Reading, Writing, and Right Wing (Re)Production:

The Teaching and Learning of Settler Citizenship in Ohio

By

Dinorah Sánchez Loza

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Lisa García Bedolla, Chair
Professor Daniel Perlstein
Professor Evelyn Nakano Glenn

Spring 2020

Reading, Writing, and Right Wing (Re)Production:

The Teaching and Learning of Settler Citizenship in Ohio

By

Dinorah Sánchez Loza

Abstract

Reading, Writing, and Right Wing (Re)Production:

The Teaching and Learning of Settler Citizenship in Ohio

by

Dinorah Sánchez Loza

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Lisa García Bedolla, Chair

This dissertation calls for a shift in the way scholars approach the role of schooling in democratic participation. Much of the scholarship documenting unequal schooling conditions exposes the absence of civic learning opportunities in under-resourced schools, and conversely, how more rigorous academics and democratic learning environments in higher resourced schools result in higher rates of youth political participation. However, more analyses are needed that interrogate the ideologies that undergird these "successful" students' political ideas and practices and that explore how homogenous schooling environments, specifically predominantly white and politically conservative schools, impact the development of youth in these spaces. Also, not sufficiently considered is the impact of settler colonialism in structuring relationships, ideologies, and schooling, and how these derive from and give rise to specific relationships to the nation-state. *Reading, Writing and Right-Wing Reproduction: The Teaching and Learning of Settler Citizenship in Ohio* offers this contribution and investigates the political ideologies that circulate and are (re)produced within spaces commonly perceived as "good schools." This dissertation looks at the everyday life in US Government classrooms and asks: What role does schooling play in shaping how youth come to think and act politically?

A political ethnography of schooling, this project examines the political education occurring in two predominantly white high schools in central Ohio: one in an affluent suburb, the other in a working-class semi-agricultural small town. Drawing upon observations, interviews, and documents from students and teachers, findings show that both schools play important roles in the (re)production of settler citizenship and this process is: 1) teacher-facilitated through ascription to politically neutral pedagogy that, in fact, reifies right-wing *hegemony* 2) student co-constructed via *funds of settler knowledge* that students draw from and deploy to co-create *communities of practice* where settler logics are apprenticed, and 3) sanctioned in school communities though a *settler-normed pubic sphere* that amplifies dominant ideologies and serves an assimilatory function into the white settler normative citizen. These findings highlight the importance of accounting for the sociocultural and, ultimately, colonial contexts in which political education takes place and the impact this has to (re)produce settler power and engagement in the public sphere. As scholars and education practitioners continue to theorize and research schools as potential sites of democracy-building, this research offers insights with regard to how we approach citizenship, governance, and political engagement and the (im)possibilities of disrupting settler-citizenship education in the classrooms of those most benefited by political and social structures as they are.

para mis abuelitxs que no fueron a la escuela porque no pudieron o porque no quisieron; pues aun

sin escuela (o quizas precisamente porque la evadieron) tenian educación y educaron.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter I: Introduction

The Teaching and Learning of Settler Citizenship in Ohio

"Columbus, Ohio."

It is not coincidence, nor irony, but extremely fitting that the setting for this research and for where I now write this dissertation should be named Columbus, Ohio. This coupling (Columbus, Ohio) has served as an epistemological cornerstone throughout my research and writing in that the city and state, as they are written together, bring together two words, signifying two dynamics, and holds them in tension. The City of Columbus is named after Christopher Columbus, the progenitor of colonialism in the western Hemisphere; Ohio, the state's name, is a Seneca word meaning "great river." In this way, this phrase—its symbolism and materiality—serves as the setting for a research project that focuses on politics, education, and the reproduction of the nation-state and also as a clear and present reminder of the settler colonialism from which these all derive.

When I relocated to Columbus, Ohio, in 2014, I was struck by the simultaneous absence and presence of Native[1] peoples. Ohio became a state in 1803, shortly after the passage of the Northwest Ordinances—legislation passed in 1789 by the 1st United States Congress, codifying as one of its first formal acts, the inherent relationship between US politics and indigenous dispossession and violence. The Northwest Ordinance established Ohio Country as land ready for "settlement" through its political incorporation and codification of property rights as incentive for moving westward and dispossessing and expelling indigenous people from their land. These ordinances, along with future policies like the Morrill Act of 1862, also required that portions of land in these new states—Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio— be set aside for the establishment of public schools, and as such, placing schools at the center of settlement (Lee & Ahtone, 2020). Yet, unlike other parts of the U.S., there are no federally recognized tribes, groups, or nations in the state. And, despite the documented issues with relying on census data as an accurate determinant of native population, the Ohio census reports only 0.3% Native residents a small number when compared to other areas of the country (Lavelle et al., 2009; Lujan, 1990; Keslen, 2019, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2015, US Census Bureau, 2019).

And yet, as I drive around central Ohio, the legacies of native people persist in surrounding place names—Chillicothe, Wyandot, Olentangy, Scioto, Pataskala, Gahanna, Shawnee Hills. Throughout, there are also more insidious deployments: a marker on the side of the street that commemorates Bill Moose, "the last of the Wyandot Indians;" a sign "RedMen Sioux Tribe No. 128" on the side of a building seemingly a remnant from a lodge or fraternal organization from decades past; driving down highway 315, a sign for the Olentangy Indian Caverns where I could "book my next birthday party and mine for gems;" a billboard advertising the return of *Tecumseh!* the summer live outdoor drama experience where I can "[w]itness the epic life story of the legendary Shawnee leader as he struggles to defend his sacred homelands in the Ohio country during the late 1700's"(The Scioto Society, 2020). And, although commonly practiced across the U.S. (Munguia, 2014), a much higher degree of appropriation of Native imagery persists in Ohio as evidenced in local school names and mascots: from Indian Springs Elementary with its carving of a "Indian head" on one of its entryways, Whetstone High School Braves and its use of the "Indian head" and

---

[1] Throughout this project, I utilize the term Native and Indigenous interchangeably recognizing, as Sabzalian and Shear (2018) make clear, that this runs the risk of collapsing diversity of experiences (p. 154). However, like them, I do this to refer to the larger collective of peoples and nations that have been and still remain here before the establishment of the US. I also follow their lead and that of scholars of Native feminism (see Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, 2013) in purposefully capitalizing the terms as a way "to emphasize the political distance between that which is Western and that which is Native" as this may serve to remind the reader "that we are Natives and not immigrants" (Trask, 1996, p. 906).

tomahawk as emblems, to Major League Baseball's Cleveland Indians and Chief Wahoo to name a few examples.

And, perhaps due to my transplant status as a Californian seeing things in the Buckeye State through outsider eyes, alongside these markers of indigeneity, I notice the ghosts-like apparitions (Byrd, 2011) or "hauntings" (Avery Gordon, 2008) of settler colonialism past and present: as stated, a capital city named after the most famous colonizer; the German Village and Italian Village neighborhoods that were settled by their respective European immigrant communities in the 1800s; and more contemporarily, the explicit naming of settlerness in a video put forth by the Franklinton Arts Commission praising artists and developers who have moved into the area "in essence…as settlers" to revive the blighted neighborhood of Franklinton, as an example of "gentrification without the negative" (The Atlantic, 2014). And, in parallel, we find the accompanying local school mascots: The Fighting Irish, Celtics, Vikings, Patriots, Pioneers, and Cowpunchers.

I share these markers as a way to make the (colonial) familiar strange; as a way to not only acknowledge, but center the indigenous people and governance structures that were and continue to be here (and elsewhere in the US) and to make visible a settler colonial state that desires invisibility for its normalization and continual remaking (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Calderon, 2009; Veracini, 2010; Nakano Glenn, 2015, Day, 2015). Centering the state as a settler colonial project also serves to animate the themes guiding this project: the tensions inherent in discussions of civic education that inevitably entangle ideas and perceptions of government, politics, nation, and citizenship, and which in turn, implicate race, class, gender, and sexuality, since these are derivative of the specific subjectivities and relationships we individually and collectively hold to the US as a settler colonial state.

Shifting the Frame in Civic Education Research: From 'Civic Opportunity Gaps' to Political (Re)Production

Unlike extractive colonialism, in settler colonialism, settlers come to stay, declare sovereignty and appropriate land and must continually justify and remake settlerness (Veracini, 2010). As Patrick Wolfe attests, settler colonialism is "a structure, not an event" (Wolfe, 2006) in that it continues to shape economic and social structures, our relations to each other and to land, our knowledge systems—in essence, settler colonialism structures our politics and education. Which leads to what I view as the central problem facing the field of civic education. Ideas such as "youth civic engagement" and "youth political participation" and "mobilizing the youth vote" are generally believed to be goods and civic education a crucial endeavor for the health of our democracy. However, as indigenous and settler colonial scholars make clear, the body politic is colonial (Grande, 2015; Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2007, 2014; Moreton-Robinson, 2015), the public sphere is inherently classed, patriarchal, and exclusionary as critical and feminist scholars attest (Fraser, 1990), and the very social contract undergirding liberal democratic ideals is animated by a racial contract where white supremacy functions as the political system that structures our "norms and differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, …rights and duties" (Mills, 1997). In this way, the civic education occurring in schools and the political ideologies it promotes must be interrogated as it is crucial to understanding how schooling, and specifically the civic education occurring therein, socializes students into political subjectivities that require their and/or others' erasure and continual marginalization. Starting with settler colonialism makes visible these legacies of colonialism and allows for different framings of the problems at the center of civic education research and practice. It also rejects colonial blindness (Calderon, 2009), settler grammars in the curriculum (Calderon, 2014), Whitestream normativity in social studies and citizenship

education (Urrieta, 2004; Ladson Billings, 2004) and foregrounds indigenous sovereignty (Sabzalian, 2019).

Schools have long been heralded as "Guardians of Democracy," as sites charged with promoting a robust democracy by nurturing an informed citizenry (Dewey, 1966; Civic Mission of Schools, 2011) and as central in "helping to shape citizens" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Importantly, scholarship of this kind served to alert us to low rates[2] of youth political participation and pointed to the "crowding out" of civic education because of the increased attention to test stores (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). These studies also document the impact of educational inequality illustrating that differential schooling experiences not only impact academic achievement, but negatively impact civic knowledge and engagement. Termed *civic opportunity gaps*, these studies expose the absence of democratic and civic learning opportunities in under-resourced schools, and conversely, show that more rigorous academic school cultures and exposure to democratic learning environments in higher resourced schools result in higher rates of youth political participation and highlight the raced and classed dynamics structuring civic educational inequality and its implications for unequal democratic participation (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levine, 2009; Oakes, 2005).

As Tuck (2009) has poignantly warned, research on educational inequality (in which I would include civic education), while well-intentioned, positions Black[3], Indigenous, and other communities of color (as these communities make up the majority of students in these under-resourced schools) as lacking and "damaged" and in need of repair (Tuck, 2009). As such, civic education research—even when focused on mitigating or eradicating social inequality—normatively positions higher-performing schools (and the predominantly White students within them) as "getting it right." However, more analyses are needed that interrogate the larger narratives and ideologies that motivate these "successful" students' political ideas and practices. *Reading, Writing and Right-Wing Reproduction,* shifts this gaze onto the education of students in high-achieving and predominantly White schools and instead of focusing on "civic empowerment gaps" as negatively experienced by poor students and students of color (Levinson, 2010; Levinson, 2012), investigates the political ideologies that circulate and are reproduced within educational spaces normatively positioned as "good schools." It is crucial to turn this lens onto the schooling experiences in predominantly White schools as to explore not just the explicit curricular and pedagogical moves taking place, but to also uncover colonial and racialized processes occurring in these spaces since these also illuminate important aspects of how students, teachers, and school leaders conceive of and enact citizenship, civic opportunity, and empowerment. This dissertation looks at the everyday life in US Government classrooms in these predominantly White schools and asks: What role does schooling, and especially civic education provided by schools, play in shaping how youth in these schools come to think and act politically?

White Youth as Political Subjects in Civic Education

As mentioned, substantive scholarship exists that explores young people's civic knowledge and engagement, yet few studies examine the specificities of White youth political ideologies[4]—that is, the contours of their opinions and worldviews—and less has been written about how these political ideologies are negotiated, affirmed, or challenged in schools via curriculum, pedagogy, and everyday school life. The majority of the work that looks at White adolescents' political sense-making, however, treats them as unraced; that is, it does not position White youth in the U.S. as racialized/settler subjects. Even while studies may disaggregate to get at voting or engagement differences among different raced and class groups, most often these studies have focused on adolescent political ideologies and practices or homogenize findings onto "American" youth overall[5] lacking attention to the specific ways ideas are racialized, classed, gendered, heteronormative, and ultimately, colonial (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Calderon, 2014; Sabzalian, 2019). Of the scholarship that does focus specifically on White youth and the substance of their politics and their racialized/racist implications, most analyses focus on right-wing youth in Europe or, if focused in the US, tend to focus on White youth involved in White supremacist gangs (Miller-Idriss, 2009; Miller-Idriss, 2018; Doosje, van den Bos, Loseman, Feddes, & Mann, 2012; Reid, Valasik, 2018).

While a substantive field of scholarship focused on White youth in the U.S. does exist exploring the relationship between schooling and development of White adolescent's racialized identities (Perry, 2002; Buckholtz, 2010, Hagerman, 2020) as well as the nuances in identity development along class lines and the particularities of privilege as a commodity to be achieved and maintained throughs schooling (Eckert, 1992, Kahn, 2012, Demerath, 2009), a need exists for looking at the political dynamics and implications these impart. Swallwell's (2013) study on perceptions of social justice among privileged White students in suburban and urban elite schools is an important contribution as it highlights the tensions and limits of nurturing "activist allies" even when educators are social justice minded given that ideas about social justice are rearticulated by students through lenses of racial and class privilege. However, more research is needed that explores how normative schooling experiences in homogenous environments, that is, everyday life in schools that are predominantly White and politically conservative, impact the development of youth in these spaces and how different classed experiences within these schools (re)produce particular ideas and engagement with politics. This study contributes to filling this gap by exploring the ways in which political ideologies are (re)produced in and through predominantly White and politically conservative schools in central Ohio—one in an affluent suburb, the other in a working-class small town.

Conversely, much of the scholarship that focuses explicitly on race and the perpetuation of inequality via the teaching and learning of civic education has done so from the vantage point of minoritized students and the importance of making civic education culturally relevant to students of color (Rubin & Hayes, 2010, Rubin, Hayes, & Benson, 2009; Mirra, Morrell, Cain, Scorza, & Ford, 2013; Garcia Bedolla, 2012; Kirshner, Strobel, & Fernandez, 2003; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Ginwright & James, 2002, Banks, 1990, 2001; Junn, 2004; Tyson 2008; Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007). Junn argues, for example, that civic education programs may be key in developing strong democratic citizenship among all the nation's youth, but how it cannot be expected that "the effects will be the same for all, or that they will have equitable benefits" (Junn, 2004, p. 253) since

> inequality and barriers to action structure rather than pepper [the] daily lives [of non-White students], and concepts such as freedom, fairness, equality, justice, and even democracy are

---

[4] Important examples of studies that have aimed to map the contours of adolescent political thinking include, Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz's (2001) comparative study across 28 countries and the work of Flanagan, & Tucker, (1999) Jennings & Niemi (2015) McDevitt (2006) and Ekström (2016).

[5] For notable exceptions please see Cohen (2010) on the political ideologies and engagement of black youth as well as the Black Youth Project and recent GenForward survey (2019).

far from unambiguous. The American democratic creed, tidy as it may sound when one is advocating its support, does not apply equally, but instead *depends on where one is situated in relation to other*" (emphasis added, Junn, 2004, p. 254).

As Junn makes clear, accounting for the ways that inequality structures the lives of marginalized students is imperative for understanding how politics are understood and experienced differentially. However, I argue that it is also imperative to account for how inequality structures the lives of White and economically privileged students that benefit from these unequal social conditions and how schooling may play a part not only in reifying particular conceptualizations of government and politics that are oppressive, but in fostering student's investments in them.

Another example is provided by Gillborn (1992), who similarly to Junn, delineates how politics are not only understood, but experienced differently via a hidden curriculum in schools. Gillborn argues that schools[6] teach citizenship via "the degree to which students truly belong and may expect full participation and equal access within society," (p. 58) and while teachers' intentions may be benign, their frequent criticism and control of Afro-Caribbean students acts effectively to exclude them from the opportunities enjoyed by their White peers" (p. 59). Schooling then, teaches students much about the "second-class citizenship of Black people" (Gillborn, 1992, p. 59). I argue that it is important then to consider not only the experiences of students of color and how they may experience differential citizenship in and through school, but how this functions conversely for White students and how schooling experiences impart particular notions of "first-class citizenships." Gillborn argues that the elements of citizenship via belonging, access, and participation are not merely constructions in the abstract, but are very real and material entitlements and "the degree to which Black students enjoy these entitlements in school transmits clear messages about the kind of citizenship they can look forward to in society at large" (p.59). What "clear messages" might schools be transmitting about the kind of citizenship White students can look forward to (and presently enjoy) in society at large? If, as Hahn (1998) suggests, the forms that citizenship education take reflect the distinct set of values of a particular culture (p. viii), then it is important to consider how racially and economically privileged sectors of society writ large, but also local practices at school sites situated within these communities: a) shape the ways that students' political ideologies are constructed and enacted differentially, b) how these might impact non-White and low-income students who are differentially positioned along race and class lines within these schools, and, c) how this might problematize the aims and measures of effective civic education.

Education, the 'White Working Class,' and Right-Wing Politics

"I love the poorly educated."
—Donald J. Trump, February 24, 2016

After the Nevada Republican primaries in 2016 and after seeing exit-poll data, then-candidate Donald J. Trump declared at a rally, "I love the poorly educated" after having garnered 57% percent of this demographic. Since Donald J. Trump first announced his intent to run for president, political pundits, researchers and scholars attempted to make sense of his public appeal citing his popularity among the White working class as cause for his political success. The "White working class"—defined as Whites without college degrees (Edsall, 2019)— became homogenized and their interests attributed to racial resentments and economic discontents resulting from a

---

[6] While Gillborn's study does not take place in the US, the legacies of slavery also continue to structure social relationships in the US in similar ways, as the field of critical race scholars have made clear.

shifting global economy that most severely impacted the American Midwest. This demographic also became, in some ways, lionized as the driving force behind the rise of Trump and the entrenchment of the right-wing in US politics. However, as Edsall (2019) explains, recent scholarship (Kitschelt & Rehm, 2019) on the matter paints a more complicated picture of the White working class finding that low-income/low-education sectors of the White population are not the demographic "most ardently realigned toward Republicans." Kitschelt & Rehm (2019) explain the surge of Whites into the Republican Party as "having been led by Whites with relatively high incomes — in the top two quintiles of the income distribution — but without college degrees, a constituency that is now decisively committed to the Republican Party" (as interviewed in Edsall, 2019). As Edsall (2019) explains, low-income Whites with no college degrees have moved to the Republican Party, but they hold more liberal economic views — they support the redistributionist policies from which they benefit — and this causes conflict with their allegiance to the party. Whites with low-education, but who are high-income, however, "are faring well economically, but fear that in the Knowledge Society their life chances are shrinking as high education becomes increasingly the ticket to economic and social success" (Kitschelt as interviewed by Edsall, 2019).

While this demographic is categorized by educational attainment, or lack thereof, I argue that research is needed that explores the education this demographic does experience, K-12 schooling. Although the allegiance of Whites with low-education to Trump and the Republican party proves to be more complicated, it nevertheless elicits questions regarding not just the level of schooling that is acquired, but the qualitative make-up of educational experiences and the relationship between these and political development. These understandings and questions about the make-up of White conservative voters combined with increasing White nationalist rhetoric and activism across the country, offered an urgency to explore the relationship between Whiteness, economic class, and political ideologies and the ways in which education structures the political development of White and conservative youth.

Further, given this relationship between citizenship education and the distinct set of values of a particular culture (Hahn, 1998; Mitchel, 2016), it is important to name right-wing politics as the field of politics currently animating both US society at large and the local contexts in which this study takes place. Concrete definitions of political conservatism and the right-wing within the context of the U.S. prove nebulous since scholarship of the right spans across studies of conservative intellectual history, individual psychology, party identification, and right-wing social movements (Blee & Creasap, 2010). Because right-wing movements have historically been "both oppositional and system-supportive, often in combination," Diamond (1995) suggests defining right-wing movements not based on their relationship to the state, but by the functions for which they see the state responsible. While most definitions arise from studies of right-leaning social movements, they still prove useful since these movements (such as the Christian Right and the Neo-conservative movement; Diamond, 1990) shape the field of conservative politics for individuals. For example, as Diamond (1995) writes, right-wing means to "support the state in its capacity as *enforcer* of order and to oppose the state as *distributor* of wealth and power downward and more equitably in society" (Diamond, 1995, p. 9). Berlet and Lyons (2000) remind us of the complicated nature of definitions given that some right-wing populist movements reject the state through either latent support or outright participation in militia movements while also favoring state distribution downward when it benefits certain segments of the population, such as poor Whites.

In their analysis of conservative and right-wing movements, Blee and Creasap (2010) describe distinctions between these two factions. They write,

> We use [the term] conservative for movements that support patriotism, free enterprise capitalism, and/or a traditional moral order and for which violence is not a frequent tactic or goal. We use right-wing for movements that focus specifically on race/ethnicity and/or that

promote violence as a primary tactic or goal. We use rightist as a generic category. (p. 270-271).

This study, however, utilizes: 1) "right-wing politics" as an over-arching umbrella term which diverges from making distinctions between conservatism and right-wing politics; and, 2) uses as a working definition, an imperfect, but more explicit definition of right-wing politics as those "support[ing] anticollectivist economic policies, fervent patriotism, and/or traditionalism and conventional morality" (Blee & Creasap, 2010, p. 271).

I choose to use "right-wing politics" because distinctions made between conservatism and right-wing movements based on a perceived focus on race (or lack thereof) do not suffice given that race often informs fervent patriotism and economic policies even if not explicitly stating it so (Haney Lopez, 2015). Therefore, I argue, that both movements involve a focus on race and promotion of violence, albeit in different forms and to varying degrees. Further, concepts such as *patriotism, free enterprise capitalism* and *traditional moral order* must be understood as deriving from and motivating the settler colonial project and, as such, are always already imbricated in the historical and continual violence they have and continue to inflict on Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color.[7] I do not wish to frame the whole of these ideologies as solely resting within the right, as Democratic, left-leaning and progressive politics are derivate of this same settler state and settler motivations (Lake, 2019). However, I focus here specifically on right-wing politics because they dominated the federal, state, and local landscapes in which these schools were situated.

While I do not wish to equate the whole of the Republican Party (and those who identify as conservative) with the Ku Klux Klan as it is necessary to draw differentiations, the lines between these two organizations have often converged. Drawing distinctions between the two that are excessively rigid risks conveying the extreme right as rare, exceptional, and/or somehow inconceivable to "ordinary" people. As Blee and Creasap (2010) note, modern sociological studies rarely employ the use of factors such as fear, ignorance, psychological disorder, and status anxiety to determine conservatism and right-wing participation because "there is considerable evidence that rightist movements attract fairly ordinary and often middle-class people, not the frustrated, downwardly mobile, and socially marginal" (Blee & Creasap, 2010, p. 271). While not all middle-class people are on the extreme right, participants in "rightist movements" are "fairly ordinary and often middle-class." Further, while "extreme right-wing" can be used to differentiate White fascist groups from mainstream conservatives, mainstream does not mean not extreme. For those that are impacted by family separation policies at the border, for example, the normalization of these policies does not detract from their extreme nature or execution. Therefore, in drawing these hardline distinctions we risk erasing the everydayness and the extreme of right-wing ideologies. As we have seen in the years since the election and subsequent presidency of Donald J. Trump, the frequency with which things that were previously perceived as unsayable in the public sphere have been normalized and form a greater part of the mainstream. In using "right-wing politics" as the larger umbrella term, I wish to make legible this normalization by not providing a false marginalization of right-wing thinking. Further, because participants in the study, both the teachers and students, did not fall in the "extreme" rightist categorization as per Blee and Creasap (2010), the need did not exist for differentiating in this project for analysis purposes. Instead, this study focuses specifically on what is perceived as "fairly ordinary" teachers and students as well as the teaching and learning of politics occurring in these "fairly ordinary" settings.

---

[7] Moreover, the factors used to differentiate between conservatism and right-wing movements must do more to make clear the differences between the right and the left given that many Democrats, considered as part of "the left," also subscribe to these ideals. For more on how leftist politics engage in settler colonialism and violence, please see Grande (2015) and Coulthard (2014).

This dissertation cannot and does not attempt to uncover the universe of possible factors that impact how adolescents in predominantly White and politically conservative communities come to the political understandings that they do, for example, the impact of the family on adolescent political development (*for work on the impact of family on adolescent politics see*: McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; Nolas, Varvantakis, & Aruldoss, 2017; Jennings & Niemi, 2015; Levin, 1961). Instead, this dissertation sets out to map the broader relationships between schooling and political (re)production and the type of settler political education that occurs in the two predominantly White suburban and small-town schools in central Ohio that were the focus of this study. In doing so, it sets out to make sense of the contours of political ideologies among the participants in this study and to disentangle the curricular, pedagogical, discursive, and everyday school processes that shape and are shaped by their thinking.

My core argument is that the political education occurring in both the affluent suburban high school and in the small-town working-class high school is fundamentally shaped by settler colonial logics (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) and these manifest most clearly through right-wing conservative politics. In turn, this political education serves to amplify and reify settler citizenship ideologies. My work focuses specifically on how young people and their teachers both shape and are shaped by larger and local political structures and how students' racialized, classed, sexual and gendered subjectivities come to bear on their understandings and experiences with politics. Ultimately, this study focuses on the "what" and "how" of political (re)production via schooling; that is, it maps the contours of adolescent political thought as well as the mechanics of how political ideologies are reproduced in everyday life in these predominantly White high schools in central Ohio.

Research Questions

This dissertation investigates the (re)production of settler citizenship through the teaching and learning of politics in two central Ohio classrooms during the academic year 2017-2018. It attends to the ways schools (re)produce the political subjectivities of White students and students in predominantly White spaces; how ownership and belonging is constructed in civic education classrooms, and what disciplinary practices exist and how and whether investments in the nation as White possession are nurtured (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Specifically, I ask:

- What relationship exists between the political landscape—global, national, local politics— and teachers' pedagogical choices in the classrooms?
- What political ideologies exist among the student body and what role do students play in co-construct the learning space to develop political ideas?
- What community norms exist across both school sites and how might these play out differently along categories of difference (race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.)? How do non-conservative students in these spaces—that is, students who identify as left-leaning— experience their school communities?

As will be discussed at length in the findings chapters, both the small-town and suburban high schools play important roles in the (re)production of settler citizenship and, as evidence most clearly, this process: 1) is teacher-facilitated through ascription to political neutrality that reifies right-wing hegemony, 2) student co-constructed via students funds of settler knowledge and communities of settler practice, and 3) sanctioned in school communities though a settler-normed pubic sphere that amplifies dominant (right-wing and settler) logics and attempts to silence non-dominant ideas and ways of being.

Theoretical Framework

Settler Colonialism, Social (Re)Production, and Political Education

> *"But what on earth is whiteness that one should so desire it?" Then always, somehow, some way, silently but clearly, I am given to understand that whiteness is the ownership of the earth forever and ever, Amen!*
> *—W. E. B Dubois, Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*

This project utilizes settler-colonial theory as an overarching frame that structures every aspect of life—including politics—through epistemological, material, and relational processes. For example, scholars of settler colonial studies center anti-Blackness, indigenous dispossession, and White supremacy and describe settler colonialism as necessitating a slave-settler-native triad (Veracini, 2010; Tuck and Yang 2012; Calderon, 2014; Vizenor 1998; Wolfe 2013; Wynters 1995). As Tuck and Yang (2012) explain, "in order for the settlers to make a place their home, they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there" while also subjugating and appropriating the "forced labor of chattel slaves, whose bodies and lives become the property, and who are kept landless" (p. 6). Epistemologically, Moreton-Robinson (2015) discusses what she terms as, "the white possessive"—the possessive logics of White sovereignty that motivate land appropriation (possession) and rationalizes (logics) a racial hierarchy where White people are deemed arbiters of rights (sovereignty).

Although writing about the settler colonial context in Australia, Moreton-Robinson (2015) offers important insight into the relationship between Whiteness and citizenship and between ownership and land. She writes,

> As a means of controlling differently racialized populations enclosed within its borders, white subjects are disciplined (though to different degrees) *as citizens* to invest in the nation as a white possession. As citizens of this white nation, they are contracted into, and imbued with, a sense of belonging and ownership. It is a sense of belonging derived from ownership, understood within the logic of capital, and, in its self-legitimation, it mobilizes the legend of Cook's discovery of an unpossessed land (emphasis added, p. 122)

The relationship between Whiteness and ownership in this way delineates a relationship between the desirability and function of White supremacy wherein this hierarchy ensures those positioned in power (Whites) enjoy control over and possession of property. This ownership and belonging constitutes the crux of citizenship within the settler colonial project of the US as well and is supported and maintained through its racialized and political economic structures.

It is because of this framing that I began this section with a quote by W.E.B Dubois as it succinctly captures the fundamental relationship between settlerness and property—the relationship between race, power, and ownership—and specifically the way that Whiteness is produced within settler societies. Race scholars have discussed this relationship between race and property via various mechanisms: Roediger (1999) builds on Dubois through his materialization of "the wages of whiteness;" Harris' (1995) conceptualization of "whiteness as property" and its codification in US law, and Lipsitz (2006) argues the existence of a "possessive investment in whiteness." As scholars of critical race theory have made clear, Whiteness is not "a real, authentic, biological or cultural identity, rather it is a phenotypically secured and culturally produced enactment of racial dominance" (Alexander, 2012, p.9; Baldwin, 1984; Roediger, 1994). And, as Leonardo (2002) adds, it is not equivalent necessary with White people, but rather functions as a set of ideals and practices that

produce and maintain White power. In this way, the dynamic between race-property imbricates a political relationship given that, in Lockean terms, liberal democracy sees its inception through regimes and structures of property and individual rights (McPhereson, 1962). As Moreton-Robinson (2015) writes, "white possession is a discursive predisposition servicing the conditions, practices, implications, and racialized discourses that are embedded within and central to White first world patriarchal nation-states (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xxiv). In this way, settler colonialism though White possession is central to the nation-state and to conceptualizations of citizenship and politics.

As Wolfe (1998) declared settler colonialism a "structure and not an event," Marxist and Marxist-feminist scholarship similarly understand capital as structuring social life and social reproduction theory as a means of explaining how capital relations are reproduced (Bhattacharya, 2017). Put simply, I utilize social reproduction theory as a way to explain the "how" of settler colonialism and I use settler colonialism as explanation for the "why" of social reproduction. That is, settler colonialism—and not solely capitalist modes of production and/or a patriarchal system—is the system from which other structures derive and are in service to, while social reproduction allows us to see mechanics and maintenance of settler colonialism in and through the institutions with which we interact in the everyday. Therefore, a synthesis between these two scholarships is useful in operationalizing research into the relationship between schools and the development of young people's political ideologies.

For example, social reproduction theorists (and those taken up by the field) have long concerned themselves with the ways social institutions work to reproduce economic relations; specifically, the ways in which social stratification is maintained through oppressive capital relations. This scholarship demonstrates the ways societal institutions, of which schools form a part, aid in the reproduction of inequality. Further, Gramsci (1971) and Althusser (1971) understood as central the ideological role that educational institutions in society play in the eliciting of consent for an exploitative social structure. Gramsci, for example, argued that institutions leverage their ideological power—hegemony—thorough institutions such as media, schools, and family and that these enact dominant ideology to be taught and for which consent must be elicited. Many critical educational theorists build on this belief that education, in this way, is inherently political.

Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2002), delineates the political nature of education by tracing the ways education functions to maintain oppressive relations through making students objects unto which knowledge is imparted and relaying content that is either irrelevant or purposefully meant to reify privileged classes. Bowles and Gintis (2011) analyze the power of public schools to perpetuate societal inequality by arguing that US schooling enacts a "correspondence principle" in which students are socialized to reproduce their original class positioning since "different levels of education feed workers into different levels within the occupational structure" (p. 131). In their study of schools and social reproduction, they illuminate the role of social relationships present in educational institutions, such as those between "administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students and their work" as replicating the hierarchical division of labor (p. 131). They argue this not only prepares students for a particular "discipline of the workplace, but develops the types of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image and social-class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy" (p. 131). Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) works similarly in offering a way of understanding how social, economic, and educational capital converge in and through schools by privileging students who possess the types of capital that are valued by educational institutions. Other studies corroborate the relationship between economic class and schools' role in perpetuating class inequality via policy, curriculum, cultural, and pedagogical differences (Anyon, 1997; Willis, 1977; Apple, 1996, Giroux, 1983). For example, Oakes' (2005) study exploring educational conditions in schools with different racial and economic demographics

explains inequality via the different types of curriculum, pedagogy, and social relationships to which students are exposed: high-track classes and affluent schools provide more rigorous curriculum, democratic teaching styles, and trusting relationships among peers and teachers, while low-track students and under resourced schools experience the opposite thereby socializing students differently "to meet the demands of the occupations they are expected to assume within the existing class structure" (p. 119).

However, these aspects of educational inequality do not only serve to reproduce economic relations via one's role in the labor market, but aid in the reproduction of one's role in the body politic. For example, while Bowles and Gintis (2011) point the disciplinary structures of schools and how these develop "the types of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image and social-class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy," I argue that these demeanors, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social-class identifications also serve to shape young people's *political* development. Further, it is important to explore how the explicit execution and experience of political education is differentially experienced across race and class cleavages and the impacts these have for the (re)production of young people's politics. Furthermore, while most of the work on social (re)production has centered on a political economic analysis—that is, on the relationship between school and the continuance of economic exploitation—education scholars in the traditions of Critical Race Theory and Settler Colonialism alert us to how schools not only reproduce class positions, but also serve to reify White supremacist and settler colonial ideologies (Ladson Billings, 1998; Dumas, 2016; Dumas & ross, 2016; Tejeda, Espinoza, & Gutierrez, 2003; Tuck & Yang, 2012). And, while important scholarship has delineated the ways these racial and colonial hegemonies impact political education (Urrieta, 2004; Urrieta & Reidel, 2008; Calderon, 2014; Sabzalian, 2019; Sabzalian & Shear, 2018; Shear & Krutka, 2019) more scholarly attention is needed into the ways that schools (re)produce the political subjectivities of White students and students in predominantly White spaces; how White ownership and belonging is constructed in classrooms, and what practices exist that may discipline into investment in the nation as a White possession (Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

For the purposes of this project, I utilize Amy Gutmann's (1999) definition of *political education* as meaning,

> the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation […] Political education prepares citizens to participate in consciously *reproducing* their society, and conscious social reproduction is the ideal not only of democratic education but also of democratic politics (emphasis added, Gutmann, 1999, p. 287).

Much like Mitchell (2016) views it impossible to view citizenship education as unaffected by the political rationality of the economic system (which she names as neoliberalism), I argue that we cannot understand our current political field without accounting for it as a settler colonial construction. Utilization of settler-colonial theory to study civic education allows for an analysis of the narratives that circulate and the themes that emerge about government and politics, about who is/is not a citizen, about relationships to land and property thereby accounting for colonial ideologies that are derivative of and in service to a settler nation-state. As stated earlier, while important work exists that troubles the Eurocentrism and settler underpinnings of civic education, a lacuna exists in theorizing and empirically investigating the relationship between schooling and the development of political, racialized, and settler subjectivities in predominately White schools. Therefore, in addition to class reproduction, any analysis that attempts to understand the relationship of schooling and civic education on young people's political ideologies must account for the high school as a contemporary settler site where invasion structures curriculum, pedagogy, and citizenship and where each school-community is located in relation to (im)material accumulation and dispossession of indigenous and Black people. In this way, this scholarship allows for an exploration

into not only how political reproduction happens in and through schools, but which politics lie at the center of this (re)production.

Methods: Uncovering Settler Tracks in Civic Education Research

"Settler colonialism obscures the conditions of its own production."
– Lorenzo Veracini, Settler Colonialism

Veracini (2010) discusses the particularities of settler colonialism in places like the United States "where (relative to public debate in other settler societies) the very invisibility of settler colonialism is most entrenched. The more it goes without saying, the better it covers its tracks" (p. 14-15). My goal, in focusing on school sites that are predominantly White, one which is also economically affluent, is to make power visible and uncover these settler tracks. Building on the work of Ava Baron (1994) and Ruth Frankenberg (1997), Veracini (2010) make the case for a focus on the settler in scholarly inquiry based on arguments made in feminist and critical Whiteness studies. Baron (1994) notes that if we only investigate women, "man" "remains the universal subject against which women are defined in their particularity." We should heed this advice," Veracini argues, "and similarly focus on settlers as well in order to avoid the possibility that, despite attempts to decolonize our gaze, we continue understanding the settler as normative" (Veracini, 2010, p. 15). Ruth Frankenberg (1997) makes the argument for engaging in a sustained critical engagement with 'whiteness.'

> "[A] continued failure to displace the 'unmarked marker' status of whiteness, a continued inability to 'color' the seeming transparency of white positionings…to leave whiteness unexamined is to perpetuate a kind of asymmetry that has marred even many critical analyses of racial formation and cultural practice. Here the modes of alterity of everyone-but-the-white-people are subjected to ever more meticulous scrutiny, celebratory or not, while whiteness remains unexamined – unqualified, essential, homogenous, seemingly self-fashioned, and apparently unmarked by history or practice." (Frankenberg, p. 3).

Veracini makes a parallel claim and alerts us to the risks that also exist in not focusing on settler colonialism as a specific formation. We should focus on "settlerness" in order to unsettle the 'unmarked marker' status of being a settler in a settler society (and to produce a critique of the 'seeming transparency' of settler positionings).

While Frankenberg (1997) calls for a "revealing" or "exposure" of the falsehood that is whiteness-as-universal, Veracini (2010) suggests we do the same with regard to settlers since settler colonialism is "not normal or natural. It is made so in a settler colonial context" (Veracini, n.48, p. 121, 122). It is important, therefore, in a study that wishes to explore how ideas about and engagements with politics are (re)produced within schools to not only focus on the deficit with/in dispossessed communities, but to also include sites of racial and/or economic privilege so as to attend to how the settler colonial state is reified—through its structures and its agents—by studying what people do and how they think about and articulate what they do so as to *reveal* the conditions of its own production.

For example, several studies focused on youth civic engagement focus on the dynamic between teachers and students since this relationship has a profound effect on how students enter into the polity (Flanagan et al, 2007). A classroom climate where students trust their teacher, where they "experience their classrooms as places to investigate issues and explore their opinions and those of their peers" (Torney-Purta et al, 2001, p. 138) have been found to help nurture student tolerance of others' ideas (Hahn, 1998). However, most civic education occurring in US public schools has been found to be largely Eurocentric and taught form the lens of civic republicanism, rarely employing

critical citizenship discourses or multicultural viewpoints (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006) much less colonial processes (Sabzalian, L. & Shear, 2018; Sabzalian, 2019). Centering settler colonialism in the analysis, therefore, serves to and allow the interrogation of schools' role in the reification and reproduction of settler ideologies. In this way, this study explores the (im)possibilities of employing comparative, critical ethnography as an anticolonial methodology (Sabzalian & Shear, 2018; Calderón, 2014). While it attempts toward a decolonizing methodology (Smith, 1999) yet does not decolonize, it is anticolonial as it expands the research base to center on settler colonial processes. In utilizing a settler colonial framing, but focusing on sites of accumulation and racial privilege, I argue that the mechanisms of social inequality—i.e. the relationship between accumulation and dispossession, between privileged and marginalized, between those positioned differentially within the native-slave-settler triad (Veracini, 2010)—can be better understood and potentially disrupted.

Research Context: Central Ohio

This study takes pace in central Ohio, a state that serves as a microcosm for many national issues. The area, which includes Columbus as the state capital, markets itself as a great relocation destination touting a thriving "creative class," low cost of living, and numerous Fortune 500 companies which have fueled robust suburban development in the last decade, including "new builds" in suburban enclaves replete with private golf courses. However, the metropolitan Columbus area ranks in the bottom five for social mobility among the 50 largest cities in the nation (Kneebone, 2016; Chetty et al., 2014). The immigrant community here has grown rapidly within the last decade with Indian and Somali residents among its biggest groups. Central Ohio is also a new immigrant destination for Latino families who come here for economic opportunity, but also overwhelmingly live in poverty. Thus, many of the racial, political, and economic dynamics present in other urban centers of the country are also evident here. Given its many surrounding rural areas, rampant opioid crisis, and proximity to the foothills of western Appalachia with its significantly economically marginalized populations, central Ohio allows for complexity in examining the processes of race, class, and politics more closely and the way these may intersect, but do not map onto each other completely.

Selection of Sites

The Ohio Department of Education utilizes a categorization system wherein schools are categorized according to population size, geographic, and economic characteristics[8]. With this typology in mind, I used a purposeful approach (Miles and Huberman 1994, p. 28) to search for school districts in various categories that were within an hour driving distance from my residence in central Columbus. Within this radius, school districts fell along three categorizations; 1) Small Town - High Student Poverty & Average Student Population Size, 2) Suburban - Very Low Student Poverty & Large Student Population, and 3) Urban - Very High Student Poverty & Very Large Student Population. However, since I set out to observe schools with predominantly White student populations, only the first two types of districts fit the criteria. Six different districts were contacted via emails to respective administrators in charge of approving research (school site principals or district liaisons, for example). Administrators from two suburban districts and one small-town district then scheduled a phone call and approved the possibility of conducting research at the site, pending teacher agreement. Each administrator spoke to their staff and informational meetings were set up to discuss the details of participation with teachers who expressed interest. Teachers at two separate suburban high schools agreed to participate as well as the teacher in the small-town site. The first high schools of each type to agree were then selected for study— Small-Town High

---

[8] http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Data/Frequently-Requested-Data/Typology-of-Ohio-School-Districts

School[9] (Type 1) and an Affluent Suburban High School (Type 2)—data for which is detailed in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

The sites vary greatly on almost all counts--overall enrollment, overall school grades, median income, English Language Arts and Math proficiency scores, and percentage of student poverty. However, they are quite similar with regard to racial demographics, both are at about 10% non-dominant student populations. Additionally, both sites score relatively high in American Government state assessments. Yet, while the test-scores are similar with regard to American Government, the way the courses are structured at each site vary greatly. Traditionally, students in the small-town high school enrolled in US Government or AP Government in the 12th grade, as the students in the suburban high school still do. However, once the state of Ohio began testing American Government as a content area and including counting the results toward students' overall scores for graduation and including these measures into schools' overall performance indices, the small-town administration made the decision to offer the course in the 11th grade instead. The idea was that students would take the course in the 11th grade which would allow students an extra year to remediate should they need it. Further, unlike the suburban high school where US Government is a semester course, the small-town high school Government course spans two semesters—the whole of the academic year. Moreover, the small-town teacher theorized that moving the course down a grade impacted students' electoral participation since he had made it a point to register his students to vote as many of them turned eighteen years old during their senior year. While the ability to make any causal claims falls out of the purview of this study and the data collected, the similarity in test scores yet different school site policies point to the ways that local school site decisions can impact students experience although they operate under the same state mandated curricula.

Table 1. Key Features of School Sites

	Affluent Suburban HS	Small-Town HS
**Ohio Dept of Education School District Typology	6 – Suburban, Very Low Student Poverty	4 – Small Town, High Student Poverty
*Overall District Grade	B	D
*Overall School Grade	A	C
*API	B (104.1/120)	C (87/120)
*% Proficient or above English	ELA I: 94.2% ELA II: 87.8%	ELA I: 76.3% ELA II: 75%
*% Proficient or above Math	Alg. 1: 87.2% Geo: 84.1 %	Alg. 1: 56.1% Geo: 65.3%
*% Proficient or above American Government	96.1%	89.7%
*Spending per Pupil	$9,380	$7,526
*Total Teachers		
**District Enrollment	16,263	1,998
**District Median Income	$73,125	$31,594
**District Student Poverty	7%	43%
**District Percent Minority	10%	11%

*Based on 2017-2018 School Report Card

---

[9] All names of schools and participants are pseudonyms.

Table 2. School Site Demographics

*Student Demographics				
	Affluent Suburban HS		**Small-Town HS**	
	Enrollment #	%	Enrollment #	%
All Students	2,172		578	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	NC	NC	NC	NC
Asian or Pacific Islander	217	10	NC	NC
Black, Non-Hispanic	31	1.4	19	3.2
Hispanic	52	2.4	NC	NC
Multiracial	69	3.2	35	6
White, Non-Hispanic	1,801	82.9	510	88.1
Students with Disabilities	205	9.4	71	12.2
Economic Disadvantage	50	2.3	149	25.7
English Learner	NC	NC	NC	NC
Migrant	NC	NC	NC	NC

Based on 2017-2018 School Report Card

* NC = not counted

A Political Ethnography of Schooling

There exists a strong tradition of the use of ethnography to study schools, the findings of which have demonstrated the relationship between schooling and the reproduction of class, sexuality, race, and culture (Eckert, 1989; Pascoe, 20111; Willis, 1977, Ferguson, 2001, Valenzuela, 1999). This study builds on this tradition to attend to how schools as institutions function to reproduce race, class, and sexuality, but with a focus on the (re)production of the political. To do this, I undertake an ethnographic approach which entails research

> based on the close-up, on-the-ground observation of people and institutions in real time and space, in which the investigator embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon so as to detect how and why agents on the scene act, think and feel the way they do (Wacquant 2003, p. 5).

