, lived experience, and political resistance are

¹⁰⁰ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, 1 edition (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 71.

¹⁰¹ Soja, *Thirdspace*, 84.

intertwined. However, a significant focus of this work is locating the sociospatial dialectic among other scholars, as well as highlighting the relationship between spatiality and political resistance among marginalized groups.¹⁰² For Soja, the concept of thirdspace was more directly a theory for explaining how political solidarity could be made possible in a spatial framework.

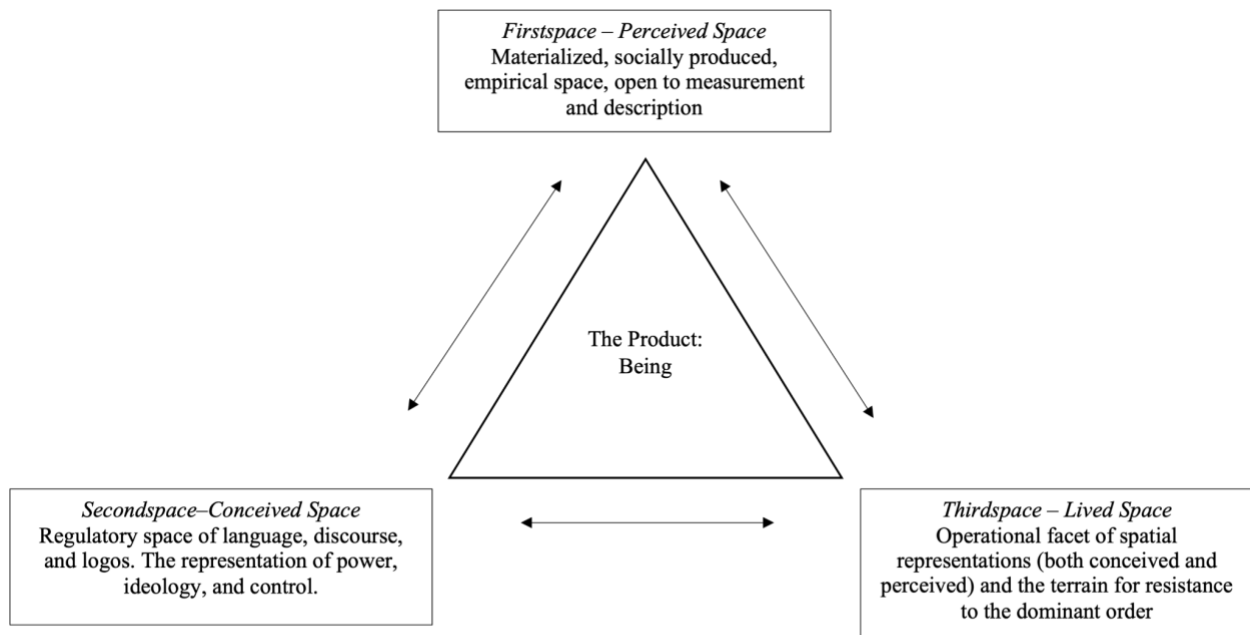


Figure 2: Edward Soja's Trialectic of Being
Derived directly from Soja, *Thirdspace*, 66-69

Racialized Space

As Lefebvre and other geographers had noted, if space was a constitutive aspect of our political system, then resistance to that system could only emerge as a *spatial* practice. Among Marxist scholars, that resistance was more specifically a notion of class struggle, however, Soja notes that there is an inherently racial aspect of that spatiality that also needs to be accounted for. In particular, he argued that communities of color, specifically those who had been segregated in the social sphere, could only forge resistance within those marginalized spaces. This *racial*

¹⁰² In addition to bell hooks and Cornel West, Soja also notes that spatializing Chicana feminist scholars such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Norma Alarcón, Sandra Cisneros, Terri de la Peña, and María Lugones have contributed substantially to our understanding of space as the locus for cultural production.

sociospatial dialectic was also a facet of our modern conditions and presented a unique challenge for racialized groups. If we return to Lefebvre's argument about the relationship between modes of production and the social spaces they produce then we have to situate the contemporary political sphere in a racial lens as well. The U.S is not simply a capitalist system, it is also inherently a racialized system of spatial organization and regulation.¹⁰³ Arguably, the social conditions and practices that are cultivated in this particular context are also inextricably linked to the production and reproduction of racial conditions. This relationship is the basis of the concept of racialized space. If social spaces are constructed and imbued with meaning and ideology, as scholars like Lefebvre and Soja suggest, then we have to assume that racialization is similarly inscribed. Consequently, the spatial practices that are cultivated in these spaces are also similarly racialized. Before moving on to a more in-depth discussion of racialized spatial practice and habitus, I will briefly explain how racialized space functions as a constitutive aspect of our political context.

The study of racialized space has emerged in a diverse range of fields and is often rooted in macro-level analysis of the relationship between race, economic institutions, and political outcomes. Various scholars have pointed to the critical function that space plays in reproducing racial inequalities, although these approaches are not as common as the theoretical frameworks associated with class and social space.¹⁰⁴ In *The Space that Race Makes*, David Delaney notes that the concept of racialized space is particularly apparent in the U.S. context, as he explains:

Ideologies of race, racisms and forms of racial consciousness form elements of a more pervasive "racial formation" which is an integral, if complex and shifting, part of

¹⁰³ This argument aligns with the theoretical foundations of racial capitalism that are implemented in Ruth Wilson Gilmore's work and can also be traced back to Black intellectuals such as W.E.B. DuBois, for more see: Justin Leroy and Destin Jenkins, eds., *Histories of Racial Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

¹⁰⁴ Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura, "Social Geographies of Race: Connecting Race and Space," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 11 (November 2011): 1933–52.

American culture more generally. As such, they are integral to the formation and revision of *all* American spatialities at all scales of reference, from the international (constructions of the foreigner, the wetback, the American) to the corporeal....spaces may be produced in accordance with ideologies of color-blindness or race consciousness, of integrationalism, assimilation, separatism or nativism (Delaney, 2002, 3).

Delaney further argues that the relationship between spatiality and racialization cannot be reduced to a horizontal axis, rather there is also vertical or hierarchical process that also needs to be accounted for:

Racial identities, for example, may be differentially constructed at various scales, and this process may have political significance. A given subject might be “raced” differently in the context of national (black, Hispanic, Native American) or local (West Indian, Southern, Chicana, Salvadoreña, Hopi, Ute) scales of reference (Delaney, 2002, 8).

For Delaney, analysis of the intersection of race and space revealed that it produced a system of objective outcomes, such as racial segregation or the violent relocation of Indigenous groups to reservations, and also had a subjective influence, such as a racialized sense of being.

This argument is echoed by Charles W. Mills in *The Racial Contract*, where he argues that the racing of space, on various scales, is a constitutive function of our modern political system and the racial disparities within.¹⁰⁵ Mills builds on the philosophical foundation of social contract theory to argue that the U.S. political sphere, which includes our governmental institutions, social structures and moral psychologies, is inherently linked to a spatial system of racial domination.¹⁰⁶ He further argued that this system is rooted in a white settler conceptualization of space that envisioned the U.S. as empty and dehumanized the various groups that already populated the region. For Mills, the impact of this process was a political conceptualization of white space with its own rules and obligations, or racial contract.

¹⁰⁵ Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 1st edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 5.

Consequently, this also produced non-white spaces where the disparate political consequences of these racial spatialities are apparent. As he explains:

Thus one of the interesting consequences of the Racial Contract is that the *political space* of the polity is not coextensive with its *geographical space*. In entering these [dark] spaces, one is entering a region normatively discontinuous with white political space, where the rules are different in ways ranging from differential funding (school resources, garbage collection, infrastructural repair) to the absence of police protection (Mills, 1999, 51).

Similar to Delaney, Mills argued that this spatializing influence occurred at every scale, from the macro-level systems of domination inherent in ideas like Manifest Destiny, to the “microspaces” of the body, where hair texture, facial features, and color of skin become similarly raced and politicized.¹⁰⁷ As a result, these processes had imbued racial privilege into every aspect of our political reality, both in terms of objective outcomes and subjective experiences. This argument is further developed by George Lipsitz in *How Racism Takes Place* (2011), where he traces the development of spatial policies that reproduced racial inequalities.

Lipsitz notes that the consequence of racialized spatiality was a system of white privilege that reverberated through every institution and inscribed racial privilege on physical spaces. He argued that the outcome of generations of racial exclusion and spatial domination was a “white spatial imaginary” that idealized space as a neutral system devoid of ideology.¹⁰⁸ Notably, this neutrality was also apparent in Bonilla-Silva’s study on white habitus. Consequently, white Americans were more likely to ignore the racial disparities that had emerged as a result of policies like redlining, blockbusting, racial zoning, and racially restrictive covenants. In addition,

¹⁰⁷ The idea of the body as a site of political domination is also a central argument for Black feminists and is a foundational aspect of the concept of “identity politics” as an emancipatory practice for Black women, for more see: The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 3/4 (2014): 271–80.

¹⁰⁸ George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 29.

they were less likely to see how the racialization of space had produced a substantial degree of intergenerational wealth that enriched whites while oppressing the rest. As he explains:

Because of the practices that racialize space and spatialize race, whiteness is learned and legitimated, perceived as natural, necessary, and inevitable. Racialized space gives whites privileged access to opportunities for social inclusion and upward mobility. At the same time, it imposes unfair and unjust forms of exploitation and exclusion on aggrieved communities of color. Racialized space shapes nearly every aspect of urban life...It exposes communities of color disproportionately to environmental hazards and social nuisances while offering whites privileged access to economic opportunities, social amenities, and valuable personal networks (Lipsitz, 2011, 6).

Lipsitz observed that access to FHA loans, which was reserved for whites, had produced an entire system of homeownership that could be linked to substandard systems of education, mortgage lending, and overall quality of life for Black Americans and other marginalized groups. This had a significant impact on the political agency of these racialized groups who have to overcome deeply sedimented systems of spatial exchange that place them at a political disadvantage. Notably, this argument is also supported by political scientists who examine the relationship between place and political mobilization.¹⁰⁹ However, the central argument of this work that is important to this study is the notion of the racialized spatial imaginary and its influence on political ideology.

Lipsitz further argued that the relational aspects of race and space had a significant influence on the production of racial groups. Echoing the work of Lefebvre, Soja, and Mills, who framed space as a multiscalar network of social production linked to systems of capital, Lipsitz also highlighted the relationship between the distribution of space and social identity. In particular, he noted that the perpetuation of whiteness as a structured privilege was inherently rooted to place and space:

¹⁰⁹ For example, see: John R. Logan and Harvey Luskin Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (University of California Press, 2007) or David M. P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2010).

When poor whites deal with landlords, police officers, merchants, social workers, and elected officials they know that they will be treated more respectfully than their Black counterparts. Whiteness also has an enormous cash value. It is worth a lot of money to be white. As a systemic structured advantage, whiteness concerns interests as well as attitudes, property as well as pigment (Lipsitz, 2011, 36).

Thus, for Lipsitz, white is not a static identity but rather a condition that is consistently legitimated through spatial/racial policies that further marginalize Blackness while placing a high value on the adoption of whiteness. Since we are unable to detach racial privilege from our social structures, political institutions, and systems of economic exchange, we cannot formulate a theory of political resistance in the absence of racialization. More importantly, we cannot set aside the spatial foundations that perpetuate the system in the first place. The idea of the political, in the U.S. context, is inherently spatial and racial. Thus, the concept of political solidarity has to be similarly racialized and *spatialized* in order to accomplish any goals that counter the dominant order. As discussed earlier, this is readily apparent in the various political practices that comprise our understanding of African American politics. Black liberation is a spatial struggle in a spatialized system of racial domination and control. Similarly, the emergence of political solidarity among other racialized groups is an outcome of spatial struggle, albeit on different terms.

Racialized Space in Latino Studies

Before explaining how habitus fits into this larger framework, I will briefly review how the concept of spatiality has been used in relation to Latinos in the U.S. Many of the scholarly works that link the objective and subjective aspects of spatiality are more commonly found among Chicana feminist scholars, such as the bodies of literature devoted to the study of the Borderlands.¹¹⁰ In addition, scholars have taken a critical approach to the study of space as a site

¹¹⁰ For example, see: Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, Fourth Edition*, 4 edition (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012); Karen Roybal, "Pushing the Boundaries of Border Subjectivity, Autobiography,

of Chicana/o/x cultural production and identity formation.¹¹¹ Arguably, spatiality looms large in Chicana/o/x studies because of the concept of liminality, which is inherent in the negotiation of Mexican and American identity. In addition, there are diasporic elements of the Mexican American experience which are fundamentally a question of spatial negotiation and coordination.¹¹² Mobility and place are also important aspects of critical spatial studies given the immigrant roots of the group.¹¹³ Within the study of Latino politics, the concept of spatiality is more generally implemented in studies of objective space, or place.¹¹⁴ These offer an important lens for understanding the political influence of place, however, they are studies of spatial outcomes rather than spatial processes. For the most part, these studies are not directly engaging with a concept of racialized space, rather they are analyzing how place-based context can influence behaviors. For example, in *Mobilizing Opportunities*, Ricardo Ramírez examines how

and Camp-Rasquachismo,” *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 38, no. 2 (September 1, 2013): 71–94; Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, *Spatial and Discursive Violence in the US Southwest* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

¹¹¹ For example see: Rosaura Sánchez, “Mapping the Spanish Language along a Multiethnic and Multilingual Border,” *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 21, no. 1–2 (1992): 49–104; Raúl Homero Villa, *Barrio-Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture*, Illustrated edition (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000); or Daniel Arreola, *Hispanic Spaces, Latino Places: Community and Cultural Diversity in Contemporary America* (University of Texas Press, 2009).

¹¹² Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

¹¹³ For example, see: Rodolfo F. Acuña, *Corridors of Migration: The Odyssey of Mexican Laborers, 1600-1933*, 1st edition (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007); Helen Marrow, *New Destination Dreaming: Immigration, Race, and Legal Status in the Rural American South*, 1 edition (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011). Genevieve Carpio, *Collisions at the Crossroads: How Place and Mobility Make Race*, First edition (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019).

¹¹⁴ See: Mario Luis Small, “Culture, Cohorts, and Social Organization Theory: Understanding Local Participation in a Latino Housing Project,” *American Journal of Sociology* 108, no. 1 (2002): 1–54; Matt A. Barreto, Gary M. Segura, and Nathan D. Woods, “The Mobilizing Effect of Majority–Minority Districts on Latino Turnout,” *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 01 (2004): 65–75; Lisa Bedolla, *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Lise Nelson and Nancy Hiemstra, “Latino Immigrants and the Renegotiation of Place and Belonging in Small Town America,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 9, no. 3 (May 2008): 319–42; Ricardo Ramírez, *Mobilizing Opportunities: The Evolving Latino Electorate and the Future of American Politics* (Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2015).

state context facilitates or hinders mobilization among Latinos in Texas, California and New Mexico, arguing that access to mass media in Spanish, naturalization patterns, group threats, and organizational mobilization are key for producing the type of solidarity that is implied by concepts like the Latino vote.¹¹⁵ For Ramírez, demographics are not enough to explain how Latinos become politically activated, rather we have to take a critical look at how particular places provide opportunities that others do not. This view is shared by Lisa Garcia Bedolla in *Fluid Borders*, where she integrates a concept of cultural capital to compare political engagement among Latinos in two Los Angeles communities. Both of these studies are technically spatial analyses, although neither explicitly acknowledges the concept of racialized space.

On the other hand, the concept of racialization itself has also been integrated into various studies of Latino politics, albeit without the spatial influence. These studies have indicated that racialization plays a vital role in cultivating solidarity or identity formation among Latinos.¹¹⁶ In particular, these studies indicate that discrimination and nativism have a mobilizing influence, particularly in the post-2016 era where racialized rhetoric against Latinos has increased. This effect is also visible in studies of Latino linked-fate. For example, in “Revisiting the Brown-Utility Heuristic: A comparison of Latino linked fate in 2006 and 2016”, the authors found that while discrimination was not significantly correlated with measures of linked fate in 2006, this

¹¹⁵ Ramírez, *Mobilizing Opportunities*, 25.

¹¹⁶ For example see: Tanya Golash-Boza, “Dropping the Hyphen? Becoming Latino(a)-American through Racialized Assimilation,” *Social Forces* 85, no. 1 (September 1, 2006): 27–55; Chris Zepeda-Millán and Sophia J. Wallace, “Racialization in Times of Contention: How Social Movements Influence Latino Racial Identity,” *Politics, Groups and Identities* 1, no. 4 (December 2013): 510–27; Angela Gutierrez et al., “Somos Más: How Racial Threat and Anger Mobilized Latino Voters in the Trump Era,” *Political Research Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (December 1, 2019): 960–75; Sophia Jordán Wallace and Chris Zepeda-Millán, “Do Latinos Still Support Immigrant Rights Activism? Examining Latino Attitudes a Decade after the 2006 Protest Wave,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 4 (March 11, 2020): 770–90.

had changed substantially by 2016.¹¹⁷ In addition, the authors found that the correlation between skin color and linked fate had also increased since 2006. Arguably, the increasing xenophobia and racialized rhetoric of the 2016 election cycle had a significant impact on the group. As explained earlier, the concept of linked fate is one that cannot emerge among Latinos as originally conceptualized, but there are particular conditions that might make it possible, particularly racialization. These authors also problematized the use of linked fate among Latinos, noting that the concept of Latino identity itself needed more development.¹¹⁸ Overall, these studies suggest that there is a significant relationship between racialization and political solidarity among Latinos, but our understanding of those processes is still under development. Moreover, they indicate that the spatialized aspects of Latino racialization need further analysis. There is a tremendous amount of scholarship that supports the argument that space is a critical function, however, those studies are framed around objective spatial outcomes such as place.

In the previous section I discussed the development of social space as a theoretical framework for explaining political outcomes. Additionally, I explained how the concept of racialized space has been implemented in critical spatial analysis. The key arguments to highlight for this section are: 1) the relational foundations of social space; 2) the instrumentality of space in the political sphere; and 3) the co-constitutive relationship between racialization and spatiality. This centrality of space in cultivating racial norms is why habitus is a useful framework for determining how political practices are cultivated. Bourdieu's habitus is also a sociological

¹¹⁷ Gabriel Sanchez, Natalie Masuoka, and Brooke Abrams, "Revisiting the Brown-Utility Heuristic: A Comparison of Latino Linked Fate in 2006 and 2016," *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 7, no. 3 (July 3, 2019): 673–83.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 680.

framework that is derived from Marxist interpretations of social space.¹¹⁹ The philosophical foundations of this theory are evidenced by the significant number of habitus studies that are focused on issues related to class.¹²⁰ However, Bourdieu's interpretation is also useful in a racial framework where the systems of spatial construction are inherently linked to social processes of racial division. In the next section I will explain how habitus is conceptualized and where it fits into spatial studies overall. In addition, I will review how studies of racialized habitus have been applied to other groups.