Because the objective of this study is to understand the meaning young people construct of politics and of their lives in predominantly White small-town and suburban school communities in Ohio, ethnography proves most useful as it allows for the questions I pose to be "productively engaged with micro-level evidence of the sort that ethnography provides" (Schatz, 2009, p. 10). This follows in the vein of Cramer's (2016) work which is "ethnographic in the sense of observing life in a place in order to understand the meaning people construct of their own lives and the world around them" (Cramer, 2016, p. 20). While social science literature on youth participation may be able to disaggregate survey data by race so as to show us the lack of parity in political participation and civic engagement among young people, this data does not get at the day-to-day life of youth in schools nor how they are making sense of politics in real time. As Schatz (2009) writes, "insider meanings and complex contextuality cannot be plugged into a regression equation" (p. 315). Thus,

ethnography is uniquely equipped to look microscopically at the foundation of political institutions and their attendant sets of practices, just as it is ideally suited to explain why political actors behave the way they do and to identify the causes, processes, and outcomes that are part and parcel of political life (Auyero & Joseph, 2007, p. 2).

Further, I approach this study as a *political* ethnography because I situate schools as political institutions. As state institutions, public schools are usually understood as political given their imbrication in federal, state, and local policy decisions. However, they also exist as sites in which power is enacted, negotiated and contested. Political ethnography allows for an exploration into how all actors within school spaces and the everyday life in schools engage in political processes as well. As Pachirat (2009) writes,

> The extended participant observation and sustained immersion of political ethnography encourages an emic perspective that reemphasizes human agency and lived experiences, captures insider perspectives and meanings, and privileges rather than suppresses conflicting interpretations and descriptions…It also carries with it the capacity to challenge the very boundaries of the political. Political ethnography is political precisely because of its unique potential to both illuminate politics and challenge established conceptions of its boundaries. (p. 144)

In this way, this study expands the boundaries of the political to include public schools as vehicles by which politics happen upon and through.

While I discuss the specificities of my researcher positionality in a later section, it is important to note that political ethnography is also political because "in ethnography the ethnographer's self becomes a conduit of research and a primary vehicle of knowledge production" (Shehata, 2006, p. 246). In addition extending our knowledge about what constitutes the political, political ethnography is also political because of its "explicit attention to relationships among perspective, power, and the ethnographic voice, and the way these relationships shape not only what is seen (a question of access), but also how it is seen (a question of the production of ethnographic knowledge itself)" (Pachirat, 2009, p. 147). In this way, fieldwork "inevitably locates the ethnographer within networks of power" (Pachirat, 2009, p. 144). As such, the corpus of the data for this political ethnography of schooling was made up participant observation, interviews, and artifacts culled from both sites.

Participant Observation. Political ethnography most often involves participant observation by way of "immersion in a community, a cohort, a locale, or a cluster of related subject positions" (Schatz, 2009, p. 5). Further, participant observation offers the researcher, "a real-time, uncensored view of the social world to more credibly analyze how humans go about their lives" (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018, p. 30). As Tracy (2013) writes, participant observation allows the researcher to "generate understanding and knowledge by watching, interacting, asking questions, collecting documents, making audio or video recordings, and reflecting after the fact" (2013, p. 65; see also Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Participant observation, however, includes not only the study of people, but also "learning from (and with) people – particularly through analyzing three fundamental aspects of human experience: (a) what people do (cultural behavior); (b) what people know (cultural knowledge); and (c) what things people make and use (cultural artifacts)" (Tracy, 2013, p. 64; Spradley, 1980).

Through classroom observations, I observed real-time pedagogical choices and student meaning-making and interactions and was allowed a somewhat uncensored view of the social worlds of the school so as to better understand how students and teachers in each respective. A critical

aspect of this ethnographic project came by way of participant observation. Both Ms. Greene (Suburban High School teacher) and Mr. Lenard (Small Town High School teacher) were quite flexible and open to my observing any class period on any day of the week and I scheduled my visits around their planning and lunch periods to make the best use of time. Because both teachers taught both AP Government and US Government sections, I made sure to coordinate a time frame that allowed me to observe at least three individual class periods that include both types of courses. I then consistently observed these class periods at each high school for a minimum of three separate class periods 2-3 times a week for the duration of the 2017-2018 academic year. After being introduced by Mr. Lenard, Mr. Schmidt invited me to observe his Current Issues class at the small-town high school— a semester-long elective course that consisted of students bringing in news articles, delivering a summary, and then facilitating a conversation on the topic. For the spring semester, I observed this class whenever I visited the small-town school.

Totaling over 500 hours, participant observation in these classrooms provided an opportunity to observe everyday school life at each site and how students made sense of curriculum and the political events occurring in real-time (e.g. President Trump's decision to end DACA, the 2017 Tax Cuts, the Parkland shooting and resultant activism, and the #MeToo movement). They also provided me with opportunity to observe interactions among students and between students and teachers and racial, economic, and gendered dynamics therein (the silencing of non-White and White female students, for example). As such, the data I documented focused on expressions of political ideologies including, but not limited to: how teachers discursively framed political issues, which topics were viewed as important to discuss and which were not, and moments of anti-Blackness and other "racialized misinformation" (e.g. ridiculing of Kwanzaa, the political origins of taking a knee during the National Anthem and #BlackLivesMatter, details regarding "illegal" immigration/DACA, native mascots and issues regarding indigenous nationhood). Additionally, I noted students' meaning-making within context of a group dynamic, the questions they posed, and because the majority of the participants were in White-dominant/conservative spaces, my observations also focused on ways in which they spoke about "Others" and non-conservative politics as well as the ways non-dominant students did or did not engage in classroom spaces.

Table 3. Class Observations

Small Town High School		
Course Title	Class Sections	# of students enrolled
US Government (year-long course)	4	140
AP Government (year-long course)	1	35
Current Issues (semester-long course Spring 2018)	1	30
Affluent Suburban High School		
Course Title	Class Sections	# of students enrolled
US Government (semester-long course)	2	60
AP Government (year -long course)	2	60

Interviews. Because central features of qualitative research include "an effort to highlight the meanings people make and the actions they take, and to offer interpretations for how and why" (Luttrell, 2010, p. 1) interviews served indispensable as way to engage the questions in a study that seeks to understand how youth make sense of politics, their own political ideology, and their experiences in school. Interview methods were also utilized because, as they "may well be the

method of choice if our aim is to describe how a *system* works or fails to work" (my emphasis, Weiss, 1994, p. 10). Since I aimed to garner a deeper understanding of how youth in conservative communities come to understand politics and their role within it and the way schooling experiences shape these understandings, interviews promised to be most useful since "the dense information obtained in qualitative interviewing permits description of the many sectors of a complex entity and how they go together" (p. 10).

I conducted one-on-one, semi-structured in-depth interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2010) with 42 students (small-town participants, n=23; suburban participants, n=19) focused on their experiences living and learning in their communities, their perspectives on political issues, and their understandings of social inequality (unequal wealth distribution, for example). Most interviews lasted between 1.5 to 2 hours and occurred only once and were conducted in a private room either in their school's library or at the local branch of their public library.

With teachers, unstructured conversations occurred almost daily as we talked between passing periods or, at times, over lunch where we discussed class topics, how they decided on curricula, their interactions with particular students, etc. Two in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Ms. Greene and Mr. Lenard: an initial interview and one at the conclusion of the study that attended to, among curricular and pedagogical questions, their experiences living and teaching in these communities, their political beliefs in relation to those of their students, and what they see as the purpose of teaching US Government. Only the concluding interview was conducted with Mr. Schmidt.

Table 4. Student Interview Participants, Demographics

Small Town High School: Student Interview Participants		Suburban High School Student Interview Participants	
White, Male	6	White, Male	6
White, Female	14	White, Female	8
Non-White Male	2	Non-White Male	1
Non-White Female	1	Non-White Female	4
Total Students	23	Total Students	19

Artifacts. I supplemented interview and observational data with classroom and school artifacts (n=350) including teacher lesson plans, lecture slides, discussion videos, student essays, etc. to investigate the degree to which raced, classed, gendered, and colonial ideologies were explicitly or implicitly (re)produced. Both teacher and student participants were also asked to engage in weekly reflective writing exercises answering questions I posed about their thoughts on class content, school and community culture, and their opinion on current events and politics. Several students at each site elected to answer these journal questions orally which allowed for frequent one-on-one conversations with these students throughout the academic year (Suburban High school, n=5; Small Town High School, n=3).

Analysis and Interpretation. Field notes were composed from jottings (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995) and taken during each class session I observed and were followed by periodic reflections to capture emerging themes (Saldaña, 2018). These jottings (n=320) were created using Microsoft OneNote because of its audio recording function allowing for easier audio transcription on each individual note and preliminary coding was conducted in situ.

To analyze the data, I employed Luttrell's three-step process (Luttrell, 2010). During the primary reading of fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and class documents, I took note of "recurring images, words, phrases, and metaphors" (p. 262) that arose throughout, for example, with regard to neutrality, I made note of teachers' explicit efforts to be neutral and moments, scripted or extemporaneous, where teachers took a particular political stance. Reviewing the data a second time, I searched for "coherence among stories"—that is, across participant interviews and across sites and observations. For example, by searching for coherence among the sets of knowledges students accessed and how these were deployed in their classrooms (p. 262). Throughout the third reading, I engaged in explicit coding that utilized the theories and concepts from a theoretical framework that synthesizes social reproduction, settler hegemony, civic education research, and political theory. As an example, codes were created based on Hall's (1986) definition of hegemony: "[the] mental framework- the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works" (p. 29). Additional descriptive codes (included, but where not limited to) concepts derived from social reproduction (correspondence, human capital, cultural capital, habitus, etc.), settler hegemony (e.g. consent, coercion, settler futurity, native erasure, anti-Blackness, nativism, moves to innocence, white possessive logics), and political theory (liberalism, right-wing populism, left-leaning/progressive politics, color blindness, White supremacist ideologies, possessive individualism, accumulation, distribution, producerism, conspiracism, etc.).

Researcher Positionality

The genesis of this project—or rather, of the questions that animated my research trajectory—could be said to have been developed during my formative years. As so many young children experiencing structural oppression in their everyday lives, I bore witness to the manifestations of colonialism, capitalism, racism, patriarchy, and xenophobia among my family and community and instead of pathologizing my relatives and my neighbors for their experiences, I pathologized a system that would create injustice and suffering. This later motivated my desire to return to my community after college and teach in the high school I graduated from believing in the potential for educative spaces to foster critical thinking and a structural analysis (Freire, 2002). However, as an English and Drama teacher, I was confronted with the tensions of engaging in political education. At times, I wondered about my "bias" toward social justice issues and whether or not it was appropriate to teach students about capitalist exploitation, patriarchy, White Supremacy, and colonialism. Yet, as I occupied spaces alongside social studies teachers who didn't question their teaching of US history from a Eurocentric/White Supremacist/Neoliberal lens and while I reflected on critical theorists who made clear the ideological and political nature of education and schooling, I felt the urgency to more seriously consider theories and practices of political education in secondary schools. While initially focused on the political education of low-income youth of color, as I gained access and experience with predominantly White schools, I felt the urgency to shift my gaze onto these school spaces. Then, as I relocated to Ohio in the year leading to the 2016 US Presidential elections, the need to study predominantly White affluent and working-class schools became abundantly clear given the narratives circulating about the "disaffected White working class" and conclusions that the ramped-up rhetoric of White nationalism fell along class lines. For some, it was no longer possible to deny the existence and deployment of White identity politics (Jardina, 2019), as the recent rise in writing focused on White people's politics demonstrates (Vance, 2017; Metzl, 2019; Hochschild, 2018; Cramer, 2016). The need for me became to study the role of schooling in stoking and/or tempering these White identity politics and racial resentments.

Having been a student and teacher in urban schools and having researched the educational experiences therein for the better part of my graduate training, I have acquired a deep knowledge of the way social forces (racism, sexism, economic exploitation) impact the lived experiences of students in everyday school life generally and in urban schooling experiences specifically. This "urban-ness" along with identifying as a Xicanx daughter of Mexican immigrants, who was raised by a single mother in a high-poverty racially segregated community, and as a sister to both a teenage parent and a previously incarcerated adolescent, I am in many ways positioned as "other" to the communities in this particular study. While I am now a middle-aged educational researcher and hold degrees and material privileges that may parallel some of the families in this study (and may even supersede some), I am nevertheless an outsider because of my racialized-colonial subjectivity and class origins. And, I am quite literally an outsider as a California transplant to Ohio. By enacting and starting off from this "liminal status" as a researcher, I engage in this study in a way that does more than "simply add on multiple perspectives" (King, 2001). Instead, I utilize this "point of alterity [to] attempt to transcend an 'either/or' epistemology" (King, in Ladson-Billings, p. 262) so that I may perceive particular nuances and complexities in communities like these.

Having never experienced predominantly White secondary school settings (and the privileges these entail) either as a student or teacher, I am able to observe seemingly mundane processes in a way that makes these perhaps normalized processes an object of analysis. And yet, as someone who has now acquired additional access to privilege (mainly through middle-class income and educational status), I am able to notice particular cultural markers of both the working and middle class that might otherwise go unnoticed (particular brands of clothing and the associated price tags these entail, the names of vacation destinations that I would have missed in my youth, for example). These categories of privilege were also undoubtedly what allowed my entry into these spaces as well—principals and district personnel respected the institutions with which I possessed affiliation and respected my pursuit of a doctoral degree. While my racial and cultural "otherness" may have impacted the types of students who decided to participate (many more female students participated than male students), it may have also motivated the participation of other students in this space (students of color, liberal leaning students, LGBTQ students, example). This outsider positionality is an advantage not "due to an inherent racial/cultural difference but… the result of the dialectical nature of constructed otherness that prescribes the liminal status of people of color as beyond the normative boundary of the conception of Self/Other" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 262). Said another way, my positionality is not a result of inherent difference because of who I am, but because of how my particular self is constructed in relation to the experiences and "selves" that predominated in the communities in which this research was conducted.

And yet, while I cannot for certain know why particular access was given to me, I must acknowledge that my racial ambiguity by way of my complexion and facial features may have provided me with an ability to "blend" into these predominantly White spaces. Being in Ohio has been an interesting racializing experience as I am at times not "seen" as Latinx by other Latinxs but am often thought to be a compatriot by middle easterners, for example. People of color do not really know what to make of me and often default to categorizing me as "White," while White people often do not know how to categorize me, but know that I am "non-White"—especially when they see my full name with accent mark (Dinorah Sánchez Loza), hear me pronounce it as my mother would, and learn that I am from California. This racial ambiguity, however, is not a racial certainty as I am not seen as Black or Indigenous or as Brown in the ways that many of my friends, colleagues, and family members are. As such, I must account for the ways that my "lightness" or, rather, my non-Blackness and my non-visible-Brownness may have afforded me the ability to more easily avoid making the record skip as I walked the halls and sat in the back of these classrooms.

Finally, as I think with/in (de)(anti)(settler) colonial studies, I take up Yang's (2017) conceptualization and acknowledge my existence as a "North American settler 'of color' as I relate to the "dilemma of being displaced by colonialism, only to arrive at a place as another participant in colonization" (p. xxiii). I acknowledge how my existence in the US is complicit in the occupation of indigenous land and the ways my community and I may be deployed and leveraged to further anti-Blackness and anti-indigeneity. I also acknowledge the ways I may be entangled, either consciously or not, in the perpetuation of the colonial assemblages I desire against (Yang, 2017). As Urrieta and Calderon (2019) write, "although all Latinxs face the potential threat and real-life effects of racialization as 'Latinxs' if not always, at least at some point in their lives, some Latinxs enjoy more privileged lives than others outside and within the Latinx community" (p. 166). As a non-Black, detribalized/disconnected/non-indigenous Xicana, I recognize the privileges I experience as well as the impossibility of my position, as I am "at once a colonialist-by-product of empire with decolonizing desires" (p. xxiii). I approach this project from this liminal space, with the knowledge that there are assuredly limitations and shortcomings, but with a commitment to interrogating these tensions and as Yang (2017) advocates, "make[ing] space for indigenous sovereignty work [and] commit to making space for Black and queer thought" (p. xxiii).

Calibrating the 'Gaze': Fieldwork in Suburban and Small Town Ohio

I felt underwhelmed during my first few observations at the suburban affluent high school. The "suburban" was evident given is geographical distance from the urban city core, but as I drove away from Columbus and its density, the affluence of the suburb was not as obvious as I thought it would be—at least to my unaccustomed eye. I frequently heard the area described by residents, teachers, and students as a wealthy community, but I saw no signs of wealth as I was used to seeing it in the cities where I had lived previously. "Well-off" is context-dependent and looks quite different in the urban metropolises that are New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Tokyo, and the Bay Area. How exactly did wealth manifest itself in suburban central Ohio?

The landscape itself didn't exude opulence—again, as I was used to seeing it. As I drove a stretch of highway to and from the suburban site every day, I admired the foliage lining the road and its seasonal changes, but there was hardly anything to see besides this; no high-end store fronts and hardly any homes which I could judge on their curb appeal. This, I came to find, is the point. Majestic homes did exist here but were tucked away into gated enclaves within gated communities not visible from any of the main roads I would use to make my way to the high school. That distance from the main roads, and its seclusion, is the privilege.

Once I turned off of the highway and onto the main city road toward the school, I was again underwhelmed. There seemed to be little there. There was an office park or industrial space and a city water tower. Other than a couple green rolling mounds and large highways at this intersection, there was not much else to see except a state-of-the-art modern high school on the northwest corner. Once I pulled into the parking lot, evidence of the affluence in the community began to shine through: BMW and Mercedes were common makes of the vehicles in the student spaces along with mainstream imports like Hondas, Toyotas, Volkswagens. I also spotted a good amount of sport or novelty domestics like Ford Mustangs and Mini Coopers. Almost all were newer models and well-kept. Some had been gifted brand-new to their teenage owners. The norm that students would have a car and that it would be new and "nice" served as an entry way to understanding the culture of this community.

I parked my mainstream mini-van in the visitor lot and made my way past the intercom-operated entryway where I was asked to disclose who I was and what business I had there. After I was buzzed in, I made my way into a bright, spacious foyer with floor-length windows and immaculately polished floors and an equally spotless lunch area. The physical space looked just like

what one would expect from an affluent suburban high school in the US: the building was new, modern, clean, with built-in art cases filled with impressive student-artwork and lining the walls, an array of photography and visual graphic art.

In the lobby, immediately after one came through the double doors, a couple of parents sat at a folding table where they asked visitors to sign-in. These parents, exclusively White moms during my site visits, volunteered their time to come in and work the sign-in table for the school. This was another sign of the privilege of the community as many of these families were one-income households allowing for one parent to stay at home and volunteer for things such as this. This was in stark contrast to the urban schools to which I was accustomed and therefore a bit of a surprise as this was usually a job that fell to office administrative staff and student office assistants.

As I looked at the students who walked the halls and populated the lunch tables in this affluent suburban high school, I was surprised that the wealth was not as evident to me as I thought it would be. This community is not made up of the uber wealthy that send their kids to elite east coast boarding schools, yet, at a median income of $139, 851 (US Census Bureau, 2019), average home value at $359,400, and over 75% of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher, it is continually ranked as one of the wealthiest suburbs in Ohio. I'm not sure what I expected exactly, but it was not the sea of black leggings, Nikes, and basic t-shirts that was the typical female students' uniform. I assumed I would see fancier clothes and designer brands, given that I was used to seeing students in urban high schools come to schools with carefully curated looks every day. I assumed this would also be the case at this suburban school but that the clothing and accessories would be more "high-end." However, for the most part, day-to-day attire here was extremely casual.

After a few weeks, I came to realize that it wasn't just any old t-shirt students were wearing to school. Those "Hilton Head" and "Cancun" t-shirts served as class markers of places they had actually traveled to on vacation—not ironically-worn bargain bin thrift store finds or hand-me-downs—further punctuated by the fact that they seemed to have enough of these to wear throughout the week. The leggings were Lululemon which average $70-90 each, the Nikes and Adidas were also higher-end styles between $100-$200 a pair, and as participants would make me privy to, the jewelry—bracelets from Pandora or Kendra Scott—meant upwards of a hundred dollars on seemingly inconspicuous accoutrements. As the seasons shifted, I'd observe Patagonia and North Face winter parkas (averaging $200-$400) migrate out as Birkenstocks (upwards of $100 a pair) made their way in.

As I compared these observations at this affluent suburban high school to those that I experienced as a student, teacher, and researcher in urban schools and communities, my gaze calibrated and I began to notice the particularities of wealth and privilege in this community that was not only evidenced by what *was* there, but also by what *was not*. I did not see metal detectors, drug-sniffing dogs, school security, or a police force. I did not hear the familiar sounds of teachers or administrators or school resources officers yelling at students to "Hurry up and get to class!" or otherwise disciplined in the matter to which so many urban youths are accustomed. I might have not seen or felt an "affluence" as I imagined I would at the suburb school, but I felt the absence of authoritarianism and discipline. I came to understand these absences as privilege. While I may have been initially underwhelmed at the lack of wealth exuding from the hallways, the more I looked around and saw and felt what was *missing*—the underlying stress of a fight breaking out during the passing period or an armed police officer questioning a student, for example—I was overwhelmed with ways affluence permeated the space.

In the small-town Ohio high school, where the average property value is $135, 100 (US Census Bureau, 2019), 14% of residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher, and with a median income of $53,007 my gaze didn't require as much calibration as these demographics more closely resembled the urban working-class neighborhood where I grew up. Most cars in the student (and

teacher) parking lot were domestic mainstream models like Ford, GM, and Chevrolet although I did see a fair share of Hondas and Toyotas. There was, however, one student-owned Mercedes Benz that belonged to a student (yet, it was an older model), but for the most part, most cars were older and "lived in." In the mornings, I often saw students arrive together in one vehicle; many students did not own their own car and carpooled with their friends to school. The working-class cues stood out in their familiarity: the cars were older, needing body repair work, displaying weathered bumper stickers, others with a plethora of tchotchkes lining the dash. As the students made their way inside for first period, some lucky ones clutched fast-food bags with breakfast they had purchased from the gas station or McDonald's on their way to school. As I opened the doors to the main office, I saw a couple of girls at the sign-in window, one with perfectly applied black winged eyeliner. I might have missed these cues, as the water the proverbial working-class fish swims in, had it not been for the couple of weeks head start I had at the suburban school. Observing the small-town after spending some time in the suburb, I was able to note differences even while they looked familiar. In fact, because these cues felt and looked familiar, I noticed them since I had become used to feeling very unfamiliar in the suburb.

For example, walking through the small-town high school's doors, the working classness of the students, teachers, staff, and of the parents that were often there picking up or dropping off— stood out to me because of its familiarity. Here, students oversaw the sign-in for visitors as they walked through the school doors fulfilling their duties as Office Assistants, much like they did in urban schools I had been in. Student and parent attire often consisted of sweatpants and sweatshirts. There was more diversity in hair color and textures, more diversity in body types—curvy, petite, burly, lanky, definitely higher number of students carrying extra pounds— and more diversity in what students wore. Name-brand, off-brand, it did not really seem to matter, it was the norm to wear sweatpants and athletic sandals with socks to school; jeans with hooded sweatshirts—often with their school's logo on them. There were some girls that on some days took the time to straighten or curl their hair and who wore makeup, but overall not common. Most girls put their hair in a ponytail or a messy bun or left it down and that was that. Boys at the school wore jeans and t-shirts, many wore football jerseys or other school spirit type gear and athletic attire. While boys in the suburb often wore khakis and button downs, however casually styled, this attire would have seemed out of place in the small-town. In the small town, boys went further in between haircuts and in between a new pair of shoes. I recall on one particular day, a burly student in sweatpants and hooded sweatshirt walked into Mr. Lenard's classroom in between classes and asked his teacher for duct tape. Mr. Lenard, flabbergasted replied, "Duct tape? What do you need tape for?" as he handed the student the tape. The student replied, "It's my shoe, it fell apart" and students giggled as they saw his well-worn shoe with the bottom sole completely detached as he tried to tape around his foot so he could make it through the day.

A couple students did stand out to me because of their seemingly non-normative aesthetic choices. One White male student whose style I would describe as "hip-hop flashy" wore skinny jeans with polos and a (what I assumed was a knock-off) Louis Vuitton belt and backpack every day. Most boys here didn't seem to give too much thought to styling an outfit. A White female student caught my attention because she wore her hair dyed green and then dyed it black with blonde streaks throughout. But mostly, students just wore what was comfortable it seemed. And, while the suburban students also wore leggings and t-shirts, there was a particular worn-in-ness about the students in the small town that was noticeable. That is why it did not surprise me when participants in the small-town, when asked to describe their community or to describe what I would need to know to survive as a freshman there, did not mention specificities with regard to clothing like the students in the suburb did. The small-town students did not focus on these markers to normativity or "in" status in how they spoke about cultural norms there. Instead, they talked about having to get

used to everyone knowing your business. Like the suburb, however, right-wing leaning political views were the political norm and, on several occasions, converged with clothing choices as I observed White students wearing Trump hooded sweatshirts, a Trump/Pence t-shirt, and once, a White female student wearing a red Make America Great Again hat. I do not recall ever seeing any left-leaning gear during my visits there or at the suburban high school for that matter.

It was also in the small-town high school where I observed students wearing uniforms that corresponded with the respective vocational training programs in which they were enrolled. Here, students in the small-town high school could enroll in an alternative program where they may gain academic credits and career training. On a couple of occasions, I noticed a White female student once wearing scrubs as health-care workers do. This was unsurprising as I was used to the ways vocational programs played a role in urban schools. What I did find striking was the White, male student wearing a black button-down shirt and matching black pants and work boots worn by a White, male student who Mr. Lenard and I came across in the lunchroom one day. Mr. Lenard explained that he was part of the prison guard program—a vocational program where students would gain training and experience to become a prison guard in any of the two correctional facilities located nearby. As I would come to find out, a good number of students' parents were employed in these facilities and, as one participant relayed, was the reason for their moving to the town. This dynamic pointed to particular class differences between the small-town and the suburb: it highlights not only the material differences that existed but also points to the ways class structured education and employment futures: the suburb had no correctional facilities in its vicinity and the high school offered no such program in preparing its students for a career in the corrections industry. The presence (or lack thereof) of the carceral state in school and in the community also served as a reminder of the larger settler relationships at work: the facilities exist as a mode of land appropriation by the state, the facilitates and technologies therein as a form of material accumulation and dispossession of black bodies via their disciplining and exploitation (black men made up the majority of those incarcerated), and illuminates the settler as both manager and beneficiary were the White working class functions as prison-guard laborer while those in the suburb benefitted from these dynamics, but could be absent from its execution.

This look into the two sites constituting this study and the need and process of calibrating my gaze and the resulting insights it produced illustrate again the political nature of this ethnographic study as the "ethnographer's self becomes a conduit of research and a primary vehicle of knowledge production" (Shehata, 2006, p. 246). It bears repeating that through explicit attention and reflection to the ways of each space, I was able to attend to "relationships among perspective, power, and the ethnographic voice, and the way these relationships shape not only what is seen (a question of access), but also how it is seen (a question of the production of ethnographic knowledge itself)" (Pachirat, 2009, p. 147).

The Teachers: Ms. Greene, Mr. Lenard, and Mr. Schmidt

I spent the vast majority of my time within these two school sites in the classroom of two teachers: Ms. Greene and Mr. Lenard, the two focal teachers in this study. Both were social studies teachers and responsible for teaching US and AP Government classes. Ms. Greene taught two sections of AP Government and three sections of US Government. As the sole Government teacher, Mr. Lenard taught the school's only section of AP Government, three periods of US Government, and one period of Psychology.

During the academic year 2017-2018, Ms. Greene was in her 3rd year of teaching at the affluent suburban high school and also served as advisor to a very active and established Junior Statesman of America; a student group whose focus was debate and policymaking. Ms. Greene grew up in, what she describes as, a middle-class suburb outside of Cleveland that was quite different

from the suburb in which she now taught. As Ms. Greene describes, the suburb outside of Cleveland where she grew up and went to school was culturally, racially, and economically diverse. After graduating, she was accepted to The Ohio State University, but at her parents' urging, decided to defer and attend a community college nearby so as to save money—another point, in her view, that might differentiate her from the majority of her students. After two years at this community college, she transferred to OSU and while she thought she would pursue a career in policy and/or politics, after a brief stint in D.C. and some work internationally in Venezuela through her church, she decided to get married and change course and enrolled in a master's program in education and teacher preparation. Once she completed her masters, she worked as a substitute teacher in the affluent suburb and, after two years, was offered a position.

She expressed to me that she was quite happy with her life decisions; although she interacts with many high-achieving parents and high-income families her values are different and prefers a more toned-down life and a smaller house "where we'd actually see each other," for example. She relayed to me that she felt some parents look down on her and her colleagues as "working for" them and relayed experiences of having to manage "helicopter parents." I was in constant awe of her diplomacy, how she could be so young and yet so well-versed in how to communicate so diplomatically in this community—language, body language, tone, etc. Given her upbringing, it was not much of a stretch or culture clash to speak "upper middle class." And yet, witnessing some of the interactions between her and some of the entitled White male students, it was nonetheless impressive to witness this diplomacy at work. With regards to politics, she described herself to students as "moderate, but lean conservative" and through conversations with me, shared that she had always understood herself to be quite Republican in comparison to her peers in the Cleveland suburb, but once relocating to the affluent suburb realized that she might be more moderate in her views as opposed to her students and their families.

Mr. Lenard was in his 15th year of teaching and, throughout the academic year 2017-2018, was also the chair of the Social Studies department and advisor to the Quiz Bowl team. He was constantly providing support for student groups, sports activities, and other programming such as organizing volunteers at the polls for election day and organizing the speech contest put on by the Rotary Club. He was a revered member of the faculty and his students respected him greatly. He had previously taught the senior class because it was the year that administration would schedule US Government. However, once the state began administering state assessments in civics and considered scores as part of students' graduation requirements, the school administration decided to move it down to 11th grade to allow students the extra year cushion in case they should fail or need to repeat the course or retake the exam.

Mr. Lenard was born and raised in northeast Ohio. He owned guns, kept a biometric gun safe next to his bed and had taught others gun safety and usage in the past. And, on weekends during hunting season, he regularly posted up on a deer stand. He was the first person in his family to go to college after enlisting in the military. During one of my observations, a Veterans Day Assembly, the principal asked veterans to stand so that the audience may thank them for their service. I noticed Mr. Lenard did not stand. During a conversation with him, I asked if there was a reason why he chose to not stand, and he relayed that he "didn't serve like they did" referring to the service members that had actually seen combat. In our first meeting, as I introduced myself and the research, I got the sense that he was intrigued by my story (as a daughter of immigrants, as a first-gen college student, as having studied film, as a researcher at Berkeley) and about conducting research in general. He thought it would be a great learning experience for his students and for himself to be a part of this study. Mr. Lenard was the type of person that was extremely interested in learning new things and read extensively about many different topics, watched films, both mainstream and arthouse. He was "worldly" and hoped to expose his students—many of whom

would never leave central Ohio—to things outside of their small-town. In many ways, Mr. Lenard complicated the one-dimensional picture many would assume about a Republican, gun-owning, White man from northeast Ohio.

While I not a focal teacher, during the spring semester, Mr. Schmidt also granted me access to observe his Current Events course at the small-town high school. Mr. Schmidt extended an invitation into his classroom since he thought the course might lend itself to interesting conversations that might be relevant to a research study on young people's ideas about politics. I agreed and began observing his classroom with the start of the second semester and I observed his course whenever I paid a visit to the small-town site (which was 2-3 times a week). My interaction with Mr. Schmidt was not as extensive as it was with Mr. Lenard, we mostly only greeted each other before the start of the class session and briefly at its conclusion.

The students loved Mr. Schmidt. He was kind and very trusting and profusely apologized one day when he got his dates wrong and would have to submit grades to administration without giving students much notice as to what they were. The students expressed audible "Awwws" as they did not feel it necessary, but nonetheless appreciated how much he cared about something so seemingly unimportant. I would not categorize Mr. Schmidt as quiet, but he came off as thoughtful, humble, and at times self-deprecating. The students poked fun at his clothing choices—almost always a pullover and khaki pants with White socks and tennis shoes. During Black History Month, he had students read from a calendar of famous African Americans and would give the selected reader a hard candy as their compensation. He attempted to be unoffensive and often relayed stories he had garnered from his life in the military. When I asked if the small-town in which he taught was like the one in which he grew up, he responded that it was. He also grew up working class in a small town in South East Ohio. After high school, he joined the military and after doing a stint abroad, came back to the states and pursued teaching. At the time of the study, Mr. Schmidt was in his 18th year of teaching. Throughout my observations, it was a bit difficult to pin down his political affiliation. He was very open, and the students were quite privy to his critique on government spending and, although he was ex-military and patriotic, he was also critical of foreign policy especially policy that argued for war. During my interview with him, it was important to me to get a clear answer as to where his politics could best be categorized, and he resisted until he finally shared that he identified as an independent.

In these ways, Ms. Greene most closely resembled the students she taught having grown up middle class in a middle class suburb outside of Cleveland and currently living in an affluent suburb of Columbus; while Mr. Lenard and Mr. Schmidt both most closely resembled their student demographics—working class/small-town/rural childhoods where they were the first in their families to go to college after having enlisted in the military—and currently living in the small-town in which they taught. All three teachers identified as conservative of varying degrees and kind. And, although I disagree with conservative politics as a whole and with many of the ways they handled political topics in their classrooms (as will be evident in the chapters that follow), they were complex people that took seriously their charge as educators and who cared for their students deeply. And, they quite often held views that were more "moderate" than their fellow suburban and small-town neighbors. All three teachers were very hospitable to me and to the research and enjoyed talking about their students, about politics, and about the art of teaching and truly believed in the potential of civic education for developing a better world.

While I have felt much apprehension since concluding my fieldwork around what I would write and how I may conduct my analyses—analyses that may, in fact, be quite critical of those that were so welcoming and opened their doors to observation—I am solaced by the advice Mr. Lenard gave me in our last interview, "just tell the truth." While I do not believe, with this kind of undertaking, that relaying of "the" truth is possible, the pages that follow—full of the observations I

chose to jot down, the questions I formulated, the moments and dialogue and interview excerpts I culled, and the analyses I conducted with my particular epistemological and theoretical commitments—offer to the study's participants (and to the communities not physically present in this study, but who are always already present in discussions about settlerness, education, and politics) *a* truth about school and the reproduction of political ideologies that I hope in some ways, affirms what we do right, but mostly, challenges us to do better.

Outline of *Reading, Writing, and Right Wing (Re)Production*

In the second chapter, *Hegemony and Pedagogy: Political Neutrality as Pedagogical Ideal, Right Wing (Re)Production in Practice*, I focus specifically on teachers' pedagogical choices, and in so doing, trace the relationship between politics and education via Gramsci's concept of hegemony. Here, I use as analytic tool Gramsci's (1971) conceptualization of hegemony as it takes as a given that schools form part of the institutional mechanisms that (re)produce "common sense" ideas about society and elicit consent to an unequal and oppressive social system. First, I examine how teachers and students frame desires for political neutrality and uncover both the values that motivate these articulations as well as their material and political reasonings. For example, teachers spoke of a fear of blowback from parents if they were to veer into political indoctrination. Further, while students also discussed wanting neutrality, the examples some students gave for teachers who had crossed the line, were of teachers who did not tow the conservative line. I then focus on teachers' pedagogical moves and argue that teachers' implicit and explicit pedagogical endorsements derive from and help maintain a settler/right-wing common-sense.

In the third chapter, *Communities of (Settler) Practice: Funds of (Settler) Knowledge and the Shared Repertoires of Settlerness*, I shift the focus onto students and, specifically, onto White, conservative students as they were the dominant demographic in each school community. The purpose for this shift is twofold: first, to highlight the ways students co-construct their learning space; and secondly, to delineate the intricacies of their political understandings and sense-making. As a way of understanding the various ways that teaching and learning occur in the classroom space, I build on the conceptualizations of "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al, 1992) and "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to uncover the ways White, conservative students access and enact particular "funds" of right-wing and settler knowledge and how these then converge in the classroom and school to co-construct a community in which the shared repertoires of settler politics are developed; including ideas concerning investments in Whiteness, heteronormativity, and racist conceptualizations of Others and Others' politics.

The fourth chapter, *"Out" of (Settler) Bounds: Cultural Norms, Deviance, and the Actually Existing Settler Public Sphere in School*, examines the cultural and political norms that existed across both school sites and how these shaped the types of politics that were (dis)allowed in the space as perceived by non-dominant students at each site. I focus on the voices of left-leaning students who also identified as female and/or LGBTQ and/or students of color to recount how cultural and political norms are perceived and experienced in everyday school life. By attending to the ways in which normativity was made manifest, I surface the political implications of being "in" or "out" of normative bounds and throughout the chapter, draw on Fraser (1990) and Cohen (2014) to trace the ways normativity shapes the "official public sphere" of the classroom, the counterpublics that exist and/or silenced, and the "deviance as resistance" that LGBTQ students in the small-town enacted. I argue that LGBTQ students' existence as being "out," aside from impacting their own political development, served as an (un)doing of settler curriculum for the larger public sphere of the school that expanded space for being "out" politically; that is, through their resisting of heteronormativity this served to nurture a nascent counterpublic that opened up space for politics that challenged Whiteness, patriarchy, coloniality, and class.

In the concluding chapter, *Just What Is Settler Colonialism and What's it Doing in a Nice Field Like Civic Education?* I provide a summary of findings and trace the contributions this study provides to the fields of education, politics, and ethnographic methodology. Next, I engage with the ways in which civic education is not metaphoric, but instead engenders tangible realities of citizenship and the resultant need to engage with decolonization in civic education curriculum. I conclude with a discussion of what it would mean to "unsettle" civic education theory and practice and undo settler citizenship education through a discussion of the need for subversive scholars and practitioners who center settlement as society's organizing principle, engage and facilitate curriculum on imaging a decolonial "otherwise" through elimination of settler sovereignty, and who will advocate for undoing and reassembling (Yang, 2017) the colonial machinations of civic classrooms and of education writ large.

Figure. 1. Picture of plaque at Federal Hall in New York City commemorating the Northwest Ordinance. It reads:

> *On this site the United States in Congress assembled, on the 13th day of July, in the year of our Lord 1787, and of their sovereignty and independence the twelfth, enacted an ordinance for the Government of the Territory Northwest of the River Ohio, by which it was dedicated forever to Freedom. Under another ordinance, passed here by the same body on the 27th day of the same month, Manasseh Cutler, acting for 'The Ohio Company of Associates,' an organization of soldiers of the Revolutionary Army purchased from the Board of Treasury for settlement a portion of the waste and vacant land of the territory. On April 7th, 1788, Rufus Putnam, heading a part of forty-eight, began the first settlement at Marietta; and on July 15th, Arthur St. Clair, as first Governor established civil government in the Territory. From these beginnings spring the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.*

Figure 2. Pictures of a local high school's spirit rock painted in anticipation of President Trump's visit, August, 2018, Lewis Center, Ohio.

Chapter II:

Hegemony & Pedagogy: Political Neutrality as Pedagogical Ideal, Right Wing (Re)Production in Practice

Right-Wing and Settler Hegemony and the Making of Common Sense

As discussed in the introductory chapter, education is political. And public schools, as social institutions that are state-run, are imbricated in the reproduction of social structures and norms. The question then becomes, what are the mechanics—the *how*—of how schooling shapes thinking? Gramsci (1971) argues that institutions of "civil society"—of which schools form part—are largely responsible for producing and disseminating hegemonic power. Building on Marx's concept of ideology ("the processes through which the dominant ideas within a given society reflect the interests of a ruling economic class"[10]), the concept of hegemonic power allows us to account for both structural and agentic forces in ideological reproduction through its reproduction in schools. Understanding schools as vehicles of hegemonic power allows for a negotiation and an analysis of the ideas that circulate as "common sense" and how differently situated groups—for example the wealthy, the poor, teachers, students, Ohioans—may ascribe to and perpetuate dominant ideologies. As Stoddart (2007) explains, the Gramscian notion of hegemonic power,

> works to convince individuals and social classes to subscribe to the social values and norms of an inherently exploitative system. It is a form of social power that relies on voluntarism and participation, rather than the threat of punishment for disobedience. Hegemony appears as the 'common sense' that guides our everyday, mundane understanding of the world. It is a view of the world that is 'inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed' and which tends to reproduce a sort of social homeostasis, or 'moral and political passivity' (p. 201; Gramsci, 1971).

What are students' and teachers' everyday mundane understandings of the world? How is the prevailing "common sense" taught and learned and how might prevailing ideologies be accepted or challenged by both students and teachers? These are the questions that arise when utilizing hegemony as an analytic frame. Yet, schools do not pull in uniform and consistent ways and as such, this chapter sets out to explore the "common sense" that exists in two predominantly White suburban and small-town high schools with regard to government and politics.

Since Gramsci developed the concept of hegemony to understand its form and function within the political economy, it is important to situate the schools in this study within the larger political context in which they exist. Mitchell (2016) argues that ideas about citizenship—for example, who is and is not a citizen, what rights it inures, what responsibilities it requires— must be viewed as "constantly evolving and always constituted in relation to spatial and temporal processes and effects" (Mitchell, 2016, p. 113). Further, as an ideological and social construction, citizenship and education in and of citizenship, is beholden to structures of power that circulate and shape the dominant ideas in a given time and space. As such, it is therefore necessary to explicitly focus on right-wing ideology in the U.S. as it is spatially and temporally impacting "citizenship formations" (Mitchell, 2016) and possible field of common sense-making as both schools under study are located within staunchly right-wing districts and more generally within Ohio—a state that has been viewed

---

[10] As summarized in Stoddart (2007), p. 192.

as a "swing state" in the past, but has in recent years concretized its place as a "red state.[11]" The determination of the suburban and small-town communities as politically conservative is made though the historical voting patterns of each county along with the descriptions provided by the study participants as teachers and most students described the communities and schools as politically conservative places.

But what exactly constitutes conservative and right-wing politics? As stated earlier, while the terms can be defined too specifically as to be problematically exclusionary or too vague and thus, not particularly useful, this study utilizes the term "right-wing politics" as an umbrella term to mean an ideology that supports "anticollectivist economic policies, fervent patriotism, and/or traditionalism and conventional morality" (Blee & Creasap, 2010, p. 271). It bears repeating that this study also situates both conservatism and progressivism as existing along a political spectrum determined by political liberalism which is a political system and epistemology derivative of the settler colonial project.

Accounting for the social reproductive function of schooling and operationalizing this through right-wing politics and common sense-making, this chapter explores the day-to-day pedagogical choices made by teachers across the two sites in this study—two predominantly White schools in politically conservative counties in Ohio—in order to investigate the role of pedagogy in political (re)production. This chapter looks at the mechanics of this common-sense making through schooling and specifically, via teachers' pedagogical choices in the classroom. My core argument is that teachers' pedagogical and curricular moves are important for understanding the reproduction of political hegemony in any given space and that in the specific sites under study, pedagogical choices perpetuated conservative ideas and talking points even while teachers discursively enacted a goal of "neutrality." Through interview data, I first show an idealization of politically neutral pedagogy, both on the part of teachers and students in this study across both the suburban and small-town sites. Next, I look at teachers' pedagogical choices via participant observation in Mr. Lenard, Mr. Schmidt, and Ms. Greene's classrooms. I argue that these reify right-wing/settler politics through explicit and implicit endorsements and that while these occurred across both sites, they occurred most consistently in the small-town and suburban site respectively.

Political Neutrality as Pedagogical Ideal

Teachers and the Goal of Neutrality. Throughout the year, the teachers in this study discussed not wanting to impart a particular way of thinking onto their students. Mr. Lenard made it a running joke in his class to not explicitly share any of his political views. Whenever students asked him if he was a Republican or Democrat or if they wanted to know how he voted on a particular issue, he would respond, "I'm not telling you that!" or he would say, "I'll tell you when…" and he'd calculate the year they'd graduate college as the date when he'd finally share with them. When I asked why he felt so strongly about this, he said he didn't think it was fair to say as it would perhaps put more weight on one side over the other. He took seriously the idea that perhaps his role as teacher would carry a lot of weight and didn't want to influence their political development. He relayed that he "really tried hard to teach both sides."

Ms. Greene, a teacher at Affluent Suburban High School, took a similar approach to her teaching of US Government. She relayed in an interview that her primary goal was to teach students

[11] These terms index the contemporary manner of referring to states as a color to mean either Republican (red) or Democrat (blue) based on how they've historically voted in presidential elections. While California has come to be considered traditionally left-leaning and Mississippi as traditionally conservative, states like Ohio, Florida, Colorado and Michigan have historically oscillated between the two and designated as "swing states." For more information on history of red/blue designations, please see: Battaglio, S. (2016); For more on Ohio's current "red" status, please see Dawson, M. (2019).

how the government worked and the structures in place and said, "I don't want to teach them what to think necessarily. I don't know. I don't believe that's my role."

However, during a lecture in which Ms. Greene had prepared a PowerPoint presentation to discuss presidential powers, I noted that it had not been updated and still showed pictures of President Barack Obama as president. After class, I asked why this was the case.

> *DSL*: Have you just not gotten around to updating the [PowerPoint] slides with new pictures?

> *Ms. Greene*: No, actually. I have a hard time finding a picture where he's not making a face, or looking…unpresidential…so I figured it best to not put a picture that might make it as though I'm portraying him in an unfavorable light"
>
> <div align="right">(Fieldnote, Suburban High School, October 3, 2017)</div>

In the above instance, Ms. Greene makes the pedagogical choice to keep President Obama's pictures on her lecture slide even though he is no longer president in order to not be perceived as purposefully showing President Trump in an "unfavorable light." She explains her decision as one that is centered on her ideology ("that might make it as though I'm portraying") which highlights an additional concern that teachers shared--that they may be viewed as imparting a particular political ideology. Her attempt at neutrality, not showing President Trump unfavorably, illustrates the types of decisions made on a daily basis and informed by the political hegemony within which this school exists.

When I asked Mr. Lenard about the political climate in which he teaches and if he feels that there is a pressure to avoid particularly contentious topics, he tells me that there is some concern and notes that a teacher had been fired from the district not long ago and that some of the narratives that circulated about the firing alluded to the teacher as being too liberal.[12] Although he added that there might have been "more to the story," alluding to other human resource issues, he implied that it is definitely something that crosses his mind. While he felt as though he was safe and not really one to push political boundaries by nature, he relayed that he nonetheless feels some pressure to stay neutral.

However, Mr. Schmidt, the Current Issues teacher at the small-town high school, relayed an instance—in a previous academic year—where he actively brought in a viewpoint that he felt was uncommon in this community. I asked if he consciously tries to teach different political viewpoints than those represented in the community:

> *Mr. Schmidt*: I tried to bring some of those things in, but that's why I'm also very cautious in creating—I don't want to seem pushy that 'here's the solution' that's going to be different than the community and that you get home and your parents hear about this, but I like to be able to tell anybody that calls me is that…I'm not pushing that value on your kid. I simply created alternative situations for them to think about and to work with their own solution.

> *DSL*: Have you ever gotten a phone call?

> *Mr. Schmidt*: Not many. I'm very careful. I make sure I…I don't like it when they call me Socialist because I bring up the red book. I don't know if you've seen the red book. You

---

[12] While Mr. Lenard relayed some specifics here to illustrate what was meant by "too liberal," these are withheld to preserve confidentially of sites and participants.

haven't seen the red book? Well, when I do Economics, I, bring in the [Communist] Manifesto and uh, they love it, but I, you know, I, I referenced it a lot because of the fact that they don't know it. They know capitalism. We live it. You live it on a day-to-day basis. You know, you do it every day. Whether you know it or not, but you don't know some of the other ideas and that's why, you know, the girl goes home and this is pretty cool and their parents are mad and she says in that way, 'you always taught me to share, make sure that everybody has what they need,' you know? [pause]. Um, I never got a call that time.

(Interview, Small Town High School, June 2018)

Here, Mr. Schmidt brings in a non-dominant view, Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, into his classroom as a pedagogical tool. While he mentions that the students "love it," it is unclear what makes him believe that this is so. However, he does not include this content without apprehension as is illustrated in his choice to be "very careful" that he would get phone calls from parents[13]. Further, he explains that he "doesn't want to seem pushy" and make it seem as though he is advocating for a particular "solution." It is evident that he shares it, but with great care as he does not want to upset parents.

During our last interview, Ms. Greene added that there was a limit to her neutrality,

I don't want to say that [not teaching them what to think] is not an absolute either because I do believe there are wrong things like…thoughts about people and about life. You know, in a very theoretical sense, all men are created equal, right? Where not one person is more valuable than another human being. And, it bugs me when the students devalue other people and place themselves above someone else. I think we all do that to an extent, but just in the way with the wealth of the community, it, that's usually how they do it. And so, and race, I would say that's something where all their comments that are made somewhat often about, like different groups of people as being less because of their race.

And I don't even think they realize they're doing it because I think if you talk to them, like in one moment they're going to be like, 'Oh yeah, racism is bad.' Then the next moment they're saying something that sounds a little racist, you know? And so, um, those kinds of things I tried to, I want to push back on and I'm like slowly trying to figure out how to do that. Again, going back to the, I think it's okay to offend somebody, but when you do that, you might lose your avenue, you know what I mean? If you do it too early in the relationship. Whereas if you do it later on and they trust you, then what you're saying is maybe a little more likely to be received even if it's not in that moment. It could be years down the road.

(Interview, Public Library, June 2018)

While she states that there are certain areas (racism) which she will "push back on," she admits that she is "still learning how to do that." For her, building a personal rapport with her students first is preferred method, before challenging their ideas.

All teachers in the study did create opportunities for students to have conversations about political topics although they all discussed not wanting to make students feel as though they had to "out" themselves politically (as in have to express publicly their political views). While they prided themselves on not requiring anyone to openly declare their views, throughout my one-on-one

---

[13] It is important to reiterate that his use of Marx's Communist Manifesto was not a moment that I observed during fieldwork, but one that Mr. Schmidt relayed. For the most part, pedagogical choices did not include critical or progressive texts or engage with "progressive" politics in-depth, much less Socialism. This is perhaps the most "leftist" non-dominant view that was discussed by any participant.

interviews, left-leaning students expressed that they didn't feel welcome to share viewpoints that were not conservative or right-leaning. While on the surface, a code to not "out" students seems like an appropriate and necessary pedagogical move, one side effect of this approach is that it made the weight of the labels (right/left; conservative/liberal) so great that students retreated into silence and secrecy around their beliefs. And, given that these were communities where the liberal viewpoint is minoritized, the political hegemony comprised and magnified conservative beliefs.

Student Desire for Neutrality. Students across both sites overwhelmingly expressed a preference for teachers to be politically neutral. In fact, not one student expressed in their interview that it would be okay for a teacher to express their political views. During our interview, Julia, a White female student at the affluent suburban high school who identified as conservative, stated that she appreciated Ms. Greene because she does a good job at being neutral.

> If I were to ask her something just in general, nothing super specific, like
> today I asked her about gerrymandering and that wasn't even a very political or controversial thing, but she told me the answer I needed. […] I know it's nice to be able to have her be able to censor her beliefs to give me an informational response that I want. So, if I were to ask her about like something else, like something like taxes or something, she wouldn't be like, 'Oh, taxes are like, oh my gosh.' She would literally tell me exactly what I needed to hear to be able to understand it and form my own opinion about it, which I really appreciate.
> (Interview, Suburban High School, January 2018)

Evan, a White male conservative student felt the same way.

> I think because, I've dealt with teachers that are liberal, I've dealt with teachers who are conservative. I think it should have been taken out of---I don't think teachers should express their opinions because I think the part of the job is being able to get kids to think. But I don't think [Ms. Greene] did that at all. I think she did a pretty good job of just making, just making people think, and I have another teacher too, who's [teaches in this high school] and his thing was just to play devil's advocate all the time no matter what. And that definitely just makes kids think more, make sure they're sure about what they believe in and make sure they think deeper about it. I think that's the role of a teacher and not necessarily to put what they believe out there and force that upon kids.
> (Interview, Suburban High School, June 2018)

However, students at the affluent suburban high school believed that English Language Arts teachers were "very liberal." For example, Julia brought up the liberal lean of the English department and said,

> It's very nice to be able to go to [Ms. Greene] because a lot of the times [her as a] Gov. teacher is what shows through not her personal beliefs, which I think is important, especially at like being an educator and being somebody who influences other people because I know especially, I don't know how it is at other schools, […]but um, like our English department is very left leaning, like *very* left leaning and now, last year my English teacher rolled in with an Obama shirt on! And, she showed us videos of like Donald Trump, like failing! And I was like, this is so uncomfortable. But they're all very, they're all very Democrat, which I can respect because I'm not, I don't, I don't like being dirty... And they're like that [dislike for

those that don't agree politically] and it shows and with [Ms. Greene] it's nice. Especially, I'm not sure how the rest of the social studies department leans, but […]

<div align="right">(Interview, Suburban High School, January 2018)</div>

Several points come through in Julia's interview. First, she makes clear that she disapproves of English teachers being very obvious with their political views and also finds it incredulous that they would show videos of Donald Trump "failing." Which poses questions for educators in these politically conservative communities: can teachers ever be seen as showing a critique of the president? Ms. Greene, in not showing a picture of President Trump at all, chose omission lest she risk showing him being "unpresidential" and being perceived as leaning one way politically. Omission is not neutrality—it is a sort of politics-blind politics in the vein of Bonilla-Silva's (2017) finding of colorblind racism. Much in the same way as the respondents engaged in racist discourse even while (and, as Bonilla-Silva argues, because of) colorblind ideology, similarly both teachers and students in this study argued for a politically neutral pedagogy that is anything but. While most educators and education researchers and theorists might propose this type of pedagogy, the withholding of political views to give students only the necessary information to be able to make their own decisions, the questions still stand, how do students determine that information is neutral? When do they perceive something as neutral and when do students deem pedagogy and curriculum as not?

Trevor, a White male conservative student at the small-town high school and a Trump supporter, revealed that he had experienced a teacher who was not "neutral" and in fact, was very much "liberal" and that he didn't think this was "correct." When asked what made him think that the teacher was liberal, he relayed a time when a Spanish teacher discussed the impact of deportation on Latinx families.

> *Trevor*: She was playing these videos where people were crying about how sad they were that family members were being deported. And, yes, it was sad, but they chose to come here illegally.

> *DSL*: So, what made you think this was her being liberal?

> *Trevor*: Well, because I think she was showing us that to try to make us feel for them. See it from their eyes."

<div align="right">(Interview, Small Town High School, May 2018)</div>

Paisley, a White female liberal-leaning student at the small-town high school also brought this teacher up in her interview but had a different take. She appreciated that the teacher routinely shared information about Mexico and other Latin American countries to learn more about the context and cultures in which Spanish was spoken. Paisley agreed with this pedagogical choice because she felt it helps students understand a viewpoint from someone you may not otherwise interact with in a community as homogenous as the small-town in which she lives. Paisley, however, did not think this pedagogy was indoctrinating or espousing a particular liberal point of view. She saw it as the teacher relaying actual current events and their impact on those affected.

This teacher no longer taught at the school, and so it was not possible to speak with her and ask about her experiences teaching this subject matter in a predominantly conservative school nor to determine her reason for leaving. Yet, this example and the two students' vastly different opinions of the class discussion illuminate an interesting tension: particular pedagogical choices may only be a problem for students if the content discussed challenges their predetermined political views. And,

perhaps only if it challenges predetermined conservative views; the left-leaning students I talked to did not complain about conservative teachers although they discussed knowing that some of their teachers were conservative and saw it as par for the course given the current political climate and living where they do.

Timothy, a student at the small-town, discussed during his interview his preference for politically neutral pedagogy. He also relayed that a particular assignment in which students had to answer questions to determine their political ideology made him uncomfortable. The survey asked students various questions regarding topics such as drug legalization, corporate taxation, abortion, immigration, etc. Once they were done, students were asked to place a dot on a grid Mr. Lenard had drawn up. He shared in an interview that he had scored as "left-leaning," but did not want to walk up to the board and make a dot there because of what his classmates might think. This was the only explicit instance in this class where students were asked to publicly take a stance. While there were no names next to dots, and once many dots accumulated there was no real way to keep track of whose dot was whose, the mere action of walking up and risking that a classmate would see where he placed his "left leaning" dot was enough to have Timothy place his dot somewhere "right-leaning" where other dots were.
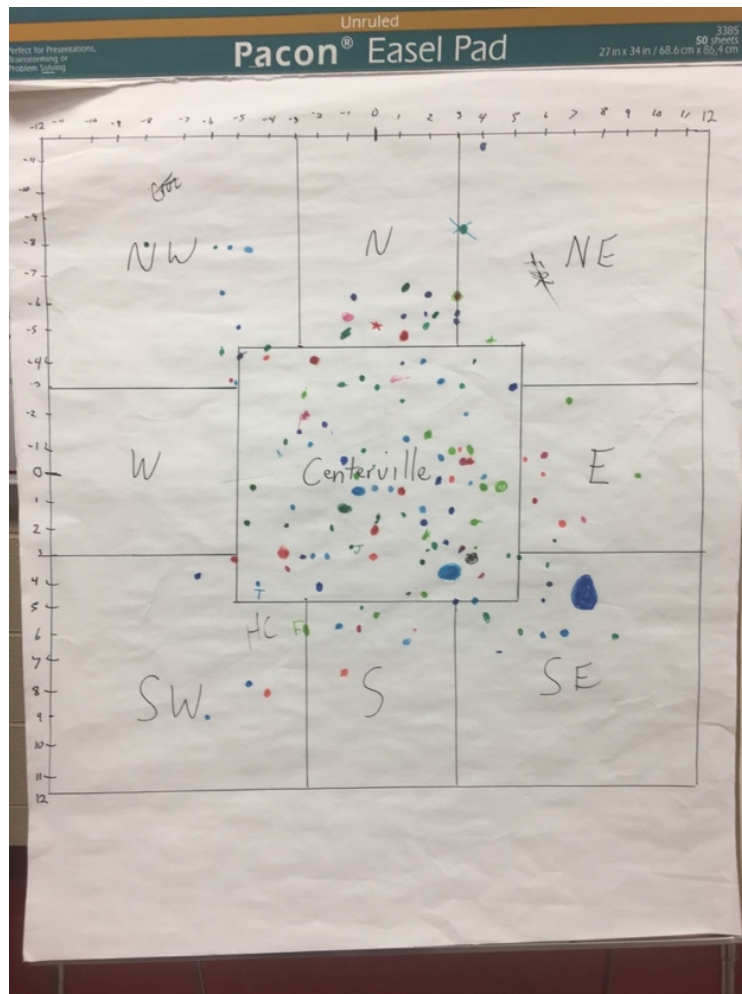
Figure 3. Picture taken of the Centerville "dots," Small Town High School, November 2, 2017.

I discuss Timothy and this instance more in-depth in a later chapter, however, I also share it here because it points to the types of pedagogical choices teachers made that reified particular homogenizing narratives within (and about) the political landscape. The point of the assignment, as Mr. Lenard shared with me in conversation, was to have students understand that most people reside in "Centerville" meaning that the majority of their community (and, for that matter, the country) are politically moderate and hence, "we're all the same." While most students' results did fall within the square that was labeled Centerville and deemed "moderate," the square was quite large and encompassed the majority of student views—thereby erasing real, marked differences within those in Centerville. And while there were also many students whose dot landed outside of Centerville, landing instead in the various "corners" of the political spectrum, there was little discussion of the variance and the nuances existing among these views. This absence of conversation and of opportunity for working through differences created an over-simplification of the political spectrum that too quickly glossed over the non-dominant (i.e. left leaning) political views that might be present in the class. Given that most participatory voices among the students were those that expressed conservative political views (as will be discussed further below and in later chapters), this *Centervillization* of students' politics through a designation of residing in the middle perpetuated a flattening of difference that served to reify the status quo—which here meant right-wing and political conservativism as the norm.

Both teachers, on various occasions throughout the year, shared that they felt it important to not put any students "on the spot" or feel critiqued for their views nor did they feel that students should have to "out" themselves politically. As Ms. Greene stated, "It's not my place to teach them what to think, but to help them refine what they already think." However, as the next section shows, both Ms. Greene and Mr. Lenard's classrooms reflected and took up right-leaning political views through their own framing of particular events, through their lack of challenge to students, or by simply not working actively against the right-wing hegemonic orientation in which their classrooms operate.

Right-Wing (Re)Production in Practice: Explicit & Implicit Pedagogical Moves

Teachers at the small-town high school and at the affluent suburban high school declared a desire to teach in a matter that was politically neutral, and students expressed the desire for teachers to be neutral as well. Yet, throughout the academic year, I consistently observed pedagogical choices that took on a non-neutral politic and endorsed a conservative political stance. Endorsements of what could be categorized as left-leaning rarely occurred and, many times, could often also be categorized as conservative. For example, in one instance, Mr. Lenard expressed his disagreement with a group of students who argued for arming teachers in schools in the aftermath of the Parkland shooting. However, the overwhelming majority of the pedagogical choices I observed endorsed, either explicitly or implicitly, right-wing views; the former occurring most frequently at the small-town site and the latter predominating at the affluent suburban classroom.

While difficult to determine exactly why the difference existed, my observations point to one possibility: cultural norms. For the most part, students spoke more bluntly in the small-town high school and teachers were a bit more relaxed as well. Also, Mr. Lenard's pedagogical presence was authoritative—he was the holder of knowledge and moderated this through lectures and leading frequent impromptu discussions, which the students thoroughly enjoyed given his entertaining and humorous delivery. At the suburban school, the students held the power. Ms. Greene facilitated her courses, which were rigidly mapped out, but students were positioned as the knowers who were expected to have read (or know enough on their own) and move the class along with their insight and questions. The suburban students were also palpably more polished in their delivery and carried themselves in class almost as future professionals or politicians and as if there were currency to

speaking more diplomatically.[14] Moreover, Ms. Greene and other teachers relayed that parents in this community were quick to get involved and "helicopter parent" and that many parents acted as though the teachers "work for them" and are less than because they were "just" teachers. This power dynamic seemed to impact Ms. Greene's ability or desire to challenge students or perhaps motivated her to endorse their views, albeit implicitly. Overall, the teachers in this study, in their respective personalities and mannerisms and pedagogical styles, reflected the cultures of the communities in which they taught.

Explicit Endorsements of Right-Wing Views. One example of explicit endorsement stems from Mr. Lenard, at the small-town high school, talking with his AP Government students about US Foreign Policy. He asked the students, "Why did we go to Vietnam? To combat the evil Commies." Students laughed. "Freedom, Democracy, and the American way." He then changed gears to talk about his time in the military.

> When I was in the military 101st, we had a chant before we did anything, 'And kill godless commies with a high-power weapon in the face." Literally…Who doesn't want to take down godless commies? No real American. (*Student laughter.*)

While Mr. Lenard was known for his sarcasm, it was hard for me to tell when he was joking and when he was sincere, and I can only assume that it might have been difficult for students to decipher this as well. He continued,

> Much of our foreign policy was defeat the Nazis, the evil Japanese, Saddam Hussein, was he a friendly neighborhood dictator? No, he was a brutal dictator, Viet Cong, they were ruthless. Alright. What was the …this is my favorite foreign policy moment in history. Monroe Doctrine […] So 1823, we were puppies. But, basically, we were half of this continent. In 1823, Spain, Great Britain were still powerful empires, Russia, had a lot of influence, here and obviously here [pointing at map] but 1823, this little puppy country. This little puppy country. Guess what? We're just a little puppy now, but if this is all ours, North and South America, we own it. If you venture into the US, we will stop anybody coming in. If you venture into the western hemisphere, we will oppose all attempts, we will stop anybody coming in.

He then stops abruptly to tell a seemingly tangential story about how when he's walking his wife's small dog, it barks at bigger dogs like he's going to tear them apart. And then he continues his lecture,

> That was the US in 1823, puppy marks his territory, lifts his leg, we essentially marked North and South America and said, "get away."
>
> <div align="right">(Fieldnote, Small Town High School, April 24, 2018)</div>

In this particular instance, his words are explicitly right-leaning as he uses terms like "godless Commies" flippantly; and, while there might have been some sarcasm, it was difficult to parse out through this ambiguity what his intended message was. However, there is no ambiguity with his expression that the Monroe Doctrine was his "favorite" and thus, no neutrality in his politics. This

---

[14] An important caveat to this, however, was the pervasive "frat bros" culture that allowed brashness and "unpolished" discourse from the white male students that will be discussed more fully in a later chapter.

instance can also be read as a moment in which Mr. Lenard roots against power as the United States is positioned as the underdog (relative to European countries) who triumphs. However, this stokes patriotism via an analysis of the US-as-underdog narrative that normalizes settler claims and promotes right-leaning politics. Further, there was no space created for students to pose questions about this policy or Communism and no analysis or critique offered by Mr. Lenard of US critics of this policy, let alone from the point of view of the countries, including the Native peoples, of North and South America. He continued discussing foreign policy and this framing the next day,

> *Mr. Lenard:* So, basically at the Bretton Woods conference 1944, the IMF and World Bank were created, I think it's kinda ironic, occasionally we see whenever, there are groups that show up to protest the IMF or the World Bank, occasionally when they meet, in certain cities, the IMF were created and the World Bank were created, where, when do dictators arise from?

> *Students*: Crisis.

> *Mr. Lenard*: Crisis. When there's an absence of, when there's a crisis. Dictators don't arrive in places where everyone is employed and living a high quality of life, and so the Bretton Woods created these two institutions as a source, as financial intuitions that provide loans to developing countries and the idea was, let's use the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to stabilize economies in these developing countries, so that they don't collapse, so that they don't create the environment that allows Adolf Hitlers and Joseph Stalins to Mussolinis, or uh Manuel Macron, [to] arise.

He then moves on to discussing the Truman Doctrine,

> *Mr. Lenard:* Obviously, Harry Truman right after WWII, the Truman Doctrine basically said (reading from a paper) the US must help free people resisting subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures. That's what it says (reads again) the US *must* help free people resisting subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressure (stops reading). Basically, Truman Doctrine is saying, you know, anywhere there is oppressed people, the US must help them. So, the Truman Doctrine, that theory of containment led to a) going to Greece, Turkey, but it also led to Korea, Vietnam, the idea that you need to contain communism where it is at and ultimately it will collapse on itself. So, this containment policy was in response to USSR expansion throughout Europe throughout Asia, but that drove our foreign policy for 50 years, you can argue that the Gulf War in 2003, originally, what did they say, 'Weapons of mass destruction,' we were there for six months, found no weapons of mass destruction, what did they change the reasoning to be there? Spreading democracy. We are going to create a democracy right in the heart of middle east and then all the rest of the middle east will see the wonders that is a democracy and topple their autocratic leaders, but so, (sees a student raise his hand). Go ahead.

> *Jimmy*: Isn't that kinda like imperialism without taking over the country?

> *Mr. Lenard:* (*Laughs*). Ha. Um. [*Pause*].
> (*Students begin to chatter amongst themselves.*)

> *White male student*: Not if America does it.

Mr. Lenard: I wanna say no. Right. [*Chuckles*] Yeah, not if America does it. I guess, I mean yeah. I think in a way it is. Now the idea, in theory, you can look at the idea is, if we stop it early, we stop the development of the next Hitler, the next, you know…so yeah…certainly hegemonic.

(Fieldnote, Small Town High School, April 25, 2018)

In this instance, Jimmy, a left-leaning White male student (one of the very few I interacted with throughout my time across both sites) raises his hands to ask this question. Jimmy was usually pretty quiet in class and asked this question without snark; he genuinely wanted to know how international policy via financing and democracy-building was not imperialism by another name. Jimmy hints at a left-leaning argument that is used around precisely the IMF and the World Bank, a critique of "development" as an extension of colonialism and Imperialism. Mr. Lenard laughs at the "zing" of it and struggles a bit to give him an answer that upholds American liberalism and international policy. When a White, male, conservative student says, "Not when America does it," Mr. Lenard repeats it laughing, joking but cosigning that take. He ultimately says, "I think in a way it is," and then reframes it to justify these policies as attempting to "stop the development of the next Hitler" and concedes that it is "certainly hegemonic." Unfortunately, there is no further discussion around what "hegemonic" means nor why it would be beneficial in his view. The minor hiccup of having to address foreign policy as imperialist is minorly discussed, but only because of Jimmy's question. Mr. Lenard then moves on to discuss the next item on the agenda, resuming the narrative of the US as democracy-builder—a narrative with its roots in right-wing and settler politics.

Another moment of explicit endorsement of a right-wing political view occurred when Mr. Lenard and his class discussed President Trump's comments on Haiti and Africa, referring to them as "shithole countries."

Mr. Lenard: Last week President Trump called together some Republican senators, and were trying to iron out a deal on DACA[15] which is the part of the immigration plan that would, like if you were, if your parents brought you here illegally, if you are not a legal citizen, but, and it's happened, I've had kids in this class who were brought into this country at a young age, have no recollection of ever being [there] at all, and are, in all effects, American citizens, what do you do with them? If they're not really here legally? But, that's what DACA is trying to deal with, so during the course of the meeting, President Trump referenced Haiti and African countries as being crap hole countries, why do we get people from this region and not, he referenced, Norway. Clearly Haiti, Africa there are not as many Caucasians there as in Norway, and that is being looked as, you know, the question is…is it racist?

Marla: It can be…

Mr. Lenard: Yeah and that's the thing.

Marla: [inaudible] Depending on how you see it and how you hear it, if people block out certain phrases and words, to hear what they wanna hear—

Mr. Lenard: Marla, that was beautiful.

---

[15] DACA – an acronym for the policy passed under the Obama Administration, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Mr. Lenard [to class]*:* Did Donald Trump hear racism when he said that?

Students: No.

Mr. Lenard: But, if you're someone from Haiti or from an African country, did you perceive that as being racist? I mean, yeah…and here's a cool thing about perception, how you perceive things is reality, perception is reality.

(Fieldnote, Small Town High School, January 17, 2018)

In this moment, Mr. Lenard brings up President Trump's comments as a discussion point and displays a particular slant—that the president's comments are not racist. Marla, a White conservative student in the small-town adds that people can hear it as racist if "people block out certain phrases and words, to hear what they wanna hear—" subscribing to the belief that those that may understand the comment as racist are doing so because "they want" to hear it that way. Mr. Lenard cosigns this idea and continues by asking the students, "Did Donald Trump hear racism when he said that?" eliciting a "No" answer from his students. There is no discussion that the President might have actually intended it to be racist or may have unintentionally displayed racist beliefs. Mr. Lenard then attempts neutrality by saying that if you are Haitian or African you would perceive it as racist—Trump didn't perceive it as such, Haitians might, and in Mr. Lenard's framing, therefore the issue is moot. While Mr. Lenard can be seen as offering an "other side" by positing that President Trump's comments could be considered racist, it relegates the issue to one of individual perception. What is missing in this pedagogical moment is a discussion of what racism is (a structural system motivated by White supremacy) and of the causes for global inequality and the disparate conditions across and within countries.

It is important, however, to note that in this moment, Mr. Lenard also reveals a lack of neutrality with regard to DACA that could be categorized as "left-leaning." He mentioned to me in a previous conversation about how his thoughts on DACA and immigration had changed a bit after finding out that one of his students (who was a "good kid" and "smart") was undocumented through the college application process. Mr. Lenard relayed that knowing this student and his family really personalized the issue for him and made him more empathetic and understanding of having to find a policy solution. It could be said that in his categorization of undocumented students as being "in all effects, American citizens," his discursive moves reveal a political ideology—these young people *are* citizens and a solution should be found for regulating their status. However, this did not happen frequently. Most teaching and politics shared engaged in perpetuation of explicitly right-wing ideas, or ideas that seemed "neutral," but were in fact laced with right-wing and settler politics.

For example, one other moment where Mr. Lenard engaged in explicit endorsement of right-wing/settler ideology occurred when the Cleveland Indians announced they would phase out their use the racist Chief Wahoo image. Mr. Lenard often started his regular US Government classes off with a topic that was currently dominating the news cycle. This day, the discussion was as follows:

Mr. Lenard: I'm a Cleveland Indian born and bred fan. For a long time, there have been people saying, 'Look Cleveland Indians, you need to get rid of the mascot of Cleveland Indians", [the] mascot since 1940s, like some of the earlier versions, let me see if I can scroll down and find…
[Mr. Lenard searched and displayed some images of the Cleveland baseball team's mascot throughout the years and projected these on the large LCD screen mounted to the wall to draw comparisons.]

Mr. Lenard: So anyhow the Cleveland Indians, in conjunction with Major League Baseball say, 'We're gonna move away from Chief Wahoo…'

A student: That sucks.

Another student: So now what are we going to be?

Mr. Lenard: They've had the block C, you see that up there [shows a logo on screen] I've seen some C's with a feather kinda engrained in it. So, Native American groups for a long time, showed up at games, on opening day and protested this mascot, uh, so yesterday [they announced] …after this year it is going away […] let me ask you this…Is anyone in here have Native American blood?
[A student raises her hand.]

Another student: Yeah, I forgot.

Student: She does.

Mr. Lenard: So, Alyssa

Alyssa: Yes.

Mr. Lenard: You're probably gonna be, let me ask you, is this [points to mascot] offensive? Because my question is, I grew up with it—

Alyssa: I can't say anything […] about it being offensive 'cause I'm not really in the culture, and like my mom's from Cleveland and my dad is from Arizona.

Mr. Lenard: Okay, well see, that's just so important about not being in the culture.

Alyssa: Yeah.

Mr. Lenard: That's it. Can I--That's such a mature viewpoint by the way.

Alyssa: Thank you.

By requesting that students in the classroom disclose if they are Native American, Mr. Lenard doesn't take into account that this act may be marginalizing and othering in a community that is predominantly White and that non-White/non-conservative students see as not very welcoming to those that are perceived as "Other." Further, in centering this person in this particular conversation he is also positioning this person to speak as representative of their group. Had Alyssa said, "it doesn't bother me" it would have confirmed for the students that Native Americans really don't care and that this is much to do about nothing. If she had said she took issue with the mascot and that it was racist, she would now be positioned as an "activist" and definitely an outsider that is now challenging the dominant White culture.

Aside from the ways these pedagogical choices reproduce the dominant ideology through the hyper focus of the non-White "other," in asking for students who "have Native American blood" he introduces, and cosigns, an insidious ideology and discourse around genetics, biology and

claim to group membership—a process that Native American community members and scholars have long critiqued as a settler colonial imposition[16] (Deloria, 1998; Tallbear, 2013). As Tallbear states,

> Part of what white supremacy has done in the United States is allowed white people to define everybody else's racial category. It's allowed white people to define what it is to be a member of a tribe and what it is to be indigenous. It's one of the privileges of whiteness, to be able to define and monitor and control everybody else's identity…" (Kim Tallbear as interviewed by Gupta, 2018).

Although a seemingly quick and a short intervention, Mr. Lenard's articulation "Native American blood" frames Native American identity and membership in these settler colonial terms. Alyssa, says she can't really say one way or another because "she's not really in the culture" is in a profound way pushing back on this idea of "blood" and responding that her not being connected to the "culture" in a significant way makes her unable to have an opinion on it one way or another. Although this is praised by Mr. Lenard as a very mature answer, it is not praised for the challenge to "blood" as claim to membership, but because it is best to not provide an opinion if one doesn't identify with a group—an approach that can be problematic as it fuels ideas that people that are disconnected from their respective culture/identity groups should not offer opinions and lays the groundwork for dismissing student opinions if one doesn't "belong" to any number of identity groups. For example, a retort from students who opposed restrictions on 2nd amendment rights toward students who were pro-gun reform legislation was that they didn't own nor have the knowledge to adequately discuss what measures should be taken; if you don't even own or shoot guns, you can't understand enough about them to make suggestions on policy. Further, although I was unable to interview with Alyssa and ask her thoughts on the interaction, her approach to answering the question was astute in that it served to eschew the problematics of answering the question in a dissenting manner as discussed above. The conversation continued,

> *Rose*: Our friend's name is Paul and he's full Shawnee. Like full on Shawnee. But stuff like this doesn't bother him. If you saw him, you'd be like, yeah, he is, looks [*inaudible*], the whole nine yards, he talks about this stuff and R*dskins[17] and Indians and he knows I go [to this school] and when the whole logo change happened—
>
> *Matt*: What do they think it is offensive about it?
>
> *Nikki*: Is it just because the skin is red?
>
> *A student*: I think the red skin.
>
> *Nikki*: The [team] colors are, also red and blue.
>
> *Rose*: I think it's just the team color.

---

[16] For a reading list on the specific relationship between genetic testing and Native American identity and belonging see
http://www.criticalethnicstudiesjournal.org/blog/2018/12/19/syllabus-elizabeth-warren-cherokee-citizenship-and-dna-testing
[17]. I think it important to include the words used by participants in order to get an accurate representation of their thinking and of the community responses, however, here and elsewhere I utilize an asterisk to challenge their oppressive nature and perhaps mute the potential violence these terms may inflict on the reader.

Mr. Lenard: On some level, I agree, I don't disagree with you, it's also like the features, the nose is like…When I look at mascots, I look at that [points to wall where a flag with the school's old mascot still hangs] and this differently. I look at that [school's old mascot] as being as—

Nikki: Powerful.

Mr. Lenard: Powerful, thank you. I look at that [points to older version of Cleveland Indians mascot] as being a caricature.

Student: Yeah, like a Cartoon-ish thing, I guess.

There is no conversation about the term R*dskins as being an offensive term used by White people toward Native Americans, no discussion of the history of violent atrocities inflicted upon Native peoples in the Americas nor even a discussion on why so many Native American mascots exist. The students posit and then continue to believe that the mascot is red colored merely because the team colors are red and blue and not the possibility that perhaps the team colors were chosen to reflect the name (Indians) and the chosen mascot.[18] The conversation continued,

Rose: I think more people that aren't Native America think its offensive than are Native American.

Naomi: I would disagree.

Mr. Lenard: Hit it, Naomi. Why?

Naomi: I don't know how to talk about, I think people are more offended that it's taken off than... I don't know why people get so offended that it gets removed?

Matt: 'Cause it's tradition.

Naomi: Yeah, well, so is the Confederate flag, that's tradition.

Matt: Yeah, its tradition.

Another White male student: Yeah, it is tradition.

Naomi: But, the statement behind it is racist.

Matt [to his friend seated next to him]: It's the rebel flag.

Nikki: You go, Naomi.

Naomi: I just think…I don't…

---

[18] This also illustrates an implicit endorsement by their teacher of these views through a lack of challenge to this narrative. More on implicit pedagogical endorsements will be discussed in the next section.

> *Rose*: There's also a different viewpoint that you have to look at it from, like people that are from Cleveland.

At this point, Mr. Lenard then makes the point that it is difficult to determine when a policy should change—when 10% of people find it offensive, and then asks students what number they think is the appropriate percentage to impact policy.

> Does anyone say that if one person is offended, it should be removed? […] You can't just say…just can't use one person's opinion [as the indicator].

He does not affirm nor amplify Naomi's point, nor does he amplify it. He somewhat confuses the conversation by talking about what percentage of people need to be offended by something for it to be considered. He then concludes the class discussion,

> Alright, so, we'll talk about it [again in the future]. It was in the news yesterday. I think it's interesting. I think what Alyssa said, it's hard to understand if you're not in the culture. Like I said, I grew up in north east Ohio, I never looked at that as being derogatory, but when you sit back and l look at this, I can see *that* being…Well, I look at this, I can see that being not flattering, but… [the conversation's] kinda cool. Alyssa you win the prize for the day.
> (Fieldnote, Small Town High School, January 30, 2018)

Here, Mr. Lenard mentions "it's hard to understand if you're not in the culture" that seems to provide room for an argument that sides with Native American groups: there might be reason for taking offense, but that it's hard to know unless you're "in the culture." Mr. Lenard's hedging may be his way of entering into a conversation with his students that transcends the narrowness of their experience by allowing the possibility that others may see the issue differently and have equally sound reasons to oppose. However, this serves to absolve himself and the students from settlerness—that is, it absolves them from grappling with Whiteness and the role of White supremacy in co-opting a people's image (or caricature thereof) and deeming it appropriate for a team mascot.

Mr. Lenard's next sentence "I grew up in northeast Ohio" works to create an equivalency of another culture as well—one that did *not* see the mascot as offensive. He restates that he never saw it as derogatory, taking a non-neutral stance on the issue, even while he points to older version of the mascot as being "not flattering." Further, in framing the versions of the mascots as "not flattering," he misses the key point of power in the discussion. It is not merely an unflattering graphic; these mascots serve to reify ideas and stereotypes about Native Americans in the U.S—as less than human, as an artifact— that aid in the continual oppression and dispossession of Indigenous people. Through the making of Native Americans as a commodity via team paraphernalia, it also serves as a way for the fan to "play Indian" (Strong, 2003) to own Native identity as their own (as their history) and functions as a move toward settler nativism (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Calderon, 2014).

Mr. Lenard continued to speak about the mascot issue in every subsequent period (except AP Government) and relayed Alyssa's comment as "mature." He also continued with his take that it wasn't offensive to him—an explicit, non-neutral pedagogical stance that supported right-wing/settler politics.

In Ms. Greene's affluent suburban classroom, most endorsements of right-wing views were implicit, however, explicit moments did occur. One of these moments was after the Parkland shooting. After the shooting, students across the country organized "walk outs" from their schools to remember the victims and advocate for gun reform legislation. The administration at the affluent

suburban high school decided preemptively to allow the students to walk out by providing a space for them to convene outside of the school and asking teachers to refrain from penalizing students for participating. A couple of the White and conservative students in Ms. Greene's AP Government class with whom she had the closest rapport with walked into class and brought this up to her. As the rest of the class filtered in and found their seats, she responded that she disagreed with the walkout, that there really was no point to it, and that the administration should not be getting involved.

> *Ms. Greene*: If it was about school security and school safety, I'd walk out with the kids […]
>
> *Student:* do you think it defeats the purpose?
>
> *Ms. Greene*: It does.
>
> *Julia*: It absolutely defeats the purpose of everything.
>
> *Ms. Greene*: It's not a protest! […] They picked 4/20 and a Friday [*Ms. Greene rolls her eyes*].
> (Fieldnote, Suburban High School, March 7, 2018)

She commented that students organizing it on a Friday and on 4/20 ("a day known for getting high") didn't help their cause and rolled her eyes implying that these organizers were acting in ways that were self-serving and somewhat disingenuous. It was unclear if she was unaware that national organizers selected April 20th because it is also the anniversary of the Columbine shooting. She could have believed it was a poor choice regardless. Nevertheless, her critique illustrates the ways pedagogy took a right-wing slant. In this moment, she eschewed neutrality and shared her opinion, however, it was an opinion that aligned with the conservative community's perception of the Parkland organizers and opposition to gun reform. It is difficult to imagine a moment where Ms. Greene might share her views with students wherein these views were in direct opposition with her students' or the right-wing politics of the suburb. This is not to say that she didn't hold views that were oppositional, but to propose that she regulated her neutrality, or lack thereof, in ways that were safe to the political hegemony of the space. Further, it is important to note that this conversation happened as students walked in and before the official start of class. These non-official moments of political discussion occurred frequently and were replete with opinion sharing, illustrating that political education occurs at all times in school in scripted and unscripted ways.

However, one very substantive explicit endorsement of right-wing politics by Ms. Greene occurred via the organizing of a guest speaker. She invited her friend, José, to give a presentation to the school on his experience as an immigrant from Venezuela. She shared with me that she had met José while she was on a mission trip to Venezuela as part of Campus Crusade for Christ, a Christian organization at the Ohio State University where she attended as an undergraduate. She also mentioned to me that once the political turmoil in Venezuela became increasingly tumultuous, José immigrated and with help of the network of people he had established through their church, made his way to Ohio.

As part of the assignment, students in Ms. Greene's class period during José's scheduled time to speak were required to attend, but all other students could ask their teachers for permission to participate. Then, for ten points extra credit, students were to write a one-page reflection piece on their thoughts of what the speaker shared. She told the students that he would be discussing the history of Venezuela, the crisis in Venezuela, that he immigrated as a Venezuelan refugee, and that he would talk about his personal story and have a Q&A.

At the time of his visit to the Suburban High School, political protests and turmoil plagued Venezuela and was only a few months prior to the contested election between Nicolas Maduro and Juan Guaidó. It is important to note that José begins his speech[19] with the year 1998, framing his story as deriving from the Hugo Chavez presidency.

> I'm from Venezuela […] I'm 27 years old, I've been in the US for three years now, and yeah, I wanted to kind of share my story first. I was 8 years old when we received or when we had the new government. It was a socialist government you might've heard of Chavez. That was a government that was implemented in Venezuela in 1998 and many people knew that he was in the military, his story and background and Cuba is a country that has been same, the same situation that we did, and many people told us that we need to be careful to do this, like if we wanted to vote for him and everything, but we thought, 'Well, Venezuela is not an island, Venezuela is a strong country,' we had one of the biggest reserves of oil, so we didn't think something bad can happen to our country so people didn't pay attention to that and they voted Chavez as president. He obviously tried to show the best part of him and like, until he won, he was going to do great things for the country and everything. And, people believed that. The only thing is, as the years went by, he changed his mind. The way he spoke to people was more aggressive. It was becoming really dangerous and like unsafe and so he did help a lot of people and poor people but in his mind, it was not okay to be rich or develop or anything like that. That is why [he] implemented, you know, socialism. Since then things started to change. We went from finding everything we wanted in stores, being safe in the streets, to not having anything in the stores. As I grew up, I got robbed five times or six times all those times at gun point or knife and all they wanted was to take my phone my shoes whatever I had because of the resale value.
>
> (Speech Excerpt, Suburban High School, November 7, 2017)

José's framing of the turmoil in Venezuela is squarely placed at the hands of a socialist government with no possibilities of any other explanations for political unrest. There are no alternative angles or reasonings for it, no discussion of pre-Chavez Venezuela, much less an analysis of why Chavismo is/was a desirable turn at that specific political moment in Venezuela. There is no alternative view point, no reasons given for why many Venezuelans had supported Chavez and a socialist populist reform.

He then goes on to discuss the realities of everyday life in Venezuela and the ways that violence was a daily occurrence and how his cousin was assassinated in a robbery. He also discussed the "colectivos" in Venezuela, who are supporters of the government and work as strong arms intimidating the public. While the oppression he detailed and experienced is horrific, his recounting of events undoubtedly takes a political side and Ms. Greene, in her organizing and giving him a venue to share his story, implicitly sanctions this take on Venezuelan politics. When José is done with his speech, Mr. Trevor comes up to the stage to facilitate the Q&A period and begins with the first question.

> *Mr. Trevor:* When you were talking about the regime in the Venezuela, can you tell us what is one of the most important lessons that you feel like you have learned and what is something you would like to share with us that you have learned in the midst of this current regime and even in this election [in Venezuela] and how it basically has been rigged [and] why these

---

[19] Although I was unable to attend the speech in real-time, the speech was recorded and shared with me and I was able to listen and transcribe portions to include here.

protests have occurred? What have you learned personally and what is something you would want everyone to sort of take away from this?

José: I think it is really important for me to tell people that, especially the young people I think the future of this country at least, it sounds crazy, but it is in your hands, it is in your hands how you're going to direct this country because eventually you'll be able to vote and elect your president and leaders and stuff, and for me I wish I knew that what was going to happen and I'd encourage you guys to see the history and just learn what has happened in the past so you know how your future will look like, I think the lesson I learned is be careful with our decisions as a country and not take for granted what we already have. Like I said, Venezuela was a powerful country and we were like "You know what? It's going to be fine; Venezuela has its reserves of oil, and you know, we can [survive this]. This is what happened, no medicine, the hospitals are [falling] apart, and no food, no anything, just yeah, be careful with your decisions, and if you need to fight for your rights and have justice, it will always be dangerous, but I think it's important to speak out and defend our rights, [that is] really something that I learned.

(Speech Excerpt, Suburban High School, November 7, 2017)

José's comments, taken at face value, would not demonstrate a particularly explicit right-wing stance on their own; he suggest that students should know that they have power to change the course of their country, urges them to study history and what has happened in the past as possibilities for what may arise in the future, and that they should fight for their rights. However, when paired with his opening of a critique of Chavez and socialism and after him relaying how steep and quick of a decline Venezuela experienced, his words serve as a warning to students that leftist politics and ideas, while seemingly innocuous or sounding desirable, could be dangerous or will turn dangerous given his warning that "I'd encourage you guys to see the history…so you know what your future *will* look like" (emphasis added). And, when understood that this happened only a year after the US 2016 Presidential Elections where a very popular Democratic candidate vied for the nomination as a Democratic Socialist, his comments could be understood as a warning of what is to come if we vote for left-wing populism. Again, in organizing José to come and speak to the school, Ms. Greene implicitly endorses the right-wing stance of José's politics; a politics that he very explicitly shares with the students.

Another explicit, yet smaller moment of right-wing endorsement revolved around President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky. Ms. Greene had been discussing various presidencies, highlighting policy platforms, successes and failures, and, of course, scandals. When discussing President Bill Clinton, the impeachment hearings came up and students began criticizing, not the President, but Monica Lewinsky's lack of judgement. While this is pretty common in the national discourse, what was particularly surprising was the critique of her sexual encounters and the way the students jumped at the chance to "slut shame" since they had not been born when the scandal took place. Student comments included: "She was so very not smart to do that"; "Oh my gosh, why would she talk to someone about it?"; "Did she really think that was a wise choice?"; "She kept the dress!?" Ms. Greene joked with the students as well and agreed that Ms. Lewinsky was not very smart to have done that. While she didn't boisterously jump in, this moment was indicative of her pedagogical style—a passive complicity with student beliefs; not a challenge to their commentary nor an opportunity for seizing "teachable moments." For the most part, the right-leaning pedagogy that at occurred at both sites, but most often in the affluent suburb, occurred more subtly and in more implicit ways.

Implicit Endorsements of Right-Wing Views. At the affluent suburban high school, moments of non-neutrality that extolled right-leaning views were also present, however, they were more often muted than those occurring at the small-town high school in a more Republican county. Toward the end of the academic year, Ms. Greene discussed civil rights cases as these would be tested on the AP Government exam that most of her students were taking at the end of the year. On this particular day, students were discussing Affirmative Action via the *University of California v. Bakke* case. Ms. Greene asked students what they thought the intention was of Affirmative Action,

> *Ms. Greene*: How did this become a thing? Why did people want this?
>
> *Emily*: I think it was LBJ, right? It came around LBJ's time, it was an attempt to help races who were oppressed in the past because of their race…be equal with…
>
> *Ms. Greene*: …Yeah, trying to correct an injustice of the past. Ok…Yeah. Good. Um, I know, I hear *a lot* of things from students about this today, especially with going to college, right? (Student murmurs). What do you think about Affirmative Action in the present context? (Student comments include "reverse racism," "inherently racist," "bad, definitely bad") Raise your hand, raise your hand so I hear one of you at a time. Meghan?
>
> *Meghan*: I believe that the original intent of Affirmative Action was with a good purpose but, today it won't ever be a way to help those whose relatives had been treated poorly in the past, so, it won't help them, so now it's just like reverse racism, discriminating against other people.
>
> *Ms. Greene*: Um. Today we are going to look at this issue of *defacto* and *dejure* discrimination…so get out those papers you picked up (*Student murmurs*). Oh yes, pass forward your Bell Ringers. (*She cues the film*).