Theoretical Foundations of Racialized Habitus

Similar to the other scholars discussed above, Bourdieu viewed space in a relational lens and situated habitus as a bridge between the objective and subjective experiences in social space. His development of habitus emerged over various decades through his lectures at the Collège de France as well as works like *Outline of a Theory of a Practice*, where he carefully delineates the boundaries of his theoretical framework. Bourdieu's approach, which is rooted in critical sociology, is more generally an framework for explaining how individual and collective practices are forged in relation to the field (social space), habitus (dispositions) and capital (cultural, economic, social & symbolic).¹²¹ Fields are any set of conditions that might produce a

¹¹⁹ See: Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, 1 edition (Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992) and Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays* (U of Minnesota Press, 2009).

¹²⁰ For example, see: Michael Hartmann, "Class-Specific Habitus and the Social Reproduction of the Business Elite in Germany and France," *The Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (May 1, 2000): 241–61; Caroline Oliver and Karen O'Reilly, "A Bourdieusian Analysis of Class and Migration: Habitus and the Individualizing Process," *Sociology* 44, no. 1 (February 1, 2010): 49–66; Wolfgang Lehmann, "Habitus Transformation and Hidden Injuries: Successful Working-Class University Students," *Sociology of Education* 87, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 1–15; John Connolly and Paddy Dolan, "Social Class Tensions, Habitus and the Advertising of Guinness," *The Sociological Review* 65, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 100–116; Thomas Grant, "The Complexity of Aspiration: The Role of Hope and Habitus in Shaping Working-Class Young People's Aspirations to Higher Education," *Children's Geographies* 15, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 289–303.

¹²¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Reprint edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

spatial/social proximity but are not necessarily rooted to biological or objective categories. In the case of Boyle Heights, it is both a residential community with fixed boundaries as well as a social space of cultural production with amorphous boundaries. Fields have diverse qualities. For example, Bourdieu argued that there is a concept of the “intellectual field” which has properties and boundaries that are purely symbolic.¹²² He argued that positionality on the field would produce a particular type of habitus, or “matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions” that would be shaped by capital and would in turn produce particular collective outcomes.¹²³ If we return to the concept of the intellectual field, then capital could be measured by any number of variables such as publications, professional networking, or tenure in academia. This would inadvertently produce different types of habitus within that field, such as the division between a student and a professor. Both agents in this particular field, student and professor, have their own set of dispositions despite sharing the field. For Bourdieu, this distinction was critical for understanding how collective practices could be made possible. For example, if there was an attempt to produce a collective or political action within the intellectual field it would require the coordination and mobilization of various forms of habitus. Similarly, if we frame the political sphere in the U.S. as a racialized field, then arguably there are various forms of coordination that have to take place to make racialized collective action possible. Here again we can see the influence of spatiality as a constitutive aspect of political solidarity.

Habitus as a Theoretical Framework

As explained earlier, habitus is conceived as a set of dispositions that can be mobilized or coordinated to produce a collective response. These dispositions are shaped in relation to

¹²² Pierre Bourdieu, *Habitus and Field: General Sociology, Volume 2 (1982-1983)* (Wiley, 2020), 200-202.

¹²³ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of a Practice*, 83.

position on the field, as well as the various forms of capital that are accessible to the agent, and are both objectively and subjectively sustained and produced. As Bourdieu explains:

The habitus is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures (e.g. of language, economy, etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms (which one can, if one wishes, call individuals) lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence (Bourdieu, 77, 85)

For Bourdieu, habitus is the mechanism between the various collective histories that shape our social field and the individuals who produce and sustain the symbolic meanings associated with the agents within. For example, in Bonilla-Silva's concept of white habitus, the decades of segregation and racial isolation became sedimented over time and produced a sense of identity that was de-racialized and de-politicized. Bonilla-Silva argued that this process of forging white habitus developed through the negotiation of the objective/subjective aspects of social space in the racialized political sphere. Bourdieu argued that this negotiation is a vital facet of our political socialization, particularly in relation to groups:

The whole history of the social field is present, at each moment, both in a materialized form - in institutions such as the permanent machinery of parties or unions - and in an embodied form - in the dispositions of agents who operate these institutions or fight against them (with past loyalties exerting hysteresis effects). All in the forms of recognized collective identity - the 'working class' or the CGT union, the 'independent craftsmen' the '*cadres*' or the *agrégé* category of teachers etc. are products of a long, slow, collective building operation (Bourdieu, 1985, 738-739).

As I explained in Chapter 1, the key focus for this study is the *process* of building political solidarity, which Bourdieu prioritizes in his work. In particular, he argued that habitus was both a product of particular conditions available in the field and the mechanism that sustained or countered those conditions. Habitus is both the outcome of a political project as well as the mechanism that sustained the symbolism associated with that political project. Similarly, white habitus is both a product of racialized space as well as the system that cultivates norms

associated with white identity. Groups cannot exist without a particular set of sociohistorical conditions that have shaped their identity, and these identities cannot engage in collective practice without forging a system of dispositions that reinforce their sense of commonality. The making and remaking of groups is an ongoing political project that needs to be sustained:

Practical groups exist only through and for the particular functions in pursuance of which they have been *effectively mobilized*, and they continue to exist only because they have been kept in working order by their very use and by maintenance work....and because they rest on a community of dispositions (*habitus*) and interests (Bourdieu, 1977, 35).

For Bourdieu, the production of a political group with clear obligations, or what is often referred to as a collective consciousness, would require time and maintenance.¹²⁴ Moreover, the ability of that group to mobilize its members would rely on the various forms of capital at their disposal.¹²⁵ Again I want to emphasize that the relationship between spatiality and political practice is a *process* that is rooted to sociohistorical conditions.

Each group is not forged with an equal degree of symbolic association or psychological attachment, rather, these ties depend on the relationships that have been forged within their particular field. As discussed earlier in relation to white *habitus*, it is a specific form of *habitus* that is cultivated in relation with the various political and social privileges afforded to white Americans. Bourdieu argues that all fields are sites of cultural, social, symbolic and political production.¹²⁶ Moreover, each agent in the field navigated the social sphere in relation to various forms of capital. With white *habitus*, this negotiation reinforces racial privileges. As Bourdieu explains, categories like race have specific qualities that are cultivated over time, or rather forms

¹²⁴ Bourdieu, *Habitus and Field*.

¹²⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Forms of Capital: General Sociology, Volume 3: Lectures at the Collège de France 1983 - 84*, trans. Peter Collier, Volume 3 edition (Cambridge, UK ; Medford, MA: Polity, 2021).

¹²⁶ Bourdieu, *Habitus and Field*; Bourdieu, *Forms of Capital*; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson, 1st edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

of capital. Specifically, he goes into detail about economic, cultural and social capital, as well as the categorizations they engender, such as class.¹²⁷ In addition he incorporates the concept of symbolic capital.¹²⁸ As Bourdieu explains:

Symbolic capital is any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural, or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, and to give it value...more precisely, symbolic capital is the form taken by any species of capital whenever it is perceived through categories of perception that are the product of the embodiment of division or of oppositions inscribed in the structure of the distribution of this species of capital, strong/weak, large/small, rich/poor, cultured/uncultured, (Bourdieu, 1998, 47).

Economic capital is not sufficient on its own to produce a type of response among agents in the field, rather, they have to view that capital as a symbolic facet of their identity. This symbolic association is a process of perception and recognition that can only occur among people who share a particular field. If we return again to Bonilla-Silva's concept of white habitus, then the process of symbolic association is one that occurred *specifically* because of their racial isolation. If we engage with this concept in relation to African Americans, then we can observe how Black spaces have produced symbolic power that is politicized and can be mobilized, such as the Black Church. This process of perception and recognition is inherently spatial and endows individual members of the group with a sense of symbolic attachment to the rest. However, this process is only possible when there is a shared understanding of how that group has value. Moreover, the notion of what has value, or what does not, emerges in relation to the symbolic capital that the group has produced. One specific type of capital is the system of networks that emerge in response to these processes:

¹²⁷ Bourdieu wrote and lectured extensively on capital which was a central aspect of most Marxist interpretations of social space. See: Bourdieu, Pierre Bourdieu, *Forms of Capital: General Sociology, Volume 3: Lectures at the Collège de France 1983 - 84*, trans. Peter Collier, Volume 3 edition (Cambridge, UK ; Medford, MA: Polity, 2021).

¹²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, trans. Randall Johnson, 1st edition (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1998).

The network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships, such as those of neighborhood, the workplace, or even kinship, into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (Bourdieu, 1986, 22).

Thus, the concept of habitus can more generally be viewed as a mediating function between the individual and the collective that explains how subjective dispositions manifest as objective actions. In addition, the practices that are produced in any given group are similarly mediated via habitus and are sustained through a dense system of networks engaged in symbolic exchange. Returning again to white habitus, Bonilla-Silva notes that the system of networks that sustains the practice of colorblind racism is one that exists in familial and social environments. It is the density of these networks, and the consistency of their message, that functions as white habitus. All of the concepts that Bourdieu engages, such as field, capital and habitus, serve to sustain and reproduce the various symbolic attachments that groups *require* in order to produce a collective political outcome.

Habitus as Method

In the previous section, I explained how habitus function in theory according to Bourdieu and explained how it emerges *spatially* and produces symbolic attachments. In this section I will explain how this theory has been applied in various studies. Habitus is more common in sociological studies although it is also common in communication, education, literary and historical analyses. In terms of methodology, habitus has been implemented in diverse ways across these fields including narrative analysis, network analysis, and various experimental approaches.¹²⁹ Bourdieu also integrated diverse approaches for explaining habitus, such as

¹²⁹ Mark Murphy and Cristina Costa, eds., *Bourdieu, Habitus and Social Research: The Art of Application* (Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

tracing out patterns to find a shared sense of understanding (synchronic-inductive approach), or tracing the trajectory of particular agents to explain how sedimentation functions over time (diachronic-deductive approach).¹³⁰ For example, Bonilla-Silva's study of white habitus traced the dissemination of racial narratives among college students and determined that there is a shared practice of colorblind racism among whites.¹³¹ This synchronic/inductive approach identifies and traces patterns in narratives or behaviors in order to explain collective outcomes. Similarly, other studies of habitus seek to explain shared practices by tracing out patterns in terms of language, style of dress, or mannerisms.¹³² For example, in a study of Roma and Czech youth, the authors traced narratives of stigmatization through interviews arguing that feelings of stigmatization manifested as conflictive urban encounters in a fragmented habitus.¹³³ Similarly, in a study of Latino students in postsecondary education, the authors examined narrative linkages to explain the gap between college aspirations and college enrollment, finding that institutional

¹³⁰ Loïc Wacquant, "Homines in Extremis: What Fighting Scholars Teach Us about Habitus," *Body & Society* 20, no. 2 (June 2014): 3–17.

¹³¹ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Carla Goar, and David G. Embrick, "When Whites Flock Together: The Social Psychology of White Habitus," *Critical Sociology* 32, no. 2–3 (2006): 229–53; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, 3 edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009).

¹³² Bob Lingard, Sam Sellar, and Aspa Baroutsis, "Researching the Habitus of Global Policy Actors in Education," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 45, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 25–42; Misako Nukaga, "Planning for a Successful Return Home: Transnational Habitus and Education Strategies among Japanese Expatriate Mothers in Los Angeles," *International Sociology* 28, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 66–83; Jaime R. DeLuca, "Like a 'Fish in Water': Swim Club Membership and the Construction of the Upper-Middle-Class Family Habitus," *Leisure Studies* 35, no. 3 (May 3, 2016): 259–77; Wolfgang Lehmann, "Habitus Transformation and Hidden Injuries: Successful Working-Class University Students," *Sociology of Education* 87, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 1–15; Michael Hartmann, "Class-Specific Habitus and the Social Reproduction of the Business Elite in Germany and France," *The Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (May 1, 2000): 241–61.

¹³³ Remus Crețan et al., "Everyday Roma Stigmatization: Racialized Urban Encounters, Collective Histories and Fragmented Habitus," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 46, no. 1 (2022): 82–100.

agents played a critical role in cultivating a sense of empowerment among need-based Latinos.¹³⁴ In contrast, the diachronic/deductive approach is more generally a study of interactions or group processes.¹³⁵ For example, in a study of moral dispositions, Samuel Perry analyzed fundraising activities, finding that whites were more likely to avoid donations to organizations that assist minorities.¹³⁶ Similar to Bonilla-Silva, Perry also found that whites had a tendency to engage in colorblind practices and often diminished the importance of race while simultaneously benefiting from racial privileges, such as dense fundraising systems. In another study of how habitus impacts working-class students, the author conducted various workshops that involved music and photography in order to explain how the concepts of hope and aspiration manifested in their artistic work.¹³⁷ The study of the working-class, particularly in relation to the concept of academic habitus, is a common subject for analysis. The incorporation of race, which was not part of Bourdieu's central argument, is a relatively newer concept that is understudied in most fields. In addition to the concept of white habitus, there is also the concept of Black habitus as well as the overall framework of "racialized habitus" that has been implemented in recent times.

¹³⁴ Zarrina Talan Azizova and Jesse Perez Mendez, "Understanding Promise: Impact of State Support on Latino High School Student Habitus," *Journal of Latinos and Education* 0, no. 0 (March 22, 2019): 1–17.

¹³⁵ Tae-Il Yoon, Kyung-Hee Kim, and Han-Jin Eom, "The Border-Crossing of Habitus: Media Consumption, Motives, and Reading Strategies among Asian Immigrant Women in South Korea," *Media, Culture & Society* 33, no. 3 (April 1, 2011): 415–31; Steph Lawler, "Rules of Engagement: Habitus, Power and Resistance," *The Sociological Review* 52, no. 2_suppl (October 1, 2004): 110–28; Harald Bauder, "Habitus, Rules of the Labour Market and Employment Strategies of Immigrants in Vancouver, Canada," *Social & Cultural Geography* 6, no. 1 (February 1, 2005): 81–97; Dan Cui, "Capital, Distinction, and Racialized Habitus: Immigrant Youth in the Educational Field," *Journal of Youth Studies* 18, no. 9 (October 21, 2015): 1154–69; Caroline Oliver and Karen O'Reilly, "A Bourdieusian Analysis of Class and Migration: Habitus and the Individualizing Process," *Sociology* 44, no. 1 (February 1, 2010): 49–66.

¹³⁶ Samuel L. Perry, "Racial Habitus, Moral Conflict, and White Moral Hegemony Within Interracial Evangelical Organizations," *Qualitative Sociology* 35, no. 1 (March 1, 2012): 89–108.

¹³⁷ Thomas Grant, "The Complexity of Aspiration: The Role of Hope and Habitus in Shaping Working-Class Young People's Aspirations to Higher Education," *Children's Geographies* 15, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 289–303;

The concept of white habitus, which Bonilla-Silva engages in his study of white college students, has also been used in other studies examining white behaviors and collective outcomes.¹³⁸ The vast majority of these studies have similar findings as Bonilla-Silva and Perry; whiteness is a structured privilege that is reproduced via habitus. In relation to Black habitus, the outcomes are substantially different although the methodological approaches are similar.¹³⁹ For example, a study of Black habitus at an elite white academic institution examined how African American students navigated the dominant white narratives that determined how they dressed, acted, and engaged with peers.¹⁴⁰ The authors conducted interviews with students and found that conflict emerged when the symbologies associated with white habitus came into direct contestation with those cultivated via Black habitus. The students reported feeling out of place in relation to students, teachers and the administration who ignored the entitlements of white students while engaging in casual anti-Black racism. In a different study of Black habitus and the educational field, the author also found that Black students had to overcome the deeply entrenched narratives of colorblind racism that were common in institutions that were historically reserved for whites.¹⁴¹ Many of the studies focused on white or Black habitus

¹³⁸ Margaret Ann Hagerman, "Reproducing and Reworking Colorblind Racial Ideology: Acknowledging Children's Agency in the White Habitus," *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 2016): 58–71; Meghan A. Burke, "Discursive Fault Lines: Reproducing White Habitus in a Racially Diverse Community," *Critical Sociology* 38, no. 5 (2012): 645–68.

¹³⁹ Kimberly Griffin et al., "'Oh, of Course I'm Going to Go to College': Understanding How Habitus Shapes the College Choice Process of Black Immigrant Students," *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 5, no. 2 (2012): 96–111; Richard Lofton and James Earl Davis, "Toward a Black Habitus: African Americans Navigating Systemic Inequalities within Home, School, and Community," *The Journal of Negro Education* 84, no. 3 (2015): 214–30; Martin P. Smith, Louis Harrison Jr, and Anthony L. Brown, "The Misintegration of the Negro: A Historical Analysis of Black Male Habitus in Sport and Schooling," *Urban Education* 52, no. 6 (2017): 745–74.

¹⁴⁰ Erin McNamara Horvat and Anthony Lising Antonio, "'Hey, Those Shoes Are Out of Uniform': African American Girls in an Elite High School and the Importance of Habitus," *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1999): 317–42.

¹⁴¹ David M. Merolla, "Oppositional Culture, Black Habitus and Education: A New Perspective on Racial Differences in Student Attitudes and Beliefs," *Race, Gender & Class* 21, no. 1/2 (2014): 99–111;

reinforce Bourdieu's overall theoretical framework about the subjective and objective processes of socialization. The field, or rather the U.S. social sphere, is one that is *racialized* and hierarchical. As a result, the agents within, whether white or Black or any other group, have access to different forms of capital depending on their position in the field. As a result, they produce different forms of habitus that inculcate diverse practices that either support or counter the dominating logic of that field. For whites, habitus serves as a means of reproducing privilege. For Black Americans, habitus serves as a site of radical subjectivity.

The concept of racialized habitus is less well developed among scholars, nonetheless, it is the overarching framework for various studies that are interested in identity and practice.¹⁴² In addition, there is also a concept of "colonial habitus" that roots the sociospatial structures of imperialism to the internalization of racialized norms.¹⁴³ Both the racialized and colonial approaches note the influence of sociohistorical conditions on the fields that impact group practices in diverse ways. For example, although the studies of white and Black habitus do not explicitly mention racialized habitus, they are implicitly acknowledging the racialized foundations of the field. Similarly, studies of colonial habitus, although fewer and farther in between, implicitly acknowledge the impact of colonialism on the global field. Bourdieu's approach, which seeks to explain how social structures become sedimented and manifest as mental dispositions, requires a critical understanding of the field. As explained earlier, the

¹⁴² Dan Cui, "Capital, Distinction, and Racialized Habitus: Immigrant Youth in the Educational Field," *Journal of Youth Studies* 18, no. 9 (October 21, 2015): 1154–69; Heather Mooney, "Sad Girls and Carefree Black Girls," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 46, no. 3 & 4 (2018): 175–94; Dan Cui and Frank Worrell, "Media, Symbolic Violence and Racialized Habitus: Voices from Chinese Canadian Youth," *The Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers Canadiens de Sociologie* 44, no. 3 (2019): 233–56.