Here, Emily, a White female student frames Affirmative Action as a policy aimed at correcting racial oppression "in the past" and by replying with "Yeah […] Ok. Yeah Good." and moving on to another point, Ms. Greene endorses this framing of the policy especially as she then pivots to asking students about what their thoughts are on the policy in the present day and juxtaposing it with an example of college admissions. Since the majority of the students in this class are seniors, this example seems to resonate given the multitude of murmurs and hands that are raised to share comments. Further, we see Meghan engage in discourse that invisibilizes racialization in describing those she deems as negatively impacted by "reverse racism" by using the euphemism "other people." Ms. Greene let's this comment stand on its own without requiring students to engage in a deeper conversation of privilege and power—of whether "reverse racism" can exist given the continuance of racial oppression. Ms. Greene continues and attempts to connect the policy to present day,

> So this is a pretty interesting topic in today's society right because by law, right, we don't have segregation, Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, set up to end that segregation by law, with that being said, it doesn't mean that we see all of these communities that are completely diverse and we have this mixing of religions and mixing of cultures that doesn't just happen. There is push in today's societies to do that and part of that is a lot about opportunities because living in one area, living in one area,

(Students interrupt Ms. Greene to correct her, saying she got the meanings confused regarding dejure vs. defacto; she acknowledges that she might have flipped the meanings and continues)

So, this is not technically achieved and there are a lot of questions of what this is supposed to look like. What we are going to do is look at some segments of the *Eyes on the Prize* and look at *de jure* and *de facto* segregation, try to identify the two and think about the present day. Any questions before we get started? (no students post questions) Alright.

(Fieldnote, Suburban High School, April 13, 2018)

Throughout the film, students were pretty quiet, however some looked down and seemed to be doing other work. A boy and girl flirted with each other while the students that had interrupted Ms. Greene previously to correct her definitions, and who are talkative and proud conservatives, looked down and away from the screen at many moments. The film showed the case of Emmett Till as well as various people sharing testimony about the brutality of Jim Crow and segregation. The bell rung and the students were dismissed without any additional discussion. All events that were discussed in the film discussed the past and without any guidance for connecting this to the present day, reinforced student comments that Affirmative Action is not a useful tool in the present to either address past racism or acknowledge its continual present-day manifestations. Although Ms. Greene promised to touch back on this topic the next class session, she did not. Instead, students were given the whole class period to study on their own for the upcoming AP test. This instance provides an example of the type of non-neutral pedagogies that occurred in these spaces. No positive perceptions of Affirmative Action were shared, both White female students who spoke delineated that this policy may have been with "a good purpose," but now results in "reverse racism." All of the overheard student comments fell along this vein. Further, Ms. Greene helped Emily finish her answer and provided a narrative of the policy as set out to correct injustices "of the past." While Ms. Greene alluded to present day conditions, these are not explicit and there is no serious engagement with the reasons that Affirmative Action policies might still be needed today.

In another implicit pedagogical move occurred during her showing of *When the Levees Broke*, Spike Lee's documentary film focused on Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath. She decided to show clips of the film because the students would be tested on bureaucratic institutions of the federal government. She thought that in watching clips of the film, they would understand how the governmental failure happened. However, without a racial and racist structural analysis, this could have very well only supported students' right-wing ideas about the failure of "big government." Further, because she decided to only use one class period for watching of the clips, she had to be selective of what to show, and it was these choices that framed the problem in particular ways for the students. Two of the scenes she showed each period involved residents who were "looting" juxtaposed with a following scene where armed White residents blocked access to a bridge.

While students watched the "looting," William's group (a group of four conservative male students that were always joking and very talkative in class) looked at each and whispered side comments. At one point, they looked at each other and one of them looked at me, became very aware that I was observing, and kind of froze, as if he was deciding to hold back his comment, but not make it obvious he was doing so. Later, we saw the scene where armed White residents blocked Black residents from walking over the bridge to get to the Super Dome. Again, I catch the boys wanting to say things to each other but holding back.

(Fieldnote, Suburban High School, March 8, 2018)

In other communities, students might focus on the injustice of blocking people who were trying to cross the bridge for help, however, in this community, I couldn't help but wonder if they viewed it from the affluent White resident's point of view: that in these kinds of times, they would need to be armed and protect their property and that this was logical, rational, and legal. Again, there was no discussion of these dynamics, of ethics of justice, of the desired role of government, during or after the film's showing.

It is important to note, however, that the showing of this film also provided a moment where Ms. Greene was explicitly non-neutral in a way that could be categorized as critiquing her students. She noticed students (White, male, conservative students) making fun of Katrina victims: their accents, vernacular, and use of hand gestures when speaking. She told students, "Hey, we need to be respectful of these people. They lost their loved ones, their homes, this was a tragedy." This action was not neutral; however, this exception proves the rule as this was one of only a handful of instances I observed throughout the school year where particular ideas were "checked."[20] Further, it denotes a particular type of official antiracism (Melamed, 2011) that displays an aversion to explicitly and egregious racist behavior, while allowing space for racist ideas on policy matters (like viewing Affirmative Action as reverse racism, for example). She later shared with me that her worst student-evaluations come from showing that documentary to students as they see it as "unnecessary."

This type of passive compliance also occurred at the small-town high school. In the fall, Mr. Lenard's US Government class prepared for Lincoln-Douglas style debates. Mr. Lenard drafted a list of topics and while students could pick their topic, they were randomly assigned as to which side they would argue. Therefore, it is difficult to gauge if students truly believed what they were saying. However, the points students chose to make during their performances offer insights as to the universe of arguments to which they have access.

For example, one set of students debated Affirmative Action. A White male student stated in his remarks that admitting Black students into colleges because of their race, increased "mismatching," the belief that one is "placed in the wrong college because the college is trying to promote diversity so they give extra benefits to minorities instead of grading them completely on their academic achievement and success." He adds,

> Some opposers of Proposition 209 would say it drops minority enrollment, but if you look at the numbers, graduation increased for the minorities who were rightfully accepted based on their academic achievement. They were passing classes as they should and not being mismatched and dropping out.
> (Fieldnote, Small Town High School, November 15, 2017)

His challenger, also a White male, argued the merits of Affirmative Action, but was not as great as a public speaker nor as prepared as his counterpart and so did not the same quantity of information nor relay this in a way that was clear (or at times audible) to the audience. However, some points to counter those anti-Affirmative Action were along the lines of gender—women can do any job a man can do and therefore deserve a chance to which the other side declared that women have equal chances and are unrepresented in STEM fields because they "choose different career paths." When students were done, Mr. Lenard offered his comments:

> Alright. (Students clap). What I heard almost none in this debate is statistics. I heard 'raised SAT scores,' but you didn't tell me by how much. You can't just say it's true, because it's

---

[20] The other instance involved a white male student making a comment about Monica Lewinsky's looks and her responding, "That's inappropriate."

true. There are some good things, Daniel you are a very good public speaker. Peter, you gotta stand up, you have to project, you gotta know your stuff better. You're not organized, and it showed. But you know what? You are alive, and you're done. (students clap). That's a tough one. You guys are in a tough spot, you're White...people…arguing against Affirmative Action.

(Fieldnote, Small Town High School, November 15, 2017)

While the use of debate and classroom discussion can be a great tool to learn about political topics and diverse viewpoints and hold the potential for exposing students to researching and engaging publicly in political discourse (Torney-Purta, 2002; Youniss, 2011), during this debate activity, there was no engagement with students in the audience—that is, classmates were not part of the conversation and merely spectators. Further, Mr. Lenard does not aid in challenging any of the points made and by solely focusing on their public speaking, lets many right-wing and conservative talking points go unchallenged ("graduation increased for the minorities who were *rightfully* accepted"). Finally, his last comment, that arguing against Affirmative Action is a difficult topic for White people to argue against also demonstrates non-neutrality and corroborates the common-sense rhetoric that "political correctness" (which is often euphemism for concessions made to social and racial justice arguments) has a stranglehold on politics. This also offers no additional context for students to wrestle with and learn from. It also is not accurate given that in this classroom Daniel arguing against Affirmative Action won the debate, per Mr. Lenard's comments.

In another instance, Ms. Lenard discussed the topic of Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Religion in his regular US Government classes.

Mr. Lenard plays a *CrashCourse*[21] video from YouTube—a series that breaks down topics in politics and social studies issues for young audiences—to help supplement his explanation. In the video, the presenter makes a comment about how Aztecs engage in human sacrifices to stimulate rain and then says, 'We're going to anger a lot of Aztecs with this video.' A White male conservative student, who I have observed constantly throughout my visits whispering commentary to his neighbors, turns to his friend and says, 'Good thing we wiped them all out.'

(Fieldnote, Small Town High School, March 12, 2018)

Mr. Lenard doesn't hear the students' comment and I am unsure he would have countered the ideology embedded in it. However, he never discusses this commentary by the presenter in the video. It is allowed to stand without interrogation and in this way, implicitly endorsed.

Although discussed more in-depth in a later chapter, it is also important to bring up the impact of "fake news[22]" and misinformation and how teachers reacted to this via their pedagogical choices. Students, at both schools, would at times, ask their teachers what they thought about a particular news topic. These moments, however, were much more frequent at the small-town school. Mr. Lenard would summarize and give a breakdown to the class and would be giving an analysis of the issue off the cuff. Other times, the students' sharing was the first the teacher had heard of the news item, as was most often the case with Mr. Schmidt.

Mr. Schmidt's Current Events class consisted of students signing up and bringing in news articles, devise discussion questions, and then facilitate discussion among their peers. Mr. Schmidt

---

[21] CrashCourse. (2015, July 24). Freedom of Religion: Crash Course Government and Politics #24 [Video file]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8dI1GTWCk4

[22] Fake news are false news stories that appear to be legitimate and are often distributed on the internet and social media and whose purpose is to promote a particular political ideology or movement.

did not know ahead of time what news items would be discussed nor which news sources students were utilizing. Although he did ask if these were "unbiased," not much discussion around these occurred to make a thorough determination. On this particular day, a student brought in an article on immigration.

> *Mr. Schmidt*: David, start us off with discussion. Let's give Mr. David your complete attention.
>
> *David*: Immigrants with green cards…they are bringing like tons of others, bringing immigrants in illegally, and um, so, [*he begins to read off a paper*] 'Under the current broken system, a single immigrant can bring in virtually unlimited number of distant relatives.' So, they can bring in any number of immigrants with them without our knowledge. [inaudible] one of the most serious problems…
>
> *Mr. Schmidt*: Was that a quote you just read? [*Student nods affirmatively*] Do you think this article was biased? [*Student shakes their head "No"*]. When it was written, didn't seem like it was biased?
>
> *David*: No.
>
> *Mr. Schmidt*: So, it points out both sides? (*Student nods "Yes"*) What do you think about this?
>
> *David*: I think immigrants, if they have a green card, they shouldn't be allowed to bring anybody.
>
> (Fieldnote, Small Town High School, February 5, 2018)

While Mr. Schmidt asks the student if the article was biased and if it pointed out "both sides," he doesn't peruse the article himself nor bring up the source and/or student's comments up to the class for discussion to make an authoritative and definitive determination. The student's assessment of the bias (or lack thereof) is taken as truth for the rest of the class to view as such. David then begins his facilitating of the discussion among his classmates.

> *David*: What should be done about green cards bringing in people?
>
> *Troy*: So, it's not legal, correct? [student shakes head negatively]. So, how are they doing it?
>
> *David*: I'm not sure, they're bringing them in. I'm not sure exactly how.
>
> *Kelly*: Either way, they're getting in.
>
> *Amanda*: I mean do we think they're sorta, [the title] said something about Trump's wall, so the title, do we think they are coming through the Mexican border?
>
> *Troy*: I think we are assuming the Mexican border.
>
> *Kelly*: I don't really think it's illegal to come to US.
>
> *Eli*: I thought you were allowed to bring your kids or something.

Kelly: Well, I think what he was saying, under how it is right now, you can bring basically anybody.

For the rest of the class, students all shared what they knew about immigration trying to make sense of the topic with many false assumptions circulating the space.

White male student: Can we look at like how they're bringing them in? That determines—

Amanda: There's this thing that you can bring immediate family with you.
[…]

Troy: What I got from the article is that one person is coming here legally and they're bringing uncles and their cousins.

Evan: How do you get a green card?
[…]

Eli: Found a little something…well, Mike did, (reads off webpage) you may petition for the family members: a spouse, unmarried son or daughter, I dunno, uh, so like uncles and aunts whoever said that, you can't argue for, um, yeah, that's about it.

Evan: How are they getting in? […] Are we assuming they just came through the border, just hopped— Are we just assuming that they came here through the border and hop— If that's the case, they gotta increase…
[…]

Troy: (Reading off of a website) The family visa program works in which immigrants already residing here, can bring their family members, called fam reunification, the way it works is, visas are[granted] according to the family tree, the green card holder or legal resident can petition the immigration service to bring over their spouses and their minor children. Once the petitioner gets citizenship, they can apply to bring over parents, married children, and adult siblings.' (stops reading and speaks to classmates) So, what happens is, somebody will come here legally, become a citizen and then they can petition for basically their entire family to come.

White male student: Illegally or legally?

Troy: It would be legal. They give them family visas but--

White male student: To be legal?

Kelly: Right.

Troy: But, the point is, so the people come and then those family members also become citizens, but they just come with a visa, let it expire, and never leave. That's how they're getting in.

White male student: So, they're getting deported?
Derek: not getting deported that's the problem.

Mr. Schmidt: So, it is a legal process?

Troy: Yeah. It *starts* as a legal process. It starts legally. […] It's called chain migration and Trump is trying to get rid of it in favor of a merit-based system.
(Fieldnote, Small-Town High School, Feb 5, 2018)

Mr. Schmidt was not involved throughout the length of the class period as students attempted to make sense of immigration. Students found information themselves, posed questions, and attempted to answer these. Some began with false assumptions and were able to find official government policy online and understand exactly who a naturalized citizen could petition for, for example. However, the ideology—that is, a right-wing and conservative framing of immigration and its merits—undergirded the discussion and thus, slanted the information that students received and how they made sense of it. While Troy was able to see that not just anyone could be petitioned for, he ultimately falls back on his right-wing beliefs ("the people come and then those family members also become citizens, but they just come with a visa, let it expire, and never leave. That's how they're getting in") and becomes the authority in the classroom space without political neutrality. While Mr. Schmidt might've attempted to be neutral in his pedagogy, the students do not hold themselves to this ideal and as such, the pedagogical choices reify a right-wing lean. Troy's final assertion "It *starts* as a legal process. It starts legally. […] It's called chain migration and Trump is trying to get rid of it in favor of a merit-based system" clearly favors Trump and Republican ideas about immigration and are allowed to not only stand without much scrutiny, they come off as collectively determined and agreed to facts in the classroom since students witnessed their classmates researching and making sense of these ideas in real time.

In another instance where fake news infiltrated the space and these were implicitly endorsed through pedagogical choices occurred when Mr. Lenard was discussing the separation of church and state and the banning of prayer in schools via the court case *Engel v. Vitale*. Students began to ask different questions, conservative students clearly upset that one would not be allowed to display the Ten Commandments in school or that schools could not allowed student-led prayer in official events. At some point, Nikki, a White female student, asks why it is okay to have LGBTQ posters displayed by teachers in their classrooms making the case that this was a form of indoctrination as well. There is some chatter among the students, Naomi a lesbian student clearly disagrees with her equivocation of the two but doesn't chime in.

Mr. Lenard: It doesn't deal with, if there is not a direct correlation to religion, theoretically you could [display]…

White female student: Wait-

Mr. Lenard: But, could a school board or principal say you know, you have to take that down? Probably. […] Once again, I don't think there's any existing laws precluding that—

White female student: —But, that would like, I mean, I dunno, I think that's like teaching [that] but, I also don't think that school should be pushing a religion.

Mr. Lenard: Understand. [Points to another student] Go.

Hudson: Are you aware that prisons, not all prisons, but most prisons don't serve pork because of Muslims. How did they get something that violates—

Mr. Lenard: That's more of a, that's not a state law, it's more of a decision, yeah, so. Hudson, what we're doing tomorrow will answer that question. We will answer that question tomorrow.

(Fieldnote, Small Town High School, March 14, 2018)

The first part of the interaction is not an aspect of "fake news" but included because it also highlights the way implicit endorsement of right-wing/conservative ideology transpired in the classroom space. Nikki equated the separation of church and state and the banning of religious affiliation and prayer in school with teachers posting flyers or stickers or other such items that advocate for gender equality or support of LGBTQ students. Mr. Lenard engages with this argument as a legal issue stating that, because it does not deal with religion specifically, that it is allowable until an administrator calls it into question. He does not delve into human rights or civil rights of LGBTQ people and allows that equivocation to stand. Then, Hudson, a White male conservative student, asks Mr. Lenard why it is constitutional to refrain from serving pork because of Muslim prison inmates. Mr. Lenard, instead of asking more questions to get at the crux of his thinking or to parse out the fact from fiction, allows this to also stand as a fact, taking his framing as valid, and deflects to answering it the next day. I don't believe they addressed it again. However, another White, male conservative student brings up this pork issue in another period.

Lastly, while this particular instance is discussed in more detail in a later chapter, I wish to highlight the following example for its pedagogical implications. After a student starts reading an article on the House Intelligence Committee releasing classified documents regarding the FBI Russia probe[23], Mr. Lenard attempts to give students a breakdown of what the issue entails. When he asks how many of the students had heard of the issue only one student raises his hand, Matthew, a White, male conservative student. Mr. Lenard continues,

> So, what it's going to show, I'm sure, is that it's going to provide information that shows, at the worst case scenario, makes it appear that FBI has done things illegally in their investigation of potential links between the Trump campaign and Russia, uh, you know, the fact that Trump okayed it, means that, like I said, if it puts him in an unfavorable light, he'd be like, 'No, we're not going to release it, it's classified, or it's based on classified, uh Democrats and the FBI are saying, 'Look, it's not, you know, the person who wrote it was not really privy to all information, it's based on partial information.' […] Many Republicans are saying, 'No, it needs to be out there.' So, we'll see. I'll be interested to see what it says. So, thank you [for sharing].

While Mr. Lenard attempts to get at the political nature of releasing, his comment that it "makes it appear that the FBI has done things illegally in their investigation," he slants the narrative toward right-wing framing of the issue. As he attempts to wrap up the conversation, Matthew interrupts,

> *Matthew:* Isn't there a chance that it's possible that they could link like Obama, with, like Obama trying to make sure Hillary doesn't get like sentenced or like, yeah…

---

[23] The student was referencing this news item: https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/house-intelligence-committee-releases-russia-memo-over-fbi-objections-n844026

Mr. Lenard: I hadn't heard *that*. What I heard, and this came out really early on during the Trump presi-might have even been before inauguration, like, after the election, and you might be right, I'm not saying, 'No, that's not it,' but I didn't hear that. But, I remember there being a question of whether or not the Department of Justice improperly, monitored, wiretapped Trump tower during, I think it was during the lead up to the inauguration and Trump said 'They wiretapped my building,' the FBI said, "No, we didn't.' Now, the reality is that some of the people involved in that stuff were, had links to Russia, so I'm thinking if the FBI did have it, if they did tap it, they have some type of uh warrant based on those connections.

(Field note, Small Town High School, February 2, 2018)

He ended the conversation, walked toward his desk, loaded up his PowerPoint lecture, and moved on to class material. This particular moment in my observations in Mr. Lenard's classroom at the small-town high school highlights particularities of teaching in an era of "fake news" and resultant implications for civic education. While it can be argued that this is a long-existing phenomenon being that we have never not been in an era of "fake news"— critiques of dominant historical narratives (e.g. the story of Thanksgiving) as a form of "fake news," for example— the current moment offers particular challenges and is unique in the sheer frequency and magnitude of news consumed and the facility with which it is shared. Students receive push notifications on their devices constantly alerting them to news items while reports document the increase in right-wing propaganda sites, many of which are designed to be indistinguishable from mainstream news sources. This paired with a teacher's reluctance to challenge students makes for a pedagogical space that not only reifies dominant political ideas, but expands the field of right-wing hegemony, by expanding dominant space to include, as in the above instance, right-wing conspiracism without interrogation.

Here, it important to note that students' affinity to conspiracism need not be viewed as an innately incorrect or as an insidious characteristic, nor as something that only occurs on the right. On the contrary, a proclivity to question dominant narratives and the intentions and/or motivations from those in power is argued by scholars in critical and social justice education as a necessity for their political development and engagement. And, as Dozano (2016) shows, conspiracy and paranoid thinking among young people can allow a potential opening of space to question asymmetrical power relations. In this way, these instances could be leveraged as powerful pedagogical moments to analyze and discuss issues of power. However, Dozano's (2016) work focuses on conspiracism among students of color who hold less power in society as opposed to the students in this study who by and large were White and male and not necessarily questioning power from "below." Instead, these students approached conspiracies from a perceived outsider status—part of the "us versus them" dialectic Berlet and Lyons (2000) discuss as shaping the conspiracism in right wing populist movements and that is fueled by right-wing misinformation campaigns many of which stoke White nationalist sentiments. Not all conspiracism is created equally nor functions similarly and as such, is particularly problematic to let these ideas go unchallenged.

Many instances occurred throughout the academic year where students came into class and asked Mr. Lenard if he had heard about a particular news story. And, each time he handled it similarly to the instance above—by not challenging the narrative. Although I cannot speak with definitive certainty as to the motivations behind each decision not to challenge, through observations and interviews, I conclude that these may be a result of various factors. First, his reluctance to challenge could stem from a desire to play it safe and avoid having to field parent phone calls or administrator queries if students complained (given teachers' concerns relayed in the

first section of this chapter). Second, Mr. Lenard shared with me on a few occasions that he avoided "shutting [students] down" solely based on disagreement with their ideas. For example, this was the case with regard to students he knew to be religious and whose ideas he surmised were motivated by their Christian beliefs. While not a religious person himself, he felt that challenging these students was a form of imposing particular set of values that are, according to him, "all objective" and, ultimately, "Who's to say what is right?" In this way, it can be said that Mr. Lenard took a thoughtful and purposeful approach; a teacher knowing the power that he may wield and deciding to err on the side of "doing no harm" to students' own political views.

As in the instance above, Mr. Lenard provides a soft challenge to Matthew's idea that the FBI probe of the Trump administration was motivated by an Obama conspiracy to protect Hillary Clinton by saying he "hadn't heard *that*." Although a pretty innocuous challenge as it could have also been understood as a lack of awareness on his part, Mr. Lenard then pivots and quickly assures the student by saying "I'm not saying, 'No, that's not it,' but I didn't hear that" perhaps perceiving his initial reluctance to affirm the student as too much of a push against the student's worldview and as such leaves room open for the conspiracy's possibility. Regardless of whether he wishes to avoid the confrontation or because he doesn't want to shut a student down, this *laissez-faire* pedagogical approach is not neutral, and instead reifies not only right-wing ideology, but right-wing conspiracism giving these ideas credibility.

Lastly, Mr. Lenard's reluctance to challenge his students could be a result of his alignment with students' worldview, either consciously or subconsciously (though, if the case, more than likely the latter). Many instances that I pinpoint throughout this study, could be a result of Mr. Lenard not seeing student's ideas as necessitating a challenge as they are the normative and "neutral" American narrative.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discuss teachers' and students' discursive framing of political neutrality as the ideal pedagogical stance. However, both students and teachers only described left-leaning ideas as instances of non-neutrality demonstrating that, in these predominantly conservative school communities, neutrality was a byproduct of right-wing hegemony where the status quo (right wing politics) was seen as the "common sense" and deviations were determined non-neutral and undesirable. Furthermore, while teachers expressed a desire to enact politically-neutral pedagogy, in practice this "neutrality" was not carried out. Instead, through implicit and explicit endorsements, teachers' pedagogical choices (re)produced right-wing politics and that affirmed settler ideologies. These manifested differently across both sites: pedagogical choices in the small-town tended to more explicit, while right-wing endorsements at the suburban high school manifested in more implicit ways which correlated with cultural norms. In the small-town Mr. Lenard and his students spoke more off the cuff; in the suburb, Ms. Greene's commentary as well as some of her students' was usually more scripted and measured. These discursive moves functioned as a sort of euphemistic politics where the ideologies proved to be similar to those at the small town, but their delivery tempered.

In accounting for the social reproductive function of schooling and operationalizing this through right-wing and settler hegemony and common sense-making, this chapter explores the day-to-day pedagogical choices made by teachers across the two schools in this study. In doing so, it *deneutralizes* the ideas—that is, it undoes the notion of neutrality— that teachers and students hold about their teaching and learning. While both teachers elicited conversation through questioning or problem-posing, these discussions were often cut short and remained surface-level. Further, there few instances where teachers challenged students or offered arguments for "the other side" in order to offer some balance to the discussions. Thus, there was both a commitment to discussion and a

repression of it. Using Gramsci's conceptualization of hegemony to interrogate school processes helps to illuminate how the larger societal and local community right-wing and settler "common sense-making" results in a discursive idealization of politically neutral pedagogy in name only. That is, a desire or perceived need for neutrality whenever non-dominant ideas surfaced or questions about their absence arise. However, these pedagogical moves, like hegemony, are not devoid of contradictions.

Talking about the ideas of democratic education, Gutmann (1999) writes,

the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation […] Political education prepares citizens to participate in consciously *reproducing* their society, and conscious social reproduction is the ideal not only of democratic education but also of democratic politics. (emphasis added, p. 287)

This approach to political education would call into question the very desire of "neutrality" since it requires that educators take stances with regard to which virtues, knowledge, and skills and what kind of society we would like students to reproduce. As these findings show, in these school spaces, teaching and learning occurred within a field of right-wing hegemony that either actively put forth conservative political views or passively went unchallenged.

While these interactions may seem mundane, it is precisely this quality of these moments that illustrates the oppressive nature of right-wing hegemony in these school spaces. As will be discussed in a later chapter, these moments also illustrate the kinds of politics that are allowable in the "public sphere" of the classroom and school space. For example, in one-one-one interviews, left-leaning students at both schools discussed not feeling safe to share their ideas in "public" as the right-leaning students shared more staunch, conservative views demonstrating the ways this non-neutral neutrality was made manifest. For example, when asked by the researcher why they think the world is unequal, responses such as "genetic differences" and "we had founding fathers, other countries didn't" racist and colonial understandings of the world order. This makes ever more problematic a pedagogy of neutrality as "neutrality" allows one type of thinking to persist unchallenged while making alternative ideas marginalized. As the data here show, what becomes clear is not that neutrality is a pedagogy devoid of politics, but that neutrality is in the eye of the beholder and thus determined by whether or not it challenges or disrupts students' particular political worldviews. The role here of "neutral" pedagogy then serves to reproduce a common sense that elicits consent for a particular conservative worldview, which in a stratified system, will always support normative power. It is in this way that explicit and implicit endorsements of right-wing and settler politics, functioning under the guise of neutrality, serve to not only (re)produce the "common sense" but act as a settler move to innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012) given that it allows for right-wing and settler politics to go unnamed and positions teachers and students as innocent, with no complicity, in the reproduction of settler colonialism and ideologies; they are, after all, "neutral."

Further, these findings call into question long-held ideas in the field of civic education, such as advocating for creating classroom environments that nurture questioning and criticality. While these may be worthwhile endeavors in fomenting in students a sensibility toward a critique of power, once again the specific communities and positions to which students belong is important to consider. on behalf of students and yet, that basic goal and framing was not present in the pedagogy and curriculum occurring in across these schools. On the contrary, while students were not explicitly discouraged from challenging right-wing and settler ideologies, students described an awareness of the right-wing hegemony that guided the space and deciding to remain silent, as Timothy in the small-town relayed. Further, the notion that student-initiated questioning alone would result in a "teaching of both sides" is shown here for its problematic assumptions as the other side never quite

gets brought in. Which is why when Mr. Lenard concludes this discussion by urging his students to find what is true to them, we must ask what role must teachers play when what is "true" to students derives from false information and/or racist tropes (such as those expressed in the Affirmative Action examples above and as will be discussed further in the next chapter)?

While it has been made clear that "neutrality" is impossible—and given Gutmann's definition (1999), undesirable—in these politically conservative communities, any semblance of "neutrality," perhaps better framed as "balance," would entail a strong and good faith effort to do right by the politics of the left by including non-dominant texts, left-leaning media sources, and guest speakers, for example. This is extremely difficult when teachers are themselves politically conservative (as Ms. Greene and Mr. Lenard identified as Republican; Mr. Schmidt identified as Independent) and are not studying "the other side" (as was evidenced by their commentary and lack of knowledge regarding "left" issues). Moreover, for marginalized communities negatively impacted by the status quo, there are real and grave consequences that result from idealizing "neutrality," and, I argue, from idealizing a politically neutral pedagogy. Like the proverbial racist who doesn't "see race," aspiring toward neutral pedagogies results in teaching of politics-bland political education which, if we take power seriously, is not possible. Indeed neutrality, or rather the guise of it, only serves power.

As will be discussed in the next chapter, the contours of the political thinking that exists within a school community must be interrogated and surveyed in addition to curricular and pedagogical choices. Too often a "teaching of both sides" or of "no sides" is the knee-jerk curricular and pedagogical guiding light without a thorough accounting for understanding exactly what students' political views are and what understandings may be informing them, which "sides" exist and which are missing or silenced and must be included by teachers. Additionally, for students in predominantly White communities that are often determined "successful" in comparison to poor and students of color, too little attention has been paid to the intricacies and nuances of their political thinking. As the next chapter will show, students aid in the co-construction of the learning space in these predominantly White and politically conservative communities by drawing from particular funds of knowledge (Moll et al, 1992) and in a community of practice with each other, engage in the development and sharing of repertoires (Lave and Wegner, 1991) that further right-wing and settler ideologies.

Figure 4. A sign on the side of a building, North High Street, Columbus, Ohio.

Chapter III:

Communities of (Settler) Practice: Funds of (Settler) Knowledge and the Shared Repertoires of Settlerness

   While the previous chapter discusses the impact of right-wing hegemony on pedagogy and discourse across both sites, here, I hone in on the contours of right-wing/conservative thinking among students as a way to focus on the particular "funds of knowledge" that the students at both sites demonstrated and utilized—mainly ideas rooted in a racialized meritocracy, conspiracism/belief of "fake news," and a disbelief and disregard of marginalized "Others" and their associated politics. These narratives derive from and are (re)produced through students' *funds of (settler) knowledge* that, when deployed and negotiated in the classroom space, help to create a particular *community of (settler) practice* where settler citizenship is (re)produced.

   The concept of funds of knowledge arose out of a desire to name and affirm the distinct knowledges that students from marginalized communities possess—specifically, the language and cultural resources of Latinx students (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez devised this conceptualization to center and de-pathologize these students, their families, and communities and delineate the ways their already existing knowledge bases could be acknowledged and leveraged for academic success. They defined *funds of knowledge* as the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for households or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). In this way, this scholarship positioned these students and their communities as knowers and framed the potential problem of academic underachievement, or perceptions thereof, as a cultural disconnect between the dominant knowledge and cultural practices of school and those of non-White students. For White students in predominantly White schools and in economically privileged communities, however, their "funds of knowledge" exist as a given and as the norm; viewed as inevitably beneficial even while the nuances and intricacies of these "funds" remain unnamed and unexamined. The ways in which "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills" have been essential for *White* households' and *White* individuals' functioning and well-being must be interrogated (or, as Frankenberg (1997) writes, "marked') for their contribution to the reproduction of racialized structures and settler normalization. Further, unlike Latinx students, White students form part of dominant society, and as such, these "funds" aren't solely derivative of their respective families, but stem from larger "culturally developed bodies of knowledge" in the United States—from the larger narratives and tropes that reify and uphold White supremacy and settler colonialism (Anderson, 2016; Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Calderon, 2014; Harris, 1995; Mills, 1997; Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Roediger, 1999; Smith, 1999). As scholars of Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness make clear, "unveiling" White racialized thinking (Matias, 2013) and tracking how Whiteness works is crucial in understanding what animates and motivates White political ideologies and understandings (Delgado and Stefancic, 1997; Roediger, 1999; Leonardo, 2002; Applebaum, 2016; Jardina, 2019).

   While Moll et al (2005) focus on Latinx households to map community and familial practices that exist for these students, this dissertation focuses on processes and phenomena occurring within schools' walls and the insights shared by student participants through interviews. As the data show, students often index ideas and viewpoints as stemming from family and cultural "bodies of knowledge." I focus on students and the sets of knowledges that students bring into the school and classroom space, what they access and deploy in their making sense of US Government curricula, and how these contribute to the shaping of a specific community of practice that inures and reifies right-wing and settler politics. While scholars have outlined the ways that White identity and settler

politics constitute a sort of "imagined community" (Moreton Robinson, 2015; Anderson, 2000), I discuss here an existing community of settler practice in which each group of students engages and in which their learning is situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger conceptualized learners as "inevitably participat[ing] in communities of practitioners" where in order to master knowledge and skills, these communities require "newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29).

In this way students across both sites participated in their respective communities as practitioners of conservative/settler politics albeit to varying degrees of participation. As Eckert & McConnel-Ginet (1992) make clear, a community of practice [CoP] is different than the traditional notion of "community" in that a community of practice is simultaneously defined by "its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages." (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, p.464). A community of practice is in this way:

> an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in some common endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations—in short, *practices* – emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavor. Indeed, it is the practices of the community and members' differentiated participation in them that structures the community socially. (emphasis added, Eckert & McConnel-Ginet, 1992, p.464)

Practice can also be thought of as "a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories, and documents" (Wenger et al., 2002: 29). Members of these communities of practice then negotiate meanings in practice which leads to

> the development of three structural elements of CoPs: mutual engagement (how and what people do together as part of practice), joint enterprise (a set of problems and topics that they care about), and shared repertoire (the concepts and artifacts that they create). (Pyrko et al, p. 391; Iverson, 2011)

I argue that in both the small-town and suburban high school, White, conservative students, as the dominant[24] demographic in these communities, enacted and deployed political ideologies attributable to funds of knowledge. Additionally, the US Government classroom and larger school space served as a community of practice in which mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire coalesced around ideologies that stem from and reify settlerness. This chapter focuses specifically on the concept of shared repertoires among White, conservative students to illustrate the ways that schooling served to (re)create these concepts around settlerness. This, along with the right-wing hegemony discussed in the previous chapter, work in concert to create communities of practice in which students engaged in the (re)production of these dominant, right-wing, and settler political ideologies.

This chapter synthesizes these two concepts—funds of knowledge and communities of practice—to a) delineate the contours of conservative thinking among White youth in both the affluent suburb and small-town high schools, and b) demonstrate the (re)production of conservative ideologies that result from being in a community of practice with each other. In this chapter, I focus

---

[24] I use dominant here instead of majority because I did not survey the total student population at both sites to determine political affiliation. Thus, I cannot make a claim as to specific percentages of political identification. However, the majority of the students I observed and who interacted and expressed their political viewpoints were predominantly aligned with right-wing/conservative politics and, as I will discuss in the next chapter, this resulted in a culture that welcomed right-wing politics. Some of the students who participated most in class did, in fact, declare their Republican (or right-leaning) party affiliation to me in interviews yet most of these students I observed were not interviewed and this exact determination as to their political identification could not be made. In this way, the ideas were "dominant."

on White conservative students as these students were the dominant demographic in both school communities. My core argument is that while the curricular and pedagogical moves that teachers can and do enact is important for understanding the reproduction of political hegemony, White conservative students bring and enact specific funds of knowledges in the classroom space which shapes particular communities of practice where shared repertoires around settlerness are then developed. The funds of knowledge that White and politically conservative students exhibited in class not only shaped the official public sphere of the space (as will be discussed in the following chapter), but also created a learning community where these right-wing and conservative ideas were practiced and apprenticed. Through their legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991), I argue, students enact and deploy funds of knowledge and create and maintain communities of practice in which all learning of US Government was "situated." Here, I focus on the shared repertoires observed across both sites and discuss the differences that existed between the affluent suburb and the working-class small town that were, not a question of kind, but of degree. I begin this chapter with a look at one aspect of this shared repertoire of settlerness—rationalizations for resource accumulation through students' meritocratic justifications and the way this manifested itself similarly and differently across sites. Next, I look at another observed shared repertoire, that of conspiracism/"fake news" that I observed at both sites and among both sets of participants but was most salient among the small-town high school's conservative students. Then, I look at the shared repertoire of "Othering"—the dismissal and disparaging of those perceived as "Others" and their associated politics. Finally, I look at the shared repertoire of perceived marginalization; that is, the ways in which White conservative students felt that as White and politically conservative, they were at risk of or already were being marginalized as a group and the resultant funds of knowledge that centered around fear of dispossession.

Communities of (Accumulating) Practice: The Shared Repertoire of Meritocracy as Justification for Possession

One shared repertoire that I observed across both the suburban and small-town schools among White conservative students consisted of the utilization of meritocracy as justification for privilege and resource accumulation. While it arose as a shared repertoire among White, conservative students at both sites, it was most frequently and most keenly articulated among students in the affluent suburban high school as justification for their own privilege and as an argument against redistributive policies. When asked about wealth inequality, why some people *have* and other people *have not*, student-participants at both sites found this difficult to explain. Frequently, students articulated that they "hadn't really thought about it before." However, when pressed further, most provided a theory as to why global inequality existed and how and why it manifested the way it did globally and locally. Overwhelmingly, self-described conservative students in the suburb explained *having* as deriving from both luck ("just where you grow up") and inter-generational hard work. For example, William, a White, male, conservative 12th grader, spoke about his father and his trajectory to becoming a physician,

> My father has worked very hard to come from nothing to make a lot of himself and does very well.
>
> (Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

He adds that his father worked as an auto mechanic while attending medical school and at one point his shop (that he owned) was broken into and all his tools stolen. William offers this as a way to show his fathers' struggle and as a counter to their current privilege as he divulged earlier that they were "very comfortable" and in the top 1% economically.

However, this shared repertoire of having rightfully earned and "coming from nothing" ignores many privileges, like the ability to own one's mechanic shop (and the tools therein). In the same interview, when I ask more details about his family, he shares that his grandfather on his father's side was a college graduate and worked "in steel." Instead of deploying a narrative of intergenerational wealth or inherited social and cultural capital that might have helped his father to medical school and become a physician, William enacts a "bootstrap" origin story and zeroes in on how his father was denied a spot at his first choice medical school because some professor's son was granted his father's spot. This meritocratic justification for one's accumulation also dovetails with Berlet and Lyons (2000) argument that an aspect of right-wing ideology is to ascribe to producerism; that is, the idea that conservatives are producers of jobs, etc. William also deploys producerism when he is asked to describe his community. He responds,

> *William*: Nice school, kids get good grades at this school. Kids go from school to be successful…
>
> *DSL*: Successful meaning what? How would you define that?
>
> *William*: Independent individuals that are positive contributions to society"
>
> (Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

Here, William frames his father as a "producer" and extends this characteristic to the larger affluent suburban community in which he resides as he describes the community as filled with people who will be "positive contributions" to society. As Berlet and Lyons (2000) write, this juxtaposition of a "good" and productive "us" versus a lazy and freeloading "them" is indicative of right-wing ideologies.

Conversely, when asked to delve into why some people *do not have*, students deployed tropes that placed the issue on the individual or their community/culture as opposed to structural impediments—in essence, meritocratic rationalization for why they failed to possess. For example, Paul, a self-identified conservative White male student in the suburb explained that the poor around the country just "don't have the right education." Most students rationalized along these lines—as a lack of knowledge and education and framed those with privilege as having taken better advantage of educational opportunities and coming from families that prioritized these values. The ability to access better educational opportunities while perhaps unfair, nonetheless plays into the idea of meritocracy because, as William makes clear, parents are seen as having made the right decisions from which they can reap benefits. In this way, this meritocratic ideology functioned as rationalization for their accumulation and others' dispossession.

Students also justified the current state of accumulation and dispossession through tropes involving a natural order of social development. Julia, a White female conservative student in the suburb, also utilized these development tropes as rationalization for inequality on a global scale. During our one-on-one interview, I asked her about global inequality and to explain, in her own words, why things were different across the world. For her, difference in resources and accumulation was a result of other countries' lack of political development. She explained, "We had founding fathers, other places didn't" meaning that countries often referred to as the "developing world" are as such because they lacked the fortune of having "founding fathers" with the necessary political expertise and ideals upon which to start a country. As rationalization for why inequality exists at a global scale, she accesses funds of knowledge founded on American exceptionalism and ideas of liberal democracy perhaps culled from family and from K-12 schooling.

These repertoires of meritocratic justifications also worked to justify dispossession. During my interview with William, a conservative and White, male student at the affluent suburb, he shared that he thought BLM was a "bad organization."

DSL: And, so Black Lives Matter. You said they're a bad organization…

William: Yeah, that's a stupid organization. Every, everybody matters.

DSL: What about the, I guess the argument is that the police brutality cases have not—

William: Yeah. My stance on police brutality is a) stop acting like the policemen are gods, they're people and they'll make mistakes. Also, I think that there's a culture problem in African American communities with crime. It is factual that they have higher, they have higher murder rates, high robbery rates. They're more likely to be criminals. I think the solution to that is better education and better police force in these areas. Educate them, and I don't mean educate them like, 'Black people are stupid.' I mean these are people living in low company income. Educate them. I'm a huge fan of education. Education solves problems. When you have an education, you're less likely to rob, murder, rape, commit crimes in general. You're also gonna be a better contribution to society in the future. So yeah, go ahead. Give them schools, stop acting like, yeah.

(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

Here, William engages is several practices—the denial of racist structures (that will be discussed further in a later section) and culture of poverty arguments as to why inequality exists. He explicitly states that "there's a culture problem in African American communities with crime" and that "they're more likely to be criminals"—statements with no factual bearing, however, they are spoken as undeniable. And, while he might correctly have stated that Black people are incarcerated at higher rates (Nellis, 2016), he lacked no structural analysis as to why this may be the case. Instead, he indexes education as the solution as this is seen as a meritocratic arbiter of resource allocation since it makes one likelier to "be a better contribution to society"—a producer.

Students often accessed funds of knowledge that utilized capitalist economic relations as meritocratic justifications for privilege. In the instance below, Ms. Greene facilitated an Agree/Disagree activity where she announced statements with which students would then have to agree or disagree. The statement she gave students was "All men are created equal." Usually students would overwhelmingly Agree or Disagree in unison, but with this statement, students were evenly split. A non-White female student shared that she agreed with the statement because we are all born equal and that no one is better than anyone else. Bryan, a White male student, jumps in,

Bryan: Yeah, a little kid in Ethiopia is not equal to me, sorry, but it's true. [classmates laugh]

Liam: Yeah, "I'm from the downtown ghetto and I pretty much have the same opportunity as everyone else," that's not true at all. All men are certainly not born equal especially not now, you can have a different skin color and be discriminated against, you can't change that, and that is certainly not equal, your parents are making $40,000 a year, you certainly do not have the same opportunities as we have here, opportunities that you have here compared because you're from like, ha, I don't know, anywhere besides [affluent suburb], you're not really getting the best of the best.

The bell rings, as students gather their things and make their way to their next classes, I overhear Liam say,

> As much as you want to say that everyone is the same. In reality, it is not equal. The definition of our market is there are winners and losers.
>
> (Fieldnote, Suburban High School, August 2017)

Bryan and Liam's comments were meant to be brutally honest and were not disagreed with outright by their classmates or their teacher. All students seemed to agree with their assessments of inequality. However, Liam's last point after the bell rung speaks to the larger rationalizations that students engage and practice with regard to oppressive structures; that they are immutable and set up to distinguish winners from losers. That statement is never troubled by Ms. Greene or classmates and is taken also as truth.

In the small-town, economic rationalizations for inequality were also deployed as were culture of poverty arguments for why some *have not*. However, these arguments were often cruder in their discursive framing. Anthony, a White male conservative student in the small-town, provided a rationalization for social inequality that centered on genetic differences.

> I think it's, first off, if we were to go all the way back, I think it's the base intelligence of the people, genetic variation, you know? Africans are on average, they have a lower IQ by today's standards, but I don't know whether or not that's actually, because IQ is also kind of based on like what you've learned because, it just has to be, but they might not have been as innovative or the basic resources might not have been as popular. You know, deserts, it was harder to reach each other. Um, like in Europe, everything is very close, very woody, made it very easy to evolve. And then, you know, you have China which had a very high amounts of sulfur, which is why they were able to, it was the same thing as Europe, just they had sulfur. And they were very, it also has to do with different foods. Different foods also probably help. But China, they developed fireworks because they had stuff, they just did, they just mashed together, and it worked. So, I think it's really about how you evolved, what was there for your species, the intellect of the species—when it was, not the species, the group, the ethnic group, they're base intellect, because of where they started and just how they slowly evolved and how they were able to communicate with one another and determine what was right, what was the right way to do things and what was the wrong way based on how their environment was. Food definitely affected things, the way you had to farm. In Europe you need big irrigation systems, in China you just had a field, like a giant marsh with rice in it. Culturally, I think that's just how the people think. One person thinks one way, makes something up and that was law back then 'cause they had more power than everybody else. Because people had very weak wills…any Chinese dynasty really because they ruled by absolutes. Does that answer your question?
>
> (Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

Here, Anthony provides a genetic reason to social inequality; a rationalization stemming from eugenicist rationalizations— racist/colonial funds of knowledge. However, this biological reasoning, I argue, also forms part of larger shared repertoire of meritocratic justification because Anthony frames these genetic and geographical differences as the "luck of the draw" and frames those with genetic predispositions or geographical fortune for ingenuity as meritocratically earning the developments that arose from the hand they were dealt. And, while it was difficult to determine where each students' ideas stemmed from, throughout our conversations, I gathered their ideas

derived from a combination of home, school, and media since students mentioned having conversations with parents, having taken a class, or having encountered a news item throughout their interviews.

These meritocratic justifications for others' having/not having also intersected with how they framed their own situations. Given the lower socioeconomic status of the county, I expected students in this small-town school to articulate specific and, perhaps, robust understandings as to why they "didn't have" in relation to other communities or to perhaps possess a critique of class inequality. However, only a few of the students I interviewed framed themselves as "not having;" instead, most described themselves and their families as middle-class. This aligns with research showing that a majority of adult Americans describe themselves as middle class (Pew Research Center, 2015). And, although newer research documents an increase among young people under 30 describing themselves as lower-class (Morin & Motel, 2012), students in the small-town did not often select this category for themselves. Class identification and the relationship to party affiliation may help explain as 23% of Republicans versus 33% of Democrats call themselves lower-class (Morin & Motel, 2012). Given the political demographics of the community as a whole and the political identifications of many of the student participants, their reluctance to identify as lower class aligns with these larger trends.

Their lack of identification to "not having" may also be attributable to the fact that many of the students I interviewed may have actually been middle class and better off economically than the larger school population. While I cannot know for sure if students' assessment of their family's financial situations were accurate, when describing their social class status, students noted the size of their homes (bigger and in a nicer area in town as compared to some of their peers) and parent's income and profession/education level as evidence for how they knew their class-identification was accurate. They may or may not have been on equal footing to some of the students in the suburb, but overall, for the small-town, a good number of interviewees' families fared fairly well economically (per student's assessments) and, in comparison to poor students of the small-town, "did have."

Antonio, a left-leaning and LGBTQ identified student in the small-town, did describe his situation as "not having," yet, in his explanation of why this was so, did not articulate it as anything other than individual misfortune and parents' poor choices having brought it upon themselves. A class-conscious community of practice in which students expressed and developed discourses and understandings around structural reasons for class inequality did not emerge throughout my observations.

The Shared Repertoire of Conspiracism and Funds of Knowledge from "Fake News"

Another shared repertoire consisted of conspiracism/funds of "fake news." Berlet and Lyons (2000) describe conspiracism as a facet of right-wing populism and define it as a "particular form of scapegoating that frames the enemy as part of a vast insidious plot against the common good, while it valorizes the scapegoater as a hero for sounding the alarm" (p. 9). However, the degree with which this was expressed and observed differed across each site with it being most commonly deployed and brought in as a fund of knowledge at the small-town site.

When asked if he trusted the US Government, Matt, a White male conservative student in the small-town school, replied:

Matt: No. […] It's pretty corrupt. […] I'm kind of a conspiracy theorist.

DSL: What kind of a conspiracy theorist? Do you think 9/11 was an inside job?

Matt: What? No. Not that one. But Mandalay Bay, in Vegas, I think that's definitely fake. Sandy Hook, I know that's an unpopular one—

DSL: Sandy Hook? That's gruesome. What's the conspiracy on that one?

Matt: That they're child actors. There's, there's several different ones. It's just because it's just, really weird stuff.

<div align="right">(Interview, Small Town High School, May 2018)</div>

When I ask him if he trusts the government, if he trusts that the government is looking out for his best interest, he responds,

Matt: No.

DSL: Do you believe people have the power to change it?

Matt: Yes.

DSL: How?

Matt: Uh, I dunno. Elections obviously, but I think when the time is right, there's going to be a reset.

<div align="right">(Interview, Small Town High School, May 2018)</div>

In this excerpt, Matt not only admits to his belief of conspiracy theories but believes that there will be a "reset" demonstrating an apocalyptic sensibility that Berlet and Lyons (2000) also describe as a subset of conspiracy thinking from within right-wing populist movements.

When asked what he planned study while in college, William, a conservative student in the suburb responds,

William: Economics […] I'm going to be Chairman of the Fed one day. If I'm crazy enough. I'll do it. [inaudible] I was gonna make a bad joke. I was gonna say, anybody in my way, you'll find out that they committed suicide by putting two bullet holes in the back of their heads.

DSL: What?

William: Anybody who tries to get in my way, because you know how in politics there's always people who commit suicide, like getting shot in the back, "Possible suicide while chained down to a wall." That's why I don't want to go the political route. That's why I'm going to go the economic route and use that to get to politics because then I'm the top dog and there's nothing they can do.

<div align="right">(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)</div>

Here, William shares aspects of conspiracism, signaling a "they" as a powerful bloc in government that do things like shoot someone in the back of the head and have it ruled a suicide. His goal to work as an economist and become Chairman of the Federal Reserve is a way to get around what "they can do" and still be involved in politics. Although he mentions he is "joking," my sense was

that the joke was in regard to his overseeing a "suicide," not that this is the way things work in politics. When I ask if he trusts the US Government, he responds,

> *William*: To a degree. […] I wouldn't take anything they say at face value, but I don't feel in danger. I don't think the US government is coming for me. I just think they're out for their own money.

> *DSL*: Do you think the US government looks out for your interest, in your best interest?

> *William*: No. [They look out for] Businesses. […] It's all about the money. I can't give them money yet. When I'm rich in the future, they'll care about my opinion.
>
> (Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

In the juxtaposition of these two White male conservative views, Matt from the small-town and William from the suburb, you see a similar distrust in the government. However, the differences illuminate larger ideologies that animate their political ideologies. While Matt from the small-town shares his belief that government is corrupt and complicit in carrying out cover-ups of recent mass shootings, William relegates their corruption to monied interests. Interestingly, both ideas (government as corrupt and only looking out for monied interests) is a point of convergence with left-leaning conspiracies (or critiques) of the state. However, the divergence perhaps rests in the motivations for corruption and solutions: Matt rests the corruption on a desire to encroach on citizens' 2nd amendment rights for which an eventual "reset" will occur; and, William, instead of wishing to mitigate monied interests, sees the solution as joining in them.

It is also important to note that Matt believes in conspiracies, but dismisses 9-11 as being a conspiracy, while believing the Mandalay Bay incident and Sandy Hook to be conspiracies—two instances of mass shooting where the push-back has come in the form of a public outcry for gun reform legislation; a policy move to which Matt is strongly opposed. Further, why he thinks elections offer an avenue for some societal change, he thinks they'll be a "reset" which I take to mean as some sort of revolution. William, the suburban student, on the other hand, talks about the government being corrupt and only looking out for monied interests, but his solution is to work toward inclusion—through becoming "rich in the future" where they'll "care about my opinion" and by being the "top dog" as Chairman of the Fed one day. As Berlet and Lyons (2000) discuss, these apocalyptic narratives also form part of conspiracist thinking among right-wing movements and is true whether "…mass political and social movements are composed of people motivated by a sense of grievance—legitimate or illegitimate—who mobilize to seek redress of their grievances through a variety of methods often including, but seldom limited to, the electoral process (p. 11).

Classroom instances where students ascribed to conspiracist thinking also differed in degree and in kind across the two sites. For example, in one instance, Ms. Greene showed students Spike Lee's *When the Levees Broke*, a documentary film about Hurricane Katrina. On this day, Michael, a White male conservative student raises his hand.

> *Michael*: I don't know if its necessarily how I was brought up, but stuff I've heard in the past is that the federal government response was slower because they looked at it a little bit politically, and realized that the citizens of New Orleans weren't really gonna favor the administration anyway, as a result, they necessarily weren't the fastest to get there. Is there is there any truth behind that?

> *Ms. Greene*: I had not heard--

Michael: I don't wanna, I know it's kinda sounds a little brutal, but they didn't have a reason to help them, like politic-

Ms. Greene: Politically, yeah. (*Pause.*) Yeah, the whole um, documentary covers the, I don't know much about the political part, the racial part, second class citizens and just not as important. I don't know about that. That's an interesting point.
[*The bell rings*]
Alright guys, […] sorry for not leaving a lot of time. Have a good weekend.

Ms. Greene: Mike, where did you hear that from, where did you--

Michael: I dunno, I've always just heard conspiracy theories, I'm sure George W. Bush didn't sit in his office and say, 'Yeah, they're a bunch of democrats we're not gonna give them aid, but I mean…

Ms. Greene: So, there's word that he might've said that.

Michael: No, no, I'm saying, I'm sure he didn't say, 'They're a bunch of democrats, we're not gonna help them out."

Ms. Greene: But, like politically, yeah…I do know this, I think they were focused on Iraq during the time, and that was taking priority over a natural disaster,

Michael: Oh, yeah?

Ms. Greene: Yes. As far as like, 'How much of it is this is an area that would never vote for a Republican administration, so we're not gonna,' I don't know if it was a conscious thing or maybe, or more so subconscious.

Michael: Right, yeah, I got you, probably subconscious. Hopefully.

Ms. Greene: Yeah, hopefully.

Michael: Yeah, if something happened in Ohio, like an earthquake or whatever, like, I'm sure there would be a lot of aid. Just because –

Ms. Greene: Hopefully, a much quicker response. It's messed up, huh?

Michael: Yeah.

<div align="right">(Fieldnote, Suburban High School, March 9, 2018)</div>

It is particularly interesting since earlier in the class period, conspiracy theories that were circulating among New Orleans residents that the levees had been purposefully blown up in order to save more affluent areas from flooding had been discussed. Michael asked if there was any merit to these theories and Ms. Greene dismissed this as an "urban myth." Ms. Greene took it upon herself to quash these ideas but doing so when those formulating a conspiracy were those not in power, Black New Orleans residents. Here, Michael discusses the lack of relief response and its possibility that it

resulted from political motivations thereby shifting the concept from a "conspiracy" to "politics." This makes the idea of a purposeful lack of response as "political" and in effect, deracializes the actions by government by categorizing within the realm of politics—a group vies and attempts to maintain their power through whatever means. And, while Michael and Ms. Greene dismiss the idea of a "conspiracy," they nevertheless in some ways continue to ascribe to the possibility with their rationalizing it as perhaps "subconscious" and beneficial to Ohio if something were to happen here[25].

While there were some observed moments in the suburban Government classrooms as those outlined above, right-wing conspiracism was more frequently and most intensely expressed among students in the small-town site. Frequently, instances arose throughout the year-long observations where students' funds of knowledge with regard to political topics seemed to derive from right-wing propaganda sites or podcasts; for example, a couple students mentioned listening to the conservative political commentator Ben Shapiro.

It is difficult to determine exactly why this difference existed among the participants in this study. Literature points to various social psychological, epistemic, existential, and social factors (Douglas et al, 2019) that contribute to conspiracy thinking. Studies have associated conspiracy beliefs with feelings of powerlessness (Abalakina-Paap et al., 1999; Pratt, 2003) and in research focused on the United States, scholars find correlations between conspiracy thinking and demographic factors, where believers are "more likely to be male, unmarried, less educated, have lower income, be unemployed, be a member of an ethnic minority group, and have weaker social networks" (Douglas et al, p. 9; Uscinski and Parent, 2014; Freeman & Bentall, 2017). Finally, Golec de Zavala and Cichocka (2012) find that *collective narcissism*—where the ingroup is perceived as embodying a greatness that others fail to acknowledge—predicted belief in conspiracy stereotypes against Jews and predicted conspiracy theorizing in the 2016 presidential campaign (Golec de Zavala & Federico, 2018). Again, while it cannot be said for certain why more instances of conspiracy thinking occurred in the small-town site, the literature points to possible explanations and variables for future study.

Given the connectedness of youth today, it was often the case that a student would hear of a news item from scrolling Twitter on their phone or getting a notification from a news outlet. Students, at both schools, would ask their teachers what they thought about this new topic. Each teacher would summarize and give a breakdown to the class. Other times, the students' sharing was the first the teacher had heard of the news item and would be giving an analysis of the issue off the cuff. These moments, however, were much more frequent at the small-town school which I attributed to Mr. Lenard's flexibility with lesson plans. Because his US Government classes were year-long, as opposed to Ms. Greene's one-semester, he perhaps felt that he could afford to stop and devote a class period (or several) to have an impromptu conversation. It was common for students to walk in and ask for Mr. Lenard's ideas on a political hot topic that broke on yesterday's news cycle or even up-to-the minute headlines happening throughout the school day. Also, Mr. Lenard enjoyed breaking these items down for students and was seen as an authority figure. In Ms. Greene's class, the suburban students did not bring up news items up to her as often, perhaps because of more rigid curriculum and lesson plans and perhaps because they were more accustomed

---

[25] At the time of writing, various reports have documented similar dynamics amidst the COVID-19 crisis where political alliances have determined the aid that states have received; for more please see Olorunnipa, T., Dawsey, J., Janes, C, & Stanley-Becker, I. (2020, Mar 31) *Governors plead for medical equipment from federal stockpile plagued by shortages and confusion.* The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/governors-plead-for-medical-equipment-from-federal-stockpile-plagued-by-shortages-and-confusion/2020/03/31/18aadda0-728d-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html; See also: Allen, J. McCausland, P., and Farivar, C. (2020, Apr 24) Want a mask contract or some ventilators? A White House connection helps. NBCnews.com. https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/political-influence-skews-trump-s-coronavirus-response-n1191236

to being asked to give their opinion on a matter instead and not necessarily elicit their teachers' thoughts on a subject.

One day, as the sixth period bell rung at the small-town school and as students made their way to their seats and chatted while Mr. Lenard readied to begin class, a White female student sitting at the front of the class interrupted with a news headline as so often was the case in this small-town school.

Mr. Lenard: Alright guys—

White female student (Reading off her phone): House Intelligence Committee released a new classified DOD memo that questions the integrity of the FBI Russia probe.[26]

Mr. Lenard: Excellent. Okay. How many of you guys have seen any of the hashtag stuff #releasethememo?
[
One student raises his hand. Students laugh at the fact that no one has heard of it.]

Okay. Just Matthew.

[*Matthew is a White, male student. He tends to be quiet in class, but as Mr. Lenard relayed to me, he is politically conservative and stays abreast on political news.*]

Mr. Lenard: So, I don't know if you know this or not, but President Trump's been investigated for potential campaign links with Russia and the Department of Justice and the FBI have been investigating potential campaign links. There've been charges, I mean, some people have been charged, none of it has been linked to Trump directly, but certainly people who worked on his campaign. So, there's been a committee that's been heading up the investigation and the uh…the chairman of that committee—which we are going to talk about the impact of committee chairman—compiled a memo outlining how the FBI and Department of Justice might be biased against Trump. Now the FBI and the Department of Justice are saying 'Don't release it because it's based on classified information, it's not…doesn't tell the whole story, that it doesn't tell the whole story, blah blah blah,' but the chairman is like, 'No, we need to release it,' Trump says 'Release it.' (*He turns to the female student who brought up the news item)* So, have they officially released this memo?"

White female student: Yeah.

Mr. Lenard: So, what it's going to show, I'm sure, is that it's going to provide information that shows, at the worst case scenario, makes it appear that FBI has done things illegally in their investigation of potential links between the Trump campaign and Russia, uh, you know, the fact that Trump okayed it, means that, like I said, if it puts him in an unfavorable light, he'd be like, 'No, we're not going to release it, it's classified, or it's based on classified,' uh Democrats and the FBI are saying, 'Look, it's not, you know, the person who wrote it was not really privy to all information, it's based on partial information.' Republicans, some Republicans, many Republicans are saying, 'No, it needs to be out there.' So, we'll see. I'll be interested to see what it says. […] But, this goes back to that thing, everything in politics is

[26] https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/house-intelligence-committee-releases-russia-memo-over-fbi-objections-n844026

political[27]. Would it break the Democrats' heart if there was a strong link between Donald Trump and Russia? (*Slight pause, no students respond*). No. And do Republicans want… uh…there to be a strong link, between? No. So, I mean, it's always going to come back to that. You have to find your own truth there, what makes the most sense to you. In general, anyone know what Occam's razor is? Anyone heard of it? (*Slight pause*). Occam's razor says this, when you are trying to find the truth, you eliminate all the impossible answers and then you identify the simplest explanation and that is usually going to be right, so when it comes out, look at all the information. I'll do a little bit of, I'll read it, read up on it some this weekend and see what it says, and we'll talk about it Monday. But that's cool…

[*As Mr. Lenard was wrapped up the discussion and prepared to move on with the lesson, Matthew, a quiet conservative student interrupts with an alternative analysis.*]

Matthew: Isn't there a chance that it's possible that they could link Obama with trying to make sure Hillary doesn't get like sentenced? Or, like, yeah…

Mr. Lenard: I hadn't heard *that*. What I heard, and this came out really early on during the Trump presi-might have even been before inauguration, like, after the election, and you might be right. I'm not saying, 'No, that's not it,' but I didn't hear that. But, I remember there being a question of whether or not the Department of Justice improperly monitored, wiretapped Trump tower during the, I think it was during the lead up to the inauguration and Trump said 'They wiretapped my building,' the FBI said, 'No, we didn't.' Now, the reality is that some of the people involved in that stuff were, had links to Russia, so I'm thinking if the FBI did have it, if they did tap it, they have some type of warrant based on those connections. Do you guys know what FISA is?

White female student: I've heard of it.

Mr. Lenard: FISA, it's the, what is it now? Federal…basically it's a counterintelligence, after 9/11 FISA was created to, basically it was passed to make easier for the FBI, CIA whoever, to investigate suspected terrorists, like, in the past, what does it take for any government agency to wiretap your phone?

White female student: A warrant.

Mr. Lenard: Probable cause, a warrant, you have to have probable cause. Well, FISA just said, if you have links to certain people, that's your probable cause, so this is one of those things when, I don't know…we'll see. We'll see. It'll be interesting. Uh, but we need to talk about political, congressional committees.

(Fieldnote, Small Town High School, February 2, 2018)

I include this moment, in its entirety in order to discuss the particular challenge of teaching when students' funds of knowledge stem from "fake news." Here, Matthew attempts to tie the problem with the FBI probe to the Obama administration attempting to protect Hillary from getting

---

[27] This saying, "everything in politics is political" was a constant refrain that Mr. Lenard used. Observing his use of the phrase, I took it as a way to denote to students the non-neutrality of politics; that is, that politicians worked and made decisions as a result of particular motives. What you see as occurring in the theater politics, is motivated by interest of some sort and understanding that would help explain why certain decisions are made and why someone may be acting the way they are. It was unclear to me that students understood this, however.

75

sentenced (presumably because of the issue with her emails). Throughout, he implies that the FBI may have done something wrong, suggesting that it is easy to claim probable cause for wiretapping. However, Mr. Lenard says he "hadn't heard *that,*" yet quickly assures Matthew by saying "I'm not saying 'No, that's not it.'" As discussed in the previous chapter, this passive compliance is not neutral, and instead reifies not only right-wing ideology, but conspiracy theories on the right thereby giving them more credence. Further, this instance demonstrates how Mr. Lenard forms part of the community of practice in which students engage. In attempting to conclude the moment, Mr. Lenard urges students to find what is true to them. However, what is "true" to them is never really examined and they are left to their own devices with the task of engaging in a community of practice in this pursuit. As discussed in the previous chapter, Mr. Lenard's urging that students find their "own truth" and determine what "makes sense" reifies right wing hegemony because students are asked to construct a world-view that will inevitably be dependent on their world-view resulting in a repertoire of political relativism on the Right.

Another instance of "fake news" as shared repertoire occurred during Mr. Lenard's recap of the 2018 State of the Union. The topic of religion came up as recurring theme throughout the speech and Mr. Lenard wanted to address why that might be.

> *Mr. Lenard* [to the class as a whole]: What does [President Trump] mention a lot? Early on in the speech, we didn't really get to talk about it, he talked about one nation under God, and faith in God. And, first period asked, what's the repub--What are…. people who are strongly religious tend to vote?
>
> *Students in unison*: Republican.
>
> *Mr. Lenard*: Republican. So, what are you doing? You're playing to your base. Smart. Um, and, I don't know, is the perception of Donald Trump, is he like, a religious man?
>
> *White male student 1*: No.
>
> *White male student 2*: Yeah, he's religious.
>
> *White male student 3*: I mean, he tweeted about having a war on Christians, so I'm pretty sure-
>
> *Mr. Lenard*: Yeah, Delvin, I feel like you're going to want to disagree with me.
>
> *Delvin*: What?
>
> *Mr. Lenard*: I said, 'Is he a religious man?' And you were like…
>
> *Delvin*: Is he religious…uh…I mean,
>
> *Mr. Lenard*: Just the perception--
>
> *Delvin*: Yes. That's how he comes out, yes.
>
> *Mr. Lenard* (a bit surprised): Okay.

[*At this point, a White male student who is usually quiet, but has at times come to school wearing a Trump hooded sweatshirt, speaks up.*]

White male 3: He's more religious than Obama is.

Mr. Lenard: Why do you say that?

White male student 3: 'Cause he pushes religion more than Obama did. Obama tried to repeal Christianity.

Mr. Lenard: Wait, what do you mean by that?

White male student 3: Like, "Stop saying 'Merry Christmas and instead say Happy Holidays'", and Trump brought back Merry Christmas, put Christ back into it.

Mr. Lenard: I'm not sure…

White male student 3: He also speaks more about God--

Mr. Lenard: He does—(*Pause*) I think that's absolutely true. I'm not sure about the Christmas thing…you can prove me wrong.

[*The bell rings and students begin to pack up and go.*]
(Fieldnote, Small Town High School, January 31, 2018)

This interaction serves as an instance where students bring in their particular funds of knowledge into the classroom space and the teacher must make choices regarding how to take up these up. In one-on-one conversations with Mr. Lenard, he expressed feeling torn between hearing student opinions that may be based on misinformation and feeling it wasn't his place to "shut down" students' views. In the example above, he does attempt to correct or question students by asking "Why do you say that?" and "What do you mean by that?" He then says "I'm not sure" to pose a challenge to the student's idea. Mr. Lenard does not attempt to correct misinformation and when the student says that President Trump speaks more about God, Mr. Lenard quickly interjects "I think that's absolutely true" although there is no discussion as to how it is determined that this is the case. That act cedes a point as true that may not be. And, although he poses doubt on the veracity of the student's claims, he ends by saying, "you can prove me wrong" implying that there is a possibility that, "Obama tried to repeal Christianity" could in fact be true. As expressed in the previous chapter, he felt as though he might deflate them given his authority as their teacher and didn't want any student feeling "shut down" because of their beliefs.

Students also accessed and deployed these funds of knowledge derived from "fake news" into Mr. Schmidt's Current Issues class in the small-town school. The class required that students bring in articles to discuss current events and students facilitated their own conversations around each topic with Mr. Schmidt often refraining, "You all know more than me on so much of this stuff." However, students often brought in fake news items and these were often taken at face value and as fact—even by their teacher. Often, I sat in the back looking up articles and finding that they came from clearly right-wing and propagandist sites like Breitbart News. Other times, students brought in articles from mainstream news outlets, but discussions among students sparked conversations that fueled false narratives. In such instance, students were discussing "chain migration" as it had been a

hot topic that week and the subject of several of President Trump's tweets.[28] In Mr. Schmidt's Current Issues class, this sparked a student to bring in an article on President Trump's critique of family reunification.[29] On the board, he wrote: Questions regarding chain migration. Students then proceeded to discuss chain migration looking up information on their phones in real time trying to make sense of immigration policies and wading through fact and fiction. At one point, as students discussed immigrants with green cards, Ms. Schmidt asked, "What is a green card?" A student chimed in that he thought it was a card for medical marijuana. The group of students then laughed and attempted to correct him. The knowledge they shared among each other supported right-wing ideas around immigration, that people "come here illegally and then are bringing in their whole families" and that "chain migration" should be stopped.

Similar ideas circulated in the suburb high school around "chain migration" as well. As they discussed the State of the Union address, a student mentioned "they were talking about chain migration and they started screaming." Ms. Greene responded,

> *Ms. Greene*: Oh yeah, the democrats were booing about the chain migration. What is chain migration?

> *Emily*: It's when people are allowed to immigrate with their families and stuff like that

> *Ms. Greene*: Right…

> *Emily*: They're extended families, too.

> *Ms. Greene*: Uh…yeah, immigration for families, cousins, aunts, uncles, that kind of thing.

> *White female student interjects*: Distant cousins…

> *Ms. Greene*: Distant cousins [chuckles] Yeah…[inaudible] Best friends...
> (Fieldnote, Suburban High School, February 1, 2018)

While the interaction around "chain migration" was lighter and more muted, it nevertheless circulated ideas about what "chain migration" consisted of, mocking the inclusion of extended family members. It also gave credence to the pejorative term "chain migration" as the official way to describe this process and not official federal term of "Family Reunification." Here, I do not wish to imply that a term constructed or in use by a federal agency equals its neutrality or legitimacy, but to point to the discursive move from one to the other where the language shifts from a seemingly innocuous or even positive term describing an immigration process (reuniting families) that has been in effect since 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) to a policy that is negative and meant to stoke distrust. As has been documented, the term "chain migration" was circulated widely at this time on right-wing news[30] and later discouraged by the Associated Press. In this way, the utilization of this term fueled a

---

28 RealDonaldTrump. (2018, February 6). "We need a 21st century MERIT-BASED immigration system. Chain migration and the visa lottery are outdated programs that hurt our economic and national security. [Twitter Post] Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/960907362109452288

29 Given the title as shared by the student in class, it seems this was the article under discussion: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-31/immigration-fight-shifts-from-trump-s-wall-to-family-green-cards

30 In 2018, the Associated Press issued guidance regarding the term stating: "Chain migration': a term applied by immigration hardliners to what the U.S. government calls family-based immigration, a longstanding program granting preference to people with relatives who already have legal residency or U.S. citizenship. Avoid the term except when used in a quotation, and explain it" (Bradley, 2018). In 2017, Media Matters documented that Fox News utilized "chain migration" 295 times in 2017, as opposed to zero times in 2016 and three times in 2015 (Radtke, 2017).

particular fund of knowledge of immigration that students were bringing into the classroom space and then acted as members of a community to conceptualize this shared repertoire based on false narratives around Others. These ideas about "Others" arose as another salient shared repertoire among White, conservative students at both sites.

The Shared Repertoire of "Others" in the Construction of Right-Wing Political Subjectivity

A shared repertoire that occurred with similar frequency and intensity across both sites was the role that 'Others' played in the co-constructed nature of White conservative political subjectivity. Whether discussion of race, gender, LGBTQ rights, or immigration, the content of conservative student's talk of "Others" was quite similar in that it served as a counter for the development of their political worldview. As Toni Morrison (1992) writes in "Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination," the co-constitutive nature of colonizer-subject and Black and White exists and while these White and politically conservative students live and learn in communities that are predominantly White, their ideas regarding "Others" and their associated politics play a significant part via a shared repertoire that derives from and acts in service to, what Morton-Robinson (2015) calls White hetero settler patriarchy globally and conservative politics locally. Further, the particular dismissiveness, or gaslighting, of the claims of marginalized groups that arose in my observations and interviews with White, conservative students.

Immigration. Immigration, and specifically, Immigrants, served as a foil to conservative student's ideological (re)production. As the previous anecdote form the Mr. Schmidt's Current Issues class above shows, students hold perceptions of immigrants that are not only false or exaggerated, but also serve to engage in scapegoating and demonization of "Others"—an important aspect of right-wing ideologies as Berlet and Lyon (2000) also argue. The White conservative students also accessed funds of knowledge regarding immigration.

During a session of Agree/Disagree at the suburban high school, Ms. Greene read a statement along the lines of "Most people would sacrifice freedom for security."

> Students took note of their position and then gravitated to one or the other side of the room that corresponded to their position. Once there, Ms. Greene asked someone from the Agree side to speak. An Indian American female student said she agreed that people would exchange freedom for security and brought up immigrants as an example since many of them might leave the freedom they felt in their home countries in the pursuit of safety given that many are fleeing violence. A White male conservative student responds, "The thing about Mexico, they're not coming for safety. [They're] coming for opportunity. The Indian American student offers that immigrants are "escaping cartels, gang wars, that they still have families they are sending money, too." The White male student responds, "I'm not arguing the logic, [I'm] arguing that it is for the opportunity."
> (Fieldnote, Suburban High School, August 23, 2017)

I include this particular moment here (although it could also serve to illustrate the shared repertoire of conspiracism) because in negating that immigrants from Mexico or Central America are fleeing their home countries because of violence, this student implies that the narratives that have circulated, either by the media or immigrants themselves, are either inaccurate or insincere. It is important to note that at this time, there was much talk in the news about the high number of immigrants arriving at the border seeking asylum and high proportion of these being unaccompanied minors. I take his pivot from violence as reason for immigration to opportunity as reason as a way to provide cover for being anti-immigration. If safety is not the real issue, but

instead a desire for a better quality of life as the motivating factor, then they should "get in line" or lobby their own governments for change. Either way, this disregards the plight of migrants and serves to gaslight the reasons migrants themselves state as motivating their journeys. Further, this functions to flip the reasoning for migration to the U.S. to "opportunity" thereby framing of the "pull factor" as American exceptionalism; opportunity that is only possible in the US given its liberal democracy and its capitalist economic structure.

Disregard for Gender Oppression and Gender Inequality. Vehement denials of oppression undergirded conservative participant's views on gender inequality and the #MeToo movement. When asked what he thought about the #MeToo movement, William responded:

> *William*: Yeah, rape's a horrible thing. I think the #metoo movement trivializes it. Way to take something important you know, an important issue and just make it look--. Because the #MeToo movement, I don't think this was their goal, but it trivializes. There's this whole-- rape is no longer a sexual act anymore. So much is considered rape--a stare. There are discussions about if stares are considered rape to some degree. Way to trivialize women that actually go through a horrible experience and not only that, all the false rape cases, way to make way to make all these women that actually experienced something horrible--We have to question now, we have to. You can't just trust the person because it destroys-- I read these stories. This guy, he was in jail for 26 years. Just came out that his rape cases, that he never actually did that, the chick lied, and he was put in jail and his life's over. Thank you. His life's over. He's lost out 26 years of his life, how do you make that up? You don't. And so way to make it now that a woman comes out as rape and my first thought anymore, isn't 'that horrible?' It's 'is she lying and is she going to destroy that guy's life, way to absolutely trivialize it […] 'cause it's all these women saying stuff that's rape that just isn't rape. 'The guy stared at me.' I'm not going to act like it's appropriate, you know, even the stuff like an inappropriate kiss or slapping a girl's butt, not appropriate. Is it rape? Not at all.
>
> *DSL*: And you came across something that was classifying all these things as rape?
>
> *William*: Yeah, people have the most obnoxious--Men. 'Men can't be raped.' They can't because we're 'in a position of superiority.' If you didn't know that, let me educate you because obviously you're a woman and wouldn't know this, you know what I mean? It's stupid. It's absolutely retarded.
>
> <div align="right">(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)</div>

Julia, a White female student at the suburb shared that her views on feminism, her opposition to it, stemmed from her belief that there was no gender inequality and that one should not get "extra rights" because of your gender or sexual orientation. She responds,

> Like, 'people can do what they want, people can be who they be,' I don't necessarily believe in all that, I'm traditional. Like, obviously, when it comes to like, 'be who you want to be', like, if you're transgender, that's fine, but you don't deserve any more rights than people who are straight do. And, especially in the topic of feminism, like I don't want you to think different of me, but I don't believe myself as a feminist because I think that everybody already has equal rights and you're playing the victim, if you think otherwise […] I kinda think a lot of, like equality is there, you can be who you want to be, but you don't deserve anything extra, you know what I mean? I'm like, a lot of the debate with like gay rights, I know a big topic at our

fall state convention for [Junior Statesmen of America] was 'Should transgender reassignment surgery be paid for by the military if they served?', which was a such a controversial debate and I don't think so. I don't think that you like, you don't deserve anything else kind of thing.

(Interview, Suburban High School, January 23, 2018)

Black Lives Matter, Taking a Knee, and the Denial of Racism as Shared Repertoire. Throughout the academic year 2017-2018, many events occurred that placed the Black Lives Matter movement in the headlines and made it a political hot topic. Also, Colin Kaepernick, at the time a professional NFL player, had decided to "take a knee" during the national anthem as a protest to the lack of justice in police-involved murders of Black people. In interviews, students were asked their thoughts about these events. The conservative students' responses, from both sites, revealed a disbelief and disregard of racism and a disdain for the BLM movement. When asked what he thought about the Black Lives Matter movement, Matt, a conservative White male student in the small town responds,

Matt: Um, I feel like it's pointless. I don't think racism exists toward, not here at least. I've never experienced the police; I don't think that's an accurate portrayal. I dunno from what my research has shown, like I've done pretty [extensive] research, but I always feel like there's always a reason that they did what they did. Like, a police officer, if I was in their shoes, I probably would've done the same thing.

DSL: So, you think appropriate force was used and appropriate measures were—

Matt: Yeah. I mean they're actually, there is some cases because there's always a couple of bad apples, but racism isn't an issue anymore.

DSL: Are there racial issues here at school?

Matt: I don't think so. I got a lot of Black friends.

In an interview with William, a White male conservative student at the suburb school what he thought about Black Lives Matter, he responds,

William: Yeah, they matter. Stupid Organization. They matter just as much as everybody else.

DSL: Did you hear about how there was a Black student here at [this school] that organized and went to a school board meeting to talk about racial issues here at school or in your district?

William: Oh yeah. They have the right to do that, but we don't have racial issues in our school.

DSL: No?

William: That's the stupidest thing I've heard in my life.

(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

Both students, and several other White conservative students at both sites, adamantly deny any racial tensions or issues at their schools. Those students who did share that they had witnessed or observed racist interactions identified as left-leaning students. For example, Antonio relayed how a student had been suspended for spitting in a Black student's face,

> *Antonio*: We do have some people that they'll just throw out the n-word[31] like it's part of their vocabulary. And we actually had a kid get suspended […] last week because he spit in this girl's face twice and called her the n-word because she was Black because he spit in her face like once and then like she's like, "Did you spit? See what happens if you spit in my face again." And he did it again and called her the n word like you f-ing n-word. And I was like, Whoa, what? And then like there'll just be some people that they'll just be talking about someone and they'll just throw it out there.
>
> <div align="right">(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)</div>

In the suburb, Jade an African American and left-leaning female student shared during her interview that she experienced the community as racist and told me about an incident in school where students had spray-painted "Death to all N-----s" in the bathroom. To these students, racist incidents existed, but the shared repertoire among White conservative students was to dismiss these Others' claims.

I also witnessed moments where students engaged in racialized joking across both sites. For example, during AP Government at the suburb site, Ms. Greene discussed with her AP students the role and function of interest groups. She devised a worksheet were students would research an interest group, define their policy goals, and state a specific real-life example of the technique or actions the interest group engaged in to achieve their goal. She then proceeded to discuss the NAACP and how their goal was equality and how they used litigation as their action. The students were then asked to form their own groups and identify an interest group and determine their actions. As the students found classmates to group up with and pull their desks together, four White male self-identified conservative students—of which William formed part—grouped up together.

> As the boys move their desks to form a group, I overhear William's friend say quietly to his group, "what about a WAACP?" The boys chuckle. Another group member says, "What do you think the 'N' stands for?" They chuckle again. One of them catches my eyes and realizes I might have heard. They share glances and move on to their work.
>
> <div align="right">(Fieldnote, Suburban High School, December 13, 2017)</div>

This group of boys were the most expressive and talkative in this AP Government class. They were perceived as "smart" by Ms. Greene and other classmates and engaged in joking that showed they were witty and stayed informed on political topics. However, this moment between them was not shared aloud to the class. It was meant to be an inside joke. What I assume was meant by "WAACP" was a question about a White people's organization. Then, when a group member asks what the "N" stands for, I assumed he was playing with the notion of the N-word. That's what caused his friends to chuckle at his audacity to "go there." This perception is based on the type of racialized joking that existed quietly and mundanely at this site. Several of the left-leaning students corroborated this culture in their interviews and shared that many of their peers used the n-word

---

[31] The n-word here refers to the oppressive pejorative term wielded against Black people and is written as participants spoke it. That is, they did not use the full word and referred to it as "the n-word."

among each other (as White students) as an insult. However, the idea that race might still be a structural and oppressive factor in the lives of people of color was dismissed.

In the small-town, an explicit conversation about race centered around the use of the n-word in Mr. Schmidt's Current Issues class. A student brought in an article discussing a school district's decision to ban the use of Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn because of its use of the n-word. Mr. Schmidt then elicited his students' advice with regard to what to teach his son about the word. Eli, a White conservative student offered his experience.

> Eli: I think that, just leave it alone, 'cause [chuckles], speaking from experience, in middle school, being a boy, you're exposed to a lot of new things. (Classmates chuckle) I think [your son will] figure out what is right from wrong on his own especially in middle school, but on the other hand, everyone is saying how they were growing up and like their parents were saying [using the n-word] was bad and what not, I spent many summers with my grandparents, and my grandparents are older, they're racist. (Another White male student says, 'so is my grandpa') Yeah, they're racist. And, I would go out there during the summer, just everyday I'd be there, so I was actually, exposed to the terms a lot younger than most people. It was not necessarily like a bad thing when I was growing up, […], so when I was exposed to the word, I was like, 'Alright, well they're using it" I didn't necessarily use it, um, but the thing was, I feel like when you're exposed to the words, it comes down to how you act, 'cause, the way my grandparents would say it, it's not like, yeah, they're racist, but weren't like, they're like more proper I guess you could say. So, when they would use the n-word, it was like, it just kinda flowed (Another White male student chimes in: "It's not derogatory") Yeah, it just kinda flowed when they said it (Same student assists: "Not in like aggressive like…) yeah, it wasn't really [aggressive]. So, when I was exposed to it, it wasn't an aggressive negative thing. I would come to learn on my own, 'cause my parents didn't talk to me about it, I learned in school that it wasn't right.

> [*Mr. Schmidt asks Eli how exactly it was that schooling changed that for him.*]

> *Eli*: It was actually a conversation at lunch, that's the great thing about being at a public school. A friend of mine was talking about it and uh, [laughs] and so we're sitting there, and sure--I didn't say, it was like, we were sitting there and talking about it and its one of things that you realize in school, […] talking to your buddies, I'll think he'll figure it out. I think it helps if you're son has African American friends, I mean, I grew up with Jaydon, so that helped my case—

> *Chloe* (a White female student): Jaydon is my best friend, and I talk to him daily, I would never dream of using that word. EVER.

> *Eli*: Well no, but like I was saying, I grew up with Jaydon, so like being--

> *Chloe*: --As did I and I would never. Ever.
> (Fieldnote, Small Town High School, March 5, 2018)

Eli, in the interaction above explicitly chalks this experience up as a case for a benefit of public schools in that it serves as a space where people from different backgrounds get to learn from each other. Given the formulation of communities of practice, Eli here is advocating for a diverse

community so that the repertoires that are shared may be disrupted[32]. However, Eli's friend's constant chiming in throughout points to a shared repertoire around who uses the word thereby normalizing it. At the end, Chloe chimes in as a way to disrupt the story as matter of fact and normative offering that she never thought using that word would be okay. The gendered dynamics will be discussed in a later chapter; however, I wish to point to it now because it is another instance where female students in the small town held other student's feet to the fire and make clear a disagreement. I wish to point to it here briefly as it troubles the notion of one singular community of practice. It wasn't until she challenged her classmate's decision to use the n-word that a counter repertoire was employed.

However, for the most part, White conservative students across both sites didn't perceive or acknowledge racial issues in their school; at least, no issues as it related to marginalization of students of color. Further, they expressed doubt of racism existing in contemporary society and this was often revealed whenever the topic of Black Lives Matter was discussed.

Repeatedly, conservative students discussed a denial of race as a structuring factor in social inequality. Race, and more specifically, political opinions with regard to racial inequality, arose through discussions of Affirmative Action (as delineated in the previous chapter and in more detail below) and when asked to discuss the protests that NFL players undertook by taking a knee during the National Anthem.

> *DSL*: [What are your thoughts on] taking a knee during the national anthem or the pledge of allegiance?
>
> *William*: I think you're a horrible human being, but you have a constitutional right do that, I'm not going to stop you. I believe too much in freedom of speech that-- see as opposed to the PC police, if you disagree with me, within constitutional means, that's okay. I'm not a fan of your opinion that you hold [and have] every right to and I will not stop you.
>
> *DSL*: You're not in agreement [with taking a knee]—
>
> *William*: Because the foundation of their stuff—the perseverance of racial inequalities in America…Eighty years ago? Yeah. Today? No.
>
> *DSL*: So, today it's not as big of an issue as 80 years ago?
>
> *William*: No, it's not 'as big of an'—I don't think it's an issue. I think most of it is self-made issues. People being told—I mean, if you're an African—if you grew up in an African American family and you're told from the time you're a young person, that the reason that you're poor is because of the White man and to hate the White, then of course you're going to feel like there's racial injustices. Even when there isn't. I couldn't care less the color of your skin. Now, I don't necessarily live in an area that has high African American demographic, but I've never had--One of my best friends, they're all, in elementary school, African American, where I went in Indianapolis, where it was a lower income area. Half my friends were African American. It means nothing. I'm not going to act like, obviously, you

---

[32] Knowing that Eli is from an upper middle-class family in this small-town, I heard his adulation of public schooling as a bit condescending—as a way for people like him to be exposed to "others" to help him be more enlightened. It seems like a rehearsed talking point about the benefits of staying in a public school (versus attending a private school as one existed in the town and he could have attended if so desired).

know all the people that came over as slaves[33] when they finally became not slaves, they were obviously all poor, but too many African Americans have worked their way up in society and are successful. People turn on the nightly news, you have three African American anchors, so many African American movie stars. You got Morgan Freeman, who's one of the smartest men on the planet. It's like, no, this all, and Morgan Freeman actually does a good bit about this. He was on an interview with an African American news host whose name I cannot remember, and he said, he was asked if he thinks that race has any factor we should consider, he says, no. He's like, 'Look at us. We're at the top of society right now.' It's like Morgan Freeman believes there's no foundation for it. It's all your hard work. He was, what— fatherless home, one of six, seven kids, worked his way up. It's all about how much work you put in. I think that that is an imaginary theme and as long as people keep saying racism, racism, racism, and they believe that racism, they're fighting a ghost and it's distracting them from becoming successful individuals.

DSL: "Fighting a ghost"?

William: Yeah, 'cause. It's dead. […] It's very rare. You have to go to very rare places for true racism to exist anymore and all those areas are poor anyway, so [racism's] not stopping you from becoming a wealthy individual. You have to go to the niches parts of the south to find that type of racism anymore.

DSL: And 'that type' meaning?

William: True racism. "I don't like you because you're Black and I know nothing about you." That's true. Racism does not exist anymore. That exists in very niche, low income Americans.

(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

Important to note here is that William engages in a denial of the existence of continued racist structures through his utilization of another repertoire, meritocratic justification for accumulation (and dispossession): if African Americans are not thriving (are dispossessed), it is not through enduring racist legacies, but their lack of hard work. William's succinct denial of racism works to then deny the need for any sort of redistributive polices. Further, while conservative students across both communities denied the salience of racism, in this response provided by William, he engages in class distinctions. He rationalizes "true racism" occurring in "niche parts of the South," indicating that racism is characterized as something that happens elsewhere—and perpetrated by "low income Americans" and, in this way, positions himself (being comfortably in the 1%) as outside of the realm of possible racists. Ultimately, however, he argues that in those cases, it is the poverty that holds Black people back and not prevailing racist social structures.

This shared repertoire of disregarding the claims of marginalized "Others" served to help White, conservative students in disregarding, dismissing, and disbelieving any political ideas that might challenge their right-wing/settler ideologies. By dismissing and disregarding, and at times deploying the "I have Black friends" trope as Matt and William did, this repertoire served to gaslight and delegitimize the grievances of non-dominant groups and allowed for conservative politics to be

---

[33] Here, instead of saying that they were "kidnapped" or "forced" or "brought over," William uses "came over." The discursive move here to utilize "come over" is an important choice on William's part that melds both the denial of oppression and meritocratic repertoires as he frames Africans as having some sort of agency in their arrival and in this way, playing a part in their own subjugation.

(re)produced. Dismissal and disbelief of Others' claims of injustice also worked to make space for another repertoire to emerge—that of the marginalized White conservative.

More Power, More Problems: The Shared Repertoire of Marginalization Among White Conservative Students

White conservatives made up the dominant demographic in their respective schools. Yet, even with the dominance in their respective communities and in the larger US society as whole, a shared repertoire demonstrated by students in this study revolved around the idea that they suffered, or were in danger of suffering, a marginalized status in society.

Julia, a White female student at the affluent suburb, shared that she felt the Indian American students were pretty insular and ostracized non-Indian students (i.e. White students) because they didn't score as high on tests as they did. She also relayed to me how she experienced discrimination by her liberal English teacher because of her conservative viewpoints.

> People [here] were almost ashamed to be Trump supporters just because in the media and the modern media, it's almost, there's almost always a little bit of left influence in the media and they're all like, "Trump's a bigot and he's a racist, he's a sexist bigot!" And I think a lot of people were ashamed to support him. But then a lot of the English department, I'm pretty outspoken. I'm pretty loud. I like to talk obviously, but we would talk about modern, current event topics every other Friday […]and she would like take points off if she didn't agree with me and I would write stuff in my papers and she would take points off. Like, there were multiple papers where I got like B minuses and Cs on. And, just to give you like a little bit of background. I hate saying this, but I have been gifted in English. Like, I've been tested. I've been gifted and that's, that was so frustrating, so frustrating because I had to debate with myself whether to stick with my personal belief or to give in to her and get the better grade. So, I ended up getting a B plus in regular English as like a, as like a gifted student, which was super hard for me.
>
> (Interview, Suburban High School, April 2018)

Students consistently framed the larger political climate as being intolerant of conservatives or conservative ideas. When discussing President Trump's 2018 State of the Union address in her AP Government class, Emily, a White and conservative female student in the suburban high school expressed her extreme distaste for Democrats' behavior during the 2018 Presidential State of the Union.

> *Emily*: It made me a little bit mad, every single time they zoomed into the Democrats, and Donald Trump would say something incredibly universal and they all would just sort of sit there, like he'd say things like 'Black unemployment is at an all-time low [classmates start murmuring, some chuckling, in agreement by her classmates] and they don't give him any respect. I guarantee you if he got up there and agreed with everything that the Democrats said, they'd probably still be sitting down. They just have no respect for him whatsoever. I think it's more personal, honestly, I think it's just a vendetta against him. It makes me mad.
>
> *Ms. Greene*: It goes the both ways. The Republicans will do the same thing—
>
> *Emily*: Somewhat. But, certain things, it's just c'mon. If Obama—I do not like Obama, but if Obama said something like Black unemployment, I'd clap. I'd say, 'Hey, that's an

achievement, that's good.' Or, if he promised something, I'd clap for that, I'd say, 'Okay, do it, do it if you can.' I would not just show them that level of disrespect.