¹⁴³ Vivek Dhareshwar, "Self-Fashioning, Colonial Habitus, and Double Exclusion: V. S. Naipaul's 'The Mimic Men,'" *Criticism* 31, no. 1 (1989): 75–102; Pere Ayling, "Frantz Fanon: Whiteness, Colonialism and the Colonial Habitus," in *Distinction, Exclusivity and Whiteness: Elite Nigerian Parents and the International Education Market*, ed. Pere Ayling (Singapore: Springer, 2019), 31–43; Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley, "State Formation, Habitus, and National Character," *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* 45, no. 1 (171) (2020): 226–61.

political sphere in the U.S. is inherently a *racialized* social field. We cannot, or rather should not, set this relationship aside. Studies of race and habitus only reinforce this argument. A sense of collective obligation, which is central to political solidarity, can only emerge in a racialized field. Even if this obligation or sense of collectivity emerges as a *de-racialized* identity, as is the case with white habitus, it is still fundamentally a product of spatial process and racial social structures. Engagement with racialized space, or the field, produces various forms of habitus, which are necessary for forging a collective practice. In order to explain how political solidarity emerges among one group, but not another, we need to account for these various systems of symbolic production that may limit or hinder the possibility for collective action.

Summary

In this chapter I discussed the theoretical foundations of racialized habitus, as well as the methodological approaches that are often implemented in habitus studies. First, I discussed how scholars have framed the *relational* aspects of social space by highlighting the various spatial systems of production that have shifted over time. In particular, I discussed how modes of production and macro-level institutions influence, and are influenced by, spatiality. Spatiality refers to the concepts in Lefebvre and Soja's triads: perceived space (everyday activities and spatial practices), conceived space (the space of planners), and lived space. In addition, I discussed how social space is framed as an inherently political system of production. Thus, each aspect of the triad is also a facet of political production. This political influence is particularly important in relation to racialized groups, as the racialization of space fundamentally requires the production of spaces of privilege, as well as the counterspaces where revolutionary practices are forged. In addition to discussing critical spatial theory, I explained how racialized space has been conceptualized within the U.S. context. Arguably, spatiality is a framework that is rooted to

sociohistorical conditions and the production of space in the U.S. is a racial project. We cannot detach these foundations from the ongoing spatial practices that are engendered within this field. By extension, we cannot detach the concept of spatiality and racialization from political solidarity because the intersection of these processes produces the networks that sustain that collective practice. Finally, I explained how habitus is conceptualized and where it fits in the study of social space. Overall, we can situate habitus as the bridge between these different spatial structures. Habitus mediates the relationship between perceived, conceived and lived space. As a mediating structure, habitus is a set of dispositions, or more specifically, *schemes of perception*, that influence individual and collective actions. In the context of the U.S. political sphere, these schemes are explicitly racialized. In addition to explaining the theoretical background of habitus, I explained how the concept has been implemented in various studies, particularly the synchronic/inductive and diachronic/deductive methods for revealing the functions of habitus. There is no standard approach for studying habitus, although most, if not all, studies integrate spatiality to explain why habitus is important. In the next chapter, I will discuss how the concept of racialized habitus was implemented and the methodological boundaries of this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss how the concept of racialized habitus was implemented in this study of political solidarity in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, and how this case study illustrates the influence of spatiality on Latino collective actions. This is a *diachronic* case study of a single community that implements both historical and qualitative analysis in order to illustrate how racialized habitus is shaped over time and how Latinos in Boyle Heights engage with that habitus via various networks.¹⁴⁴ As explained in Chapter 2, Bourdusian approaches to social groups are specifically designed to engage with both the subjective and objective aspects of any given field, and this study adopts a similar approach. This study can be situated among “historically oriented political science” which examines narrative and discourse to draw inferences about specific theories.¹⁴⁵ In this chapter, I will explain how those principles influenced the research design that was adopted in order to answer my initial research questions: 1) How does habitus cultivate and sustain a sense of obligation among Latinos in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, 2) How does habitus cultivate and sustain a sense of racialization among Latinos in Boyle Heights, Angeles and 3) Do Latinos in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles with a racialized sense of identity feel a sense of political obligation with other Latinos outside of their community? First, I will discuss the research philosophy that was adopted for this study and why I believe a qualitative approach is necessary for examining the processes that underlie racialized habitus. This includes a brief discussion on the debate between interpretivist and positivist modes of analysis and the limits of positivist methodologies in relation to spatiality and racialized habitus.

¹⁴⁴ John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 1st edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹⁴⁵ Ian S. Lustick, “History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias,” *The American Political Science Review* 90, no. 3 (1996): 605–18.

Additionally, I will explain why the diachronic case study is the best approach for illustrating how Latinos engage with racialized habitus. Finally, I will explain the type of data that was analyzed in this study as well as data collection methods, study delimitations, and methodological limitations.

Research Design

Research Philosophy

In keeping with the principles of habitus and Bourdieusian approaches to social analysis, this study implements an interpretivist, or qualitative, approach for illustrating the processes of racialized habitus. Positivism, which is more generally associated with quantitative analyses, is an important approach for explaining outcomes but falls short in relation to process because it excludes the contextual data that is traditionally implemented in qualitative studies.¹⁴⁶ The perceived limitations of positivist methods in relation to identity and action is precisely why Bourdieu integrated a notion of field and habitus. In particular, he pointed out the inconsistencies between the static categories of identity that are required in statistical analysis and the dynamic processes that shape and re-shape identity over time.¹⁴⁷ He argued that positivists have a bevy of methods for analyzing outcomes but could not account for the multiscale processes that shape identity and, more importantly, produced collective outcomes. Self-identification with a static category is not enough, on its own, to produce an action related to that identity. Thus, interpretivist methods, which require the analysis of sociohistorical or contextual conditions, are more likely to reveal how processes function over time. Similarly, this study also implements a

¹⁴⁶ David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 5th edition (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2015).

¹⁴⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Habitus and Field: General Sociology, Volume 2 (1982-1983)* (Wiley, 2020).

qualitative approach in order to illustrate how racialized habitus influences the production of political solidarity, which is an outcome that needs to be forged and sedimented over time. Given the theoretical boundaries of this study and the principles that Bourdieu emphasized in his work, a positivist approach is incompatible with the concept of habitus. In order to explain how field and habitus interact to produce a political outcome, there has to be an analysis of both the objective facets of the field and the subjective experiences by the agents on that field. As a result, this study requires an understanding of the contextual and sociohistorical conditions that *objectively* shape the field, for which analysis of primary and secondary historical sources is the more appropriate approach.¹⁴⁸ In addition, this study seeks to explain the *subjective* experience of racialized habitus for which semi structured interviews, an interpretivist method, are the most appropriate approach.

Positivist research methodologies, such as surveying or structured interviews, are standardized and designed to minimize deviation from a specific protocol.¹⁴⁹ The purpose of these rigid boundaries is generally to reduce bias and improve the replicability of the study. Although this is a useful approach for certain types of political analyses, it is unsuited for illustrating how racialized habitus functions in relation to political solidarity in this specific community. The purpose of this study is to illustrate a process rather than a causal outcome. Moreover, this study is designed to explore how spatial conditions make political solidarity possible, as well as how this solidarity can be sustained over time. For this purpose, the diachronic case study was selected as the method because it implements the analysis of various forms of data, such as texts, archival material, oral histories and interviews, and is particularly

¹⁴⁸ Philip S. Gorski, ed., *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

¹⁴⁹ David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 5th edition (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2015).

useful when seeking to examine both objective and subjective experience over an extended period of time. Additionally, case studies are useful for illustrating processes, as Gerring explains:

Case studies, if well constructed, may allow one to peer into the box of causality to locate the intermediate factors lying between some structural cause and its purported effect... When studying decisional behavior, case study research may offer insight into the intentions, the reasoning capabilities, and information-processing procedures of the actors involved in a given setting (Gerring, 2006, 45).

In addition, case study methodology is a useful approach for examining the conditions that make an outcome possible, such as that implied between racialized habitus and political solidarity, through the implementation of *process-tracing*:

While other methods can be understood according to their quasi-experimental properties, process tracing invokes a more complex logic, one analogous to detective work, legal briefs, journalism, and traditional historical accounts. The analyst seeks to make sense of a congeries of disparate evidence, each of which sheds light on a single outcome or set of related outcomes. Note that although process tracing is always based on the analysis of a single case, the ramifications of that case may be generalizable, and indeed may be quite broad in scope (Gerring, 2006, 178-179).

Given that the purpose of this study is not replicability but rather to improve our understanding of the theoretical conditions that make political solidarity possible among Latinos, the case study is the more appropriate method. In general, the strengths of positivist approaches do not align with the goals of this study or the theoretical framework that is implemented in this study.

Interpretivist methods are much better suited to my research questions, the theoretical boundaries explained in the literature review, as well as the population that is being studied.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study engages with the *diachronic-deductive* approach which traces the development and trajectory of habitus in any given field.¹⁵⁰ In addition, I incorporated a *synchronic* case study approach using interviews in order to further illustrate the

¹⁵⁰ Loïc Wacquant, "Homines in Extremis : What Fighting Scholars Teach Us about Habitus," *Body & Society* 20, no. 2 (June 2014): 3–17.

theoretical principles of habitus. The synchronic-diachronic approach is the most common case study methodology and requires analysis of processes over time as well as within-case variation.¹⁵¹ This particular case study, which is a single case analysis, relies heavily on contextual and deductive logic to “reconstruct” the processes that influence racialized political solidarity in this community over time.¹⁵² In addition, I incorporate semi-structured interviews in order to show how engagement with racialized habitus can vary within this particular case. Inductive logic, which emerges from the collection of data, does not suit the theoretical principles that are being examined. Moreover, inductive case studies, which often implement quantitative analyses and rely on randomized data, are better suited for cross-case studies where statistical criteria are necessary for identifying potential cases in a large N study setting.¹⁵³ Given that this particular study involves tracing historical processes over time in a single community, inductive methodologies are unlikely to answer the research questions I posed at the outset of the study. A qualitative approach is better suited for the analysis of habitus, field and intersubjective exchange. As noted earlier, positivist methodologies are designed to identify different outcomes than this study.

Given that the focus of my research is the sedimentation of dispositions, intersubjective exchange with racialized networks, and the sociospatial qualities of racialized places, the reflexive aspects of qualitative analysis are more likely to reveal the processes that habitus implies. In particular, semi-structured interviews are designed to be more inclusive of participant

¹⁵¹ John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 1st edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 172.

¹⁵³ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 6th edition (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2017).

perspectives, which is critical for identifying the *subjective* influence of habitus.¹⁵⁴ The main purpose of this study is to improve theory development in relation to Latinos in the U.S., which is a strength of qualitative and case study approaches. Additionally, case studies are a useful methodology for analyzing a phenomenon in a bounded setting. As Gerring explains:

I propose to define case study as *an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units*. A unit connotes a spatially bounded phenomenon -- e.g. A nation-state, revolution, political party, election, or person -- observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time (2004, 342).

In this study, the phenomenon, racialized habitus, is the unit of analysis that is being studied in order to illustrate how racialized political solidarity is produced. Moreover, there is substantial evidence that case studies can be highly influential in relation to theory development.¹⁵⁵ This is particularly true of the single unit case study, which is generally an in-depth, descriptive analysis that is *exploratory* and theory-generating.¹⁵⁶ Given that the purpose of this study is the development of theoretical principles that can explain the political outcomes among Latinos, a case study approach is the best starting point. Habitus was *specifically* designed as an antithesis to positivist methodologies and quantitative analysis cannot possibly align with the theoretical boundaries of Bourdieu's work. Qualitative work, which can identify critical processes in relation to political participation, can ultimately improve quantitative measures over time. However, the purpose of this study is to illustrate theoretical principles that are relatively new in the field of Latino politics and the implementation of positivist methodologies that incorporate a

¹⁵⁴ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications*.

¹⁵⁵ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Illustrated edition (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2005); Sharon Crasnow, "The Role of Case Study Research in Political Science: Evidence for Causal Claims," *Philosophy of Science* 79, no. 5 (December 2012): 655–66.

¹⁵⁶ John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (May 2004): 341–54.

concept like spatiality would require further theoretical development and different data collection methods..

Case Study Selection

The foundational argument I am making with the concept of racialized habitus is that there is a process of racialization, which is spatially reproduced, that influences the production of political solidarity among Latinos. As explained in detail in both Chapters 1 and 2, concepts like group consciousness, or linked fate, are the products of sedimented systems of racialization that have produced identity-based systems of political action. For Latinos, who navigate racialized space in their own unique way as a result of the varying identity frameworks that shape the group, the processes that produce political solidarity require the negotiation of racial, ethnic, and generational barriers. This negotiation is a *spatial* process that influences the production of racialized political solidarity and a case study is more likely to answer the research questions that motivated this study, particularly process-tracing.¹⁵⁷ As Vennesson explains:

Process tracing is a fundamental element of empirical case study research because it provides a way to learn and to evaluate empirically the preferences and perceptions of actors, their purposes, their goals, their values and their specification of the situations that face them. Process tracing helps the researcher to uncover, directly and indirectly, what actors want, know and compute (Vennesson, 2008, 233).

Process-tracing is also a common approach in interpretivist studies that are seeking to implement a contextualist explanation for specific outcomes. In order to implement a process-tracing approach in this study, I identified three factors that hypothetically influence the production of political solidarity among Latinos: *spatiality*, *racialization*, and *intersubjective exchange*. These factors are “steps” in the processes of forging a racialized sense of political solidarity among

¹⁵⁷ Pascal Vennesson, “Case Studies and Process Tracing: Theories and Practices,” in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, ed. Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 223–39.

Latinos.¹⁵⁸ The logic of process-tracing is that each analytical “step” is designed to shed light on the next until the researcher arrives at their hypothesized outcome.

As explained in Chapter 2, the literature on spatiality suggests that there are spatial processes of racialization that influence the production of political behaviors among racially marginalized groups. In order to illustrate how these theoretical principles function in relation to Latino political solidarity, I examined each factor (spatiality, racialization, intersubjective exchange) individually. This case study is similar to the “crucial case” approach which explores theoretical principles by analyzing their potential in the most likely or least likely setting.¹⁵⁹ This study adopts principles of theory-testing process tracing methodologies, as well as historical analysis, and crucial case methodology.¹⁶⁰ In keeping with those principles, I chose the community of Boyle Heights, Los Angeles as a site for analysis because it was the *most likely* setting where the aspects of racialized habitus could be approached empirically, a common approach for crucial case and process-tracing case studies. As a community with a long-established history of political activism, as well as its location in a historically redlined sector of the city of Los Angeles, Boyle Heights has a wealth of historical data that can be assessed in relation to racialized space, including primary archival sources and secondary sources.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 1st edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 174.

¹⁵⁹ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Illustrated edition (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2005); John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 1st edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); John Gerring, “Is There a (Viable) Crucial-Case Method?,” *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 3 (March 1, 2007): 231–53.

¹⁶⁰ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*, 2nd edition (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019).

¹⁶¹ Sophie Spalding, “The Myth of the Classic Slum: Contradictory Perceptions of Boyle Heights Flats, 1900–1991,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 45, no. 2 (February 1, 1992): 107–19; Eric Avila, “L.A.’s Invisible Freeway Revolt: The Cultural Politics of Fighting Freeways,” *Journal of Urban History* 40, no. 5 (September 1,

Moreover, given the longitudinal aspects of the study that are implied by sedimented dispositions, choosing a site also depended on the availability of archival data. Boyle Heights is a community that receives significant academic attention, even to the point of being met with strong resistance from residents.¹⁶² As a result, there is extensive scholarly work on the area that indicates there is a dense network of sedimented networks that have been produced in this space. The availability of this research, as well as community concerns about academic exploitation, are another reason the case study approach is a more appropriate qualitative method. Other methods, such as ethnography, could also be useful for illustrating the function of racialized habitus, but they are intrusive and ethically dubious given the displacement caused by increased gentrification in the community.

Data Collection

As noted earlier, three factors are analyzed in relation to the theoretical foundations of racialized habitus: spatiality, racialization, and intersubjective exchange. In keeping with the principles of process-tracing, these factors were analyzed as steps that lead to a specific outcome, racialized habitus, which functions as a mediating structure that explains how racialized political solidarity is made possible. This framework aligns with the *in depth* approach to theory-testing process-tracing which involves 1) Conceptualization → Operationalizing Empirical Fingerprints → Collecting and Evaluating Evidence.¹⁶³ Conceptualization of racialized habitus has already been discussed at length. Operationalization in process-tracing can vary from case to case,

2014): 831–42; George J. Sánchez, *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*, First edition (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2021).

¹⁶² Brittney Mejia, “Gentrification Pushes up against Boyle Heights — and Vice Versa,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 2016.

¹⁶³ Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*, 2nd edition (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019), 264.

particularly in theory-testing and theory-building frameworks. This study is more specifically a blend of various methodologies, which is necessary when conducting studies of habitus that require a bridge between objective and subjective conditions. As a result, this is not a formal theory-testing design, rather it is designed to illustrate how the theoretical principles of racialized habitus emerge in a specific case. The process of “operationalizing” spatiality, racialization and intersubjective is described below in Figure 3. The collection of evidence in a process-tracing case study requires that the researcher make predictions about the evidence that should manifest in relation to each factor that was analyzed, this is also detailed in Figure 3. Data collection was non-randomized given the contextual framework of the study and the need for specific residents (Latina/o/x or Hispanic) in a specific community (Boyle Heights, Los Angeles). In keeping with the principles of habitus, the concept of the field was integrated through historical and archival analysis. Archives were selected according to their availability during COVID restrictions, as well as the size of their archival material related to Boyle Heights. Given the lack of access to archival sources that were identified at the onset of the study before COVID, I incorporated oral histories to strengthen the analysis of intersubjective exchange as well as the historical record. The archives used in this study include the Boyle Heights Archive at CSU-Los Angeles, the Juana Beatriz Gutiérrez Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) Collection at CSU-Northridge, the Ulises Diaz Adobe LA Archive at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, and the Center for Oral History Research at UCLA. These archives were chosen because they 1) included political materials related to Latinos in Boyle Heights and 2) included political narratives by Latino community members of Boyle Heights. These materials (archival,

secondary and oral histories) function as historical “account evidence” or testimonies and documentation that can illustrate empirical accounts of racialized discourse.¹⁶⁴

Theoretical Mechanism: Racialized Habitus				
Mediating Structure: <i>Racialized Habitus</i>	Step 1: <u>Spatiality</u>	Step 2: <u>Racialization</u>	Step 3: <u>Intersubjective Exchange</u>	Outcome: <i>Racialized Political Solidarity</i>
Engagement with racialized habitus, a set of dispositions that can be mobilized for a collective political action among racially marginalized groups.	A socially constructed and bounded system of symbolic meaning that influences the actions of agents within any given spatial field, functions co-constitutively with racialization.	A process of racial “othering” that places non-white groups at a political disadvantage and produces a need for collective political actions in order to remedy group disparities, functions co-constitutively with spatiality.	Racialized spaces produce sedimented dispositions (habitus) that are cultivated by <i>discursive</i> engagement with networks that cultivate and disseminate racialized narratives among group members.	Individuals who positively engage with these networks are more likely to feel a sense of political obligation with other group members and acknowledge the impact of racialization on the group’s social trajectory.
Proposed Evidence (Predicted Empirical Manifestations)				
Latinos who believe that racialization impacts the group <i>politically</i> will engage in racialized discourse and symbolic exchange with familial, social and community networks that validate the need	Account evidence, primarily historical material such as primary and secondary sources, will show how spatiality has produced racialized places with their own systems of	Account evidence, both historical and qualitative, will show how racialization has influenced political actions, both collective and individual, among Latinos in these racialized places. The data collected will	Account Evidence, primarily semi-structured interviews, will reveal the <i>subjective</i> experience of racialized habitus through the use of racialized discourse in a political context. Oral Histories	Account Evidence, primarily semi-structured interviews and oral histories, will show that discursive engagement with racialized familial, social and community produce a sense of political

¹⁶⁴ Beach and Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods*, 172.

for a collective response.	political networks and cultural production.	reveal the <i>objective</i> conditions of racialized habitus.	will show how habitus has functioned in the past (diachronic) and interviews will reveal how this process works in a contemporary setting (synchronic).	obligation with other Latinos over time. This evidence will manifest as racialized discourse that links individual political beliefs and collective political actions to structural racial barriers.
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Figure 3. Process-Tracing Overview, derived from Löblová’s study of epistemic communities, cited in *Beach and Pedersen, Process-Tracing Methods*, 262.