Ms. Greene: That divided government thing you can visually see that the other night, for sure.
(Fieldnote, Suburban High School, February 1, 2018)

Emily sees Democrats refusal to support Donald Trump as disrespectful and "personal." Although Ms. Greene attempts to temper the idea that a refusal to support the president is one-sided, Emily doubles down and reiterates that she would cheer for a Democratic talking point, but that is not reciprocated by Democrats and instead they show a particular low level of disrespect.

Heidi, a White, female conservative student at small town, was visibly upset during the recap of the State of the Union in her AP Government class period. Mr. Lenard showed clips for discussion the day after the speech was given and two of the left-leaning girls in the class openly mocked and laughed at President Trump. Heidi noticed her friends laughing and rolled her eyes. When I asked her in her interview what she felt during the address, she mentioned feeling as though her friends' reactions were disrespectful given that he is our president whether we like it or not and that Republicans didn't act this way when Obama was president. This statement does not align with the facts as many examples of Republicans "disrespecting" Obama can be found; one example being the famous "You lie!" outburst by Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC) during President Obama's 2009 address to Congress. Important to consider here is how students come to construct or come upon this narrative of their political side being uniquely trespassed. In her interview, Heidi talked about her conservative parents and their news watching and I can only assume that she may have encountered this narrative—of democrats being particularly disrespectful— through conservative media sources.

Conservative students in the small-town also expressed feelings of marginalization. Some conservative students discussed feeling as though they couldn't speak freely, described the environment at school in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election as especially contentions and described left-leaning students as being obnoxious with their opinions and not allowing for disagreement and conversation—paralleling what left-leaning students described. Matt, a White, male conservative student in the small town who called himself a conspiracy theorist, perceived his school as "pretty liberal." When I ask him why he thinks that is when the electoral demographics show that it is a pretty Republican county, he qualifies that his US Government class is pretty liberal. He has the same class as Naomi and Antonio, two students who identify as left leaning and LGBTQ. As an outspoken left-leaning and lesbian student, Naomi may have tilted the scales in class enough to give an impression of more ideological parity among the student body and in this way, Matt felt like conservatives were outnumbered. They weren't. While numerically, left-leaning students may still be a minority in the class, her and others' willingness to express dissent to dominant conservative ideas were perceived by Matt as making his school experience feel "pretty liberal." In his interview, when asked about the school climate, he adds,

Matt: All the English teachers are really liberal and are pretty open about it and its kinda annoying.

DSL: How do you know they are liberal? They just say it?

Matt: Yeah

DSL: Like, what? like "Hey, I'm a liberal, guys."

Matt: The way they say stuff, when you say something and they're like, 'You can't say that.' Well, I can. [*He scoffs*.]

(Interview, Small Town High School, May 8, 2019)

Matt's scoffing at the idea that teachers could regulate what he could say ("you can't say that.' Well, I can.) was echoed by William at the suburban school when he discussed the PC police regulating what he could and could not say ('See as opposed to the PC police, if you disagree with me, within constitutional means, that's okay"). This idea that there were things that were off-limits was seen as an attempt at marginalizing conservative thinking. Something both boys discussed and resisted.

Funds of Fear: Affirmative Action as Proxy for White Dispossession. Affirmative Action served as a recurring political hot-topic throughout the academic year at both sites. Although it served as a proxy for the practice of developing the shared repertoire of meritocratic justification for social position, it also functioned to develop a shared repertoire around fear of "reverse discrimination" and the potential loss of privileged status and is therefore included here as a formed part of the shared repertoire of perceived marginalization. During my year-long observations, outright support for Affirmative Action policies was extremely rare across both sites.[34] Much like Bonilla-Silva (2018) discusses the discursive rhetoric mired in abstract liberalism deployed by White participants in his study of racism, these students discuss their opposition to affirmative action as being contradictory and hypocritical to the ideals of the civil rights movement. Through their sense-making of this policy, White, conservative students held fast to meritocratic reasoning as justification for criticizing this policy. However, what often undergirded their sense-making was a fear of dispossession—that is, that they, as racially privileged students, would now "lose" privileges.

Anthony, a White male conservative student in the small town, shared his opinion on Affirmative Action policies.

So, they lower the requirements for the minority and increase for everybody else. It's almost harder for a White person or an Asian person to get a job because they are White or Asian, which sucks. But it also sucks if you take it away, the inverse, that some people, like, say you have a Black person that can't pay for college or they can't make it into college because they were just never, they were at an inner city school that wasn't funded. Well, that sucks. But I mean everybody's given their lot in life and I feel like you shouldn't be penalizing everybody because you need to help a few people. I just, I just don't agree with that. I, cause we're, if we're going to say that we're truly capitalists, it's not something we can have.

(Interview, Small Town High School, May 2018)

While Anthony acknowledges the injustice of students attending an "inner city school that wasn't funded" and how this impacts students' ability to attend college, he begins his position by stating that requirements are lowered for minorities and "increase for everybody else" which then make it harder for White and Asian students—accessing here the shared repertoire that there would now be a "loss" of privilege. He concludes his statement saying that we are all "given our lot in life" and that it is anti-capitalist to do anything to help those struggling with poverty or unequal school conditions utilizing here the meritocratic repertoire as it implies that people, however disparately positioned, must pull themselves up from their bootstraps.

---

[34] Students who agreed with Affirmative Action expressed their views through their one-on-one interviews These students' experiences will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

At the suburban high school, students also displayed this fear of privilege and a threat of marginalization when discussing Affirmative Action. On the day they were to discuss this topic, the slide projected onto the board of Ms. Greene's AP Government classroom read: "*What is the case Regents of California v. Bakke about?*" She had planned to show the class clips from the Eyes on the Prize documentary as a way to discuss the Civil Rights Act as there would undoubtedly be questions pertaining to this area in their upcoming AP Government exam. The conversation that ensued demonstrates the funds of knowledge that students enacted and deployed with regard to a fear of dispossession and how the community of conservative practice functioned in the affluent suburban high school. Liam, a White male student asked,

> *Liam*: Can we talk about this case, by the way? Like, can we actually have an in-depth discussion about this case?

> *Ms. Greene*: Yeah, what do you want to talk about?

> *Liam*: Okay, correct me if I'm wrong, Affirmative Action is in general saying like, depending on your race or ethnicity, you are more likely to get into, say for example, going to college, university or job, like work force, than a Caucasian person?

> *Ms. Greene:* Basically. But there are parameters.

> *Liam*: How is that relatively equal to Civil Rights in any way, shape, or form?

> *Ms. Greene*: The idea is that because of the history of injustice and discrimination in the US, they were trying to right a wrong because if you were a African American in the 1970s, the likelihood of you having enough money and background and support to be successful in society, you were already at a disadvantage compared to people who are White and so the idea was, the government thought, 'Let's right the wrong.' Slavery was supposed to be done in the 1860s, but African Americans lived as second-class citizens for over another 100 years and so they were trying to undo that and trying to give an opportunity to somebody that had traditionally been completely unallowed to participate as a first-class person in our society. The issue becomes, right, I'm imagining this is kinda of what you are thinking, is today, the question do we *need* this-

> *Liam*: It's not even, 'Do we need this?' It's just not constitutional in any way, shape, or form.

> *Ms. Greene*: Okay. Because it's discriminatory against--

> *Liam*: I mean yeah, if you're gonna, I get all the stuff about solving discrimination against Black—like African Americans—isn't this discriminating against White people?

> *Ms. Greene*: What do you guys think?

> *Julia*: yeah.

> *Ms. Greene*: Do you all agree with Liam?

> *Julia*: Can we do Agree/Disagree?

Liam: I mean, I get that you are trying to make up for it, but that's just not constitutional, not even at all.

Ms. Greene: You're kind of saying, 'It's the law, it's violating the law—

Liam: Especially, if it's like the make or break to get into a certain university that could literally set up your life. You know what I mean? That would not be equal favor based on race, that would completely, goes against the whole Civil Rights Movement.

Ms. Greene: Okay. It's hypocritical kinda—

Liam: Very hypocritical.

Liam wants to discuss the constitutionality of Affirmative Action and engages in this shared repertoire that it discriminates against White people. Vita, an Indian American student sits at the front of the room, close to Ms. Greene, and unlike Liam, she does not project her voice for all to hear.

Vita: I think when you consider that schools want a certain percent of the population to be a certain group, isn't that racism? Like, they're basically saying that they want a certain amount of people because they think a certain way, but they're saying that because they belong to a group that they will think the same way, that they represent a certain mindset. Isn't that racism?

Ms. Greene: Anybody else? You guys in agreement with Liam and Vita?

Brian: Yep.

Although Vita reveals in interviews with me that she is more left-leaning than her peers with regard to social issues, she also makes clear that she is "fiscally conservative" and more conservative overall than her Democrat-voting father. However, in the comment above, we see how even more liberal students engage in this community of conservative practice—she critiques Affirmative Action as a policy that is racist because it homogenizes groups by assuming that non-White students will "think a certain way." This angle plays well to the dominant group (White conservatives) as it aligns with their shared repertoires. Interestingly, Vita provides an argument against affirmative action, but from the sense that admitting someone because of the perceived diversity they might bring somehow essentializes that racioethnic group.

Julia, a White female conservative student steers the conversation back to the impact Affirmative Action policies have on dominant populations.

I think nowadays too, it's not even necessarily, I mean, it definitely is still race-based, but it's still, I think, especially with um like the gay rights movement, it's definitely more discriminatory towards the majority of like heterosexual people too, I don't know like, you know what I mean? It's kinda not necessarily just African American versus White people, it's not just race-based, it's based on other things too. I think they're trying to get more diversity in that kind of sense as well 'cause they have you list like 'Are you part of the LGBTQ

community?' and you say 'Yes' or 'No,' I kinda also feel like that can determine it because they're' trying to get more diversity.

Here, Julia expands the conversation to include other marginalized groups, not just racial categories, but centers her point around how "nowadays" the environment is "definitely more discriminatory towards the majority of like heterosexual people too" doubling down on this idea that affirmative action policies harm people from dominant groups.

Liam focuses on his incredulity that Affirmative Action policies were allowed to move forward as they are unlawful.

Liam: I'm really surprised this was actually upheld in the court, you know? Because this is a political view, not something about constitutionality, which completely goes against the entire reason the court was set up.

Ms. Greene: Okay.

Liam: That is not interpreting the constitution in any way.

Ms. Greene: Do you think it's making law?

Liam: That is 100% making law.

Michael: Slavery got upheld in the courts too, though.

Liam: Because they weren't considered citizens. It actually says in the constitution. They weren't considered men; they were considered property.

Ms. Greene: I think what Mike is saying, the law isn't always right.

Liam: But that's like, not even a law, that's just like, we're going to make this, like they have this entire thing about civil rights, and ending discrimination, and stuff like that, but they didn't make it equal, they just did this, and it got upheld in the court which is not backed up by the constitution because there is none, there is no slavery anymore, at that point then, maybe 100 years maybe 50 years later.

Michael attempts to explain how Affirmative Action can be upheld by the courts by comparing it to how slavery was also upheld. While this calls into question the infallibility of the courts, it also serves to rhetorically equate slavery with affirmative action—two instances where, according to the shared repertoire of the group, the law may be wrong, but courts enact their power to uphold them as policy. Liam then retorts that slavery was upheld because Black people "weren't considered citizens. It actually says in the constitution. They weren't considered men; they were considered property" and by doing so argues that the court was right to rule for slavery per the constitution as written at the time, however unjust. White people, conversely, have always been citizens (and "men") implying that any action that attempts to restrain rights of White people is discriminatory. While they may not have liked the decision, it was constitutional whereas Affirmative Action, according to Liam, had no bearing whatsoever. Ms. Greene attempts to help their conversation and adds, "I think what Mike is saying, the law isn't always right." This adds credence to the funds of knowledge displayed that Affirmative Action is a law that might have also gotten it

wrong—as the courts are wont to do. Julia, a White female conservative student continues the conversation,

> *Julia*: My understanding, like there is a lot of immigration, obviously, and Caucasians are projected to be a minority race by--

> *Ms. Greene*: Yeah, like by 2048.

> *Julia*: Yeah, it's like close, easily, so do you like, I don't know, based on the racial quotas, is it possible that they'll they treat White people the same as they did the African Americans even though we were considered first class citizens.

> *Ms. Greene*: Like, will it change?

> *Julia*: Like, will they say like you need 6,000 White people? Or, will they still, you know what I mean? Will they treat us the same, you know what I mean?

> *Ms. Greene*: Yeah, I have no idea.

> *Julia*: I was thinking about that.

> *Ms. Greene*: Like, down the road what that would look like.

> *Julia*: Will they treat *us* the same or will they treat, will it be different?

> *Ms. Greene*: I don't know. Kindergarten class this year, yeah, is the first time in American history that Caucasians are the minority, in this kindergarten class.

> *Julia*: So, I was asking, I was like, so when those kids are applying to college, will being White be an advantage to them? You know what I'm saying?

> *Ms. Greene*: Right? The only thing is that Affirmative Action is to correct a wrong. If we keep that thought process, I would say no.

> *Julia*: But even in racial quotas, we were discussing earlier, it was for one specific issue to correct it.

> *Michael*: [to Julia] So, you're saying it's like an overcorrection? Like, we might over correct to a point where we have to correct it the other way?

> *Julia*: Yeah, that's kinda what I was thinking…

In this exchange, Julia brings up the idea that Whites will be minoritized and shares that she wonders if being White would then "be an advantage to them" implying both that White people will endure "loss of privilege" and that being a minority currently serves as an advantage to non-White students. Ms. Greene attempts to steer the conversation away from the policy as "correcting a past wrong" and toward the perceived benefits of diversity.

Ms. Greene: What are the benefits of diversity? Why are so many people concerned with diversity in our society?

Lupe, a Latinx student, talks in a quiet voice about the importance of representation and how in Hollywood movies, female directors for example allow for different viewpoints because without diversity, media can perpetuate different stereotypes and having diversity allows a different perspective to be shared. Ms. Greene adds that maybe it breaks up stereotypes.

Vita, the Indian American female student, chimes in with regard to ending the cycle of poverty.

Vita: [programs that consider diversity aim] to break that cycle, of being a low-income family, [if you] don't have access your kids will also not have access…so they can have social mobility, so that you are not destined to a certain fate, so demographic doesn't coincide with like—

Ms. Greene: So, you are not destined to a certain fate.

Vita: Yeah, I think the Democrats talk about that in their platforms.

Ms. Greene: Anybody else?

Julia: Good publicity.

Ms. Greene: Good publicity?

Julia: Yeah.

Ms. Greene: Because people like it?

Julia: Because it makes you look good.

A White male student sitting across from Julia looks at her and smirks approvingly. She continues,

Julia: Like this high school is majority Caucasian and we have a Diversity & Inclusion club and they highlight it because it helps makes us look good, makes us seem accepting towards other people so more people move here, get more money, and the district will continue to be as successful as it is today.

Ms. Greene: So, it's PR?

Julia: Like a lot of things here, it's PR.

Ms. Greene: You all agree with that?

Bryan: Yeah.

Jake: Yes

While Vita and Lupe attempted to bring in a different perspective of why diversity might be a contribution and desirable, Julia quickly turns it around and frames it as a superficial ploy at public relations by the institution in an effort to increase the perception of eh community and "get more money"—a hint at conspiratorial rationalization stemming from economic interests. Some of her White male colleagues agree. Michael, then asks,

> *Michael*: How do you fight *de facto* segregation?
>
> *Ms. Greene*: you're bringing up my topic for today—
>
> *Julia*: What is de facto segregation?
> […]
>
> *Michael*: it's like segregation, but it's not a purposeful intention of, not being kind or not, excluding someone. It's like natural economic separation of--
>
> *Ms. Greene*: It's not by law it's just, *de jure* is by law […] which is the Civil Rights Movement and *de facto*-- Michael, do you want to say it again? I thought your explanation was pretty good.
>
> *Michael*: it's just like, it's not like a purposeful segregation of races its more based on like the economic, geopolitical situation. You can look at [this suburban high school] and Columbus City schools and if you look at the demographics its mostly because of, just like Columbus— [this suburb], the different geopolitical situations in the areas.

Here, Michael rationalizes de facto segregation as the "natural" order of things; as some innocuous political situation they have no control over. This rationalization is reminiscent of the "moves to innocence" that Tuck and Yang (2012) discuss in which settlers deploy logics such as these to eschew the guilt of perpetuating unequal and enduring social structures.

> *Ms. Greene*: Its politics, people choosing, right? To live and work in certain places, or your economic status, which is often like Vita said, can be tied to race, so we get segregation occurring, but it's not by law. There isn't a law separating people, though it might have its history in law, it could be a historically, going back years and years ago, there was *de jure* segregation and that ended, but mixing of people doesn't happen overnight as we know, right? As Liam is saying its—
> […]
>
> *Liam*: So, *de facto* is just like social? What people think?
>
> *Ms. Greene*: Yeah, choice, economic background, it's not by law.
>
> *Liam*: There's like, I don't think you can ever fight it, like Michael was saying, I don't think you can ever fight that.
>
> *Michael*: there are economic advantages—

Liam: The only way, is like if you increase everyone's wealth, but like, right now there is no true way to fight, people like, especially families, they want their kids to be safe they're not going to go to an impoverished area to develop a family.

Ms. Greene: if you can afford it, you're not gonna move in to a…right.

Liam: Right, you're not gonna move into an impoverished, to where there's possibility of danger, endangerment of your children, little opportunity, you know what I mean? No one's gonna go there, 'Hey, I'm going to buy this like 2.5-million-dollar house in the middle of like some ghetto suburb, outside of New York City, or something. No one is gonna do that, they're gonna like move four miles out of the city where there's are a bunch of wealthy parents who all have gates on their drive ways and go to some nice private school.

Here we see a deployment of self-preservation; given the system as it stands no rational person would choose to not have privilege. There is a logic to the preservation of privilege that can be seen as fueling a fear of a risk of dispossession. Further, he continues laying the groundwork in ways that absolve them from taking steps toward theorizing and working toward more just futures. "Right now, there is no true way to fight" maintains the status quo where their privilege is preserved, albeit acknowledged. Ms. Greene continues the conversation,

Ms. Greene: So, what we do about that?

Liam: I mean, from an economic standpoint there is always gonna be, what is considered losers If there is gonna be any winners, there has to be losers, class conflict.

Ms. Greene: Not everybody's gonna win.

Bryan: (chuckles) He said class conflict.

Liam: Yeah, you can't, if you bring everybody up essentially, that just means that the wealthy are gonna get even wealthier and it's just gonna, it's just gonna move, its gonna shift up, everyone just shifts up either way.

Michael: So, you're saying, it's just always proportional?

Liam: It's always, yeah, it's always gonna be proportional, things are, it's not really gonna change.

(Fieldnote, Suburban High School, April 18, 2018)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I shift the focus from teachers' pedagogical and curricular moves to students' role in co-constructing the learning space. Specifically, I focus on White, conservative students as they constituted the dominant demographic at both school sites. Building on the conceptual contributions of "funds of knowledge," (Moll et al, 1992) and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger), I demonstrate that White, conservative students at both the suburban and small-town high school possess and deploy right-wing and settler knowledges to construct a community of practice where these repertoires are apprenticed and developed. Important differences existed across the suburb and small-town—for example, conspiracism arose at both sites, but was observed more frequently in the

small-town school, whereas feelings of marginalization among White, conservative students were articulated more acutely in the suburb.

However, most striking were the similarities of these repertoires: meritocratic justifications for possessive logics that, at times, drew from racist tropes and investments in Whiteness; an affinity and use of conspiracy theories to understand US politics; racist conceptualizations of Others and Others' politics; and a belief in existing or impending marginalization of Whites and conservatives. I argue that the funds of knowledge framework along with the concept of communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) when applied to White students, provides a generative way for investigating the political subjectivities that not only existed at both the small-town and suburban schools, but how these ideologies are (re)produced through the classroom space.

While economic class may structure schooling and life experiences in different ways for students in the small-town and the suburb, Whiteness and settlerness largely shape the contours of these students' political ideologies and, as communities of practice, their classrooms function as spaces to share and develop conservative politics and White possessive logics (Moreton-Robinson, 2014). As Moreton-Robinson (2015) writes, "White subjects are disciplined (though to different degrees) as citizens to invest in the nation as a White possession. As citizens of this White nation, they are contracted into, and imbued with, a sense of belonging and ownership" (p. 122). It is this relationship between discipline and citizenship that these communities of (settler) practice foster. By looking toward and within schools the specific mechanisms of settler citizenship reproduction materialize.

Further, like wages of Whiteness (Dubois, 1935; Roediger, 1999), these funds of knowledge materialize into real benefits. Although Julia believed otherwise, these funds and repertoires were accepted and rewarded and allowed for students' successful participation in the US Government classroom. They also impact White conservative students' social position in that the ideologies practiced in community within the classroom space translate into economic, social, and political positions that reify the unequal social structures from which they benefit.

As I've shown and as Lave & Wenger (1991) discuss, a community of practice is not without its tensions and challenges. The next chapter focuses on yet another factor impacting the development of politics among high school students—cultural norms and the official public sphere of the school and space. While the previous chapters focus on the impact of right-wing ideology on teachers' pedagogy and on the funds of knowledge and communities of practice students co-construct, the next chapter focuses on students from non-normative positionalities, left-leaning students who identified as female and/or LGBTQ and/or as a student of color and how they experience, are silenced by, and at times, challenge and resist these spaces.

Figure 5. A marker commemorating Bill Moose, Clintonville neighborhood, Columbus, Ohio.

Chapter IV:

"Out" of (Settler) Bounds: Cultural Norms, Deviance, and the Actually Existing Settler Public Sphere in School

Settler Normativity and Schooling as Public Sphere

As discussed in the introduction, cultural norms manifested quite differently in the affluent suburb than in the small-town high school. While I had to calibrate my gaze to "see" the privilege that existed in the affluent suburb, once I began observing through a comparative lens, I noticed more fully the differences in culture and structure between the two school sites. It was common for students in the suburban high schools to wear designer leggings and drive BMWs to school, while in the small-town, students' dress and cars seemed more worn-in. I review these brief details of each school community as an entry point for considering that what are viewed as cultural norms operating in each school community also inform political norms— who and how one can engage in political discourse as well as the possible field of ideas one can express. In previous chapters, I show that curricular and pedagogical moves contribute to the reification of right-wing hegemony and settler common sense-making in these suburban and small-town school communities. I also show the specific *funds of settler knowledge* that students possess and how this contributes to a particular *community of settler practice*. I now shift the focus onto the social and cultural norms of each community to show how these demarcate the public sphere of these classrooms and larger schools and its implications for youth political development and engagement and the (re)production of settler citizenship.

The notion of the public sphere, as Habermas (1991) conceptualizes it, acts as the space outside of state institutions where citizens can deliberate and engage in "rational" discourse. I use here Habermas' conceptualization of the public sphere because, although public schools are extensions of the state, they operate as one of the few spaces where high-school aged youth convene as individuals and can (and should) engage in deliberation on a regular basis. I argue that it functions as a public sphere where they not only develop but enact their understandings of politics and their roles as participants. Viewing the classroom and school space as a public sphere is an appropriate lens for understanding that what happens in school spaces is not only political in content, but also in its form.

However, there are limits to Habermas' (1991) theory in that it idealized a bourgeois public sphere that did not exist, but rather as Fraser (1990) writes, the public sphere was in actuality a space where

> discursive interaction […] was governed by protocols of style and decorum that were themselves correlates and markers of status inequality. These functioned informally to marginalize women and members of the plebeian classes and to prevent them from participating as peers. (p. 63)

These protocols of style and decorum also governed the discursive interaction in the classrooms and larger schools in this study and not only functioned to marginalize some students from participating, but also to regulate the field of political ideas that could be expressed by all students. Just as particular clothing was considered in or out of normative bounds, so too were political ideas. Not "fitting in" at school encompassed more than just clothing and social networks; these norms also regulated the political ideas that could be believed and or expressed and by whom and thus, tell us

much about what occurs in and through schooling that contributes to the public sphere of the classroom and school—not outside, but alongside the US Government curriculum and pedagogy.

Further, I argued earlier that "settlernesss"—the structural, social, epistemological processes and logics that maintain and justify the settler nation-state— provides a critical framework in helping us understand not just how schools are derivative of settler colonialism, but how settler political ideologies are made and remade in the classroom and school space. Settlerness requires the continual (re)production of a normativity. Even while subaltern counterpublics always already exist in the public sphere (Fraser, 1990), "the constitutive hegemony of the settler component […] is that the settler establishes itself as normative" even while the indigenous and exogenous subalternities are dialectically related to it (Veracini, 2011, p. 2). These settler norms then work to justify dominant liberal democratic ideas around politics and who and how one can participate. As Frankenberg (2007) has theorized, the unmarked, unnamed status of Whiteness is itself an effect of its dominance, this 'whiteness as norm' parallels and works in concert with the normativity of settlerness in settler colonial contexts like the U.S. "where a sovereign act is constitutively based on a distinction between settler (normal) body politic and subaltern (deviant) indigenous and exogenous alterities/ethnicities." (Veracini, 2011, p. 10).

Building on Cheryl Harris' conceptualization of whiteness as property, Moreton Robinson (2015) argues that "White identity has cultural and social purchase, and as a possession it enhances one's life chances as configured through the logic of capital (p. xix)." While the data here does not focus on land rights and the associated capital accumulation that comes with those moves to and with property, I argue that Whiteness as the possession was made manifest in these schools and classroom spaces and that race, gender, sexuality, and class all converge to continue settler investments in these properties. Further, Whiteness in itself is constituted by and through explicit gendered, classed, and sexual norms. It is itself an intersectional episteme as it has wrapped up in its material manifestations investments and values that are tied with patriarchy, heteronormativity, property ownership, and sovereignty. Thus, Whiteness is not only a racial hierarchy, but here in the present U.S. context, also a settler one.

In the previous chapter I argue that the dominant demographic of White and politically conservative students within a predominately White and politically conservative county serves to shape a particular community of practice where right-wing and settler thinking are constructed via shared repertoires. I also argue that the political co-constitutive "other" was always already present in the ways White conservative students framed their political ideas and viewpoints and that this "other" serves as a cornerstone to the *funds of settler knowledge* from which their politics stem. Here, I center on the experiences of participants in this study who in some ways were "other" and "othered" because of their respective positionalities and/or political ideas. In this chapter, I focus on non-normative youth and the ways in which narratives about (non)normativity— about what is in and out of cultural and political bounds—manifested themselves in participant's schooling experiences. My core argument is that the push toward cultural and political normativity at the affluent suburban school was more marked and rigid in everyday life as were the social consequences for deviating from the norm; while at the small-town high school, some resistance to the status quo existed via LGBTQ students' "deviance" and girls' outspokenness that opened up the public sphere of the classroom to nonnormative modes of gender, sexual, and ultimately political engagement. Here, I use Cathy Cohen's conceptualization of "deviance as resistance" (Cohen, 2004)—the idea that Black queer peoples' mere existence as both racially and sexually deviant functions as resistance to White supremacist and heteronormative dominance.

Although the majority of these LGBTQ students in the small town where White (or were coded as White), their presence and audacity to be "out" and exist sexually and/or racially and/or politically "deviant" from the norm challenged the normative cultural politics that were prominent

in the community. This, in conjunction with working-class girls' difference in engagement, functioned as a subaltern counterpublics (1990) in the small-town high school that made possible the public expression of alternative politics and altered the official public sphere of the school much like Fraser theorized, "insofar as these counterpublics emerge in response to exclusions within dominant publics, they help expand discursive space" (Fraser, 1990, p. 67). She adds, assumptions that were previously exempt from contestation will now have to be publicly argued out. In general, the proliferation of subaltern counterpublics means a widening of discursive contestation, and that is a good thing in stratified societies (Fraser, 1990, p. 67). Further, being "in" (complying with cultural norms) bestows social and material benefits and being "out" (resisting or challenging norms) its related consequences. Being "out" and deviating from cultural and political norms threatens the status and hierarchy of those that are positioned at the top and in these predominantly White and politically conservative schools threatens the possessive logics of patriarchal White sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) operating in these school spaces and, in doing so, threatens settler justifications for politics as they are.

  I begin this chapter with a discussion of the cultural and political norms that prescribed the universe of normativity at each school. Then, I look at the particular ways in which normativity shaped the public sphere for LGBTQ, female, and students of color at each site. Lastly, I discuss the ways in which the "out" status of LGBTQ youth at the small-town high school impacted the cultural and political norms by making space for deviance that then opened up space to counter normativity with regard to sexuality and politics in the larger sphere of the school.

  Although I discuss the relationship between curriculum and pedagogy in reifying the cultural reproduction of conservative/Republican political views that dominated in each context in an earlier chapter, it is important to include institutional involvement here as well as it speaks to students' boundedness to these as norms. For example, when introducing the make-up of the two major political parties in class, both Ms. Greene and Mr. Lenard did so similarly by listing their voter demographics. In this way, the Republican party became the party of White people, specifically, of successful White Males, of the more college educated, of the higher income, of business owners and of Christians. If students identify as these (or aspire to), then choosing otherwise would force them toward "deviance" from not just community norms, but also the larger national norms and trends as made evident by the demographics that their teachers relayed. Conversely, the Democratic party was framed as the party of the working-class, of people of color, of immigrants, of those that are non-Christian, and of those with less education (and are therefore working-class) and in a community that places such high currency on educational achievement, that alone could be enough to dissuade any students entertaining a Democratic affiliation. Aside from the glaring factual problem of the GOP being "more educated,"[35] framing the parties in this way made students' allegiance and potential membership to the Republican party almost a foregone conclusion. To think and choose otherwise would mean transgressing the norms of (and perhaps being traitors to) their racial, class, and religious groups to which they belonged (or aspired to belong). And, why wouldn't they want to vote Republican if that is what higher income White people do—a demographic and status that was held in high-regard in the community? Of course, none of the less-idealized "trends" of the Republican party were shared (for example, how party members, like David Duke, have a long history with the Ku Klux Klan or how climate change deniers would be most likely to also affiliate with the Republican party). Instead, only those categories that showed Republicans in a positive light were shared and while not negative at face-value, for students who have been raised to consider the

---

[35] While it may have been the case that the GOP claimed higher education in decades past, since the 1990s that trend has been shifting with Democrats now including more college graduates and those with post-graduate degrees. Retrieved from: https://www.people-press.org/2018/03/20/1-trends-in-party-affiliation-among-demographic-groups/

social consequences of association, framing the Democratic party solely with women and uneducated, non-religious minorities may function as a deterrent.

Settlerness in the Suburbs: The Hegemonic Impact of Patriarchal and Heteronormative Whiteness on White Girls

Throughout my time in the affluent suburban high school and interviews with students there, I observed a pervasive homogeneity. That is, while White students were the dominant racial category (85%) of students and an increasing percentage of the student population was non-White (just under15%), there seemed to be this sense that one must strive to not stand out or be different—racially, culturally, economically, politically, or aesthetically. The normative culture that was deemed as the norm to aspire to, as participants will describe in detail below, consisted of White, upper class, heterosexual, and politically conservative. And, as discussed earlier, there existed a distinct "frat bro" culture where White male students were allowed space to be brash and opinionated in ways that girls were not. In this particular context, the outcomes of striving to not be different become particularly pernicious.

For left-leaning girls and for students of color in this study, they relayed this pervasive homogeneity as intolerance of difference. When I asked Bernadette, a left-leaning White female student at the suburban high school, what I would need to know to survive as an incoming freshman at her school, she responded,

> *Bernadette*: Just to know that there are going to be people that are going to be mean to you and um, just try and let it roll off your back, I guess. Because there are girls and guys that, who don't really accept other people and they don't have like, I guess they just don't know how to accept other people and taking different cultures and mindsets [into consideration].
>
> *DSL*: Being different [here] is hard?
>
> *Bernadette*: Yeah, I think so.
> <div align="right">(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)</div>

Bernadette begins her advice at surviving with having me understand "that people are going to be mean to you," because they "don't really accept other people" confirming other participants' views that there was a particular cut-throat nature to the social scene at this school that privileged those who were high status: excelled at academics, athletics, were wealthy and knew when and where and how to show it, and who fit the "cultural" norm which meant being White and conservative.

Jess, also a left-leaning White female student corroborated this in her interview. She relayed that she was set on moving out of the area when possible because of this.

> *Jess*: I definitely think that [the Suburb is] somewhere I don't want to stay. It was good to get the knowledge that I needed from this place, but it's something I want to grow beyond because I feel like it has only the potential to create more narrow-minded thinking. It's usually pretty polar and people are, if you don't share a common opinion, people aren't usually that accepting. They're not mean about it. Like they're not willing to get in your f-, at least with the kids, they're not going to get in your face and say you're a bad person or you shouldn't be here because you believe in this. But they definitely distance themselves and they make it hard to make connections with people.
>
> *DSL*: Like if you're on the outs, it's hard for you to break in?

Jess: Mmhmm. Now, that's not necessarily an important thing, to be in, but it's good to have people you can connect with.

While it may be easy to dismiss not feeling part of a "group" as par for the course in high school, if we are to view high school as a public sphere (and not just a holding area for participation in society at a later time) then social life in high schools (and how in-groups and out-groups are created therein) signals to the politics that exist in a space. Participants here made clear that being different and not sharing the "common opinion" ostracizes you, and in this particular affluent suburb, social status works to garner social networks which, as it is believed and experienced here, come with material benefits.

When I asked Bernadette to explain what is considered acceptable and what's considered different and "other" here, she responded,

> Okay. I guess acceptable would probably be like [politically] conservative. Kind of wear what everyone else is wearing […] For girls, it's like, blonde and highlights, black leggings, Nike sneakers, regular t-shirts, baggier t-shirts. Straighten your hair. Flat iron. People don't like their normal hair. Only two [girls] in my friend group alone don't wear it straight. And everyone drives Jeeps. Black Jeep Wrangler is the iconic car in [this community]. Vineyard Vines is really good. 'Laid back preppy' that's like [this school's] main style. Salmon button ups and khaki shorts and Sperry shoes.

Bernadette begins by talking about what is acceptable in the community by talking politics first, "be like [politically] conservative" then shifts to talking about the need for blonde straight hair and clothes and cars illustrating the interconnectedness cultural norms and political ideas. It is this relationship between what is acceptable aesthetically and politically and the interchangeability of how these are policed that arose as a salient theme in observations and interviews and is useful in illustrating the co-constitutive nature of cultural norms and politics.

However, Bernadette delves deep into the intricacies of what one is supposed to look like in this affluent suburb to fit in. Bernadette notes that having blonde hair with highlights and wearing it straight is the norm and that only two girls out of her group do not wear it straight. Thinking about curly and dark colored hair as "out of bounds" signals racialized norms around who and what is acceptable in this space. Bernadette was a self-proclaimed outsider because she chose to be different, even while stating that in doing so, she would suffer social consequences. She had naturally blonde hair, but chose to dye it dark brown and relayed how dyeing her hair was looked down upon:

> *Bernadette*: It's a little harder to feel like what, like what you're going to do is not going to be judged by your peers kind of. […] I remember dying my hair rainbow, and like you're taught not to think [about] what other people think, but sometimes you do think about what other people think of you, I guess.
>
> *DSL*: Your hair is dyed dark?
>
> *Bernadette*: Yeah, it's naturally really blonde. Oh, I used to look so different. I like dying my hair, it's kinda my thing…I've done it since I was in like fourth or fifth grade. I just like dying my hair in different colors.

DSL: Rainbow?

Bernadette: Yeah.

DSL: And people looked at you funny?

Bernadette: Yeah.

DSL: What did they say?

Bernadette: They were just like, they just kinda like make little snide comments like about my hair and stuff like that. And umm...even like now, they'd be like, "Oh my gosh, do you remember when your hair was dyed rainbow? That was so bad' and I was like, 'I liked it' and stuff like that. So, it was just kind of like, I feel like people don't have anything else since there's not as much to do in [SUBURB]. Like the only thing that they focus on is like, everyone else.

<div align="right">(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)</div>

While Bernadette explains the obsessiveness with others' appearance as an effect of there "being nothing to do" in the suburban community, the policing of oneself and of each other is an effect of there being much to do in this community by way of keeping and maintain normativity as it is currently calibrated—normativity that is informed by hegemonic Whiteness. As Moreton Robinson has written "It takes a great deal of work to maintain Canada, the United States, Hawai'i, New Zealand, and Australia as White possessions" (2015, p. xi) and in this way, it takes a lot of work to keep a school normed in a way that reifies White heteropatriarchy. Viewing schools as part of the mechanisms that keep societal (and political norms) functioning as they do, these regulatory processes on everyday life make sense.

Aside parameters on appearance, Bernadette also relayed activities that can fall out of the bounds of acceptability in this suburban school.

One thing, it was like, I've never been like truly bullied, but my mom said, where I just felt like someone was kind of almost attacking me, like, since I was like six or seven, I've always skateboarded. It's my favorite sport and whenever I go to the Skate Park, I'm the only girl there. But I've been called, I don't like saying this word, but a "d***[36]." Like, I was called that by so many girls because I skate, just 'cause I skateboard. Yeah. And it's just 'cause I skateboard…that was the only thing, they were like, 'Yeah, you skateboard, that's like a guy sport' and stuff like that. I was just like, 'What?' So, I actually stopped skateboarding for a little bit. [I still skate now], but I stopped skateboarding for like a year or two cause I was afraid of what people would say or what people think […] I got over it, but it was just like, that was the thing that I think kind of was like, not everyone [in this community] is like this, but there have definitely been experiences where there are girls that are like that…just kind of like look down upon you. If you do something that's kind of out of the norm of like your gender.

<div align="right">(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)</div>

---

[36] Here, Bernadette relays a particular term used as a pejorative for lesbian. I choose not to type it out as an attempt to blunt its potential violence on the reader.

Not only were clothing and hair choices important for maintaining an aesthetic normativity, but here, Bernadette relays an instance where sexuality was also up for regulation. Skateboarding was not only looked down upon in this community because it was "a guy sport," but because of the implications that she might be a lesbian for engaging in it was the transgression here. Her being called a "d***" was a way to critique her transgressing gender and potentially sexual mores with regard to sexuality. When asked what was viewed as appropriate, she mentioned cheerleading. The messaging that Bernadette relayed as operating in and through her school and community is that girls are to be straight with straight blonde hair and be politically conservative. Thus, a particular White femininity here is desired and (re)produced.

'I Don't Want to Make a Scene Causing Trouble': White Girls' Discursive and Affective Limitations in the Public Sphere. Aside from these norms, participants discussed the ways in which girls could exist with regards to personality. Jess, a White female student who had naturally dark and very curly hair and chose to wear it this way, talked about the way she self-policed because of the community's norms with regard to girls' personality and expression.

> *Jess*: Growing up was never a problem for me here, I was always weird so I [laughs] never really fit in.
> […]
>
> *DSL*: […] I find that very hard to believe.
>
> *Jess*: You'd be surprised. I was so obnoxious growing up. I always say this, If I ever met my younger self, I would hate my younger self. [laughs]
>
> *DSL*: What do you mean?
>
> *Jess*: I was always in everybody's face. I thought I knew everything. I thought I was hilarious. So, I would just try and constantly make all these jokes.
>
> *DSL*: And you weren't [hilarious]?
>
> *Jess*: Um, I don't think I was, but apparently, I was adorable because I had a really round face. So, I feel like that made it a semi acceptable to adults. But um, I was always very forward because in my family we're, we're kind of open it, it was a struggle from about seven to 12, like trying to keep that openness. But I always told people exactly how I felt, exactly what I thought. And I was always enthusiastic cause I loved people. I was very trusting and very like I was just high energy and I loved, I wanted people to love it life as much as I did. Like I wanted them to be excited and people are like, you're really annoying, you need to calm down.
>
> *DSL*: Everything you're describing. I see no problems.
>
> *Jess*: Yeah. I mean it's important to have when you're older and going through life. But I, here, it's almost---

DSL: It was not seen as a positive?

Jess: Nu uh. Not here.

DSL: So, tone down the enthusiasm?

Jess: That's what I had to do.

DSL: Tone down and not be very transparent in your beliefs?

Jess: Mm hmm […] And I know now I still have those things. It's just here, I know to just keep it cool. And you just stay under the radar because I don't, I don't want to make a scene causing trouble.

(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

Again, here we see the conflation between what was acceptable with regard to delivery with the actual content of girls' opinions. Jess talks about not being overly "enthusiastic" about her ideas, but also to not "be open" with her thoughts. She realized that while she was enthusiastic and sharing her ideas, the message she received was that she was annoying and "needed to calm down." Referred to as tone-policing[37], these types of discursive regulations have political implications as it changes the rules of discourse, but ultimately favors dominant modes about what is allowable in the public sphere, much like Fraser's (1990) critique. Conversely, male students never discussed feeling constrained in this way and from what I observed, the more boisterous and confident in their delivery, the more they were praised.

For the girls, this was not the case. As Jess relays, it was a struggle to maintain her way of being, of "telling people exactly how I felt, exactly what I thought.'" Girls expressed an acute awareness of the social consequences that arose from speaking in ways that were viewed as unacceptable for girls; consequences that not only impacted their friend groups, but also potential romantic partners. As Bernadette explains,

I think it's kind of hard 'cause there, I feel guys in [this high school] like girls to be a certain way almost, the kind of straight hair and stuff like that. And maybe they like to go out and party and stuff like that. And if it's not you, it's kind of harder to find [someone to date]. It's harder to find a boyfriend or whatever. So, I think it's just kind of more, and you feel a little bit vulnerable because even though a lot of the guys and even girls think feminism is not, shouldn't be a thing, also sometimes it's just kind of hard and like when he, like were to date someone you want to tell them everything. But like, if your political views are completely polar opposites, it's kind of hard to tell him everything. So, it's kind of weird, I guess.

(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

Again, here Bernadette talks about how "guys in [this high school] like girls to be a certain way" and talks about desire for girls with straight hair who are not feminists. This conflation is not an outlier,

---

[37] "Tone policing, simply put, is the dismissal of a person's argument (generally a less-privileged person in social justice discourse) because of their tone, which may be perceived by the bigoted more-privileged person as 'too personal,' 'too emotional' or 'too angry.' Meanwhile, the oversensitivity argument basically amounts to the bigoted more-privileged person telling the less-privileged person to suck it up and deal with the abuse the kyriarchy deals out. Put together, these things add up to a massive display of double standards." (Retrieved from: https://angerisjustified.wordpress.com/tag/tone-policing/)

it is the way normativity functioned in this school community; that is, norms where made clear with how girls should look, talk, and what political ideologies should be held and expressed.

When we discussed the climate around the 2016 presidential election at school, all students across political affiliations and at both sites talked about the feeling of contention that permeated their respective schools. However, left-leaning White female students/LGBTQ students/students of color at both sites repeatedly brought up the feeling that there was an energy—a latent hostility—particularly emanating from Trump supporters/conservative students that work to silence in both verbal and aesthetic ways.

> *Bernadette*: It was literally like, I feel like it was just chaos [around the presidential election of 2016] 'cause there were the people that were liberal and liked Hillary or Bernie, [but] there was only a small group of people that were for them. And then, everyone loved Trump, like that was a big thing at our school. It was Trump and people—oh, and the thing I always noticed that was so weird, people would wear the Make America Great Again hats and the Donald Trump shirts and like no one would ever say anything about that, probably because they're expressing their political beliefs and I'm completely okay with that. But, if I were to wear a Hillary or Bernie shirt people would rip me apart and it's just kind of weird that we're okay with them, showing their political beliefs, but they're not okay with us showing our political beliefs […]
>
> *DSL*: Did you ever wear a shirt that was--
>
> *Bernadette*: I had a button on my backpack that said, um, "Another nasty woman voting for Hillary" or something like that. I remember people were like, "Why do you have that on your back?' And like my one friend, he said he was joking, but I don't think he was, he took it off my backpack and was like trying to throw it away. And I was like, "I'm not going to do that to your Make America Great Again hat. Why are you doing that to my own button?" Um, so it was just kinda things like that. And then, I remember, um, we had like a mock election or whatever at [STEM program] and, um, people were like, if they saw that you voted like liberal leaning, they were wouldn't talk to you for the rest of the –like, it was so weird that my one friend who was like, "Yeah, I voted for Trump and I was like, "Okay. I voted for Hillary." And then he was like, "Oh." And, he didn't talk to me. And I was just like, why does that even matter? It was just kind of weird. People were just getting mad about it. And, I remember when Trump was elected, I was really disappointed, but um, people were like, if I looked down, they would high five in front of me in the hallways and stuff like that, "Go Trump!" I remember the day after he was elected, people ran through the hallways [saying] "Go Trump!" and stuff like that. And like, if people did that, like screamed, "Go Hilary!" people, I think, would—or like, "Go Bernie!" people would not let that happen or they would almost bully the person.
>
> (Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)

The theme that students felt silenced for their particular beliefs emerged quiet heavily throughout my observations and interviews. Even a few conservative students articulated feeling discriminated against for their thoughts (as I discussed in a previous chapter). However, these left-leaning students' experiences corroborated each other's' and when taken holistically and in conjunction with observation data illustrate a clear picture of right-wing hegemony and the normativity of settler heteropatriarchal Whiteness that was made manifest in everyday life as a regulatory, latent hostility toward non-normativity. As Bernadette makes very clear,

There's just more of like a conservative mindset that I really take into account here. And, I kind of feel like some of my views when I try and talk about them are kind of suffocated by other people.

<div style="text-align: right">(Interview, Suburban High School, May 2018)</div>

Keep Your Head Down, Be Safe: Suburban Silencing as Experienced by Girls of Color. This silencing was also experienced by girls of color in this suburb, yet in ways that were compounded given their respective racialized positionalities. Jade, a Black female student who identified as left leaning, moved to the affluent suburban community from New Jersey as she was beginning middle school. When asked to describe the community, she responded,

Jade: Very, very conservative, very White, very suburban area. Very--are you familiar with the movie Pleasantville?

DSL: Yes.