As noted above in Figure 3, the process of conceptualizing and operationalizing racialized habitus relies largely on historical and qualitative data. In addition to archival data, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with Boyle Heights residents in order to examine racialized habitus in a *synchronic* framework in order to strengthen the overall rigor of the case study. Participants were identified through a non-randomized selection process with only two basic parameters: 1) Resident of Boyle Heights, and 2) Identified as Latina/o/x or Hispanic. As a single case study with specific spatial and contextual boundaries, this is the most appropriate sampling method. Purposive sampling was also implemented in order to identify residents in the community who regularly engage in political actions, this included direct contact with local activists as well as residents who attend meetings of the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council, and members of community organizations dedicated to social justice. This also aligns with the crucial case methodological principles of seeking the most likely case for your theoretical framework. The interview was structured around the three factors identified in Figure 3: Spatiality, Racialization and Intersubjective Exchange. These included questions about the participant’s relationship with the community of Boyle Heights, their perceptions about their

identity as Latinos, and the extent to which they exchanged ideas about their political beliefs with friends, family and community members. The interviews were conducted via phone, which presents potential limitations for building rapport which is a central aspect of semi-structured interview methodologies and interpretivist studies.¹⁶⁵ In order to create a sense of trust between myself and the participants, I made every effort to explain the purpose of the study, the rationale for choosing Boyle Heights, and my own positionality as a Chicana researcher who is an outsider to the community. These conversations about the study took place before interviews were conducted. Interviews averaged 60 minutes in length. Given that the focus of this study is process and discourse, the purpose of these interviews was not to maintain a rigid protocol but rather to interrogate how participants speak about their own identity, their relationship with their community, and their opinions on racialization.

Data Analysis

As noted in the previous section, this study is not a formal process-tracing study but rather a mix of qualitative and historical methodologies that were implemented in order to illustrate how racialized habitus functions. Similarly, data analysis also entailed the incorporation of mixed techniques. Interpretive case studies do not have clearly defined methods for analysis, although narrative and discourse analysis are common approaches.¹⁶⁶ Each step in the process-tracing described in Figure 3 required a different analytical framework. Spatiality and Racialization, which are both objective and subjective facets of social production, are *historically* produced aspects of habitus that were examined via discourse analysis, which identified the use

¹⁶⁵ Timothy John Rapley, "The Art(Fulness) of Open-Ended Interviewing: Some Considerations on Analysing Interviews," *Qualitative Research* 1, no. 3 (December 1, 2001): 303–23; David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 5th edition (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2015).

¹⁶⁶ David Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 5th edition (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2015).

of racialized language in a political context, and thematic analysis, which identified patterns of racialized language in non-political contexts.¹⁶⁷ Texts and documents that were identified in the data collection phase of the study were analyzed for 1) the use of racialized discourse in relation to Latino political events, 2) the use of racialized discourse in relation to Latino identity, and 3) the use of racialized discourse in political appeals for Latino support. This is essentially an “interpretivist repertoire” approach which examines how related terms are organized coherently around specific concepts, in this case, racialized terms were analyzed in their relation to political discourse.¹⁶⁸ This historical narrative approach also aligns with the principles of *field* theory that are central to habitus studies.¹⁶⁹ In addition, the oral histories that were incorporated in this study, which include long-time residents and activists in Boyle Heights, were similarly analyzed for the use of racialized discourse in a political context and the invocation of racialized frames in relation to their identities as Latinos from Boyle Heights.

Interview data was similarly analyzed for racialized discourse. In particular, I focused on engagement with the three themes identified in Figure 3: spatiality, racialization and intersubjective exchange and the “rhetorical organization” of discourse related to those themes.¹⁷⁰ Each interview that was collected is an illustrative case within the overarching study of racialized habitus. As noted in Chapter 1, as well as Chapter 2, habitus studies are not designed to be a large N approach. Moreover, there is no standard sample size that is appropriate

¹⁶⁷ Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, First edition (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2007).

¹⁶⁸ Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 450.

¹⁶⁹ Philip S. Gorski, ed., *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

¹⁷⁰ Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 207.

for this study. Small N samples are common in qualitative studies, where data collection should reflect the research paradigms of the study and contextual limitations of the theoretical framework.¹⁷¹ The sample size that was chosen, along with the other data that was collected, reflects a heavy saturation of the theoretical concepts that are presented, which is an appropriate measure in qualitative analysis and theory development. A total of 10 interviews were incorporated in order to examine how the processes that are evident in the historical record emerge in a contemporary setting and to examine variation within the case, a synchronic approach. Ages of participants ranged from 18-31 and included individuals who identify as male, female and nonbinary. Length of residence in the community ranged from 5-31 years. All participants except one identified as Mexican American and range from immigrant to 3rd generation. Interview length ranged from 45-60 minutes in length and participants were asked questions about their community (spatiality), their identity and political beliefs (racialization), and how they negotiate those identities at home, work and in the community (intersubjective exchange). The data that was gathered from archival research, oral histories, and interviews was then organized in relation to the thematic factors identified for process-tracing. The findings for this study are presented in a descriptive narrative which is a common case study format. When necessary, images were also incorporated to illustrate how certain racialized discourses were disseminated through political messages. In the next chapter, each process factor (spatiality, racialization, and intersubjective exchange) is examined thematically and in a step-by-step format in order to align with the principles of process-tracing.

¹⁷¹ Clive Roland Boddy, "Sample Size for Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* 19, no. 4 (January 1, 2016): 426–32, <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-06-2016-0053>; Kirsti Malterud, Volkert Dirk Siersma, and Ann Dorrit Guassora, "Sample Size in Qualitative Interview Studies: Guided by Information Power," *Qualitative Health Research* 26, no. 13 (November 2016): 1753–60, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444>.

Study Limitations

As mentioned previously, some of the main concerns of case study analysis, particular single N cases, is the concept of replicability or generalizability. These concerns are valid in a positivist framework where methodologies have to be structured and unbiased by necessity. However, the purpose of this study is to improve the development of theoretical principles related to Latino political solidarity through the incorporation of spatiality. This spatiality is explained through historical and qualitative methods, which are specifically designed to build and develop theory. Although the historical conditions in this community are to some extent unique, the processes that shape racialized habitus are more generalizable. As explained earlier, the concept of linked-fate could be framed as an aspect of racialized habitus in the African American community. Similarly, there will be diverse ways that Latino communities engage with racialized habitus given the contextual diversity of Latino spaces and places. This study is not designed to be replicated, rather it is designed to improve our overall understanding of the principles that shape racialized political action among Latinos. The impetus behind this study stems from the limitations of current theoretical principles which are more generally designed for different groups. Improving the theories that underlie both positivist and interpretivist methods is crucial for improving scholarship related to the group, as well as for identifying the factors that may hinder the cultivation of political solidarity.

Summary

In this chapter I identified the philosophical and methodological decisions that were made in order to describe how racialized habitus functions. This includes a conversation about the close ties between interpretivist methods and the theoretical principles of habitus. In addition, I explained how the community of Boyle Heights was selected, how archival material was

collected, and how study participants were selected. I also explained how the process-tracing method was used in this study, as well as the facets that were set aside due to the boundaries of the study. Moreover, I explained how the concepts of spatiality, racialization and intersubjective exchange were operationalized for the purposes of empirical analysis. In the next chapter, I will describe how these factors interact to produce the dense networks of symbolic meaning that sustain racialized habitus.

Chapter 4: Racialized Habitus in Boyle Heights

Overview

In this chapter I will explain how the concept of racialized habitus was applied in the community of Boyle Heights, Los Angeles. As noted in Chapter 3, the framework for this study engages with the concepts of *spatiality*, *racialization*, and *intersubjective exchange*. Specifically, I explain how the intersection of race and space cultivates racialized networks that are critical for the intersubjective exchange that produces a sense of political obligation and solidarity among Latinos. This chapter is organized in two sections. First there is the *diachronic* aspect of the study where I explain how racialization has become sedimented in community histories and narratives over time, and then I shift to the *synchronic* aspect of the study that focuses specifically on interview data. In the first section of this chapter, I briefly describe the history of the community in the period prior to the 1960s when the Latino population began to outnumber the other groups represented in the neighborhood. In the next section, I use archival data to explain how the concepts of *spatiality* and *racialization* emerge in this specific community. This includes a brief summary of the structural spatial processes that have shaped Boyle Heights, as well as an analysis of how community members have engaged with racialized narratives over time. In addition, I use oral histories to further explain how racialized networks influence dispositions, or habitus, through *intersubjective exchange*. These oral histories include activists as well as professionals from the community. Finally, I engage with the synchronic aspect of the case study by examining how current residents negotiate these same networks and the extent to which they influence their political obligations to other Latinos.

Cultivating Racialized Habitus in Boyle Heights

Racialized Space in East Los Angeles

Boyle Heights, Los Angeles is an ethnic community in East Los Angeles that was originally part of the Paredón Blanco land grant. Purchased by Andrew Boyle in 1858, the area was later renamed “Boyle Heights” by his son-in-law, the politician and former mayor of Los Angeles, William H. Workman.¹⁷² Various freeway systems intersect the community and it is bordered by Lincoln Heights, City Terrace, USC and Downtown Los Angeles among others (Figure 4). The community has undergone various transformations over time but has historically been home to numerous marginalized ethnic groups including Irish, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Jewish and Mexican immigrants. Currently, Boyle Heights is a predominantly Latino community (93%) with an estimated population of 86,175.¹⁷³ More than 80% of the community speaks Spanish at home and immigrants comprise nearly 50% of the population. The community is largely home to working-class families (median household income - \$50,623) who are renters (72.9%). Boyle Heights has historically functioned as a “gateway city” for immigrants and has been associated with the practices of “ghettoization” that isolated ethnic communities in underprivileged spaces.¹⁷⁴ As a result, the community has faced a significant number of disparities in terms of education, health, policing, and housing. Although many of the spatial processes that isolated and marginalized the community began before the era of Latino dominance, they have continued unabated for decades. Many of the contemporary issues in the

¹⁷² George J. Sánchez, *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*, First edition (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2021).

¹⁷³ Boyle Heights Demographic Profile - Los Angeles Department of City Planning, 2021.

¹⁷⁴ Clara Irazábal and Ramzi Farhat, “Latino Communities in the United States: Place-Making in the Pre-World War II, Postwar, and Contemporary City,” *Journal of Planning Literature* 22, no. 3 (February 1, 2008): 207–28.

community are rooted in spatial policies and practices, such as the struggles against gentrification, the contestation of the expansion of the prison system in East Los Angeles, and the increasing crisis in the city due to the lack of housing. Historian Rodolfo Acuña refers to the East Los Angeles area as a “community under siege” given the hyperpolicing of the Chicana/o/x residents in the area and the lack of attention in terms of quality of life.¹⁷⁵ This study indicates that the problems that have historically impacted the community are not only a direct consequence of the racialization of the neighborhood, but also that they are inherently *spatial*. The boundaries of Boyle Heights are constantly under attack. Consequently, the political practices that have been forged in contestation of these policies are similarly racialized and spatial in nature.

The neighborhood has a long history of multicultural organizing and coalition-building among Jewish, Japanese, African American and Latino communities. In the early 20th century, the community was home to a substantial Jewish population.¹⁷⁶ The Mexican Revolution in 1910 accelerated the migration of Mexican immigrants and by the 1920s Japanese immigrants also began moving into the neighborhood.¹⁷⁷ The ethnic diversity of the community is also reflected in the redlining maps that were produced by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) between 1935 and 1940 (Figures 5 & 6). The area description for Boyle Heights, which was given the lowest possible rating of D by the HOLC, described the neighborhood as a “melting

¹⁷⁵ Rodolfo F. Acuña, *A Community Under Siege: A Chronicle of Chicanos East of the Los Angeles River, 1945-1975* (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, University of California Los Angeles, 1984).

¹⁷⁶ Wendy Elliott, “The Jews of Boyle Heights, 1900-1950: The Melting Pot of Los Angeles,” *Southern California Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (1996): 1–10.

¹⁷⁷ “Boyle Heights Timeline compiled by George Sanchez”, Box 6, Folder 1, Ulises Diaz Adobe LA Archive, 93, Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles.

pot area” that is “literally honeycombed with diverse and subversive racial elements.”¹⁷⁸ As noted in Chapter 2, the history of redlining is one of many examples of how racialization and spatiality intersect to produce inequalities. In particular, the HOLC ratings were critical for potential homeowners who were seeking loans to buy a new home. With a rating of D, and a description that stated “it is seriously doubted whether there is a single block in the area which does not contain detrimental racial elements”, investment in the area was unlikely. Historically, redlined areas were more likely to house minority groups, hazardous waste, and dilapidated structures.¹⁷⁹ Resistance to these spatial policies, which are inherently racial in nature, has been common in the community for generations.

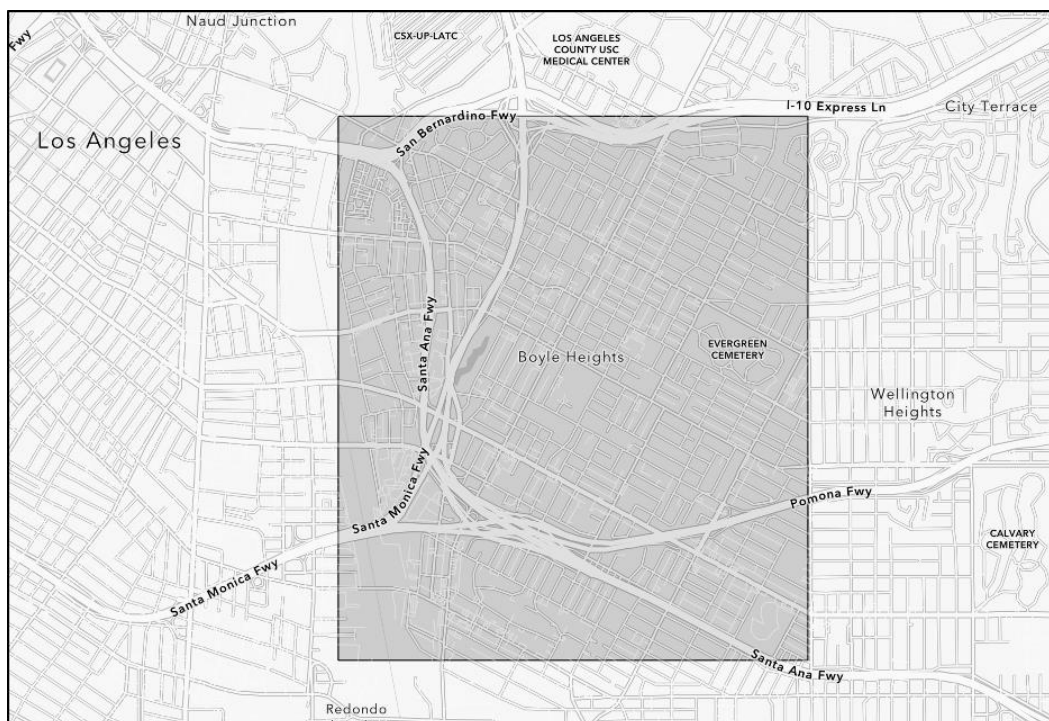


Figure 4: Overview of Boyle Heights which is intersected by various freeway systems.

¹⁷⁸ Mapping Inequality. United States, 2016. Web Archive. <https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0026813/>, Los Angeles, Area D53.

¹⁷⁹ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, Reprint edition (New York London: Norton, 2018).



Figure 5: Redlining Map of Boyle Heights, images provided by Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly, et al., “Mapping Inequality,” American Panorama, ed.

AREA DESCRIPTION
Security Map of LOS ANGELES COUNTY

1. POPULATION: a. Increasing Slowly Decreasing _____ Static _____

b. Class and Occupation Jewish professional & business men, Mexican laborers, WPA workers, etc. Income \$700 to \$2000 and up

c. Foreign Families 50 % Nationalities Russian, Polish & Armenian Jews, d. Negro 1 %
Slavs, Greeks, American Mexicans, Japanese and Italians

e. Shifting or Infiltration Subversive racial elements increasing.

2. BUILDINGS:

	PREDOMINATING	40 %	OTHER TYPE	%
a. Type and Size	<u>4, 5 & 6 rooms</u>		<u>2, 3 and 4 room shacks</u>	<u>30 %</u>
b. Construction	<u>Frame and stucco</u>		<u>Apts. & other multi-family</u>	<u>20 %</u>
c. Average Age	<u>20 years</u>		<u>Old 7 rooms and up</u>	<u>10 %</u>
d. Repair	<u>Poor to fair</u>			
e. Occupancy	<u>97 %</u>			
f. Owner-occupied	<u>20 %</u>			
g. 1935 Price Bracket	<u>\$2000-3250</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>% change</u>
h. 1937 Price Bracket	<u>\$2250-3500</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
i. 1939 Price Bracket	<u>\$250-3500</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
j. Sales Demand	<u>Poor</u>			
k. Predicted Price Trend (next 6-12 months)	<u>Static</u>			
l. 1935 Rent Bracket	<u>\$2.50-35.00</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>% change</u>
m. 1937 Rent Bracket	<u>\$25.00-40.00</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
n. 1939 Rent Bracket	<u>\$25.00-40.00</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>%</u>
o. Rental Demand	<u>Fair</u>			
p. Predicted Rent Trend (next 6-12 months)	<u>Static</u>		<u>\$4000-\$5500</u>	

3. NEW CONSTRUCTION (past yr.) No. 25 Type & Price 5 and 6 rooms How Selling Owner built

4. OVERHANG OF HOME PROPERTIES: a. HOLC. 3 b. Institutions Many

5. SALE OF HOME PROPERTIES (3 yr.) a. HOLC. 33 b. Institutions Few

6. MORTGAGE FUNDS: Limited 7. TOTAL TAX RATE PER \$1000 (1937-8) 52.80

8. DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AREA:
Terrain: Level to hillside with generally favorable grades and comparatively few construction hazards. Land improved 90%. This is a "melting pot" area and is literally honeycombed with diverse and subversive racial elements. It is seriously doubted whether there is a single block in the area which does not contain detrimental racial elements, and there are very few districts which are not hopelessly heterogeneous in type of improvement and quality of maintenance. Schools, churches, trading centers, recreational areas and transportation are all conveniently available. Many of the thoroughfares are arterial in character and constitute traffic hazards. This area is wholly in the City of Los Angeles. It is hazardous residential territory and is accorded a general medial red grade, although in many parts slum conditions prevail. The Federal Government, in conjunction with the city government are undertaking a slum clearance project covering 41 areas in the extreme northeast part of the area.