Jade: Very Pleasantville-y. Very Stepford wives. Cliquey. Everything's perfect on the outside, but the people aren't perfect on the inside. Um, very much a place that likes to keep up appearances and there's good and bad sides to that because on the good side, like you don't have to worry about getting mugged when you walk down the streets in [this suburb]. It's a very kind and welcoming area. And, if you're a smart minority, you're fine. So that works out for me and my family because we're smart, well-to-do minorities. So, like that gets kind of glossed over and it's not as, it doesn't stick out as much. But if I was an impoverished or not as smart or athletically talented minority living in (this SUBURB), I would be more worried about my experience if I was honest because it's *racist* [here]. They can, like I, they don't, they're not 100% blatant about it. And that's part of what keeps up the image is people don't walk down the streets in like White hoods, like it's, it's not that level of obvious, but it's very subtle. So, like the attitude is there. Absolutely.

DSL: Like what?

Jade: So, we had some incidents at [Suburban HS], um, where there was like graffiti on the walls, um, written on the walls. It said 'Death to all the n------ and n----- lovers.' Um, and that was written on the walls and the KKK was spray painted on the school wall. So…

DSL: This past [school] year?

Jade: Yeah.

<div style="text-align: right">(Interview, Suburban High School, June 2018)</div>

Jade describes the suburban community as "a place that likes to keep up appearances" illustrating again the process of regulation that occurs in the community. She uses words like "Pleasantville-y" and "Stepford wives" to index for me a White and affluent/upper middle-class normativity. Further she makes sure to qualify that this non-normativity would be felt more strongly for minorities that are not "smart" pointing to, again, the value that is placed in the school/community on being high-achieving and the extra requirements needed to conform that non-White residents have. Further, she describes not just the aesthetics norms (Stepford wives, keep up appearances), but names the

pervasive Whiteness of the community and outright overt anti-Blackness and racist events at the school. However, Jade continued with more details into the White gender normative policing that she experienced.

> *Jade*: That first year in [this community] [I realized], like keeping up a perfect appearance seemed to matter more here [than where I previously lived]. […], like imperfections weren't supposed to be showcased, if that makes sense. If there was a problem with your academic status or your social status or anything of the like, it was to be fixed or just ignored. Um, so to try and keep a perfect sort of like good girl status, you know, good at sports, good at um, school, good at volunteering at church, whatever you could to be like the perfect child, that mattered more here.
>
> *DSL*: How did that come across to you?
>
> *Jade*: I think it was when I came to [this community] as a very brash, rebellious, angry teenager cause I had just been moved from the place I've been in eleven years without much of a say in the matter so I was kind of angry and loud and like I wore bright colors and bright colored lipstick and I was just--
>
> *DSL*: Fabulous?
>
> *Jade*: Abrasive. [chuckles] I appreciate that.
>
> *DSL*: Those sounds like good things...(laughs)
>
> *Jade*: Right, but I quickly learned that you were meant to keep your head down a bit more. Like it wasn't necessarily encouraged for you to be this overly loud, to some people, obnoxious presence. Um, because I was kind of shunned and given weird looks for how loud and outspoken I was. So, I kind of quickly reverted that. Once I realized that it wasn't that socially acceptable. In my English class with my 30-year-old teacher who has dinosaurs on this wall and tattoos and all that, I could be that loud version of myself. But in every other class [I couldn't].
>
> (Interview, Suburban High School, June 2018)

Whereas in other schools one might think that being super high achieving and volunteering at church might hurt one socially, in this suburb, being a high achiever academically (and athletically as long as it did not interfere with academic high achievement) held high currency. Students who were "average academically" were looked down upon. Students had to be perfect—academically, socially, and in appearance. findings Jade stood in contrast to those norms as a new resident with bright colored clothing and an opiniated demeanor. And, as she states earlier, as a Black girl, it was crucial that she be smart and that her parents be educated and "well to do." In this affluent suburban community, girls were socialized into being "good girls" and good girls were not loud nor shared their opinions in an "abrasive" matter. And as Jade reveals, she was "shunned" when she didn't fit the mold. Boys' loudness and abrasiveness, however, were not only tolerated, they were celebrated as funny and even endearing. When I asked participants if this impacted the culture of the US Government classrooms when discussing politics, girls of color expressed that the climate was aggressive and that they didn't speak because they knew that these boys would "annihilate" you in

debate and it wasn't "worth it." As Rani relays below, it was better to be safe than sorry when sharing political ideas in this community.

Better to Be Safe than Sorry: Social Ostracization, The Threat of White Anger, and Resultant Self-Policing for Girls of Color. I noted that Rani, an Indian American female student at the suburban high school, chose to not share her opinion much in US Government class. She remained pretty quiet throughout the year and, during our interview, I asked if this was a conscious choice she made. She explained why she is quiet and how it stemmed from her thinking about joining the school's Junior Statesmen of America (JSA) club because her friends in a neighboring suburb had recommended it. I had attended a JSA club meeting and had listened in on many conversations among members as these were some of the more talkative students in Ms. Greene's class often coming in during lunch and in between class periods to talk politics. Ms. Greene was the advisor at this suburban high school and had heard from her how "intense" the meetings would get. However, Rani, relayed that the particular culture of the club was pretty contentious and that this was indicative of the US Government classroom culture since many of the students were also classmates. She says,

> If we do express-- I went to a JSA meeting just to see, because I had friends in [nearby suburb], who were like, "Oh my God, this is the best club ever, and I was like, 'Wow, I'll join it.' [My friends in that suburb] are mostly Democratic as a group. So, I went to one of these meetings they had, they were debating on a topic, and I just saw one girl just sit there and they just, all their bonds are, they were like, "Oh my God, how dare you say that!?" And I was like, "Oh no, I'm not going to check this club [out]. So, like I've seen like the top, how *angry* they can get that kind of like scares you a little. And my mom always tells me like, make sure not to anger anyone at school. Don't say anything wrong. Like she makes me hold back.

Rani describes how "angry" those at the "top" get, meaning students who are leaders and possess social clout in the school, and how their "anger" scared her and prevented her from participating in the club and also made her reconsider participating in the classroom space. When I asked why her mom advised her to not "say anything wrong" she relays a previous experience where she had regretted having shared her thoughts.

> *DSL*: Why do you think [your mom] tells you that?

> *Rani*: Um, so I had, I was talking about something in eighth grade and then all of a sudden these kids spread rumors about me and I was a new kid coming in that year and they were like, "Oh, she's supporting the Taliban. She's basically the Taliban." I was like, "Wow." So, I kind of like stepped back.

> *DSL*: And what did you say?

> *Rani*: I was like, so we were talking about like the torture, it was about the torture methods of like Americans versus like over there [Middle East] and we were reading a book and in that book they were talking about before killing anyone the Taliban usually offers the last meal before killing them. Um, but, and then we compared them to American like serial killers and how they like did not do any of that. And then when I was trying to, like I was trying to play devil's advocate at that point because like at that time I was like, "Oh, this is,

this would be so much--if we all started agreeing then it's boring, I was always up for [debate] I need to do it. […] I talked about water boarding. Like I was like, those are pretty horrendous methods, at least [Taliban captives] are given a last meal. But they were like, automatically they were like, 'Oh my gosh, she supports the Taliban.' And so, like after eighth grade I shut down. I won't voice my opinion.

DSL: There were rumors going around? I'm sure that affected you.

Rani: Yeah, it was the first time that like when I, I'm usually outspoken, but that was the first time when I experienced like, maybe I should shut up for once and not say anything.

DSL: And so, you told your mom this is what's happening at school.

Rani: Yeah. And she just said it's better safe than sorry.

(Interview, Suburban Public Library, May 2018)

While Rani describes this incident that occurred in middle school, the "anger" the JSA club members exhibited at the high school confirm for her the intolerant environment present in the community for those that think different politically. This paired with Jade's observation of the different standards for non-White students along with Bernadette's and Jess' perception of the school as intolerant to difference illustrate a public sphere where those that do not fit the cultural and political mold (i.e. White,) are silenced. In Rani's experience, it is not merely a silencing in a public sphere that should be open for all diverse ideas and deliberation. The self-silencing was a result of a threat felt by non-normative students about stepping out from the norm—that is, the threat of ostracization, "othering," and other social and material consequences. Rani's mother urging her to be "safe" was not merely talking about losing friends when understood within a context of a school where racist incidents like "Death to all n------- and n------- lovers" was spray-painted on a rock and where Trump paraphernalia was worn and welcomed. For students of color and for White female students who did not ascribe to these ideologies, this environment forced a particular silencing to maintain settler normativity in place. For Rani, she had experienced the consequences of having teetered on troubling the accepted norms and when I asked if she felt safe at her school she responded,

Rani: It's a little less—I guess. But I feel like I'd experience this [kind of environment] anywhere else as well.

DSL: Hmm. Chicago?

Rani: Chicago, maybe not. It was more diverse, ethnically diverse. So, I'd have at least someone backing me, like I'm totally [upfront] of like going ahead and saying [what I think], but I need someone behind me to be like, 'You should voice your opinion even if it's wrong.' But here you don't get that support.

(Interview, Suburban Public Library, May 2018)

Rani sounds resigned that she would have to deal with this type of public sphere anywhere, but when I ask if she thinks it would be this way in Chicago, where she lived prior to moving to Ohio, she rethinks that idea and points to the ethnic diversity of Chicago as a possible reason as to

why the public sphere of the school would not be the same. She doesn't say that her Chicago peers would think like her politically, but that there would be someone "backing" her and supporting her in sharing her opinion. And, she says they would back her "even if it's wrong" alluding to the idea, again, that there are "wrong" things to believe politically as this has been the message circulating in her affluent suburban community. All left-leaning girls of all racialized experiences in the affluent suburban community discussed a culture in their school where they felt the need to keep quiet about political viewpoints or non-dominant ideologies or experiences or be ostracized. However, as Jade and Rani's comments illustrate, for girls of color in this community there was an added danger of confirming this "outsider" status—a danger that one might suffer consequences, social or otherwise, because of not ascribing to the norm.

Throughout my observations in Ms. Greene's three classes, I only observed three instances throughout the whole of the academic year where students of color shared a viewpoint that challenged the conservative norm. In one instance, an Indian American female student supported the idea that non-citizens should be allowed to vote. She felt that legal residents were still impacted by policies and while they were not officially citizens, they legally had permission to reside there. In the other instance, a Latina student in this same class shared that she had scored as "left leaning" on a political survey. I share these even though they might seem pretty benign views that would barely qualify as liberal leaning, however, given the larger political landscape in this school, these stood out as non-normative and, for these students of color, as "othering" and as challenging the well-greased settler and right-wing hegemonic gears of the everyday.

Also, it is important to note that Ms. Greene pulled the Indian American female student to the side after class to validate her thoughts on immigration. She asked the student questions about her parents' legal status (something to the effect of acknowledging that she had personal connection to the debate and that it was a valid point she had made) as a way to empathize. While important, this was done after class and outside of the 'public sphere' of the classroom thereby leaving the status quo undisturbed. Perhaps Ms. Greene did not want to force the student to "out" herself publicly about her parents' immigration status, however, this status was made clear by the student herself—her parents were Indian and had legal permanent residency. By not discussing publicly, what she validated privately, she may not have contributing to 'othering' the student and the idea by dismissing it or disparaging it, but she did not disrupt its marginalization through a bringing it into the mainstream conversation with added weight of teacher behind her. The student was left to fend for herself in the public sphere.

As Anjali, an Indian American female student relayed to me, the public sphere of the school was contentious and the "frat bro" culture quite prevalent and as she said, it was "not worth it"— not worth the anxiety and social ostracization—to get into political debate with her peers because their idea of debate was, as she put it " just out to annihilate you." When discussing what the conversations were like around the presidential election of 2016, she discussed students choosing to not share political viewpoints that might detract from the conservative norm in the community.

Anjali: So, at [Suburb High School] especially, it's very polarized towards president Trump and I think—

DSL: Polarized towards him in favor?

Anjali: In favor of him. Yeah. So, it was very, it was definitely, um, strongly favored towards president Trump. And it's evident because of the socioeconomics economic status of this community. It's kind of, it was kind of like pretty clear that they would vote for the Republican candidate. And I think climate wise, I think a lot of people who wanted to vote

for Hillary, were kind of silenced in a [way] and not saying [they supported her] because they knew everyone would kind of feel like bias towards president Trump. So, they all kind of like, either they just didn't voice an opinion or just kind of stayed quiet about it.

(Interview, Suburban High School, February 2018)

Anjali shares that while it was a heavily Trump supporting community, there were Hillary supporters who felt silenced and had to stay quiet. She also told me that many of her friends and classmates who are students of color had very active Twitter profiles where they shared their political ideas regularly. I asked why she thought they were okay with sharing online, but not "in real life" as they would still be "outing" their beliefs and she reminded me that many, if not most, students, keep their profiles private and would only be sharing their ideas with those they have approved. In this way a subaltern counterpublic existed in a space outside/apart from the school.

My observations throughout the academic year corroborated these students' experiences. I observed the gendered norms made manifest in each class I visited and saw how these regulated the field of expression for girls in ways that muted their political expression. In this suburb, girls in general, but left-leaning girls in particular, were hardly heard. Boys, on the other hand, constantly spoke out—blurted even—opinions, sarcastic jokes, insults ("Why wouldn't they vote? That's just stupidity") and classmates and their teacher tolerated and supported these discursive moves and public sphere norms. While girls offered correct answers when the teacher posed a question, they offered not much more. Important exceptions were the times I did observe girls confidently (perhaps even, brashly) expressing political opinions. However, these were White female students who identified as Republican and who were expressing conservative views including, but not limited to: anti-abortion stances, advocating for gun rights, critiquing the March for Our Lives walk-outs for gun reform, making fun of Monica Lewinsky, etc. While they may have been challenging gender norms that required they be demure and muted in their politics, their ideological alignment allowed for this transgression to be permitted in the space. Thus, the findings here show the bounds of acceptability and the processes of (self) policing and regulation in which female students engage in order to comply. The White male-participants from the suburban elite high school didn't mention specific instances of being silenced nor having to regulate their political expression. The same held true for conservative students in the small-town. While conservative students (both male and female) did discuss feelings of marginalization due to their conservatism, examples given were a generic "PC[38] police" or liberal teachers with an agenda. However, it is important here to note that these students did not relay specific instances in classrooms with peers nor indexed a larger school culture of marginalization. On the contrary, when Matt discussed a liberal teacher saying, 'You can't say that" and his response of "Well, I can," he illustrates his resistance to being silenced. This absence with regard to being/feeling silenced on the part of the boys correlated with my observations—very little obstacles to the White, male, conservative point of view existed. Put another way, these findings show that those that shared their political opinions freely where most often White, male, and conservative and set the norm for what the default politics were and who were allowed to express them.

(Un)Settling Normativity in the Small Town: The Hegemonic Impact of Patriarchal Whiteness on LGBTQ Students and Students of Color

Settler normativity—cultural and political norms governing dispositions, discourse, and ideology that reify settlerness—also permeated the small-town space. As I will discuss later in more

---

[38] "PC" is an acronym for Politically Correct and is often a term used by right-wing commentators to decry shifting social norms that make the use of sexist and racist discourse inappropriate.

detail, what came as a surprise throughout my observations were the differences in girls' political expressions and demeanors and the presence of a robust LGBTQ community that made their presence felt and their accompanying left-leaning political ideas heard[39]. However, for students of color/LGBTQ students, the hegemonic Whiteness and heteronormativity of the small town still impacted their schooling experiences. Student participants form the small town who identified as left-leaning White female students, and/or LGBTQ and/or a student of color explicitly discussed a latent hostility that existed in the school toward those that were different—racially, politically, and as a result of sexual orientation.

Kylie, a White-coded[40] Latina in the 11th grade at the small-town high school, describes an environment that was hard for those that were racially different and/or who were LGBTQ. When I asked her to describe the community, she responds,

> *Kylie*: I guess we don't have like a lot of diversity, so like it's very just like clean cut, I don't know how really to describe it or whatever. If you do stand out or something, you *stand out*. (*Her emphasis.*)
>
> *DSL*: Who stands out here? What do you mean?
>
> *Kylie*: Like, if you were to be in an inner-city school, it would be normal if you are Mexican or Black. But, like here you definitely would be known...and then…[pauses]
>
> *DSL*: You don't blend in as easily?
>
> *Kylie*: No.
>
> (Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

Kylie's perception that she was unable to really describe her community, I think, points to the pervasive normativity and the way Whiteness and White dominance becomes "unnamed" and "unmarked" (Frankenberg, 1997). It can be difficult to describe the norm, yet she attempts to do so with her phrasing of "clean cut" which I took to mean as non-transgressive, non-alternative and quite literally as not diverging too much by "standing out" through aesthetics or styling. Being racially different and being "out" with regards to one's sexuality, however, automatically makes one stand out and not fit this norm in this community. When I asked Kylie if her friend group was diverse, she responds affirmatively and when asked to describe how it was so, she responds,

> *Kylie*: I'm part of it 'cause like, and bi or whatever and then my friend, she's gay and, we're like, there's very few out gay people here.

---

[39] While there were surely LGBTQ students in the affluent suburban high school, there presence was not felt as it was in the small-town. During class observations, there were never discussions or claiming of membership from the students to that community and Ms. Greene never discussed their presence nor its relevance to any of our conversations.

[40] I use the phrase "white-coded" here to describe Kylie's experience and to center her self-identification. I didn't "read" her as Latinx before she discussed identifying as such being that her first name which isn't "traditionally" Latinx, she has lighter skin tone, blue eyes, and attended a school where students are predominantly white. She shared that one of her parents was Puerto-Rican and the other was from Central America but is most often not read as Latina. Further, I use the term "white-coded" versus the more commonly used "white passing" because "passing" connotes a process (commonly associated with Black Americans) whereby a person chooses to be seen as white for survival. For Latinx who are "white coded" (as opposed to Latinx who choose to "pass" as white) there isn't a choice or desire to be "seen" as white, but instead "Whiteness chooses YOU" (@âpihtawikosisân, Jan 29, 2017).

DSL: Can you count [those that are 'out'] on your hand?

Kylie: Yeah. Yeah. Like it's not a lot. And we had someone that's mixed but that's it. And, then we have like the White friends or whatever (chuckles) but they're not, but they're nice, they're respectful and they won't make, they're very like respectful about it.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

Her discursive choice to say "and, then we have like the White friends," is interesting as many of those in her LGBT friend group, including Naomi of whom she refers to above, are also White. This points to a way that being LGTBQ in this community functioned as an "othering" that moved them away from hegemonic Whiteness and toward a marginalized "other" status. This points to a categorization of those that are not racial minorities nor identify as LGBTQ as White because of their membership in the dominant/normative group at the school. Her non-gay friends who are not students of color she describes as White "but they're not—but, they're nice, they're respectful" also points to that latent hostility toward non-normative people and ideas that students described and which I observed throughout the academic year at this school.

Very few instances occurred were students of color participated in class in general, and I observed no instances where a student of color specifically challenged dominant political or cultural ideas in class. Timothy, an 11th grader at the small town who identified as bi-racial (White and African American) shared that students of color might choose to keep their ideas to themselves so as to "not even get into it" with their peers.

Timothy: Sometimes in class and stuff I've noticed we'll talk about something, the [kids of color] they'll start, they'll quiet down, they won't say as much. There are those few that speak up, they're going to speak their opinion. And then, there's others that just kind of sit down, you know, and just think on their own. And I do think it's probably because they're a different color than everyone else and most of the class is White and they have maybe one other student that's in there that's like mixed or dark or something. And they're afraid to stand up and say their opinion because they're afraid that they're going to get shot down by everyone else 'cause they feel like, I think they feel like all White people think alike and they're just on their own…I'm not gonna lie when I'm sitting in [US] Government [laughs], I have like, I'm afraid to stand up and say my opinion, not because I'm colored or anything, but just because [pauses].

DSL: It might be different?

Timothy: It's different.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

Here, Timothy shares his thoughts that students of color regulate their participation because of potentially being perceived as different. He acknowledges that some students will always speak their mind and that other students "just think on their own" and adds that "I do think it's probably because they're a different color." So, while some students may be more talkative by nature, he explains that the non-participation of students of color may derive from being "afraid that they're going to get show down by everyone else." Timothy continues,

Like in the beginning of the year, I don't know if you were here for this, but Mr. Lenard gave us a website and we filled out this questionnaire and it told you if you were more Republican

or Democrat and there was, you know, like a lot of stuff about that, because some kids didn't know that they were like Democrat, they said they were Republican and their scores came out differently, you know? And so, when people are like, well, 'What'd you get?' and they were scared to tell them. They were afraid to tell them or when they did, the other kids [said] stuff rudely, but joked with them like, "Oh, look at you," that kind of stuff. I just know that some kids are like, "Whoa, you're a Democrat? You guys stay away from us. We're Republican," you know, joking around. I don't know a lot about each party. You know, I haven't chosen a side. I just kind of, usually during elections, I think if I could vote, this would be right. [And I'd] go for it because maybe I favor their opinion. Um, but yeah, I don't really know. My scores came out that I was Democrat, I think. And I just, I put my computer away and I didn't tell anyone, 'cause I don't know how I actually feel yet, you know? I don't want to go around telling people all my scores said this if I don't even know yet.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

Here, Timothy describes a specific moment in class where he purposefully avoided having to share his results (by putting his computer away and not telling anyone) because of the latently aggressive environment in the small-town high school toward non-normative views. Although he said other kids "joked" with non-conservative others, he also categorized it as being done "rudely." Being seeing as different was already ostracizing for students of color at this school, adding to that the additional transgression of thinking different politically would then further position students of color as oppositional to the hegemonic Whiteness/conservatism of the school community. Thus, while a subaltern counterpublic existed, these voices inclusion into the "official public sphere" of the classroom and larger school was hamstringed by the fear of being seen as "Other."

Kylie also confirmed this self-silencing during her interview. She shared with me her political views including her support of the Black Lives Matter movement and how she felt it was really important for society. I noted that this idea was never expressed out loud in any of the classes I observed and was probably more on the left than what the majority of her peers believe. She responds,

Yeah. Like that's why I'm kind of happy we don't discuss [race issues] in Current Events. Just like, there's multiple things: First, it would be a good group of White people [as in a high amount] saying they're opinion on racism that doesn't affect [them] or something like that. [laughs] I just think, I'm happy no one's brought in an article about it 'cause then I would just be like, why are we discussing this?

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

I then bring up with her the time in her Current Events class where the students were indeed discussing racial issues, specifically the use of the n-word. A student had brought in an article that discussed a school district contemplating the banning of Huck Finn because of its use of the n-word. The predominantly White classroom then got into a discussion about whether or not books should be banned (They agreed they shouldn't be), but then the conversation evolved into their own use of the n-word and whether or not this was bad. Zack, a conservative White male 12th grade student who was quite popular and spoke often in class offered his personal experience using the n-word and shared how he learned through his grandparents who used it quite casually to refer to Black people and how he then used it in school until fairly recently. I reminded Kylie of this instance and offer,

DSL: That's gotta be tough if you're a Black student at the school if you hear [the n-word].

Kylie: I don't know. I feel like, I don't know, 'cause I guess it's the individual. Like, the Black students here, I guess, they always say that they don't have political opinions here. I don't know if that's them just saying [that], so it's not, so they don't get into controversy or something, but I don't know.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

She says she "doesn't know" if they'd be offended with the use of the n-word because she notes that Black students say "they don't have political opinions." However, she then brings up the idea that they might be doing this so as to not "get into controversy" with their peers. Earlier in the interview, she had spoken to me about at times letting negative comments slide or not sharing her opinions on LGBTQ matters with her peers.

DSL: So maybe [the Black students are] kind of like how you are [with LGBTQ issues]?

Kylie: I'd rather, yeah, like discussing the way I'm like, yeah, I'd rather not say to this homophobic person, "Don't say that," right? And, [Black students] wouldn't want to say [that] to like a racist person.

DSL: Why do you think students make that choice? To avoid the confrontation?

Kylie: They will be outnumbered. It would just be a you against them. So, you say, "No, it's fine." Things like that.

DSL: And it's a small school and now everyone [would] know that there's this issue…

Kylie: Yeah. And, I know recently, I heard a conversation, it was in my Math class and someone behind me, someone told the principal, one of the gay students here, because they [non-gay students] made a comment and they [gay student] told the principal and they [non-gay students] were complaining about [the gay student] telling the principal about it. And it's like one of those things, it's like, well what did you--

DSL: So somebody who was gay was offended by a comment that was made and they told the principal…

Kylie: And then the [non-gay] person was saying that they were being like a snitch and like too sensitive and things like that. And, I don't know. I feel like maybe it's just because they don't understand it, I guess.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

As described by Timothy and Kylie, being different in the small town was not a desirable experience and students of color and LGBTQ students did what they could to minimize the ostracization. And, as they both relay, this included ignoring issues (like anti-gay comments or the n-word) or outright not sharing their ideas and reactions. As Kylie describes in the anecdote above, for those that do speak out, there will be consequences like then being called "a snitch." When I ask Kylie if she thinks it is a big deal to be out in the small town, she responds,

Kylie: Yeah, definitely. Just because there's not really any one that's out here and [non-gay students] have pretty bad perceptions [of] people that are and stuff like that. And, they can be very, they can say it out loud what they think, their opinions and things like that. They're not afraid to speak their mind. But like then again, me and my friends, we're not afraid to speak our minds, too. It's like, it's a very big divide definitely.

DSL: Have you faced any like negative pushback for [being LGBTQ]?

Kylie: No, not for me personally. I don't know, I'm pretty like quiet and stuff. No one really, well I'm really quiet, but I'm also like a class clown who never seemed, like it didn't really matter to me. But then the people that are— to people that are more out […] like my friend who's lesbian and a feminist and stuff like that. Like, she's very open about being lesbian and being a feminist and she faces a lot of backlash and stuff.

DSL: Um, what kind of pushback does she get?

Kylie: Just a lot of people would purposely say comments or something 'cause they know, [they'll] go rile her up. […] They would just say like stupid things. Like, it's not like a big deal, just like "Feminism is a joke" or something like that. Just something stupid, you know just something to purposely try and get a reaction [out of her].

<div align="right">(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)</div>

Not only is it difficult to know that the larger school community has bad perceptions of gay people, but as Kylie shares, "they can say it out loud what they think" implying that LGBTQ students do not feel so free. However, Kylie then offers that she and her friends speak their minds as well and that it is "a very big divide." She then offers more insight into how contentious the environment ca be for those that are "out" and not quiet. As she explains, "they" will purposely seek out her very "out" friend to "rile" her up. That is how that latent hostility materializes in everyday political encounters and which most students just avoid. However, for the students who are "more out", as Kylie put it, it is this resistance to hegemonic conservatism (via heteronormativity and Whiteness) and the deviance that these "out" LGBTQ students embody that I argue created ruptures in settler normativity and expanded the public sphere of the classroom and school space to include subaltern voices and political views for all students. And, as mentioned in a previous chapter, we see one of the most oppressive aspects of teachers' pedagogical choices: the implications of teachers' unwillingness or inability to see the need for protecting these students and create space for them. Viewing schools as part of the public sphere, it is clear how the very undemocratic structures of the larger public sphere manifest in schools and how the failure to provide space and protection for marginalized students makes democratic schools an impossibility.

Resisting the (Political) Closet: Queering as Deviance in the Small-Town High School. In the working-class small-town, right-wing leaning political views functioned as the norm much like it did in the suburb. On several occasions, I observed White students wearing a Trump hooded sweatshirt, a Trump/Pence t-shirt, and a White female student wearing a red Make America Great Again hat. I did not observe any left-leaning gear at any time. However, "deviance" from both cultural and political norms existed.

I remember when I first began visiting the Small-Town High School, I would only observe Mr. Lenard's 3rd, 6th, and 7th period classes. But, after a couple of weeks, he insisted that I come to his first period and "check it out" since he had a bunch of students (girls, he mentioned specifically)

that were very talkative and who did not shy away from political conversation. He mentioned that one student, Naomi, had recently completed a class presentation and in front of the class outed herself as a "big ol' lesbian" or something to that effect. He shared this because he appreciated their audacity and willingness to engage in political conversation, even arguments with the more conservative boys in the room. However, I do not wish to overstate girls' expression as equal empowerment in the public sphere of the school or even in Mr. Lenard's classroom. Boys still talked and communicated at much higher rates than girls and in ways that framed their participation as conversations between them and their teacher and not in relation to their peers. Yet, there was a marked difference in girls' participation here as opposed to the suburban high school. Along with the possibility that this stems from working-class cultural norms, I argue that the difference was also attributable to the presence of a small, but mighty LGBTQ community whose presence altered the culture of the school's public sphere as a whole by altering conceptions of the (hetero)normative. While the previous section outlined how it was still ostracizing for students, this section will detail the ways their "deviance" functioned as resistance to dominant norms.

Through conversations, Mr. Lenard discussed that things had been evolving in the small-town in recent years and that the challenges to cultural and political norms he observed were not present 10-12 years ago. He felt the culture changing and also pointed to the presence of these students as a potential driving force that "normalized" being LGBTQ and to be "out" as different. Moreover, as Naomi states below, coming "out" was not only a matter of her sexuality, but also in stating and developing her political beliefs,

> I think now, I think a lot of people in my class, like there's obviously like a separation, between political beliefs. And, I'm friends with some of the people, but […] I'm to the point now where *I used to be like really quiet about what I thought and same thing with like being in the closet type of thing* where it's like, now I want to actually educate myself on matters. I don't really care about what other people think now.
>
> (*emphasis added*, Interview, Small Town HS, April 2018)

I often observed her in class asking questions, being critical of conservative policies, and blurting out her knee-jerk reactions to comments made by Trump. She really didn't care. And, in so doing, I think she "expanded discursive space" (Fraser, 2004) which student interviews confirmed. Various students pointed to her coming out as making it okay to be out or to consider non-heteronormative possibilities for themselves and others. Further, when asked if they got along with the more conservative students in the room, many students joked that they kind of had to since it was such a small community that if they didn't talk to classmates who they had disagreements with, they would not have a social life. In this way, the smallness of the community may have served to ensure inclusion of non-normative youth and nurturing tolerance of others given that, as one interviewee explained, you would run out of friends pretty fast if you did not look past some things. This raises questions regarding the impact of social distance or lack thereof in a small community and its implications for social cohesion and political tolerance. It potentially highlights the importance of economic status in delimit physical mobility, access to larger social networks, and opportunities for distance oneself from classmates and neighbors. However, while friend groups existed across different social groupings, the larger public sphere of the space still privileged normative positionalities.

As Naomi makes clear, she views how she used to be quiet about her thoughts as similar to her being in the closet. Being "out" with regard to her sexuality has also motivated her to "actually educate [herself] on matters" with regard to politics. When I asked her why she things some students may continue to be "in the closet" both sexually and about their political beliefs, she responded,

Yeah. I think it's, most of the people that are here that are conservative are like big jocks or the popular [kids]. So, I think it was that fear of being, I don't know, harassed and I guess that's not my fear. Like especially I notice, I mean Antonio, he doesn't really voice his opinions, but I know they're very similar to mine. I feel like it's different from being like a female and also being like a male. For him, because I know like he's in the same situation like me with being like LGBT or whatever. I think there's like a difference between being like a guy that's gay and being a girl that's gay.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

Naomi offers an important observation with regard to intersectional subjectivities and how these may be differentially experienced. As a White female student who is lesbian, she felt the community as more tolerant to her challenges of political norms. For a boy who is gay[41], she articulates less tolerance for her friend Antonio's transgressing of sexual and political norms. I observed Antonio in Mr. Lenard's class and noticed that he often had things to say, but simply turned back and shared with those classmates seated closes to him in a whisper. Naomi, on the other hand, would voice these out loud in the larger public sphere of the classroom and was ready to debate with her peers and withstand the pushback if challenged. Perhaps Antonio picked his battles differently. However, in a particular act of resistance discussed below, I was struck by his willingness and resoluteness in challenging an increasingly sacrosanct political norm both locally and nationally, one whose challenge had, in the year of my fieldwork, garnered national attention and the ire of conservatives.

Protesting the Pledge of Allegiance: 'Deviance' as Resistance to Political and Cultural Norms. Antonio, despite the animosity he said he felt and experienced in his small-town community, engaged in one daily act of resistance in his small-town high school. Every morning, as the first period bell would ring for the start of the school day to begin, students would stop what they were doing, stand at their desks and turn to face the back of Mr. Lenard's classroom were a US Flag hung. Then, they would join their principal (who was heard over the loudspeaker) in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. All students did this, unprompted. All, except for Antonio who remain seated.

In conversations with Mr. Lenard and in one conversation with the principal, I had been made aware of Antonio's choice to remain seated and not participate in the daily Pledge of Allegiance. Once I started observing first period, I was able to see his non-participation in action. During our one-on-one interview, I asked him why he made this choice.

Antonio: Um, I don't do it mainly because, I don't know. I see, I mean, not a lot of people agree with me, but I see it as kind of like being a Nazi because you're looking up to something, you're doing something, they did this, we're doing this and you're reciting verses, the hand over your heart and we're reciting something and, plus the fact that people feel the *need,* that they have to do it. Like people be talking and then they'll just stop whatever they're doing and jump up and, I'm not for that. And people are like, "Oh my God, you're disrespecting our flag." […] People tell me that I'm disrespecting our country or flag or veterans, not every day, but it has been said on the beginning of the year, kind of not this year, but like throughout—

---

[41] This intolerance may also be compounded for a boy who is gay and perceived as non-White in this community. I initially coded Antonio as bi- or multi-racial given some of his features and his name; his name was unique to this community, but a very common one in communities of color. I also understood his friend Kylie as referring to him also as biracial, but I did not follow up further with her about this. Antonio identified himself as White in his interview, yet I offer that he may be perceived as racially ambiguous as a way to further understand his experience in this community.

DSL: This isn't the first year you do this?

Antonio: No. I started last year and I actually could--not last year, freshman year (2015-2016) and I actually got kicked out of my class. She was like, because the first day it was on a Friday and you know, Mr. Schneider [the principal] was like, "would you please rise and join me for the pledge?" And, I mean I don't, I don't sit there and do stuff during it. I'm not like, like crinkling [pretends to crumple up paper] or [taps his fingers loudly on the desk] something, I'll sit there, and she's like, "You will stand for the pledge!" And I was like, "Nope, no." I didn't say that, but I was like, whatever. And she said, "If it happens again, you're out." And that Monday came around, one of my classmates was like, "All right, stand up." And she's looking right at me and I was like, "No." And, as soon as Mr. Schneider finished [with the over the speaker recitation of the Pledge], the teacher was like, "Get your stuff and get out of my room." So, I was like, "Bye." And then I got sent to Mr. Schneider's office and he was like, questioning me on why I didn't do it and how I felt about our soldiers and yeah…[I said] 'cause I don't have to do it. It's my right to not do it.

DSL: You said that to him?

Antonio: Yeah. And he said it was their right to ask me to do it and, "Oh, good for you" [he says sarcastically as if he is telling his principal]. And, I don't do it. Um, especially now. From the fact of that, like they feel as though they can make me do it. Hmm. No. So yeah, that's that.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

As Antonio described the beginning of his resistance of the Pledge, he relays that his teacher was quite upset with his decision and how he persisted despite being "kicked out" and then sent to the principal's office. Not only is Antonio already seen as deviant for being an "out" gay male student, but in protesting the Pledge, he is very explicitly deviating from the political norms of the school and remaining steadfast in his beliefs in the face of power (via his teacher's admonishment and having to advocate for his choice with the principal). Recalling that he lives and learns in a small community is also important as his resistance became known not just to his teachers and peers in his class period, but the larger school community and classmates. I asked him about this added layer of deviating and resisting in such a small community.

DSL: You've gotten pushback, you continue to have pushback and it's such a small school. What motivates you to keep taking a seat [during the Pledge]?

Antonio: The fact that really, it's just myself because, um, have you ever been in Lenard's psychology class? He likes to call us sheeps 'cause we just do what we're told [as a human species.] And I do, I'm like that with some things. But I found as I got older, I began going against what people say I should do because I'm my own person and I mean, I don't know. I feel as though you're trying to rule me, not you specifically, but like whoever it is, and I don't like that feeling.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

When I ask Antonio what kind of comments he's heard or pushback he's received he mentions,

People saying I don't respect our troops and stuff like that. And it's not that I don't respect our troops because I do because I mean they do fight for our country and our freedom. But I feel as though there are other ways I can support our troops than reciting something to a flag. I don't know. I have a very standoffish view with it. Like to me, I'm not very nationalistic, is that the word I'm looking for? To me, it's a flag. That's it. The real heart or whatever it is of our country are the soldiers themselves. So, I don't know.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

I do not wish to diminish the importance of Antonio's protest, especially when considering the current political climate in which it is carried out: a small town in a politically conservative county and state. However, it is important to note that while seen as a major transgression by some of his peers (and faculty), Antonio still maintains that he has respect for the military, troops, and that the "real heart" of the country are its soldiers. As a matter of fact, most students, including those who identified as left leaning and/or LGBTQ abstained from challenging or outright expressed similar views.[42] This is far from a radically leftist politic. He does not critique the military, nor does he align with Colin Kaepernick's protest concerning police brutality. He does not appreciate the act of standing for the Pledge because he sees this as blind allegiance and authoritative. While his deviance from the political and cultural norms of the school (and country) is important, so too is considering that his move in aligning with the military serves normative ends. As Puar (2007) has discussed, there are ways that LGTBQ individuals ascribe to the nationalist project in a form of interest convergence—a way to be and function as "deviant' within the larger White hetero dominant political structure that maintains their privilege in relation to others. Puar (2007) describes, homonationalism,

> may support forms of heteronormativity and the class, racial, and citizenship privileges they require. The historical and contemporaneous production of an emergent normativity, homonormativity, ties the recognition of homosexual subjects, both legally and representationally, to the national and transnational political agendas of U.S. Imperialism. Homonormativity can be read as a formation complicit with and invited into the biopolitical valorization of life in its inhabitation and reproduction of heteronormative norms. (p. 9)

I will not go so far as to say that Antonio consciously chooses to align with normative ideals to reify an Imperialist project, yet there does exists a possibility that LGBTQ students may ascribe to some normative politics as a way of lessening the pressures and consequences of being "deviant." While Naomi and Kylie talk about not caring what their peers think, they and Antonio and others relayed how contentious the environment can be and how undesirable it is to be "different." With regards to the possible social consequences stemming from his protest, I asked Antonio if he had lost friends over his stance. He answered,

> *Antonio*: No, not directly, but I feel as though like I may have prevented myself from becoming friends with the left side of the [US] Government [class]room. Like for my birthday, everyone sang Happy Birthday except for the left side. And it's because I don't stand for the pledge […] Naomi, she heard them talking about it and she let me know. She's like, "You know why? And then it's like, "I'm assuming it's because I'm gay." And she was

---

[42] In a unique moment, Matt, a white male student who identified as LGTBQ, posed a question once in class as Mr. Lenard discussed the democracy-building function of the U.S. military wherein he asked why these operations weren't seen as a continuation of US Imperialism. My reading of the interaction was that he asked this without sarcasm and without seeing the potential of a critique of US foreign policy. Mr. Lenard chuckled a bit, but moved on without really answering the question.

like, "No. They said it's because you don't stand for the pledge." I was like, "Oh well, I don't care." So yeah.

DSL: Does it bum you out?

Antonio: No, because, I don't know. I feel like if it did bum me out, I'd be seeking validation from them, but I don't care.

DSL: And they're not your friends the people on the left side of the room, they're not in your friend group?

Antonio: No. Not even close. [laughs]

DSL: Why not even close?
Antonio: Um, well, again, they're like very like conservative. Um, and a lot of times they're just jerks. They're just rude to people and they say, "Oh, I'm just being blunt." No, you're being rude.

DSL: To everyone in general?

Antonio: Yeah. Yeah. In school, to people. Yeah. And I don't, I'm not for that. Don't be rude. Okay?

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

This disdain that Antonio felt from his peers was not something he imagined. Naomi also perceived and witnessed this latent hostility. I was able to interview Brad, one of the White male Republican boys who were a part of this class period and to whom both Antonio and Naomi referred. When in the interview protocol I asked about current political events and the topic of the NFL and Colin Kaepernick's protest came up, Brad mentioned Antonio and his choosing to sit for the Pledge. He was adamant that it was wrong, disrespectful, and shared that if anyone tried that on the football team (of which he was a varsity team member), they would get beat up—again, a latent hostility coming to the surface where he admired the football's team's physical aggression in meting out consequences and/or deterrents to resistance of "patriotism" and "respect for the troops." He also made it very clear to me that he thought Mr. Lenard was wrong for allowing Antonio to continue with his abstention and wished he would put a stop to it.

The Parkland Shooting, #March 4 Our Lives, and Limits to "Deviance." While discourse was expanded and different ideas were made possible to share, student activism and mobilization was practically non-existent. For example, as youth across the country mobilized to protest for gun reform and organized a Walk Out, students at the Small-Town high school felt defeated. When I asked Kylie if she participated in the Walk Out, she responded,

I would like to do the protest myself, but we don't live in like a big city area. So, like we wouldn't have anywhere to like march to or something.

(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)

Antonio also mentioned the smallness as a factor, but in the context of the smallness not making a difference and potentially making it worse on participants in getting in trouble. Further, he states his peers framing of it as "stupid" as a reason he didn't participate.

> *Antonio*: I was for it. Um, but like the reason I didn't participate in like this school is because I knew most of the school is like conservative and so like everyone was like, "Oh, that's stupid." And then the people that did want to do it, there was so little of us, it wouldn't have made a difference. It would have just been like four or five of us that got in trouble. Um, so I mean, I was for them and I'm happy that the students that did do it did it, but I didn't partake in it.
>
> *DSL*: But had there been more of a momentum and like maybe a bigger group of students here, you would have participated?
>
> *Antonio*: Yeah.
> <div align="right">(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)</div>

However, when discussing the future walkouts scheduled for March, Naomi discussed that she would sit it out to avoid consequences.

> Um, I think there's probably a few people that will [walk out], I probably won't, I don't want to get, like they're going to discipline you or whatever. And I understand like the reasoning behind it because it's advocating for, um, the whole issue. But I just, I don't know. I don't know how walking out is gonna do [anything] because I think, also the school being so conservative that it's going to be hard to...And, we're just kind of like a small voice, I guess. So, I don't know...
> <div align="right">(Interview, Small Town High School, April 2018)</div>

Here, Naomi shares that social consequences seemed to matter less to her than academic discipline. While she was willing to resist and challenge norms that might ostracize her socially, the possibility of troubling her academic standing was enough to dissuade her from walking out even as she believed in the larger purpose of the protest.

The challenge to normativity that these LGBTQ youth posed impacted the public sphere by shifting the norms of the school and allowing for deviance in both sexual norms and in political thought and modes of expression. These norms were observed and felt as quite different from the more stringent and narrow norms in the affluent suburb. While important to note the existence and function of this subaltern counterpublic and its relation to the official public sphere of the school, it is also important to temper any utopian view of political life in the small-town HS. While LGBTQ youth and girls' participation positively altered the culture of the school, their ideas and thoughts were often first attempts at countering their conservative peers' well-researched talking points. While Naomi, for example, wondered why we would not prioritize climate change as it impacts everyone, her Republican male peers would rattle off what seemed like Fox News or Rush Limbaugh talking points about a conspiracy to hurt the American economy with talks of carbon pollution while China goes unpunished. For many youths, this was the first time hearing such arguments and it proved difficult for them to formulate counterarguments off the cuff and in real time. And, it was this framing—as an argument and not an open dialogue with sincere and honest questions and voicing of values—that contributed to a latent hostility that permeated the classroom/school public sphere. Girls' honest questions like Naomi's about climate change were often scoffed at and framed as naïve

and uneducated, not as matter-of-fact bluntness getting at the heart of the matter. While at times left-leaning girls and LGBTQ youth would offer a challenge to the dominant conservative ideas (which was more than how students in the suburb participated), the dialogue would usually end there as the LGBTQ and left leaning kids did not have their talking points at the ready.

Conclusion: Cultural and Political Norms and the (Re)Production of a Settler Public Sphere

        As the findings in this chapter show, the cultural and political norms that exist in each school site aid in the (re)production of settler citizenship. Along with hegemonic pedagogy in Chapter 1 and the communities of settler practice discussed in Chapter 2, cultural and political norms where co-constitutive of dominant White heteropatriarchal and settler ideologies which served to demarcate the normative filed of citizenship. Non-normative students' self-policing toward a particular cultural norm illustrates how the overall culture of the community and school shaped the official public sphere at each school site. Both through interviews and observations, left-leaning students took care to temper their political views and discussed the latent hostility toward those who challenged or resisted norms—from clothing and style, to personality and political ideas. However, in the small-town, I observed more resistance to heteropatriarchal norms: girls claimed more space to speak and express their ideas as did some outspoken LGBTQ students who resisted via their deviance (Cohen, 2004) and expanded the discursive space of the public sphere (Fraser, 1990). This deviance in the small-town high school allowed for non-normativity politically in ways that were not observed in the suburban high school.

        While some may explain the hegemony of conformity—the in-groups versus the out-groups, the desire for dressing cool and having nice clothes—and how these serve as markers for social status—as par for the course in adolescence, it is the transferability of this dynamic onto the realm of politics that I have interrogated. Moreover, social status and the power associated with this must be observed through lenses of race, gender, class, and sexuality as these markers function to regulate a particular way of being *politically* in school and in the community at large. These ways of being are not occurring in isolation to the larger communities in which these schools are situated; these power struggles and "status" markers are being negotiated and mediated in and through schooling. And, as the participants from the suburban school show, how one gets to "be" in school is evident in their description of Lululemon leggings, black Jeep Wranglers, straight, blonde hair and Vineyard Vines, but, these brands and stylization also translate to the political ideologies and opinions and expressions thereof that are allowed and given space in the public sphere of the classroom. Lululemons are "in" just as Trump hoodies are. Crazy kitten socks and too many bohemian bracelets on one's wrists[43] are "out" as is being perceived as "loud." Arguing that perhaps Taliban soldiers may engage in humane practices in their code of war is definitely "out," like rainbow hair, Hillary buttons, and girls who skateboard. Non-normative ideas are marginalized, and in these communities, political non-normativity— left-leaning, Democratic, ideas that are not in the purview of right-wing conservative thinking—results in a marginal identity to possess. And, for adolescents in both sites who articulated the related social consequences of not being "in", being marginalized or associated with additional marginalized positionalities (being bi-racial and a Democrat, for example) would be enough of to deter them from outwardly critiquing or challenging the hegemony.