9. LOCATION Boyle Heights SECURITY GRADE 4th AREA NO. D-53 DATE 4-19-39
CAUTION: This area is currently affected in whole or in part by an Ad valorem Tax District. Individual properties should be checked for this hazard.
401

Figure 6: Area Description for Boyle Heights, images provided by Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly, et al., "Mapping Inequality," American Panorama, ed.

The community continued to undergo demographic changes in the face of racialized policies, such as the expulsion of Mexican Americans during the repatriation campaigns of the

1930s.¹⁸⁰ During this period, which lasted from 1931-1934, Boyle Heights experienced their first immigration raid and Los Angeles ultimately lost an estimated 1/3 of the Mexican American population.¹⁸¹ By 1940, Boyle Heights had grown to 85,000 residents (35,000 Jewish residents, 15,000 of Mexican descent, and 5,000 of Japanese descent).¹⁸² However, the population of the community began to change dramatically in the 1940s and 1950s. Executive Order 9066, which forced Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans into internment camps, led to the removal of residents in the community. In addition, the early stages of freeway development began cutting through the area. By the 1950s, when the Golden State Freeway and Pomona Freeway projects led to the “butchering” of the neighborhood, the community population had shifted dramatically.¹⁸³ In 1952, the population had changed to an estimated 60,500 residents (40,000 Mexican descent, 14,000 Jewish, 6,500 Japanese descent). This era of freeway development produced varying degrees of community resistance across the Los Angeles region, however, it was largely communities of color that faced significant displacement as a result.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, Boyle Heights, which already faced various disparities as a result of racialized spatial policies, was slowly dismantled and divided by the development of various freeway networks.¹⁸⁵ These

¹⁸⁰ Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*, 1st edition (Albuquerque: Univ of New Mexico Pr, 1995).

¹⁸¹ “Boyle Heights Timeline compiled by George Sanchez”, Box 6, Folder 1, Ulises Diaz Adobe LA Archive, 93, Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁸² Haynes Report, cited in “Boyle Heights Timeline compiled by George Sanchez”, Box 6, Folder 1, Ulises Diaz Adobe LA Archive, 93, Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles.

¹⁸³ George J. Sánchez, *Boyle Heights: How a Los Angeles Neighborhood Became the Future of American Democracy*, First edition (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2021), 181.

¹⁸⁴ Eric Avila, *The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2014); Eric Avila, “L.A.’s Invisible Freeway Revolt: The Cultural Politics of Fighting Freeways,” *Journal of Urban History* 40, no. 5 (September 1, 2014): 831–42.

¹⁸⁵ Sánchez, *Boyle Heights*, 270.

processes ultimately pushed the Jewish community out of the neighborhood and disrupted the political ties that had been slowly developed over time. In the post 1950s period, the grassroots networks that were originally forged by multiracial coalitions became increasingly centered in the racial politics of the Black and Brown communities in Los Angeles. In particular, the 1960s period was one of extensive political activity that was explicitly racialized and linked to the Chicano Movement.

As explained in Chapter 3, for the purposes of this study racialization is defined as a process of racial “othering” that places non-white groups at a political disadvantage and produces a need for collective political actions in order to remedy group disparities. This process of othering functions co-constitutively with spatiality. Although Boyle Heights was only starting to become a Latino majority community in the post-WW2 era, the processes of racialization that marginalized people of Mexican descent pre-dated the Mexican-American War. The construction of Mexican Americans as the foreign, unassimilable “other” was accelerated in the post-1848 period as the question of identity became critical in the face of statehood.¹⁸⁶ The U.S., which established policies of racialized marginalization and segregation with the African American community, took a similar approach with Mexican Americans. In Los Angeles they followed a similar pattern to African Americans in terms of racial isolation. In 1931, the *Monthly Labor Review* published a report on the “Labor and Social Conditions of Mexicans in California” that illustrates the practices that were common at the time:

Mexicans in California have a tendency to live in colonies both in urban and rural districts, and this retards their assimilation with the native population. The housing facilities available to most of the Mexicans are often poor and do not conform to proper sanitation standards. Sales agreements frequently prohibit these aliens from buying

¹⁸⁶ Laura E. Gomez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: NYU Press, 2008); Edward M. Telles and Vilma Ortiz, *Generations of Exclusion: Mexican-Americans, Assimilation, and Race* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2008)

property in any but Mexican districts. The existing ground-rent system in certain sections results in overcrowding and unhygienic conditions.¹⁸⁷

As explained in Chapter 2, processes of racialization in the U.S. manifest in spatial practices of exclusion and segregation. The racially-restrictive policies that limited the mobility of the Mexican American population were common throughout the state of California. Consequently, Boyle Heights was not an ethnic community by choice, but rather by design. As noted in Chapter 2, spatial processes of production are inherently *political* projects that simultaneously produce geographies of racial difference as well as counterspaces for political resistance. In East Los Angeles, which had been deliberately designed as a segregated space for ethnic groups, particularly Mexican Americans, identity was undoubtedly shaped by *racialized* systems of symbolic production. Over time, these racialized systems became increasingly sedimented in the cultural and political practices of the community.

Boyle Heights begins transforming to a space of Latino Empowerment

Although there is a strong multiracial history in Boyle Heights, it is also notable as a significant site of Chicana/o/x activism and cultural production since the 1960s. For example, a 1995 Cultural Needs Assessment of East Los Angeles that was conducted for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority identified more than 170 businesses, community centers, and cultural centers linked to Latino culture, as well as 100 murals in the region that were created between 1966-1992 (Figure 5). Many of these murals are located in Boyle Heights and use explicitly racialized language and images that are rooted to Mexican American and Latino culture, such as “Las Tres Culturas” (The Three Cultures) which was originally painted in 1974 by Rozelio Duarte and is located on Wabash Avenue (Figure 6). The mural depicts three

¹⁸⁷ Taken directly from the “Conditions of Mexicans in California”, in “Community Needs Assessment”, Boyle Heights Archive. California State University, Los Angeles.

themes that are linked by Chicana/o/x culture: revolution, indigeneity and the working class. Both Ramona Gardens and Estrada Courts, which are public housing developments in Boyle Heights, are also home to dozens of murals celebrating Chicana/o/x culture. Religious iconography and ideology was also explicitly linked to racialized political practices in the area, as evidenced by groups like “Católicos por la Raza” (CPLR) who linked their faith to the practice of political solidarity and argued that political issues such as education and housing disparities were detrimental to their spiritual wellbeing.¹⁸⁸ In addition, there was a strong system of Mexican American organizing in East Los Angeles that Boyle Heights residents could build on. This included Spanish-language radio programs that emphasize community issues, the regularization of Catholic processions and events, the formation of the Mexican Youth Conference, the formation of the Confederation of Mexican Labor Unions in 1927, and the Congress of Spanish Speaking Peoples of the United States held in 1938.¹⁸⁹ Latino residents in Los Angeles also relied on various organizations for support such as the Alianza Hispano Americana, which was the largest fraternal organization in the United States and had more than 30 lodges in Los Angeles.¹⁹⁰ The relationship between residents in Boyle Heights, their racial identity, and their political activities, was slowly developed over time but became solidified in the 1960s. Here we can see some of the early foundations of racialized space that was explained in Chapter 2, as well as the account evidence that was described in Chapter 3. Mexican American

¹⁸⁸ “Católicos por la Raza” 1970 Group Statement, Box 1, Folder 1.1 Cultural Needs Assessment, Boyle Heights Archive. California State University, Los Angeles.

¹⁸⁹ Cultural Needs Assessment, Box 1, Folder 1.1, Boyle Heights Archive. California State University, Los Angeles, IV-39.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

based groups, which were often rooted to labor, were created *specifically* because discriminatory practices were marginalizing Mexican Americans, a spatial and racialized process.

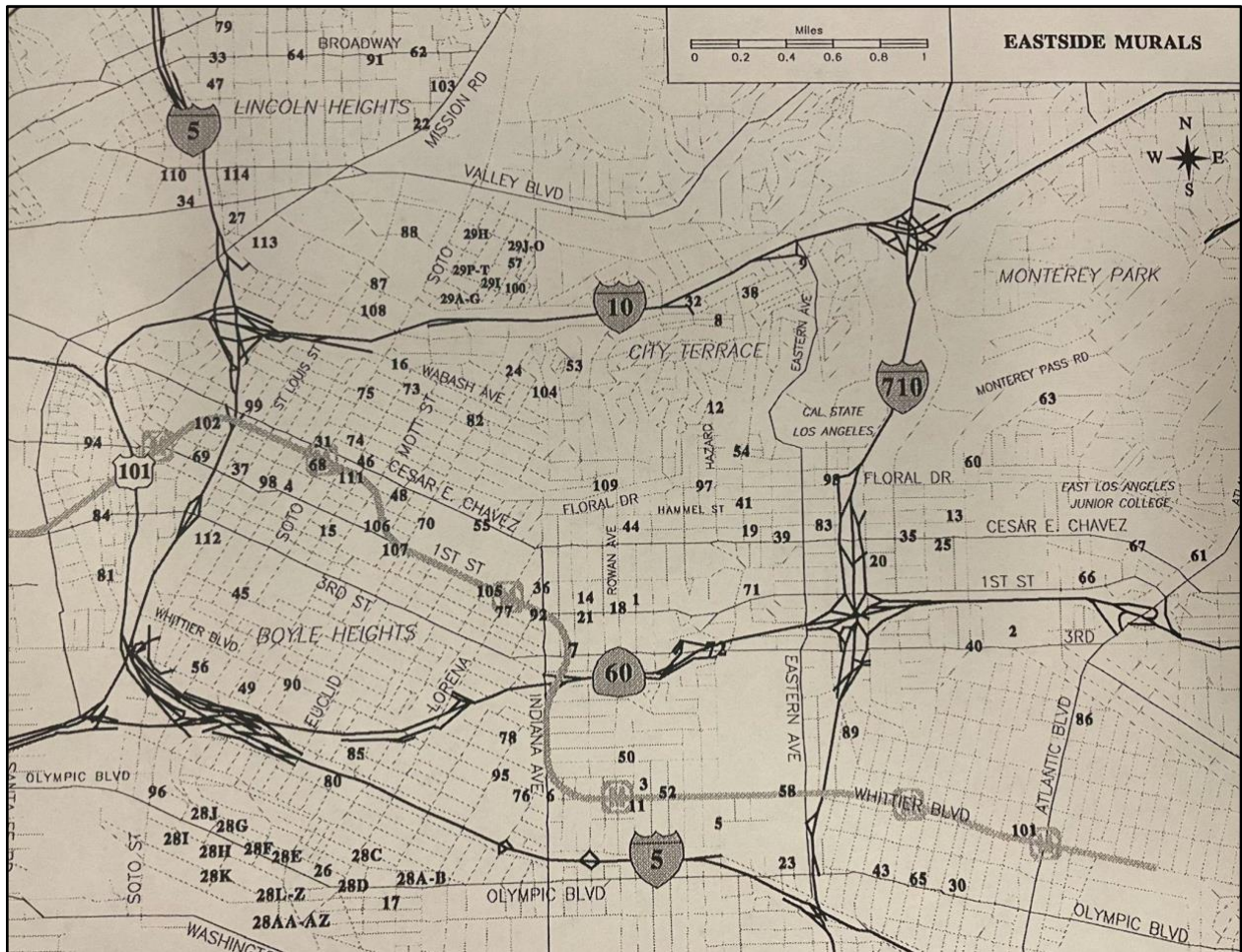


Figure 6. Map depicting mural locations in East Los Angeles
Cultural Needs Assessment, Boyle Heights Archive, California State University, Los Angeles.



Figure 7. Las Tres Culturas, 1974

Artist: Rozelio Duarte. Nancy Tovar Murals of East L.A. Collection, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center

Historically, the development of organizations dedicated to the Latino community mirrored the processes that have shaped African American organizations. Spatial exclusion and isolation preceded the development of networks that were *explicitly* directed at Mexican Americans. For example, Hope Mendoza Schechter, a former Boyle Heights resident and co-founder of the Chicano civil rights organization, Community Service Organization, reflects on her own experiences with racialized space:

We never learned to swim, because at that time they were anti-Mexican, very anti-Mexican. You could only swim on a Thursday, because that was the day before they emptied the pool. They charged, and we, of course, didn't have the money. So during my life I've had swimming lessons about five times, and I get pretty good, and then I don't swim for five years or so. I even lived in a house with a pool after I got married, but I never really learned to swim, so I would stay in the shallow end of the pool. So there

*were little restrictions like that that you knew you were poor, and you faced discrimination.*¹⁹¹

Although Schechter indicated that she was aware of the discrimination and racialization she was experiencing, that was not a shared outcome among all Mexican Americans. As I explained earlier, racialization is a *learned* process. Schechter notes that she had direct experiences with racialized space that shaped her understanding of discrimination against Mexican Americans. In contrast, activists like Robert “Bobby” Lee Verdugo, an important figure in the East Los Angeles Walkouts during the Chicano Movement in the 1960s, was not aware of this history and had to develop a sense of marginalization through engagement with racialized discourse. As he explains:

*I didn't know my history here. I didn't know all the stories that my father told me later, about when he grew up in Downtown LA, during the Zoot Suit Riots, but even before that how they could go to the movies only on Wednesday night because that was Mexican night. They couldn't go any other night, they would be turned away, how the public pools, even Lincoln Park where we went every day in the summer, how they would only let Mexican kids go on Thursday because Friday they drained the pool to clean it. How come I didn't know that stuff? How come my dad isn't angry?*¹⁹²

Verdugo also indicated that the development of a distinctly *political* racialized identity as a Chicano took time and complicated his relationship with racism:

*I had no idea what it was, I didn't think that we were like Blacks in the South suffering racism, I didn't see that kind of racism here. It was there but we didn't see it like that, we didn't know that Mexicans got lynched in California...we didn't know about that type of oppression because it was a more subtle racism that Mexicanos were going through.*¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Hope Mendoza Schechter, “Community Service Organization Oral Histories”, by Virginia Espino, Session 1, November 19, 2009, Beverly Hills, California.

¹⁹² Robert Lee Verdugo, “UCLA High Potential Program,” by Juan Pablo Mercado, Session 1, February 17, 2016, UCLA.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

Here again we see how an understanding of racialization had to be *learned* over time, despite experiences of discrimination. Verdugo was not naturally aware that his identity was the source of the marginalization he experienced in his engagement with white spaces. Moreover, he explicitly contrasts the racism he experienced with the overt racialization of African Americans in the South. Although discriminatory practices were common in the area for generations, it was not until much later in the 1960's that a more explicitly *racialized* sense of identity, which was rooted to systems of racial marginalization that targeted Mexican Americans, began to enter the political discourse. Activist Carlos Montes, a founding member of the Brown Berets, also noted that there was a period where racialization was a confusing aspect of his own sense of identity as he attended school in East Los Angeles and Boyle Heights:

*I think as a young person, you want to learn, you want to be accepted, you want to learn stuff, so all I got in high school was the U.S. is the best country in the world. I didn't have Chicano history or Black history or progressive history. I just got the bland white history. So by the time I'm in tenth, eleventh grade, I think I had one teacher, Mr. Alex Aviles, who was a Chicano that I identified with in high school. All the other teachers were white. They would make racist comments.*¹⁹⁴

Notably, Montes associated the discrimination he faced to his own identity as a Chicano, indicating that he developed a sense of marginalization that stemmed from processes of racialization. Although Boyle Heights is a community where the *cultural* aspects of Latino identity are often celebrated, as indicated by the various murals, processions, and events rooted to the Mexican American experience, the explicitly racialized political solidarity in the community was in its nascent stages. For decades, the Mexican American community had forged a unique cultural identity that was often the target of racial policies, racial violence, and racial segregation. The outcome of these processes of racialization was a dense system of networks that

¹⁹⁴ Carlos Montes, "La Batalla Está Aquí - The Chicana/o Movement," by Virginia Espino, Session 1, March, 23, 2012, Alhambra, California.

were rooted to an empowered cultural identity that became the *foundation* for the heightened political activity of the 1960s and later.

Before moving on to the next section, I want to review the concepts that have been introduced so far. First, in terms of spatiality, I explained how processes of racial exclusion initially shaped the community of Boyle Heights and produced a multicultural ethnic enclave. This marginalization created a community that was forced to rely on community networks in order to protect itself from ongoing spatial disruptions such as the expansion of the freeway systems. Over time, the community began to develop a distinctly Mexican American identity. This did not change the onslaught of spatial disruptions, on the contrary, as I will explain in the next section, Boyle Heights is continuously facing the consequences of spatial racialization. Moreover, the expendability of the community and its residents is contingent on their demographic makeup. Historian George Sánchez also makes this point in his analysis of the Jewish exodus in the post-WW2 era. As he explains:

Almost all white ethnic groups achieved a certain level of social and geographic mobility after the war due to the booming interwar and postwar economy. The postwar decline of anti-Semitism, along with successful legal challenges to the practice of restrictive neighborhoods and to overt anti ethnic prejudices, benefited Jews in particularly significant ways (Sánchez, 2021, 132-133).

Mobility itself was a privilege reserved for those with a proximity to whiteness. As noted in Chapter 2, one of the aspects of racialized space that influences our political socialization is the ability to navigate white space. When racially-restrictive policies became more lenient for the Jewish community, a significant number left East Los Angeles permanently. During this exodus, the Mexican American population continued to grow and the political networks in the community became explicitly racialized and rooted to Latino culture.

In terms of *intersubjective exchange*, this concept will be developed further in the interview section but there are some critical aspects I would like to address. The oral histories of Hope Mendoza Schechter, Robert “Bobby” Lee Verdugo and Carlos Montes were incorporated in order to offer account evidence of the *subjective* experience of racialized space. These activists became staunch supporters of Latino social justice later in their lives and gained a keen sense of racialization over time. Notably, their experiences in Boyle Heights, which were often discriminatory were not sufficient on their own to produce a sense of political obligation, despite the shared marginalization. Instead, these outcomes were shaped *discursively*. For example, Verdugo noted that his own awareness of his Chicano identity, which he first learned about from his father, was not explicitly political in the beginning:

That’s the first time I had ever heard that term was from my Dad, because he would call his friends that he grew up with and those that were stationed with him that were of Mexican American or Mexican ancestry, Chicanos...like yeah I was in a platoon with Chicanos. And I didn’t know exactly what a Chicano was, for me it was just slang, he didn’t use it in a bad way but he didn’t use it in a political way either, the way that I would begin to use it after the walkouts. But I always remembered the name, Chicano. It was always something that was embedded in my head.¹⁹⁵

Verdugo notes that dispositions associated with Chicano identity became sedimented in his own processes of identification as a result of his upbringing, however, they did not become *racialized* and overtly political until later on. Similarly, Dr. Rita Ledesma, a former Boyle Heights resident who socialized with Brown Berets during the East Los Angeles Walkouts, did not develop a sense of racialized identity until much later when she participated in Camp Hess Kramer, a Jewish Youth Camp:

It was among the first kind of coordinated discussions that I ever experienced about what it meant to be Chicana, about identity, what it meant to live in Boyle Heights, to go to Roosevelt, to be a 2nd gen young woman, to be an adolescent, and it was the first exposure I had to Chicanos and Chicanas who were in college or went to college. It was

¹⁹⁵ Robert Lee Verdugo, “UCLA High Potential Program,” by Juan Pablo Mercado, Session 1, February 17, 2016, UCLA.

*the first coherent exposure to that. New way of thinking, new way of talking, new way of people being together.*¹⁹⁶

Although Dr. Ledesma was raised in this racialized space, she didn't engage in the type of *intersubjective exchange* that is necessary to forge a sense of political obligation. Similarly, Jesus Reyes, the co-founder of and Creative Director of East LA Rep, an organization that offers mentorship and access to cultural and theatrical programs to Boyle Heights residents, was raised in the community but didn't reflect on the political significance until later on. Like Dr. Ledesma, Reyes did not develop a racialized sense of identity until engaging with explicitly *racialized intersubjective exchange* during his time in college, for example here he describes an interaction with a Chicana activist:

*She was hardcore, Brown, Brown, Brown. So I think she sort of starts helping layer some of that into me, you know, you have to represent. It's the first time I heard that, you have to represent, and so that's the other thing I learned, not only do you have to represent but you have to do it good.*¹⁹⁷

Over time, these activists and professionals returned to their communities to engage in the type of political solidarity we generally associate with racialized groups. Reyes returned to develop a theater organization that could serve marginalized Latinos in the community. Dr. Ledesma notes that her newly-gained awareness of racialization and marginalization influenced her decisions to become more politically active. Similarly, both Verdugo and Montes became committed to the community and Montes is still an active member of the neighborhood council. The important aspect to notice here is how processes of racialization, which produce disparities among Latinos, take time to become sedimented as racialized dispositions that can be mobilized. Although racialization eventually becomes the mediating structure that informs on group status, for

¹⁹⁶ Rita Ledesma, "UCLA High Potential Program," by Juan Pablo Mercado, Session 2, July 12, 2016, UCLA.

¹⁹⁷ Jesus Reyes, "Community-Engaged Theater in Los Angeles," by Jane Collings, Session 3, December 17, 2012, Burbank, California.

individuals growing up in the 1950-1960s, this concept was still relatively new. Nonetheless, we can see how exchange with racialized networks, whether at home, at school, or in the community, can be influential for forging a sense of political obligation.

Racialized Habitus in 1980s Boyle Heights

By the 1980s, the racialized discourse that began to emerge in the 1960s was deeply sedimented in the neighborhood's political actions. One example that illustrates how racialized space influenced political solidarity in the community is the Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) movement that emerged in response to the construction of a prison that would be placed within one mile of Boyle Heights, and two miles of 34 schools in the area.¹⁹⁸ As noted earlier, the marginalized status of residents in Boyle Heights is apparent in the seeming disposability of residents and the lack of power over spatial processes that disrupt their daily life. Similarly, the proposed construction of another prison in East Los Angeles in 1984, which was already home to numerous prisons, was another indication of the community's vulnerable position. At the time, East Los Angeles housed 78% of the city's inmates (15,417) within a 3-4 mile radius at four separate prisons, as well as the federal jail.¹⁹⁹ Notably, the density of prisons in the area was a direct result of the multipurpose zoning practices of the early 20th century that disproportionately impacted communities of color. White communities in Los Angeles were zoned for single-purpose residential use. In contrast, neighborhoods like Boyle Heights were subject to various environmental hazards. The new prison would further encroach on the residential areas in East Los Angeles, particularly Boyle Heights, although city officials and

¹⁹⁸ Mary Pardo, "Mexican American Women Grassroots Community Activists: 'Mothers of East Los Angeles,'" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 11, no. 1 (1990): 1-7, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3346696>.

¹⁹⁹ "Letter from M.E.L.A. to Willie Brown, Jr. Speaker of the Assembly - 1986", Box 9, Folder 2, Juana Beatriz Gutiérrez Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) Collection, California State University, Northridge.

Governors George Deukmejian and Pete Wilson claimed it would be a benefit to the area. In a response letter to MELA, who contested the location of the prison, Chief of Government and Community Relations for the Department of Corrections, Judith A. McGillivray, argued that prisons are “good neighbors” who would improve the local economy:

The Crown Coach site is advantageous for many reasons. This prison may serve as a combination reception center and work-based prison for 1,700 inmates which, if located at Santa Fe Avenue and 12th Street, will require a minimum of time and cost to transfer inmates from the Los Angeles County Jail to the reception center. It is close to the population centers where families of inmates reside and thus encourages visitation. Adequate water and sewage treatment facilities are readily available. While there are residential areas within one to two miles of this site, the railroad yard, the Los Angeles River and industrial development provide an adequate buffer zone for the prison.²⁰⁰

Notably, McGillivray’s letter speaks directly to the spatial influence of racialized policies. For communities like Boyle Heights, the outcome of racialization was a residential neighborhood bordered by prisons, railyards, water and sewage treatment facilities, and industrial centers. Moreover, the letter stated that the new prison would be a convenient location for the “families of inmates” who lived nearby, indicating that the prison population was drawn from the local community. This argument was further reinforced by Governor Deukmejian who claimed that convicted felons were coming straight from the backyards of Los Angeles homes.²⁰¹ For organizations like MELA, this was yet another indication of how the city and other political elites had failed the community, and they adopted slogans such as “Schools not Prisons” in order to stress the connection between educational disparities and structural barriers faced by Latino children. Ultimately, MELA’s struggle against the expansion of the Los Angeles prison system

²⁰⁰ “Letter from Judith A. McGillivray to Juana Beatriz Gutiérrez - 1985”, Box 9, Folder 2, Juana Beatriz Gutiérrez Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) Collection, California State University, Northridge.

²⁰¹ “Mothers of ELA respond to Governor’s comments,” *Eastside Journal*, January 24, 1990.

in East Los Angeles was successful, although it took years of organizing, protests, and marches to finally kill the project in 1991.

Initially, MELA was organized in order to combat the construction of the prison that was endangering the community. From 1985-1991, the group forged numerous coalitions and opposition to the prison grew from a loose association of concerned mothers to a broad network of local residents, religious institutions and political elites such as Assemblywoman Gloria Molina. Although this was an unexpected finding in this study, the relationship between mothers and Latino political solidarity in Boyle Heights is a common theme in the archival record.

Activist Bobby Verdugo noted his mother's influence on his political actions:

As a teenager I realized that she was always really active in the community, with the heart association, PTA. My Dad, he worked so he didn't have time to be in the schools or doing work in the community. But my mother was very community minded and she worked for an agency called NAPP, Neighborhood Adult Participation Project, who had offices in East LA and South Central LA. And she was like a comadre social worker, she helped moms, gente, who needed help with school, dealing with teachers or any kind of issues.²⁰²

This framing of his mother as a “comadre social worker” is indicative of themes that continued to resonate in the community during the MELA movement. Not only are mothers a vital aspect of community organizing, their political practices are inherently tied to racialized political discourse and practices. Dr. Ledesma also noted this influence with her mother:

There was a sense that she was doing these things, but the kinds of things that were supported by my father. My dad wanted a stay at home wife, you know a more traditional kind of wife, and she was beginning to have different kinds of ideas and get exposed to things. She did the War on Poverty work when I was in high school after they were divorced.²⁰³

²⁰² Robert Lee Verdugo, “UCLA High Potential Program,” by Juan Pablo Mercado, Session 1, February 17, 2016, UCLA.

²⁰³ Rita Ledesma, “UCLA High Potential Program,” by Juan Pablo Mercado, Session 2, July 12, 2016, UCLA.

In contrast, Jesus Reyes noted that his mother was relatively de-politicized and he credited this lack of political activism with his own lack of interest in greater issues in the community:

We didn't grow up with that. My mom worked nights, she was a waitress and she would come home and she would sleep. I mean, we don't have time for the moratorium in 1979, or the walkouts or whatever. I was too small for any of that but it didn't affect her, you know, she didn't bring it home. It was about providing.²⁰⁴

As I will explain further in Chapter 5, the political socialization in the home is a critical aspect of what Bourdieu referred to as *primary* habitus, which he differentiated from *secondary* habitus, or rather the world outside the home. However, for the purposes of this section, I want to stress that there is a significant relationship between *gendered* space, racialization, and political solidarity in Boyle Heights that was not the focus of this study but merits further attention. Overall, the MELA movement was indicative of deeper sedimented dispositions that are both gendered *and* racialized.

For example, MELA leaders engaged in racialized discourse in their political appeals to the community. Founder Aurora Castillo argued that the city was converting the community into a “penal colony” and that the prison location was specifically chosen because Boyle Heights is Latino and working class.²⁰⁵ In an interview, co-founder Juana Gutiérrez explained that her motivation for participation in grassroots activism was “her children, her community and her race”.²⁰⁶ When the newly elected Assemblyman Richard Polanco, who had initially campaigned against the prison, cast his vote in favor of construction, local residents referred to him as a

²⁰⁴ Jesus Reyes, “Community-Engaged Theater in Los Angeles,” by Jane Collings, Session 3, December 17, 2012, Burbank, California.

²⁰⁵ Laura Bleiberg, “250 marchers protest plans for prison in East L.A.,” *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, March 31, 1989, A4.

²⁰⁶ Translated from “Interview with Hugo Paez”, Box 9, Folder 10, Juana Beatriz Gutiérrez Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) Collection, California State University, Northridge.

“vendido” or a sell-out who had betrayed his race.²⁰⁷ In 1986, the political struggle became intertwined with the celebration of Mexican Independence Day which is celebrated on September 16. Assemblywoman Gloria Molina invoked the holiday in an anti-prison political flyer that stated “In 1810 we fought with cannons and guns, today we fight with one united voice” (Figure 7).²⁰⁸ The symbolic linkages between Mexican identity, the historical practices of racialization, and the political necessity for collective action became a foundational aspect of the anti-prison efforts during this time. These sentiments were echoed in the *Eastside Journal*, which was established by Jewish immigrants in Boyle Heights in 1935 and served the local community for more than 40 years:

We [Latinos] now provide much of the labor force for the industries of the Southwest and especially Los Angeles, the new financial and manufacturing backbone of the country. However racism and discrimination continue to deprive us of our share of the benefits of that development. We still suffer disproportionate employment. Our children attend inferior and overcrowded schools. Most Latinos still live in segregated, low-income communities. We have been forced to suffer the dislocation and environmental pollution brought on by freeway construction for the benefit of wealthier communities.²⁰⁹

This racialized appeal echoed the narratives adopted by MELA and the various coalition members that opposed the prison. In addition, these appeals are also illustrative of the relationship between spatiality, racialization and intersubjective exchange. Spatial contestation in Boyle Heights, as exemplified by the anti-prison movement, was a product of exclusionary policies and engaged with racialized frames of identity that were cultivated and disseminated by community networks. It took years for these efforts to come to fruition with the abandonment of

²⁰⁷ Edward J. Boyer and Marita Hernandez, “Eastside Seethes Over Prison Plan,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1986.

²⁰⁸ “Gloria Molina Flyer”, Box 9, Folder 20, Juana Beatriz Gutiérrez Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) Collection, California State University, Northridge.

²⁰⁹ Veronica Gutierrez and Antonio H. Rodriguez, “State’s Prison Plan Insults the Whole Latino Community,” *Eastside Journal*, August 27, 1986.

the plan in 1991, however, the strength of the MELA coalition illustrates the density of the community's organizing capacity. Over time, MELA became a political force that numbered in hundreds and also targeted other environmental hazards such as the proposed toxic waste dump in nearby Vernon.²¹⁰ Currently, the group continues to battle the various disparities that emerged from spatial policies of racial exclusion.

²¹⁰ Mary Pardo, "Mexican American Women Grassroots Community Activists: 'Mothers of East Los Angeles,'" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 11, no. 1 (1990): 1-7.

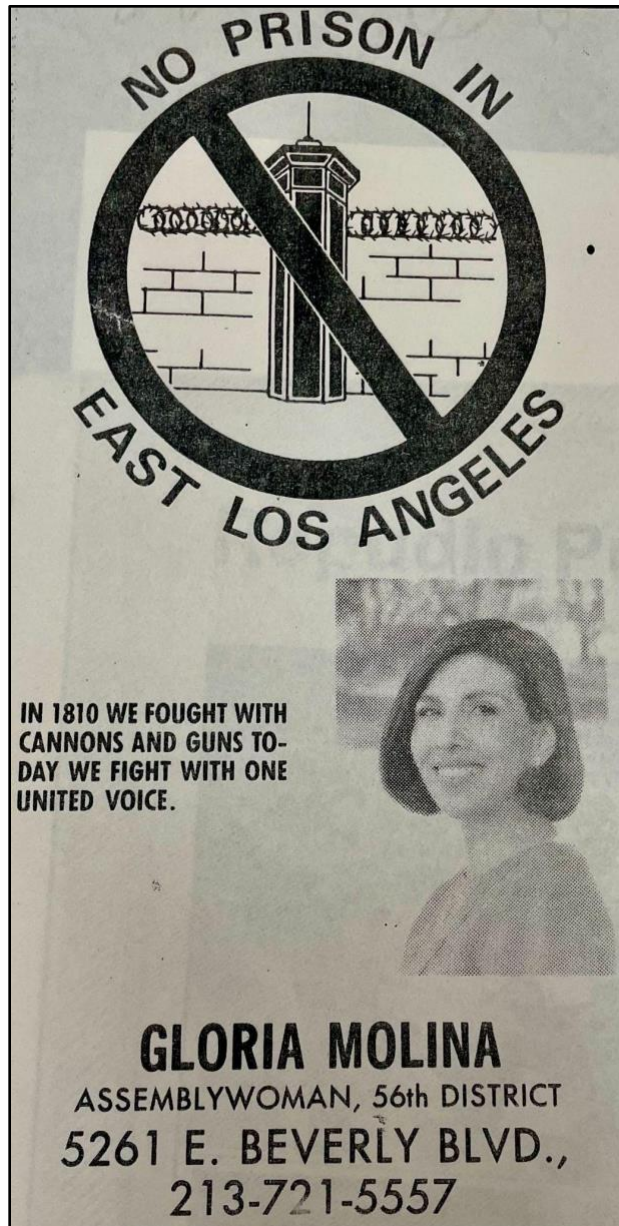


Figure 7. Gloria Molina Flyer

Juana Beatriz Gutiérrez Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) Collection, California State University, Northridge.

In order to garner support for their cause, MELA engaged in racialized discourse that appealed to the sedimented histories associated with Latino identity and Mexican culture. As noted earlier, political action in Boyle Heights is often in defense of the community boundaries and spatial disruptions that endanger the wellbeing of residents. This outcome aligns with the

processes described in Chapters 2 and 3. Spatiality, which is both an objective and subjective system of production, is closely intertwined with racialization. This racialization results in segregated spaces and produces disparities that need to be resolved through group actions given their marginalized status. These processes also produce racialized networks which cultivate and disseminate racialized dispositions that are sedimented over time and can eventually be mobilized. In the context of Boyle Heights, these processes are evident in the decades of spatial disruptions that have shaped the built environment as well as the networks forged within. The outcome is an explicitly racialized sense of obligation that is *discursively* maintained. Political officials and elites in the community engage in explicitly racialized discourse in order to appeal to residents. Similarly, residents engage in racialized discourse in order to make sense of their own positionality. This is just one example of how intersubjective exchange, another facet of racialized habitus, can influence the production of political solidarity. From the early exodus of Jewish residents in the post-WW2 era, to the development of a uniquely Chicana/o/x culture since the 1960s, racialized narratives have played a critical role in political actions in the community. This approach is still a fundamental aspect of organizing and mobilization in Boyle Heights, as exemplified by the art gallery protests described in Chapter 1.²¹¹ However, for the purposes of this section I want to highlight how racialization and spatiality have intersected to produce a racialized system of political organizing that is rooted to Latino cultural practices. These processes are contextually bound. More importantly, this interaction of race and space also produces the group networks that disseminate and cultivate a sense of political obligation within the group.

²¹¹ Rory Carroll, “‘Hope Everyone Pukes on Your Artisanal Treats’: Fighting Gentrification, LA-Style,” *The Guardian*, April 19, 2016; Cindy Chang, “Boyle Heights Activists Protest Art Galleries, Gentrification,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 5, 2016.

Summary

In the previous section I presented the findings from the first-part of my study which involved the archival reconstruction of the sociohistorical conditions that are inherently linked to the practice of racialized political solidarity. This section was presented in a narrative format which is consistent with historical methods. The purpose of this section was to “decipher” the habitus by examining how spatiality has produced systems of symbolic production, which is a common approach in habitus studies. In the first section, I briefly discussed the history of Boyle Heights before the dominance of Latinos in the area. Next, I explained how policies and racialization helped shape the political practices that are still evident in the community. In particular, I incorporated oral histories to illustrate how the processes of racialized habitus emerged in the post 1960s period when the Chicano Movement was in its prime. Finally, I incorporated archival data related to the MELA movement to illustrate how racialized discourse has been sustained since the 1960s. This aspect of the study was the *diachronic* approach, which was designed to examine how dispositions become sedimented over a period of time. In the next section I present interview data to explain the *synchronic* aspect of the study and engage directly with the research questions that were presented in Chapter 1.

Racialized Habitus in contemporary Boyle Heights

As explained in Chapter 3, the interviews that were collected for this study were semi-structured and conducted via phone. The names of the participants have been changed to maintain anonymity, as well as other identifying information. All of the interviews were collected between September 2022 and April 2023. A total of ten interviews were used to address the research questions for this study. Each participant is a current resident of Boyle

Heights except one who moved away from the neighborhood while the study was being conducted. Demographic and other relevant information is presented below (Figure 8).

Name	Age	National Origin	Generation	Length of Residence
Jessica	18	Mexican	First Gen	13 Years
Patricia	26	Mexican	First Gen	20 Years
David	26	Mexican/Argentinian	Second Gen	5 Years
Cristina	27	Salvadoran/Mexican	First Gen	25 Years
Ana	29	Guatemalan/Salvadoran	Second Gen	25 Years
Francisco	31	Mexican	Third Gen	31 Years
Emma	32	Mexican	First Gen	32 Years
Brenda	53	Mexican	First Gen	48 Years
Martín	56	Mexican	First Gen	45 Years

Figure 8 - Interview Participants, all names were changed to maintain anonymity.