     As such, the protocols governing the discursive space are derivative of and in service to the perpetuation of settler logics (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) and a particular settler-normed civic education where a White normative citizen is disciplined via patriarchal, heteronormative, and

---

[43] This was shared by Charlotte, a white female student in the suburb who identified as conservative leaning. I did not include excerpts from her interview in the body of the chapter as I focused here on left-leaning girls' experiences, however, she also corroborated many of the clothing and aesthetic norms of the school.

racialized norms. In this way, the data here reveal a settler-normed public sphere and how students both self-policed and challenged these protocols. These cultural and political norms are how settler hegemony is made visible in relational, material, and symbolic ways in the school space. Thinking of schools and classrooms as a public sphere allows us to see how norms operating in school aide in this endeavor—again, not just in content, but in form.

While right-wing ideology served as the political norm at both school sites as described in previous chapters, there were distinct cultural differences across the affluent suburban and small-town sites that impacted the public sphere of each school. In the suburb, the bounds of normativity, and the gravity of the social consequences for those deemed as non-normative, were more rigid and more clearly articulated by suburban students. For example, with regards to gendered norms, girls talked much less frequently, for less amount of time, and at lower volumes. They also mostly spoke out loud in class only when called on by the teacher or when they needed to earn extra participation points for the week. Girls' muted and almost submissive engagement in the public sphere of the classroom was a stark contrast to the palpable "frat bro" culture that existed wherein White male students spoke often, loudly, expressed unsolicited opinions, posed rhetorical questions, and shared their knowledge of political events; frequently their modes of expression bordering on disrespect, disdain, and sarcasm toward society, their peers, and their young, White, female teacher.

In the small town, more fluidity existed as there was some space for challenges to cultural, political, gender, and sexual norms. Girls in the small-town high school took up more space in the public sphere of the classroom than did their suburban counterparts and often took on a combative, yet respectful, stance with their peers and their older, White, male teachers. I would describe girls in the small town as scrappy—ready and willing to argue their point and not hold back reactions to class content, current events, or what they saw as ignorant comments by their male peers or the President. This energy, however, was not matched by their male peers. Boys in this school spoke more often than girls, but in more muted ways— lower in volume and affect; how one may engage when one thinks one is right and has nothing to prove. Within the public sphere of the classroom, boys in the small-town were not as brash as their suburban male counterparts but were nevertheless heard and their point of views appeased. Yet, while there was more malleability with regard to how girls could exist and be in the space, students of color in the small-town hardly ever expressed their opinions in class—a phenomena that also rang true in the suburban high school, demonstrating that while economic make-up may be different, racialization functioned similarly for students of color in predominantly White spaces to silence and regulate their participation.

In this way, these findings complicate and add nuance to larger understandings with regard to politics. As the data above point to, class is not merely a predictor of particular political ideas because one wishes to uphold economic interests, but because these "economic" interests are inextricably linked to social interests and investments in belonging to a particular community. These data make visible a possessive investment in Whiteness, in suburban affluence, in how a particular settler politic operates at the local, school level and the perceived dangers of divesting (or even the perception that students might be disinvested) from these norms.

While there were concrete differences at the small-town school that allowed for an expanded public sphere where difference was a normative occurrence (albeit still viewed with disdain by conservative students), it was only marginally more expanded than at the suburban school. Students were still marginalized and harassed for their views as the "riling up" of Naomi and the refusal by some conservative classmates to sing Happy Birthday to Antonio show. Further, the expanded public sphere did not result in increased mobilization—at least, not during the academic year (2017-2018) in which I conducted my fieldwork. Perhaps seeds have been sown through exposure to difference that will flourish later for those in the lower grades or that will develop more fully in the participants as they become adults and are living their post-secondary lives. However, during the

academic year, their "resistance" in the public sphere via conversation and discourse had its limits as their experience with student walkouts shows.

Given the experience shared above, practitioners and education scholars must consider how non-normative students experience politics in school and how they are forced to negotiate their political ideas and subjectivities. It is not merely a matter of introducing political and controversial topics into the course material, but the fears and latent aggression experienced by these students speak to larger cultural issues that serve as not only a backdrop but give shape to how students experience the curriculum. Very few outward expressions of resistance or challenge to conservative politics were outwardly shared in the public sphere of the classroom and when these did occur, they were most often expressed by students who held 'non-normative' identities (that is, were non cis-gendered, non-heterosexual, non-White, non-male) which served to reify the ideas themselves as what "Others" have and further stigmatize already marginalized students. Further, as the students in this chapter shared, they then had to navigate the public classroom and the private sphere of social relations in school and communities demonstrating that while the categories between private and public may provide some utility in, for example, helping to determine pedagogical interventions, the two spheres cannot be treated as separate as Fraser (1990) makes clear. The personal is political and the political, as shared in the public classroom space, has implications for the personal.

Further, while some may argue that these "deviant" students' presence in the classroom space is perhaps the most organic and relevant educational expressions of engagement for civic change and potential for democratic deliberation, it gambles on the chance that non-dominant students will "bring these in" to the classroom and places the responsibility of teaching non-dominant political ideas on these students. It also further exposes them amidst a larger political backdrop that wishes to extinguish their existence. On this note, it bears repeating that failure to create space and/or protect non-normative students within a White settler heteropatriarchal public sphere of the classroom, results in oppressive pedagogy. As such, it is crucial for practitioners to wrestle with the value and importance they truly place on not only non-dominant political ideas, but the students who embody them.

Figure 6. An entryway, Indian Springs Elementary, Columbus, Ohio.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Just What Is Settler Colonialism and What's It Doing in A Nice Field Like Civic Education?

This project makes the case for theoretical and empirical engagement with settler colonialism in the field of civic education as it allows for much needed interrogations of ideologies and practices that make up the ruling paradigm in the field and that too often mask and reify processes of settler reproduction: White supremacy, anti-Blackness, and indigenous erasure and elimination. Starting with/from settler colonialism allows us to better answer the question: What is civic education derivative of and what is it in service to? As Wolfe (2006) declared, settler colonialism is a structure, not an event as it did not begin and end with contact, but continues to structure, among other things, our politics and education. As stated earlier, this illuminates the central problematic within civic education paradigms that position the learning of civic knowledges, dispositions, and skills as general public "goods" without sufficiently interrogating the ideologies undergirding these ideas. Settler colonial theorizing allows the work to be placed in context and within larger structural forces as well as to show how settler colonial structures are reproduced in everyday school life. *Reading, Writing, and Right Wing (Re)Production: The Teaching and Learning of Settler Citizenship* offers this contribution.

In Chapter 2, *Hegemony and Pedagogy: Political Neutrality as Pedagogical Ideal, Right Wing (Re)Production in Practice*, I discuss teachers' and students' discursive framing of political neutrality as the ideal pedagogical stance. Teachers expressed not wanting to be seen as indoctrinating students and potentially bringing on parent or administrative backlash, yet non-neutrality was only discussed with regard to "liberal" or non-conservative ideas. Similarly, students described a rejection to non-neutral pedagogy, yet only described left-leaning ideas as instances where this neutrality was breached showing that, in these predominantly conservative school communities, neutrality was a byproduct of right-wing hegemony where the status quo (right wing politics) was seen as the "common sense" and deviations were determined non-neutral. I then show that teachers' pedagogical choices (re)produced right-wing politics that affirmed settler ideologies through implicit and explicit endorsements and how these manifested differently across both sites: pedagogical choices in the small-town tended to more explicit, while right-wing endorsements at the suburban high school manifested in more implicit ways. This guise of neutrality also functions as a settler move to innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012) allowing for right-wing and settler politics to go unnamed and positioning teachers and students as innocent, with no complicity, in the reproduction of settlerness.

In Chapter 3, *Communities of (Settler) Practice: Funds of (Settler) Knowledge and the Shared Repertoires of Settlerness*, I shifted the focus onto White, conservative students—the demographic which made up the majority at both school sites. I show how these students access and enact particular funds of right-wing and settler knowledge and how these then converge in the classroom and school to co-construct a community of practice in which the shared repertoires of settler politics are developed. Although some differences existed across the suburb and small-town, most striking were the similarities of these repertoires: meritocratic justifications for possession that, at times, drew from racist tropes and investments in Whiteness, an affinity/use of conspiracism and questionable news sources to understand US politics, racist conceptualizations of Others and Others' politics, and perceptions of their own marginalization as White, conservative students. Illustrating that while economic class may structure schooling and life experiences in different ways for students in the small-town and the suburb, Whiteness and settlerness largely shape the contours of these students' political ideologies and their classrooms function as spaces to share and develop settler logics.

In Chapter 4, *"Out" of (Settler) Bounds: Cultural Norms, Deviance, and the Actually Existing Settler Public Sphere in School*, I demonstrate the relationship between the cultural norms of each community and the field of politics that were dis/allowed in each space as perceived by non-dominant students at each site. Focusing on non-normative students who identified as left leaning who were female and/or LGBTQ and/or students of color, I show how cultural and political norms were experienced in everyday school life. In the suburb, this was made manifest in a silencing of girls' expression overall—their affect, their aesthetics, and especially, with regard to left-leaning politics. For girls of color in the suburb, the actually existing public sphere took on additional silencing as their hypervisibility as "Other" required their heightened vigilance so as to not draw the ire of the majority. In the working-class small town, cultural and political norms were still largely shaped by race, gender, and conservative politics, but here girls and outspoken LGTBQ students who identified as White claimed more space in the classroom allowing for a slight expansion in the discursive space. Across both sites, however, I argue that cultural norms shaped political normativity and in demarcating an official public sphere determining who and what was "in" versus "out," functioned to dictate the boundaries of citizenship calibrated on the White settler as normative. And yet even this expansion of discursive space, when compared with the silencing that students of color experienced in the affluent suburb, demonstrates the "wages of Whiteness" (Roediger, 1999) that youth in the small town still possess, given that working-class White students, while negatively impacted by economic liberalism, continue to reap the benefits of Whiteness and settlerness within U.S. liberal democracy.

Motivated by Gloria Ladson Billing's (1998) seminal piece, *Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's it Doing in a Nice Field like Education?*, this project shows what a settler colonial lens "does" for civic education research and calls for more scholarship in the field—especially that which sets out to interrogate and dismantle unequal power relations— to grapple with the settler colonial condition. It also offers additional theoretical and methodological contributions to the field of education. Theoretically, it demonstrates the utility of starting from settlement in grappling with issues of inequality and oppression in civic education. It makes visible fundamental issues and limits of civic education by not only consider the workings of race, class, gender, and sexuality in and through education, but nests these processes and relationships as deriving from and working in service to the maintenance of settlerness in the US. Further, the use of analytic concepts (hegemony, communities of practice, funds of knowledge, normativity, deviance, the public sphere) that span across disciplinary fields (education, critical social theory and political theory) and synthesizing these within a settler colonial theoretical framing, serves two purposes: 1) it animates these concepts by placing them within structures of power that account for settlement and coloniality, and 2) offers an analytic process for making settler colonialism visible in everyday life in schools and uncovering settler tracks in education. As such, this study's contributions span diverse fields including civic education, critical race and decolonial studies, political theory, youth political development and socialization, and critical youth studies.

The methodological contributions of *Reading, Writing, and Right-Wing (Re)Production* are multifaceted. As a political ethnography of schooling, it expands the research base exploring the ways in which schools not only shape academic achievement, but also play a role in (re)producing social and political subjectivities. It builds on the literature in school ethnographies that have traditionally explored the (re)production of race, class, culture, and sexuality, to demonstrate how schools also serve to reproduce students' *political* selves and specifically how settler citizenship is (re)produced in schools. Further, as a comparative ethnography and investigating the teaching and learning of political ideologies across two predominantly White yet economically different school communities, it draws more scholarly attention to the ways that race and class function to structure differential civic learning opportunities. It offers insights into the convergence and divergences of

Whiteness and economic class and the impact of these on political ideologies and schooling experiences. It helps to fill a lacuna in research with regard to how homogenous schooling environments, specifically predominantly White and politically conservative schools, impact the development of youth in these spaces and how different classed experiences within these schools (re)produce particular ideas and engagement with politics. Importantly, its purposeful focus on racially and economically privileged school communities—that is, making predominantly White schools the object of analysis—enacts an epistemological re-shifting of the research "gaze" unto schools and communities normatively positioned as the ideal to interrogate the teaching and learning occurring therein. In this way, this project shows the importance of calling into question where "inequality" and "problems" reside in educational research by focusing on communities not often situated as "damaged" (Tuck, 2009) or associated with deficiency. In so doing, it opens up epistemological space and demonstrates the utility and urgency for further research into "good schools."

Civic Education is Not a Metaphor: Decolonization, Incommensurability, and Unsettling Settler Citizenship in Schools

> *When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future. Decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks. The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonization is yet another form of settler appropriation. When we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym.* (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3)

Decolonization is not a metaphor—as Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us—and after the year I physically spent at these two school sites and as I revisited throughout my analysis and writing, it is clear to me that civic education is no metaphor either. As scholars and practitioners, we often frame the work in classrooms as preparing students for their potential civic futures. Since most students in K-12 schooling are not of voting age, we may think of their civic education as practice and preparation for what will or might be. We may frame class content and activities, such as student debates on laws and policies, as theoretical exercises. However, none of what constitutes civic education is theoretical. What and how students learn about politics and their role within it, derive from concrete realities and result in material consequences. As the chapters of this dissertation demonstrate, everyday school processes—pedagogy, co-constructed learning communities, and cultural/political norms that make up the public sphere of schools—work individually and collectively to circumscribe a field where settler politics are (re)produced. And, for the students in this study who benefit from oppressive social structures, civic education is not theoretical in content nor form as they are able to practice and enact the citizenship that they study in school and embody in society at large. In this way, civic education is implicated in normalizing and sustaining settler futurity (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013).

Writing about the relationship between citizenship and settlerness, Moreton-Robinson (2015) states,

> as a means of controlling differently racialized populations enclosed within its borders, white subjects are *disciplined* (though to different degrees) *as citizens* to invest in the nation as a white possession. As citizens of this white nation, they are contracted into, and imbued with, a

sense of belonging and ownership. It is a sense of belonging derived from ownership, understood within the logic of capital, and, in its self-legitimation, it mobilizes the legend of Cook's discovery of an unpossessed land. (Moreton-Robinson, p. 122)

If political education is to engender particular virtues, knowledges, and skills so that students may consciously reproduce their society (Gutmann, 1999) then we must assess and address the ideologies that constitute these virtues, knowledges, and skills and how civic education works to discipline White subjects as citizens to invest in the nation as a White possession. Even projects aimed at minimizing the "civic empowerment gap" tend to focus on inclusion for Black and brown youth to better engage in democratic participation. But, participation and inclusion into what? Civic education functions as the explicit learning of the ins and outs of settlement; and, even as we might advocate for multicultural and critical civic education, we do so in a field demarcated by White supremacy, antiBlackness, and denials of Native life and sovereignty. As recent scholarship focused on the schooling experiences of BIPOC students in politically progressive contexts show, even social justice centered schools (Shange, 2019) and race-focused equity programs (Stone, 2019) engage in anti-Blackness, White supremacy, and settler logics. To teach otherwise is incommensurable with the larger project of (civic) education as it currently stands.

Toward Unsettling Civic Education

To teach, research, and theorize "otherwise" in civic education would entail taking seriously the project of decolonization which, again, is not a metaphor. As Tuck and Yang write, decolonization is, "the abolition of land as property and upholds the sovereignty of Native land and people. Decolonizing the Americas means all land is repatriated and all settlers become landless. It is incommensurable with the redistribution of Native land/life as common-wealth" (Tuck & Yang, pp. 26-27). A civic education intending to work toward decolonization would reveal property as an organizing principle of settler politics and would take seriously what it would mean to eliminate settler property rights and settler sovereignty. Moreover, as Sabzalian (2019) writes, "anticolonial citizenship education is a necessary step toward engendering land-based solidarities and inclusive conceptions of citizenship and justice that account for the well-being of land and all it sustains" (p. 334). It would recognize "how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically. This is precisely why decolonization is necessarily unsettling, especially across lines of solidarity" (Tuck & Yang, p.7). A desire to unsettle civic education therefore carries important implications as it would require, first and foremost, scholars and practitioners to be subversive and disloyal to colonialism. This is the incommensurability of civic education (as currently practiced) as it is imbricated in justifying the state's very existence. This is no easy undertaking. As teachers in this study relayed, even hinting at teaching something perceived as "liberal" or "political" was viewed as high risk and something that could cost people their jobs or make difficult their work conditions. Decolonization, as Fanon (1963) writes, "never takes place unnoticed" (p. 3) and as such, given the findings of this study and the specific sites in which this project was carried out, it is perhaps easy to dismiss the potential for unsettling civic education as a forgone impossibility. However, the insularity present in predominately White schools–of ideas, of accumulation, of settlerness—must be disrupted and unsettled.

The findings here show that US Government classrooms (and schooling in general) could provide space— however flawed, fleeting, and laced with problems—for imaging an otherwise. In theorizing the decolonial possibilities of educational institutions, Yang (2017) writes, "regardless of its colonial structure, because school is an assemblage of machines and not a monolithic institution,

its machinery is always being subverted toward decolonizing purposes (p. xiii). While the students in the suburban school resisted the normative space to a lesser degree than the small-town students, students in both spaces challenged normative ideas, either publicly or privately, and at times, expressed a desire for an "otherwise." Civic educators wishing to unsettle civic education must find space to subvert and create and support spaces for these students' voices and bodies to exist and be.

"If colonization is about ownership and territoriality for some at the expense of others," Patel (2016) writes, "anticolonial stances must imagine still being in relation with each other but for survivance: in order to grow and to thrive from lived agency" (p. 8). What would civic education classrooms look like, if instead of ushering students into settler citizenships, we were to facilitate curricula and pedagogy that worked toward a collective citizenship of survivance? Furthermore, what new citizenships might emerge if classroom spaces—and the field of civic education for that matter—challenged democracy itself? As Yang (2017) writes,

> One ought to be a little agnostic about democracy when inside a colonizing machine. And alternatives to democracy exist. We might think of various indigenous forms of governances such as elderships or matrilineal land stewardship. We might think about hip-hop governance, or even revolutionary organizations, as a form of relation-based organizing. (p. 51)

Rejecting colonial blindness in education (Calderon, 2009) would entail not only challenging the myths about democracy as it actually exists (or rather, fails to exist), but would challenge democracy as the only viable and legitimate form of governance. Doing so would expand pedagogical and curricular space for students to think outside normative parameters toward possible unsettled political futures.

Finally, unsettling civic education in all contexts requires that we, as students, as educators, as researchers, as theorists—act as "subversive beings [who] wreck, scavenge, retool, and reassemble the colonizing [institution] into decolonizing contraptions" (Yang, 2017, p. xiii). We can utilize the structure of public schools and of civic education spaces to enact insurgent pedagogies (Ross & Vinson, 2014) aimed at developing and organizing around "aspiring hegemonies" (Smucker, 2015). If we take seriously the idea that the purpose of political education is for a conscious reproduction of society, then starting from settlement and offering decolonial possibilities is a necessary endeavor as anything short of that fails to provide students with the understandings of why structures are as they are and restrains their ability to imagine what could be; the "not yet and, at times, the not anymore" (Tuck, 2009). Only in acknowledging the colonial nature of the state and subsequent and enduring violence of the governance structures to which it has given rise can scholars and practitioners forge a new path forward.

References

Abowitz, K. K., & Harnish, J. (2006). Contemporary discourses of citizenship. *Review of educational research*, *76*(4), 653-690.

Alexander, R. (2012). *Education by dispossession: schooling on the new suburban frontier.* [Doctoral Dissertation, UC Berkeley]. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5q28d3pm

Allen, J., McCausland, P., & Farivar, C. (2020, April 24) *Want a mask contract or some ventilators? A White House connection helps.* NBCnews.com. https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/political-influence-skews-trump-s coronavirus-response-n1191236

Althusser, L. (1970). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (notes towards an investigation), Ben Brewster (Translation), *Monthly Review Press*. http://www.csun.edu/~snk1966/Lous%20Althusser%20Ideology%20and%20Ideological%20 State%20Apparatuses.pdf

Anderson, C. (2016). *White rage: The unspoken truth of our racial divide.* Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto schooling: A political economy of urban educational reform.* Teachers College Press.

Apple, M. W. (1996). *Cultural politics and education.* Teachers College Press.

Applebaum, B. (2016). Critical whiteness studies. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, 1-23. https://doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.5

Arvin, M., Tuck, E., & Morrill, A. (2013). Decolonizing feminism: Challenging connections between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy. *Feminist Formations*, 25(1), 8–34.

Baldwin, J. (1998). On being White…and other lies. In D.R. Roediger (Ed.), *Black on White: Black writers on what it means to be White.* (pp. 177-180). Schocken Books.

Banks, J. A. (1990). Citizenship education for a pluralistic democratic society. *The Social Studies,* 81(5), 210-214.

Banks, J. A. (2001). Citizenship education and diversity implications for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *52*(1), 5-16.

Battaglio, S. (2016, November 3). When red meant Democratic and blue was Republican. A brief history of TV electoral maps. *Los Angeles Times*. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/tv/la-et-st-electoral-map-20161102-htmlstory.html

Becker, H. S. (2009). How to find out how to do qualitative research. *International Journal of Communication* 3, 545-553.

Berlet, C., & Lyons, M. N. (2000). *Right-Wing populism in America.* The Guilford Press.

Bhattacharya, T. (2017). *Social reproduction theory: Remapping class, recentering oppression.* Pluto Press.

Blee, K. M. & Creasap, K. A. (2010). Conservative and right-wing movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*, (36), 269-286.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2018). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States.* (5th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. (1977). Reproduction in education, society and culture. Sage.

Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (2011). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life.* Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Bradley, J. (2018, May 25). *New AP guidance: Avoid use of "chain migration" language on following grassroots campaign.* Immigrant Legal Resource Center. https://www.ilrc.org/new-ap-guidance-avoid-use-"chain-migration"-language-family migration-following-grassroots-campaign

Bricker, D. C. (1989). *Classroom life as civic education: Individual achievement and student cooperation in schools. professional ethics in education series.* Teachers College Press.

Brown, J.S. & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. *Organization Science,* 2(1), 40–57.

Brown, W. (2003). Neo-liberalism and the end of liberal democracy. *Theory & Event, 7*(1).

Bucholtz, M. (2010). *White kids: Language, race, and styles of youth identity.* Cambridge University Press.

Byrd, Jodi A. 2011. *The transit of empire.* University of Minnesota Press.

Calderón, D. (2009). Making explicit the jurisprudential foundations of multiculturalism: The continuing challenges of colonial education in US schooling for Indigenous education. In A. Kempf (Ed.), *Breaching the Colonial Contract: Anti-Colonialism in the U.S. and Canada* (pp. 53–77). Springer.

Calderon, D. (2014). Uncovering settler grammars in curriculum. Educational Studies, 50(4), 313-338.

Carnegie Corporation. (2011). The civic mission of schools: Guardians of democracy. https://www.carnegie.org/media/filer_public/ab/dd/abdda62e-6e84-47a4-a043 348d2f2085ae/ccny_grantee_2011_guardian.pdf

Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Kline, P., & Saez, E. (2014). Where is the land of opportunity? The geography of intergenerational mobility in the United States. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 129*(4), 1553-1623.

Cramer, K. J. (2016). *The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker.* University of Chicago Press.

Cohen, C. J. (1997). Punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens: The radical potential of queer politics?. *GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay studies, 3*(4), 437-465.

Cohen, C. J. (2004). Deviance as resistance: A new research agenda for the study of Black politics. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race, 1*(1), 27-45.

Cohen, C. J. (2010). *Democracy remixed: Black youth and the future of American politics.* Oxford University Press.

Coloma, R. S. (2013). Empire: An Analytical Category for Educational Research. *Educational Theory* 63, 639–658.

Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition.* University of Minnesota Press.

Dawson, M. (2019, January 15). Ohio is now a red state. Can Democrats ever take it back? *The Washington Post.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/01/15/ohio-is-now-red-state-can-democrats-ever-take-it-back/

Day, I. (2015). Being or nothingness: Indigeneity, antiblackness, and settler colonial critique. *Critical Ethnic Studies, 1*(2), 102-121.

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror.* Temple University Press.

Deloria, P. J. (1998). *Playing Indian.* Yale University Press.

Demerath, P. (2009). *Producing success: The culture of personal advancement in an American high school.* University of Chicago Press.

Diamond, S. (1995). *Roads to dominion: Right-wing movements and political power in the United States.* The Guilford Press.

Doosje, B., van den Bos, K., Loseman, A., Feddes, A. R., & Mann, L. (2012). "My in-group is superior!": Susceptibility for radical right-wing attitudes and behaviors in Dutch youth. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research, 5*(3), 253-268.

Douglas, K. M., Uscinski, J. E., Sutton, R. M., Cichocka, A., Nefes, T., Ang, C. S., Deravi, F. (2019). Understanding Conspiracy Theories. *Advances in Political Psychology*, 40(1), 3-35. https://doi: 10.1111/pops.12568

Dozono, T. (2016). *Jenseits von being and reason: Imagining otherwise and the World History*

classroom. Publication No. 10251030). [Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (2016). *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*. Verso Books.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1999/1935). Black Reconstruction in the United States, 1860-1880. The Free Press.

Dumas, M. J. (2016). Against the dark: Antiblackness in education policy and discourse. *Theory Into Practice*, *55*(1), 11-19.

Dumas, M. J., & ross, k. m. (2016). "Be real Black for me" Imagining BlackCrit in education. *Urban Education*, *51*(4), 415-442.

Eckert, P. (1989). *Jocks and burnouts: Social categories and identity in the high school*. Teachers College Press.

Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (1992). Think practically and look locally: Language and gender as community-based practice. *Annual review of anthropology*, *21*(1), 461-488.

Edsall, T. B. (2019, June 26). *There Are Really Two Distinct White Working Classes*, The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/26/opinion/pelosi-white-working-class.html

Edsall, T. (2019, August 28). We Aren't Seeing White Support for Trump for What It Is. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/28/opinion/trump-white-voters.html

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.

Fanon, F. (2007). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove Press.

Flanagan, C. A., Cumsille, P., Gill, S., & Gallay, L. S. (2007). School and community climates and civic commitments: Patterns for ethnic minority and majority students. *Journal of educational psychology*, *99*(2), 421.

Frankenberg, R. (Ed.) (1997). *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*. Duke University Press

Frankenberg, R. (1997). Introduction: Local Whitenesses, Localizing Whiteness. In Ruth Frankenberg (Ed.), *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, Duke University Press, 1-34.

Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text*, (25/26), 56-80.

Freeman, D., & Bentall, R. P. (2017). The concomitants of conspiracy concerns. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 52(5), 595–604. https://doi:10.1007/s00127-017-1354-4

Freire, P. (2002). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum.

GenForward (2020, February). Politics and the 2020 Election by Race and Ethnicity. http://genforwardsurvey.com/assets/uploads/2020/03/2020-02-February-Slide-Deck-Politics-and-the-2020-Election-by-Race-and-Ethnicity-final-.pdf

Gillborn, D. (1992). Citizenship, 'race,' and the hidden curriculum. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, *2*(1), 57-73.

Ginwright, S., & Cammarota, J. (2007). Youth activism in the urban community: learning critical civic praxis within community organizations. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *20*(6), 693–710. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390701630833

Ginwright, S. & James, T. (2002). From assets to agents of change: Social justice, organizing, and youth development. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 96, 27-46.

Ginwright, S., Noguera, P., & Cammarota, J. (Eds.). (2006). *Beyond resistance! Youth activism and community change: New democratic possibilities for practice and policy for America's youth*. Routledge.

Giroux, H. A. (1983). *Theory and resistance in education: A pedagogy for the opposition*. Bergin & Garvey.

Golec de Zavala, A. G., Cichocka, A., Eidelson, R., & Jayawickreme, N. (2009). Collective narcissism and its social consequences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97(6), 1074–1096. https://doi: 10.1037/a0016904

Golec de Zavala, A., & Cichocka, A. (2012). Collective narcissism and anti-Semitism in Poland. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 15, 213–229. https://doi: 10.1177/1368430211420891

Golec de Zavala, A., & Federico, C. M. (2018). Collective narcissism and the growth of conspiracy thinking over the course of the 2016 United States presidential election: A longitudinal analysis. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *48*(7), 1011-1018. https://doi:10.1002/ejsp.2496

Gonzalez, N., Moll, L. C. & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gordon, A. F. (2008). *Ghostly matters: Haunting and the sociological imagination*. University of Minnesota Press.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. International Publishers.

Grande, S. (2013). Accumulation of the primitive: the limits of liberalism and the politics of occupy Wall Street. *Settler Colonial Studies*, *3*(3–4), 369–380. https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2013.810704.

Grande, S. (2015). *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political thought*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Gupta, Prachi. (2018, October 16). 'Our vote matters very little': Kim TallBear on Elizabeth Warren's attempt to claim Native American heritage". Jezebel. https://theslot.jezebel.com/our-vote-matters-very-little-kim-tallbear-on-elizabeth-1829783321

Gutmann, A. (1999). *Democratic Education*. Princeton.

Habermas, J. (1991). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. MIT press.

Hagerman, M. A. (2020). *White kids: Growing up with privilege in a racially divided America*. NYU Press.

Hahn, C. (1998). *Becoming political: Comparative perspectives on citizenship education*. Suny Press.

Hall, S. (1986). The problem of ideology-Marxism without guarantees. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *10*(2), 28-44.

Haney-López, I. (2015). *Dog whistle politics: How coded racial appeals have reinvented racism and wrecked the middle class*. Oxford University Press.

Harris, C. (1995). Whiteness as Property. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical Race Theory: The key writings that formed the movement*, 276–291. The New Press.

Hess, D. E., & McAvoy, P. (2014). *The political classroom: Evidence and ethics in democratic education*. Routledge.

Hochschild, A. R. (2018). *Strangers in their own land: Anger and mourning on the American right*. The New Press.

Iverson, J. O. (2011). Knowledge, belonging, and Communities of Practice. In H. E. Canary and R. D. McPhee (Eds.) *Communication and organizational knowledge*. (45–52). Routledge.

Iverson, J. O. & McPhee R. D. (2008). Communicating knowing through communities of practice: Exploring internal communicative processes and differences among CoPs. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 36(2), 176–199.

Jardina, A. (2019). *White identity politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Joseph, L., Mahler, M., & Auyero, J. (Eds.). (2007). *New perspectives in political ethnography*. Springer.

Junn, J. (1997). Assimilating or coloring participation? Gender, race, and democratic political participation. In J. Tronto & C. J. Cohen (Eds.). Women transforming politics: An alternative reader. New York University Press.

Junn, J. (2004). Diversity, immigration, and the politics of civic education. *PS: Political Science and*

Politics, 37(2), 253-255.

Khan, S. R. (2012). *Privilege: The making of an adolescent elite at St. Paul's School.* Princeton University Press.

Kahne, J., & Middaugh, E. (2008). High quality civic education: What is it and who gets it? *Social Education, 72*(1), 34.

Kahne, J., Chi, B., & Middaugh, E. (2006). Building social capital for civic and political engagement: The potential of high-school civics courses. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 387-409.

Kahne, J., & Middaugh, E. (2008). High quality civic education: What is it and who gets it? *Social Education, 72*(1), 34.

Keslen (2019, Dec 29). Native Americans, the census' most undercounted racial group, fight for an accurate 2020 tall. *NBCNews.* https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/native-americans-census-most-undercounted-racial-group-fight-accurate-2020-n1105096

King, J. E. (1995). Culture centered knowledge: Black studies, curriculum transformation, and social action. In J. A. Banks & C. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 265-290). Macmillan.

Kirshner, B., Strobel, K., & Fernandez, M. (2003). Critical civic engagement among urban youth. Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education, 2(1), 1-20.

Kitschelt, H. P., & Rehm, P. (2019). Secular partisan realignment in the United States: The socioeconomic reconfiguration of white partisan support since the New Deal Era. *Politics & Society, 47*(3), 425-479.

Kneebone, E. (2016). The changing geography of disadvantage. In S. M. Wachter & L. Ding (Eds.), *Shared Prosperity in America's Communities*, (pp. 41- 56). University of Pennsylvania Press.

Macpherson, C.B. (1962). *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism.* Oxford University Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). Culture versus citizenship: The challenge of racialized citizenship in the United States. In J. A. Banks (Ed.), *Diversity and citizenship education: Global perspectives* (pp. 99–126). John Wiley and Sons.

Lake, M. (2019). *Progressive New World: How settler colonialism and transpacific exchange shaped American reform.* Harvard University Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge University

Lavelle, B., Larsen, M. D., & Gundersen, C. (2009). Strategies for surveys of American Indians. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 73*(2), 385-403

Lee, R. and Ahtone, T. (2020, March 30). Land-grab universities. Expropriated indigenous land is the foundation of the land-grant university system. *High Country News.* https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities?utm_source=pocket-newtab

Leonardo, Z. (2002). The souls of white folk: Critical pedagogy, whiteness studies and globalization discourse. *Race, Ethnicity and Education,* 5 (1): 29-50.

Levine, P. (2009). The civic opportunity gap. *Educational Leadership, 66*(8), 20-25.

Levinson, M. (2010). The Civic Empowerment Gap: Defining the Problem and Locating Solutions. In J. Torney-Purta & C. Flanagan (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth* (pp. 331-361). Wiley & Sons.

Levinson, M. (2012). *No citizen left behind.* Harvard University Press.

Lipsitz, G. (2006). *The possessive investment in whiteness: How white people profit from identity politics.* Temple University Press.

Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1995). *Analyzing social settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis*. Wadsworth.

Luttrell, W. (2010). *Qualitative Educational Research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*. Routledge.

Lujan, C. (1990). *As simple as one, two, three: Census underenumeration among the American Indians and Alaska Natives*. United States Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/1990/adrm/ev90-19.html

Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual review of anthropology*, *24*(1), 95-117.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage.

Matias, C. E. (2013). On the "flip" side: A teacher educator of color unveiling the dangerous minds of white teacher candidates. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 40(2), 53-73.

Melamed, J. (2011). *Represent and destroy: Rationalizing violence in the new racial capitalism*. University of Minnesota Press.

Metzl, J. M. (2019). *Dying of whiteness: How the politics of racial resentment is killing America's heartland*. Basic Books.

Miller-Idriss, C. (2009). *Blood and culture: Youth, right-wing extremism, and national belonging in contemporary Germany*. Duke University Press.

Miller-Idriss, C. (2018). *The extreme gone mainstream: Commercialization and far right youth culture in Germany*. Princeton University Press.

Mills, C. W. (1997). *The racial contract*. Cornell University Press.

Mills, C. W. (2017). *Black rights/white wrongs: the critique of racial liberalism*. Oxford University Press.

Mitchell, K. (2016). Neoliberalism and citizenship. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *The Handbook on Neoliberalism* (pp. 104-115). Routledge.

Mirra, N., Morrell, E. D., Cain, E., Scorza, D., & Ford, A. (2013). Educating for a critical democracy: Civic participation reimagined in the council of youth research. *Democracy and Education*, *21*(1), http://democracyeducationjournal.org/home/ vol21/iss1/3

Moreton-Robinson, A. M. (2001) A possessive investment in patriarchal Whiteness: Nullifying Native title. In P. Nursery-Bray & C. Lee Bacchi, (Eds.), *Left directions: Is there a third way?* (pp. 162-177). University of Western Australia Press.

Moreton-Robinson, A. M. (2015). *The white possessive: Property, power, and indigenous sovereignty*. University of Minnesota Press.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.

Morin, R. and Motel, S. (2012). *A third of Americans say they are in the lower classes*. Pew Research Center: Social & Demographic trends. https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/09/10/a-third-of-americans-now-say-they-are-in-the-lower-classes/

Munguia, H. (2014, September 5). The 2,128 Native American mascots people aren't talking about. *FiveThirtyEight*. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-2128-native-american-mascots-people-arent-talking-about/

Nakano Glenn, E. (2015). Settler colonialism as structure: A framework for comparative studies of US race and gender formation. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, *1*(1), 52-72.

Nellis, A. (2016, June 14). *The color of justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons*. The Sentencing Project. https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/

Oakes, J. (2005). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. Yale University.

Olorunnipa, T., Dawsey, J., Janes, C, & Stanley-Becker, I. (2020, March 31). Governors plead for medical equipment from federal stockpile plagued by shortages and confusion. *The Washington Post.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/governors-plead-for-medical-equipment-from-federal-stockpile-plagued-by-shortages-and-confusion/2020/03/31/18aadda0-728d-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html

Pachirat, T. (2009). The political in political ethnography: Dispatches from the kill Floor. In E. Schatz (Ed.), *Political ethnography: What immersion contributes to the study of power* (pp. 143-161). University of Chicago Press.

Politico. (2016, December 13). 2016 Ohio House Election Results. *Politico.* https://www.politico.com/2016-election/results/map/house/ohio/

Pascoe, C. J. (2011). *Dude, you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school.* University of California Press.

Perry, P. (2002). *Shades of white: White kids and racial identities in high school.* Duke University Press.

Pew Research Center. (2015). *Most say government policies since recession have done little to help middle class, poor.* https://www.people-press.org/2015/03/04/most-say-government-policies-since-recession-have-done-little-to-help-middle-class-poor/

Puar, J. K. (2018). *Terrorist assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times.* Duke University Press.

Pyrko, I., Dörfler, V., & Eden, C. (2017). Thinking together: What makes Communities of Practice work? *Human Relations, 70*(4), 389-409.

Radtke, D. (2017, December 13). Fox and Breitbart are helping Trump mainstream the term "chain migration," a misleading nativist buzzword. *Media Matters.* https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-friends/fox-and-breitbart-are-helping-trump-mainstream-term-chain-migration-misleading-nativist

Reid, S. E. & Valasik, M. (2018): Ctrl+ALT-RIGHT: Reinterpreting our knowledge of white supremacy groups through the lens of street gangs, *Journal of Youth Studies,* 21(10), 1305-1325 https://doi: 10.1080/13676261.2018.1467003

Roediger, D. R. (1999). *The wages of whiteness: Race and the making of the American working class.* Verso.

Ross, E. W., & Vinson, K. D. (2013). Resisting neoliberal education reform: Insurrectionist pedagogies and the pursuit of dangerous citizenship. *Cultural Logic,* 17-45.

Ross, E. W. and Vinson, K. (2014). Dangerous Citizenship. In E. W. Ross (Ed.). *Social Studies Curriculum, The: Purposes, Problems, and Possibilities.* SUNY Press.

Rubin, B. C., Hayes, B., & Benson, K. (2009). "It's the Worst Place to Live": Urban Youth and the Challenge of School-Based Civic Learning. *Theory Into Practice, 48*(3), 213–221. doi.org/10.1080/00405840902997436

Rubin, B. C., & Hayes, B. F. (2010). "No Backpacks" versus "Drugs and Murder": The Promise and Complexity of Youth Civic Action Research. *Harvard Educational Review, 80*(3), 352–379.

Sabzalian, L. (2019). The tensions between Indigenous sovereignty and multicultural citizenship education: Toward an anticolonial approach to civic education. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 47*(3), 311-346. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2019.1639572

Sabzalian, L., & Shear, S. (2018). Confronting colonial blindness in civics education: Recognizing colonization, self-determination, and sovereignty as core knowledge for elementary social studies teacher education. In Shear, S. B., Tschida, C. M., & Bellows, E. (Eds.). *(Re) Imagining Elementary Social Studies: A Controversial Issues Reader,* (pp. 153-176). Information Age Publishing.

Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Sage.

Saldaña, J. and Omasta, M. (2018). *Qualitative Research. Analyzing Life.* Sage Publications.

Schatz, E. (Ed.). (2013). *Political ethnography: What immersion contributes to the study of power.* University of

Chicago Press.

Shange, S. (2019). *Progressive dystopia: Abolition, antiblackness, and schooling in San Francisco.* Duke University Press.

Shear, S. B., Sabzalian L., & Brown Buchanan, L. (2018). Affirming indigenous sovereignty: A civics inquiry. *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, 31 (1), pp. 12–18.

Shear, S. B. & Krutka, D. G. (2019) Confronting settler colonialism: Theoretical and methodological questions about social studies research, *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 47(1), 29-51, https://doi: 10.1080/00933104.2018.1541428

Shehata, S. (2006). Ethnography, Identity, and the Production of Knowledge. In D. Yanow & P. Schwartz-Shea (Eds.)., *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn* (pp. 244-63). Routledge.

Sherrod, L. R. (Ed.). (2006). *Youth activism: An international encyclopedia.* Greenwood Publishing Group.

Simpson, A. (2007). On ethnographic refusal: Indigeneity, 'voice' and colonial citizenship. *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue*, (9).

Simpson, A. (2014). *Mohawk interruptus: Political life across the borders of settler states.* Duke University Press.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies.* New York: Zed Books.

Smith, R. M.(1993). Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America. *The American Political Science Review*, 87 (3), 549-566.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation.* Harcourt Brace.

Stoddart, M. C. J. (2007). Ideology, hegemony, discourse: A critical review of theories of knowledge and power. *Social Thought and Research*, *28*(May), 191–225.

Stone, T. A. (2019). *Emplacing White Possessive Logics: Socializing Latinx Youth into Relations with Land, Community, and Success.* (Publication No. 22615816) [Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Strong, P. T. (2003). Playing Indian in the 1990s: Pocahontas and the Indian in the cupboard. In P. C. Rollins & J. E. O'Connor. (Eds.), *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film* (pp. 187–205). University Press of Kentucky.

Swalwell, K. M. (2013). *Educating activist allies: Social justice pedagogy with the suburban and urban elite.* Routledge.

TallBear, K. (2013). *Native American DNA: Tribal belonging and the false promise of genetic science.* U of Minnesota Press.

Tejeda, C., Espinoza, M., & Gutierrez, K. (2003). Toward a decolonizing pedagogy: Social justice reconsidered. *Pedagogies of difference: Rethinking education for social change*, 9-38.

The Atlantic. (2014). *Gentrification 'Without the Negative' in Columbus, Ohio.* [Video]. Youtube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2Ihu3dzYmU

The Scioto Society (2020). Tecumseh! Retrieved from: https://tecumsehdrama.com/the-show/

Torney-Purta, J., Lehmann, R., Oswald, H., & Schulz, W. (2001). *Citizenship and education in twenty-eight countries: Civic knowledge and engagement at age fourteen.* International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Torney-Purta, J. (2002) The School's Role in Developing Civic Engagement: A Study of Adolescents in Twenty-Eight Countries, *Applied Developmental Science*, 6:4, 203-212, https://doi: 10.1207/S1532480XADS0604_7

Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact.* Blackwell.

Trask, H. K. (1996). Feminism and Indigenous Hawaiian nationalism. *Signs*, 21(4), 906–916.

Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(3), 409–428. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.3.n0016675661t3n15

Tuck, E., & Gaztambide-Fernández, R. A. (2013). Curriculum, replacement, and settler futurity. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, *29*(1).

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education & society*, *1*(1).

Tyson, C. A., & Park, S. C. (2008). Civic education, social justice and critical race theory. In J. Arthur, I. Davies, & C. Hahn (Eds.). *The Sage handbook of education for citizenship and democracy*, (pp. 29-39). Sage Publications, Ltd.

United States Census Bureau. (2019). Quick Facts Ohio. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/OH

Urrieta, L. (2004). Dis-connections in "American" citizenship and the post/neo-colonial: People of Mexican descent and Whitestream2 Pedagogy and curriculum. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *32*(4), 433-458.

Urrieta, L., & Reidel, M. (2008). Citizenship normalizing and white preservice social studies teachers. *Social Justice*, *35*(1 (111), 91-108.

Urrieta Jr, L., & Calderón, D. (2019). Critical Latinx Indigeneities: Unpacking indigeneity from within and outside of Latinized entanglements. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, *13*(2), 145-174.

US Department of Housing and Urban Development. (Spring 2015). Who counts? Identifying Native American populations. Office of Policy Development and Research https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/spring15/highlight2.html

Uscinski, J. E., & Parent, J. M. (2014). *American conspiracy theories*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Vance, J.D. (2016). *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. Harper.

Veracini, L. (2010). *Settler colonialism*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Veracini, L. (2011). On Settlerness. *Borderlands*, 10(1). http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol10no1_2011/veracini_settlerness.pdf net.au/vol10no1_2011/veracini_settlerness.pdf

Vizenor, G. 1998. *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence*. University of Nebraska Press.

Wacquant, L. (2003). Ethnografeast: A progress report on the practice and promise of ethnography. *Ethnography*, *4*(1), 5-14.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., and Snyder, W. M. (2002). Cultivating Communities of Practice. Harvard Business School Press.

Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to Labour*. Columbia University Press.

Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41 (2), 1- 26.

Wheeler Bell, Q. (2014). Educating the spirit of activism: A 'critical" civic education. *Education Policy*, 28 (3) 463-486.

Wolfe, P. 2013. The settler complex: An introduction. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 37*, 1–22.

Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native. *Journal of genocide research*, *8*(4), 387-409.

Wynters, S. (1995). 1492: A new world view. In V. Lawrence Hyatt & R. Nettleford (Eds.)., *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*. Smithsonian Institution Press. (p. 5–51).

Youniss, J., & Yates, M. (1997). *Community service and social responsibility in youth*. University of Chicago Press.

Youniss, J. (2011). Civic education: What schools can do to encourage civic identity and action. *Applied Developmental Science*, *15*(2), 98-103.