As noted earlier, each of the participants was asked questions about their racial identity, their relationship with their community and their understanding of racialization. In addition, the interview questions explored their relationship with the sociohistorical conditions that have shaped the neighborhood over time. Each of the participants had a strong sense of community identity and noted the deeply sedimented dispositions that are rooted to the community's Chicana/o/x roots. As a result, the *racialized* and *spatial* aspects that influence their sense of identity were evident in all of the interviews, which strongly suggests there is a racialized practice, or habitus, that shapes identity, obligation and belonging. For example, Patricia, who moved from Boyle Heights to attend college at a predominately white institution experienced culture shock when she left her home:

Growing up in Boyle Heights. I had a lot of Latinx identifying, Indigenous, Afro Latinx community around me. And so when I went to college, I was exposed to a lot of Anglo Americans which I wasn't really used to. That was very weird for me. I mean, LA is very segregated. Growing up, I didn't really see a lot of Anglo Americans, maybe some of my teachers, but that's pretty much it. So it was definitely a big culture shock for me.

This explicit connection between the racial aspects of the community's identity, and the lack of engagement with white spaces, was also echoed by David, who moved to Boyle Heights after living in a more mixed area:

Living here in Boyle Heights has really made me see the need and the disparity that a lot of people, like lower income people, Latino people, that I didn't see before. I just have a hard time empathizing, I think, with those people in my hometown, who have these ridiculous ideas of liberty or freedom and refuse to acknowledge the existence of other people who are suffering financially or with mental health issues or drug issues and things like that.

Although David has only lived in the community for a short amount of time (5 years), he has already noticed distinct differences between his prior community, which was mixed but also Latino, and his new home, which is explicitly Latino. Moreover, he links his own lack of an overtly racialized identity with his upbringing:

I mean, I'm a very, very whitewashed Latino. You know, growing up in my hometown, but also I feel like my parents were more of the mindset of assimilation.

David notes that both his hometown, and his family's pursuit of assimilation, were essentially de-racialization mechanisms that informed his own sense of identity. Here we can see how his experience illustrates the objective and subjective aspects of social space. In contrast, participants who grew up in Boyle Heights were more aware of the issues that arise from engaging with racialized space. For example, Jessica, who has lived in the community her whole life, expressed reservations about bringing up race outside of the community:

I feel like outside of my community, you don't really know that many people and don't really understand whether they're more social justice oriented or don't like to have anything to do with social justice. Like there's some sort of uncomfortableness that comes through it.

As I explained earlier, the research questions for this study *presume* that a racialized form of

habitus is already a practice in this neighborhood and the responses from the participants strengthened that hypothesis. When necessary I will highlight those aspects of the interview data but this section is mainly designed to address the research questions presented earlier.

Interviews in Boyle Heights

R1) How does racialized habitus cultivate and sustain a sense of obligation among Latinos in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles?

All of the participants repeatedly mentioned that they felt a strong connection to their community and noted the long history of multicultural organizing. Emma, who has also lived in Boyle Heights all of her life, observed the influence of Jewish culture on the built environment, as well as the relationship with immigrants overall:

I feel like everybody that, you know, comes to LA from their country of origin, comes to Boyle Heights and so at a certain point in their lives they lived here. I know that the history of Boyle Heights used to be Jewish, Asians, different types of community and when I moved here, from the projects, some of the homes still had the Star of David on them, for Jewish people living here.

This relationship with immigration and understanding of the community's history was echoed throughout all of the interviews, as well as the oral histories incorporated in the previous section. Some study participants, such as Francisco, had a robust awareness of the Chicano roots in the area given his family's relationship with Chicano culture. His paternal grandmother was a Pachuca who owned a tailor shop and made zoot suits, and his maternal grandfather arrived with the Bracero Program. His grandmother, who moved to the area in the 1920s, was particularly influential in shaping his identity and understanding of the community:

I was a grandmother's boy. So she told stories, like it was really like open borders back then. And she came to Boyle Heights and it was all mixed boys back then. Like you know, the Japanese, college Jewish, the Russians. So when she came there were not that many Mexicans. And I remember her telling me that on one side of Boyle Heights were the Mexicans, and that it's all hilly. Like, pretty much like wasteland. So if you're familiar

with Boyle Heights the Jewish had Brooklyn Avenue, now known as Cesar Chavez. The Japanese had First Street and Evergreen.

Francisco's statement also speaks to the ways that racialized space influences identity. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the Jewish community left the area in the 1940-1950s.

Francisco notes that even during the period of multiculturalism, Mexican Americans were further marginalized *within* that space and lived in the more hazardous parts of the neighborhood. These stories about Mexican Americans, Chicanos, and Boyle Heights overall, encouraged Francisco to seek more information and learn about his culture. Each study participant was asked if they were aware of any specific moments in the community's history, and Francisco was aware of various Chicano movements in the city, the relationship between Chicano identity and the Zoot Suit Riots, as well the marginalization of Mexican Americans during Operation Wetback.

The history of the community, as well as the relationship with Chicano organizing overall was a common theme that was often related back to the concept of obligation. For example, Ana a teacher in the neighborhood, noted that the history of the walkouts, as well as the development of organizations like Homeboy Industries, are important moments that she teaches her students.²¹² In addition, she directly mentioned the MELA movement as a critical historical moment:

I'm just trying to follow the legacy of like, you know, that self reliance that history shows you. I mean, the Mothers of East LA are powerful and I can only hope to do as much work as they did to stop a prison with the community, and you know, a lot of work around gang violence. And so I think for me, yeah, it's really important and that that's the first thing I acknowledge like, it's not like we just started, we're actually continuing the legacy of some amazing work that's been done already.

This also aligned with Cristina's perceptions of the community as a space of political action and

²¹² Homeboy Industries is a non-profit youth organization that originated in Boyle Heights and was founded by Father Greg Boyle of the Dolores Mission Church, who also assisted during the MELA movement.

social justice:

I feel like there's a strong sense of the history of organizing and identity in Boyle Heights, like a lot of our history with the walkouts. It's also with a lot of you know, police brutality but there's also a sense that these issues happen in other communities. So I think there's a strong sense, but there's also opportunity to collaborate with other folks to uplift their stories.

Notably, Cristina not only mentioned the East Los Angeles Walkouts that occurred in the 1960s, but she also related these processes of racialization and marginalization to other similar communities. In addition, she felt these similarities necessitated political collaboration. Patricia also noted the importance of the walkouts in terms of her own identity:

I did learn about the walkouts because I attended Roosevelt High School. I remember just feeling very proud to go to a school like Roosevelt that has such a such a huge history in the Chicano movement.

This sense of pride was a common theme in the interviews, particularly in relation to political obligations to other community members. This feeling was echoed by David, who is relatively new to the community and is still navigating the dense organizing networks in the neighborhood:

Since I'm not from the area, I try to never be like, oh, I'm here to help, you know, and have that kind of mentality, but I just tried to fill in, filling the gap. If there's ever something you know, that's needed that people are asking for, or people want and I try to just be there. Whether I can help or not.

Although David has not been a long time resident, he has quickly adapted to the community-driven initiatives such as the Neighborhood Council. His sense of political obligation predates his time in the community but it has been strengthened over time through engagement with community networks.

Participants who were less inclined or able to engage in meaningful exchange during their formative years developed a sense of obligation through other community organizations. For example, Jessica became more interested in the political aspects of her neighborhood after

her participation in local social justice organizations:

I didn't know anything about like community, like, like councils and, and just having a voice in the community. I just assumed that we just pick our representatives. And I feel like that was definitely something that most that motivated me. Because, I feel like, it was the first sort of an outlet for me to discover more about my communities.

Jessica is barely out of high school, but in a short amount has developed a keen understanding about the community's dedication to social justice that came directly from her engagement with these organizations. In addition, she noted that she didn't necessarily believe these concepts extended outside of her neighborhood:

Outside of my community, you don't really know that much people and don't really understand whether they're more social justice oriented or, don't like anything to do with social justice. There's some sort of uncomfortableness that comes through it.

For Jessica, the types of obligations she felt toward her community were also linked to the community identity overall, particularly in relation to their political history. Notably, she felt discomfort bringing up these concepts outside of this space, which lends support to the argument that engagement with racialized space can influence your understanding of marginalization.

Overall, all of the participants related some degree of community obligation and community identity that was distinctly racialized. Moreover, they reported feeling discomfort or suspicion about outsiders. This discomfort was often explicitly described as a result of engagement with whiteness, or white networks. This understanding of racialization was a recurring theme.

R2) How does racialized habitus cultivate and sustain a sense of racialization among Latinos in Boyle Heights, Angeles?

The participants who grew up in Boyle Heights and attended public schools in the area repeatedly linked their experiences in the neighborhood schools with their own understanding of racialization. For example, Patricia mentioned specific policies that marginalized Boyle Heights

residents, which she learned about at Roosevelt High School:

In junior year we learned about a lot of different topics in LA, one of them being redlining. And we actually did a whole research project on redlining in Boyle Heights and racial covenants. And that was really, that fired me up, I think. Really learning about that and just being like, wow, this is intentional. And also feeling kind of justified. And how sometimes, my feelings around certain Anglo Americans, I remember feeling like I don't know, my body just didn't feel good. I think I just felt very anxious around Anglo Americans growing up.

Notably, Patricia not only viewed her experience at Roosevelt High as a formative aspect of her politicization, she also linked her own experiences of discomfort with white space to the specific racialized spatial policies that had produced disparities in the area. Roosevelt High School, which participated in the East Los Angeles Walkouts that were mentioned earlier, is a significant site of *intersubjective exchange*. In contrast, participants who lived in Boyle Heights, but attended schools in different areas did not engage in the racialized discourse that Patricia described. Both Emma and Cristina stated that they didn't learn about the community and racialization until they started working with a local activist organization. Emma in particular stated that she was fairly insulated from the community:

My parents, when we were kids, they sent us to the private schools. And I didn't have a lot of friends growing up because my parents didn't allow me to hang out a lot with the neighborhood kids.

Emma mentioned that she didn't learn about racialization, or gain a sense of political obligation, until much later after attending college. It was at this time that she began to understand how her own community faced struggles that others did not:

I went to college in Orange County, and I was like, my presence here and my community are lacking. And then as I grew older, and I learned about what was going on in our community, that's when I was like oh, man, I want to be part of the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council and make my presence a little bit more known.

Among residents who were active in their community, like Emma, the relationship between their

own identity, the community's history, and their commitment to social justice was inherently the result of a *racialized* process. Many of the participants noted that they learned more about their marginalization through engagement with white spaces, while others linked their politics to their engagement with various racialized networks, whether at home or at school.

Only one of the participants, Francisco, overtly rejected any racialized frames or concepts. As mentioned earlier, Francisco has a long relationship with the community that stems back to his grandparents' arrival in the 1920-1930s. Francisco is also deeply invested in learning more about Chicano history. However, he does not view his identity in a racialized framework, rather he framed being Chicano as a distinctly *cultural* identity that is inherently American. When asked to define Chicano identity, Francisco talked about his grandparents and their relationship with the Mexican flag:

On my grandmother's side of the story, they say, Oh, which flag would you raise? The Mexican or the American flag? And because of my grandmother, who left the country [Mexico] because their country failed them during the war and all that. They actually kind of taught me you have to raise the American flag.

Francisco did not view his identity as a Chicano in a racialized framework and did not view himself as linked to other Latinos. On the contrary, he stated that there is a connection but not a "brotherhood or sisterhood" specifically because Chicano is a distinctly Mexican American experience. Instead, he viewed his relationship with other Latinos as a shared cultural connection, such as holidays, food and music. In addition, Francisco did not view himself as linked to other racialized groups. I asked Francisco to elaborate on the relationship between race and identity, particularly in relation to Black Americans, and he mentioned that views himself and other Latinos as white. Moreover, he didn't see himself connected to Black Americans:

It depends who you ask, like during the walkouts and all that the Blacks and the Browns were united. But if one of us gets locked up, we're not going to be with the Blacks.

All of the respondents except for Francisco appeared to hold more left-leaning views. In contrast, he stated that conservatism was a normal part of being Mexican American. He repeatedly detached the *cultural* aspects of his identity from the patterns of *racialization* that initially shaped the group. Although he was heavily invested in Chicano history, he did not relate that to his political activities and stated that he cast his first ever vote in 2016 for Donald Trump. Prior to that period he did not feel that candidates related to him, particularly Democrats. When I asked him directly about his views on racialization and racial identity, he stated that he is a Christian who views all humans as equal under God.

The critical distinctions between Francisco and the rest of the participants were rooted in this lack of engagement with racialization. He was the only participant who viewed race as a separate issue that did not relate to his own politics, or the issues in the community. In contrast, David, who arrived in Boyle Heights as an adult, learned directly about racialization through his own experiences with the criminal justice system. Other participants linked their engagement with racialized discourse in school, or at home, to their political activism. Although Francisco is well informed on the history of Chicanos in East Los Angeles, he was more interested in the cultural aspects of his identity and did not view this discourse in a racialized framework. As I mentioned in earlier chapters, this is one of the significant barriers for racialized political solidarity. Francisco identifies as Chicano, an inherently political identity, but opts-out of the *racialization* that is implied by that same identity. Notably, he also does not believe he has political obligations to other Latinos or other racialized groups. Most importantly, the *political* aspects of his identity, which he framed as American and Christian, did not align with the perspectives of the other participants. For example, both David and Emma mentioned Bernie Sanders in a positive light and stated that the 2016 Presidential Election was a period of radical

transformation for their own personal politics. That election was also transformative for Francisco, albeit with radically different outcomes.

In addition to interrogating their relationship with the community and racialized space, I also asked participants how they felt about sharing their political views with others at home, at work, or in the community. All of the participants stated that they felt comfortable speaking openly with other community members about race, but this did not always extend beyond that space. For example, some participants talked about their experiences with white colleges, which were already explained above. Engagement with racialized discourse at home was also an important topic. For example, Cristina, the only participant who was not Mexican American, noted that political topics were taboo at home given that her family was forced to flee El Salvador due to the Civil War:

I think my experience growing up, my family wouldn't really want to talk about their upbringing, because it was very traumatic. So it was a little hard for me sometimes to learn more about my family or like you know how things were because it was just a lot to talk about. So I would hear about it in bits and pieces.

Patricia also noted that conversations about politics or identity were not common at home, particular in relation to race:

In my household, we didn't really [talk about identity], we had like, traditions that we would do. But it wasn't really, in terms of like identity, like racial identity. For example. I didn't really know what I was racially because I knew I was not white or Black. I knew I wasn't like Native American, or full Native American. And so it was just weird. We didn't really know or I think my parents also maybe just weren't really aware.

The disconnect at home between the sense of racialization and political identity is a common theme in the interviews as well as the archival record. For example, Jesus Reyes noted in his oral history that his mother was just too busy working to spend time on political socialization.

Similarly, Dr. Ledesma stated that she did not engage with racialized frames until later on when

she attended Camp Hess Kramer. Similarly, David, who grew up in a different neighborhood, also talks about the language of assimilation when relating his identity to his upbringing.

Notably, David has learned a lot about the community through his engagements with the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council, as well as his talks with Carlos Montes, the Chicano activist and Brown Beret who was mentioned in the first section of this chapter.

For residents who did not grow up in Boyle Heights, there was a stark contrast between their prior home and their new community. For example, Ana, who attended school in Central America, described critical differences in terms of racialization:

I understand that people have such different realities, you know, like, also like understanding poverty and that the model is very different than poverty in LA, right. And then also like the racism, it wasn't so much black and white, although we do have, you know, black Guatemalans that also faced racism. But for me what I was seeing in the hometown that I was in was like, so much like racism towards indigenous people and not understanding.

Ana noted that, as explained earlier, the racialization in Latin America is vastly different from what Latinos experience in the U.S. Although Black identity is also complex in Central America, much of the racism she witnessed was directed at Indigenous populations. This was a practice she didn't observe in Los Angeles, where anti-Black attitudes are more prominent. Overall, the relationship between the marginalized status of community members and patterns of racialization was a recurring topic of conversation for all of the participants except Francisco. Cristina also noted the relationship between the community's racial identity and their working class roots:

I definitely think that classism is a thing like racism, and I don't think it's a coincidence that my community is one of the top 1% most polluted communities in California. That's not a coincidence. Like, Beverly Hills isn't you know. I definitely think there's a coordination between that and there's like a lot of issues that like we face, we have hyper policing in our community. So we have the CSP officers, so they're called Community Safety police. We have LAPD, which is the Los Angeles Police Department, sometimes we'll have gang unit so they sometimes come in less than like we have the SWAT team for like other issues. So I feel like that also goes back to like the war on drugs. And as we

know, that's definitely an issue that has impacted a lot of our black and brown communities.

Although some respondents, like Francisco, did not report a strong sense of racialization, the majority of participants felt that the community's recurring issues were a direct consequence of the demographic makeup in Boyle Heights. Developing a sense of racialization was not a monolithic experience but it was a key issue for all the participants who described feelings of obligations toward the community. Notably, this was not a concept that necessarily extended outside of Boyle Heights.

R3) Do Latinos in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles with a racialized sense of identity feel a sense of political obligation with other Latinos outside of their community?

One of the more surprising findings from these interviews was the relationship with overall Latino political solidarity, which was the focus of my third research question. Although nearly all of the respondents believed they had political obligations to their community, they framed their obligations to others within a multiracial context. For example, when asked about her thoughts on Latino political solidarity, Emma viewed her own identity within a system of marginalization that is raced *and* classed:

I feel like we're all Americans. And I think that racial division is just racial division. And I think that for working class people, it doesn't matter if you're white, Black or Brown or Asian or whatever. I think working class people should be united because ultimately we want the same goals, which is stability in our homes. We want financial freedom, ultimately, and I do feel like people have more in common that they do not have in common.

This class-based framing was also evident in Jessica's response when asked about political solidarity with other Latinos:

I think especially growing up in East LA and Boyle Heights, they're predominantly like mechanics, Mexican, Central American, folks. And so I think it's like really, it would be great to like, collaborate and have more of those like, like national conversations.

Another issue that came up in conversations about political solidarity was the relationship between Latino identity and immigration. For example, Emma, who is undocumented, noted that she did not really think about her identity until she was graduating from high school and realized she lacked the necessary documentation to apply for colleges and other programs. This awareness of her marginalized status informed her own political identity as well as her obligations to others:

I do feel like there is like, the same sort of experiences shared, especially for those who are targeted mostly due to their immigration status. It's always like Mexican immigrants, but actually, there's undocumented from all over the world.

Emma was keenly aware that her status as an undocumented immigrant was an issue that was shared by more than just Latinos, and she felt that this was the most pressing issue impacting the group. This was a common theme during the interviews. Although nearly all the participants acknowledged a sense of political obligation to other Latinos, they also tied this obligation to other marginalized groups. For example, Patricia also connected political solidarity to class-based issues when asked about the most significant barriers impacting the group:

I would say economic equality as well. I think that's definitely something that you know, like just the inequities between, like, how much white folks make, you know, in comparison to like Black and Latinx communities is like, it's just like, the differences are really like obvious.

Patricia not only believed that economic disparities were a significant issue, but she also related these issues to larger structures of racial discrimination that disproportionately impact non-white groups. Along with the influence of Latino mothers on political organizing, this was one of the more surprising findings of the study. None of the participants seemed to engage in an overt practice of Latino racialized political solidarity. Instead, they viewed their political obligations as a process of coalition-building and collaboration with other racialized groups. Arguably,

intersubjective exchange with racialized networks did produce a sense of racialized political solidarity, but it was also inclusive of other groups who are not Latino.

Although there was a sense of political solidarity that was important to all of the participants, this was not explicitly described as a “Latino” solidarity. Nonetheless, collaboration was a key issue for many. For example, Ana noted that the community is always need of more organizing and coalition-building:

Because different folks might be moving in or because of like displacement and stuff. So I feel like it's always shifting but I feel there's a strong sense of history of organizing and identity in Boyle Heights. It's also with a lot of you know, police brutality but that's something we also know happens in other communities. So I think there's a strong sense, but there's also, always opportunity to collaborate with with other folks to uplift their stories.

Latino community identity, particularly Chicana/o/x identity, is a critical part of socialization in the neighborhood, however, it was always linked to a greater multi-racial coalition. All of the respondents who reported a sense of racialization linked those systemic disparities to other marginalized communities. As I explained above, this was not the expected finding. My hypothesis was that this sense of obligation would also link to a greater political solidarity with other marginalized Latinos. Instead, I found that it was a broader sense of solidarity that extended to Black and Indigenous communities. More importantly, this sense of obligation was often described as an intrinsically *American* experience. For example, Emma echoed some of the arguments presented by Francisco in terms of national identity:

I grew up differently than I would say, my other counterparts. I've talked to people that are like, from different ethnicities and they don't necessarily see things the way that I see them. And I totally respect that. But, then we have conversations about it and they're like, well, I've never thought about it that way. But I ultimately do see myself as an American like a lot of people put a large weight on the mere fact that they're like, so proud to be Mexican American.

Of all the questions I examined in this study, the relationship between their sense of racialization

and obligation and the greater Latino community was the most perplexing. Nearly every respondent had a different response although more than half described a sort of multi-racial solidarity that is common in Rainbow coalitions.

Summary

In this chapter I illustrated how the concept of racialized habitus has been cultivated and sustained over time in the community of Boyle Heights. In addition, I explained how current residents navigate the various networks in the neighborhood and gain a sense of racialization and political obligation. In terms of the archival record, there is an abundance of empirical evidence that this community has developed a distinctly racialized identity with specific political obligations. Although this organizing has its foundation in the multicultural organizing of the pre-WW2 era, the development of a Latino agenda has been ongoing since the 1950s. In addition, all of the respondents reported a strong sense of obligation toward their community that was often explicitly racialized, however, this political solidarity was not necessarily a *Latino* form of solidarity rather a multi-racial, class-based system of organizing. Nonetheless, there were recurring mentions of the Chicano Movement and the relationship with Chicana/o/x history that influenced contemporary perceptions of political solidarity. As explained earlier, both R1 and R2 had substantial support in the interview data but the sense of overall Latino solidarity was more complicated. Participants did note a sense of political obligation with others, but it was broader than originally expected.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this chapter I will be discussing the findings of the study and addressing my initial research questions. The following sections will be organized as follows. First, I will directly address each concept that was analyzed (spatiality, racialization and intersubjective exchange). In addition, I will explain how the interview data supported my original hypothesis. Next, I will explain how the study limitations impacted the findings. Finally, I will describe plans for future research and how the findings influence our overall understanding of Latino solidarity.

Spatiality

As explained in Chapter 3, spatiality is defined as a socially constructed and bounded system of symbolic meaning that influences the actions of agents within any given spatial field. Among racialized groups spatiality manifested as exclusionary policies and the production of counter-spaces imbued with racial meaning. These processes differ from group to group and from space to space. The archival record indicates there is a dense system of spatial marginalization in the area. Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles were more likely to live in the poorer areas of town in “cholo courts” which were neglected by city officials and produced systems of self-reliance.²¹³ In Boyle Heights, spatial processes were similarly rooted to exclusion and isolation, as well as the racial demarcation of the built environment. Historically, the community began as a majority-Jewish neighborhood, however people of Mexican descent have resided in the area, as well as the larger East Los Angeles region, since the founding of Los Angeles. In the late 19th century, the neighborhood was composed of Mexican railway workers in boxcar communities who were barred from living in

²¹³ “Los Angeles Housing Commission”, in *Cultural Needs Assessment*, Box 1, Folder 1, Boyle Heights Archive. California State University, Los Angeles.

other parts of the city.²¹⁴ By the early 1900s, Jewish residents began moving to the community, also as a result of exclusionary policies that barred them from living in other parts of the city. Zoning laws that were passed in the early 20th century designated East Los Angeles as a mixed-use area, which led to the development of industrial sectors and the displacement of residents in Boyle Heights. These policies have consequences that reverberate in the archival record as well as the interviews I conducted. Each of the participants had a strong awareness of their status as a marginalized community, although it took time for them to develop that understanding. The objective spatial representations of the area, which are evident in the HOLC descriptions of the community as well as the seeming disposability of the community in relation to spatial projects such as the development of the Los Angeles freeways, have consistently placed the residents of Boyle Heights in a defensive position. As historian George Sánchez notes in his expansive history of the community, there is a “policy of urban apartheid” that has displaced residents, destroyed historical networks forged by multiracial coalitions, and is an ongoing detriment to grassroots organizing in the area.²¹⁵ Sánchez estimates that freeway development ultimately consumed 15% of the original community.

This practice of simultaneous isolation and displacement has been a consistent problem in the community for generations. If we take a critical look at the aspects of spatiality that have influenced, and continue to influence, the cultivation of political practices in the neighborhood then we can see how policies of isolation became the foundational roots of the neighborhood’s political identity, as well as its political networks. Although the systems of symbolic production that resulted from spatial processes of isolation are not unique to Los Angeles, they are

²¹⁴ Sánchez, *Boyle Heights*, 266.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

illustrative of aspects of the spatial triad that Lefebvre emphasized. In particular, he noted a linkage between objective spatial structures and subjective lived experiences.

Racialization

The impetus to segregate and divide based on racial/ethnic factors is a fundamental aspect of social and political socialization in the U.S. In Boyle Heights, this impetus is laid bare in the demographic makeup of the community, as well as the expendability of its residents. Despite the dedicated efforts of the Jewish community in the neighborhood in the pre-war period, the destructive aspects of urban renewal were impossible to combat. Nonetheless, the efforts of Jewish residents in the face of displacement produced activist networks that were adopted by Mexican American residents during the post-WW2 era. The development of an activist ethos would continue to accelerate throughout the 1960s and 1970s, both in relation to the ongoing displacement of residents as well as resistance to racially restrictive policies. Arguably, there is a history of multiracial organizing in the area, however, the aspects of racialization that shaped political organizing in the neighborhood since the 1950s were distinctly Chicana/o/x. Notably, some parts of Boyle Heights were spared from the worst consequences of urban renewal, while other neighborhoods which were primarily Mexican American, such as Chavez Ravine, were completely dismantled.²¹⁶ Overall, there is a strong indication that spatial policies have influenced the form and function of political organizing in the neighborhood.

Notably, all of the participants except one seemed to have a keen sense of racialization. The participants repeatedly linked their own experiences of marginalization to larger barriers that cause racial disparities. This was by far the strongest finding in the study. All of the participants who expressed an understanding or awareness of systemic racism and racial marginalization also

²¹⁶ Estrada, "If You Build It, They Will Move: The Los Angeles Freeway System and the Displacement of Mexican East Los Angeles, 1944-1972."

reported a strong sense of political obligation. For the most part, this sense of racialization was linked to the Mexican American experience, although participants with different backgrounds noted that patterns of racialization in the U.S. do not distinguish between ethnic differences. For participants who had engaged with racialization in Latin America, this distinction was even more clear. There is a specific pattern of racialization in the U.S. that is largely anti-Black, in contrast, Latin America was viewed as a space of anti-Indigenous perceptions. The relationship with racialization was also readily apparent in the archival record and was inherently linked to the practice of spatial marginalization. This practice of racialization stemmed from the Mexican American experience although it was often deployed against other Latinos.

Intersubjective Exchange

In the archival records, oral histories, and interviews it was evident that engagement with racialized networks in Boyle Heights played a significant role in cultivating a sense of obligation with others in the community. All of the interviewees participate in the community to some extent, that include trash clean-up, the neighborhood council, as well as local politics. Notably, the only participant who did not seem interested in participating in local protests and collective actions was Francisco, who is also the only respondent who rejected racialized frames of identity. Each of the other participants had either left Boyle Heights and returned to work in local organizations, or had moved to Boyle Heights from a different location and *then* became involved in political organizing. All of the respondents who participated in these activities had undergone a *process* of engaging with racialized habitus through their schools, social networks, and community networks that eventually influenced their decision to give back to their community. Moreover, all of the respondents noted that there was an obligation to others in the community that was an *inherent* aspect of living in Boyle Heights.

As explained in Chapter 4, there were various ways that participants navigated their own understanding of racialization including engagement with white space. However, all of the participants except for one described the process of engaging in racialized discourse with diverse networks. Notably, one of the respondents mentioned that Boyle Heights was so segregated that it was often difficult to see beyond that bubble. It was not until they left the area that they became aware of their own marginalized status and the dispositions that were sedimented over time became explicitly racialized. The history of the community, which has become a central aspect of their identity, was also a common theme among participants. In particular, Roosevelt High School was repeatedly mentioned as a space of racialized exchange that was a positive aspect of their upbringing. In contrast, the students who participated in the East Los Angeles Walkouts did not have the same experiences, as evidenced by the massive protests against the discriminatory practices at the school. More than 50 years later, those same political actions have become a central part of the community's narrative and the schools that were initially shaped by white practices of marginalization eventually became sites of racialized organizing. This speaks to the processes of sedimentation that are analyzed in studies of habitus. Racialization is a process that takes time. Internalizing those racialized frames also takes time is a process related to engagement with racialized networks. But as I explained in Chapter 2, you cannot engage with racialized networks in spaces that are not racialized. As David explained in his interview, he grew up in a fairly white space with little to no racialized discourse. It was not until he moved to Boyle Heights that this awareness of racialization accelerated.

Does Space Matter?

The overall argument that I proposed with this study is that there are sedimented networks that are critical for cultivating a sense of racialization and political solidarity. The

findings from this study support that argument, however, there are some areas that require further analysis. The most important issue to draw from this study is the foundational nature of space in relation to political participation. As explained earlier, there are specific patterns and sociohistorical conditions that have influenced the cultivation of political solidarity in Black communities. Similarly, there are patterns of exclusion and spatial marginalization that are critical to grassroots organizing and coalition-building in Boyle Heights. Overall, spatiality is an important aspect of political organizing because it creates the conditions that make political organizing necessary. There are diverse reasons that Latinos become involved in political organizing or participation, however, those motivations have to be sustained over time. In the absence of engagement with racialized networks, Latinos struggle to gain a sense of political obligations, as evidenced by the interview and oral histories. Even among participants who had a deeply established history in the community, lack of engagement with racialized networks was a significant barrier. The findings from this study validate my original argument that spatial conditions shape political outcomes. More importantly, they support the argument that racialization is a distinctly different process for racialized groups. Black marginalization is not co-extensive with Latino marginalization. Consequently, Latino Politics are not co-extensive with Black Politics. Given that the study participants were often able to set aside their own racial identity, there is a strong indication that Latino identity and race do not intersect in the same way as Black identity.

As explained in Chapter 3, Boyle Heights was selected as a site for analysis because of the substantial history of organizing, as well as the strong record of spatial marginalization in the community. The consequences of those practices were evident in the archival record as well the interview data. Not only was there a long history of marginalization in the community, there was

also strong awareness of this history among community members. Many of the interviewees repeatedly compared their own community to other wealthier and more privileged Los Angeles neighborhoods, such as Beverly Hills. Notably, one of the respondents, Ana, also mentioned that communities like Echo Park had not been able to stem the tide of gentrification. This was an important lesson for Ana who believed that anti-gentrification work was critical for maintaining the community's history of organizing. Outsiders, particularly developers, were repeatedly framed as a danger to the neighborhood. Similarly, the dismantling of Chavez Ravine, which paved the way for the construction of Dodger Stadium, was also a topic of conversation among participants with a broad understanding of Los Angeles history. In general, participants had a strong awareness of the *spatial* limitation of their political power and they linked these barriers to their identity. As I explained in Chapter 2, this is a concept that is often presumed in studies of Latino solidarity. Latinos are not racialized or *spatialized* in the same way. As a result, intersubjective exchange with racialized networks is inherently a process rooted to sociohistorical conditions and Latinos require this exchange in order to gain a sense of political obligation.

Study Implications

One of the motivations for this study was the disconnect between the measures we apply to Latinos and Latino political behaviors and the sociohistorical conditions that shaped the group. In Chapter 1, I explained how there were key differences between various states that comprise the Southwest, as well as other areas with high populations of Latinos. Although Boyle Heights is just one small community in Los Angeles, it is illustrative of many other Latino enclaves in the U.S. in terms of the racial marginalization that residents experience. However, key differences between Boyle Heights and other ethnic communities are the sedimented networks that have been cultivated over time by Mexican Americans and other Latino groups.

For example, the city of El Paso, Texas has undergone similar processes of gentrification in the ethnic enclaves of Segundo Barrio and Chihuahita, which are historically Mexican American communities. In contrast with Boyle Heights, residents in Segundo Barrio did not have deeply sedimented networks that could mobilize group members. In the absence of a shared agenda and community identity, the residents had to rely on outsiders to defend their neighborhood.

Eventually, anti-gentrification efforts became co-opted by organizations who were concerned with protecting the architectural integrity of the structures in the neighborhood. Unlike Boyle Heights, which frames their political organizing in explicitly racialized terms, organizing in Segundo Barrio became a question of historical preservation. The explicitly racialized aspect of the movement was set aside in the pursuit of mixed agendas. Although some aspects of Segundo Barrio and Chihuahita survived, much has been demolished. The key thing to consider here is that Texas and California have vastly different group resources for Latinos. Moreover, they have varying density in terms of racialized networks. In order to gain a clearer understanding of how political solidarity is made possible, we have to be critical about the way that racialization has shaped Latinos in diverse spaces.

Boyle Heights is one enclave of many, but it is a model for communities that are seeking political redress. More importantly, it is illustrative of the processes of panethnic political solidarity that political scientists are often invoking in their research. However, it is one unique space shaped by unique processes. How do Latinos navigate their sense of identity and political obligation in new destinations where there is a weak system of organizing and coalition-building? To what extent are Latinos disengaging from the political aspects of their identity simply because of the lack of exchange with racialized networks? These are important questions that need to be addressed before we develop a theory of solidarity that encompasses the whole

group. Although some forms of racialization, such as the corporeal racing of the Black community, extend beyond physical spaces, this is not necessarily true for Latinos. On the contrary, where you live can dictate how you identify in a critical way that will substantially limit political solidarity. Black identity crosses borders in a way that Latino identity does not. Similarly, Latino identity takes forms that are rooted to place in a way that Black identity does not. We should not rely on the measures or theories designed for the Black community given our distinct processes of racialization. Moreover, Latinos need to contend with their own proximity to whiteness in order to develop a sense of marginalization. Although the research question for this study were not designed to address whiteness, it was a recurring theme in the interview data and oral histories. Participants who regularly participate in community organizing were keenly aware of the privileges of whiteness and noted that some Latinos were simply able to set politics aside. As I explained earlier, this is a privilege of Latino identity that needs to be addressed further. Here again spatiality plays a key role. If we return to the Texas comparison, we have to acknowledge that there are important differences in terms of sociohistorical conditions. Notably, Texas has the highest rate of Latinos who identify as white. How and why these Latinos adopted this form of identification is important for understanding the barriers that limit Latino political potential.

Future Research

In order to gain a clearer understanding of how racialized habitus functions in Latino spaces, future research would require an analysis of other diverse spaces in the community. For example, the Borderlands are space of meaning and cultural production with distinct processes of socialization and racialization. Similarly, the various new destinations where Latinos reside are also in the process of forging their own systems of political and cultural production. All of these

spaces intersect with previously sedimented networks that may or may not be conducive for organizing. As a result, a more rigorous examination of Latino spaces is needed to further explore these networks. Also, as I explained in Chapter 4, one of the more surprising findings from this study was the critical role that mothers play in political empowerment. The relationship between gender and race, which is a critical intersectional approach, was not the focus of this study but certainly merits more attention. Racialized habitus is one type of practice but that does not indicate that gendered space does not influence political socialization in key ways. Given that mothers were a recurring theme in the archival record, oral histories, and interviews, further studies should explore this influence. Notably, this was not a theme that was recurrent in my analysis of the literature related to African American organizing. This does not indicate that mothers do not play a critical role among Black Americans, however, the prominence of mothers in Latino organizing appear to be a unique aspect of the group. In addition, the multiracial aspects of political solidarity among participants also merits more attention. To what extent is Latino a meaningful category for analysis? All of the respondents were more invested in their personal histories and their community identity. None reported the type of panethnic solidarity that is implied by a concept like “Latino Politics”. Given that so many respondents reported a multiracial and multiethnic form of solidarity, further research should explore how that solidarity intersects with Latinidad. Finally, the concept of racialized habitus itself needs more development. Although there is a strong indication that racialization, spatiality and intersubjective exchange are foundational for Latino solidarity, this relationship needs to be explored further in diverse spaces.

Summary

In this chapter I discussed the the implications of the study and the goals for future research. As explained throughout the study, much of the work related to racialized habitus is in its nascent stages and requires further research. Nonetheless, this study is an important step forward in exploring the relationship between racialization, spatiality and political solidarity. There is no easy answer to the question of Latino solidarity, however, there are conditions that make this outcome possible. In contrast, there are also conditions that limit the potential for the group. There is a vast and dense system of organizing that has been instrumental to the Black community in terms of organizing and political empowerment. In contrast, Latinos have forged systems that appear endlessly fragmented and complex. Although there is the potential for organizing and coalition-building, it is limited by the spatial boundaries that shape the group. In addition to the various regional forms of fragmentation, there is also a proximity to white identity that needs to be addressed. Latinos are a racialized group but they are a unique in terms of their multi-racial and multi-ethnic roots. Consequently, there are unique processes of forging political solidarity that are ongoing and diverse. For example, immigration is often presented as a key issue for Latinos, however, none of the participants in this study seemed to be motivated by immigration barriers. Instead, the residents of Boyle Heights were motivated by the spatial barriers they navigated on a daily basis. Lived experience among Latinos shapes political outcomes in a way that merits more attention. Latino political solidarity is not a natural extension of self-identification, rather it is a goal forged through struggle, symbolic exchange, and the rejection of the privileges associate with whiteness.

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