

National Academy of Education

Civic Reasoning and Discourse

**Agency and Resilience in the Face of Challenge as Civic Action:
Lessons Learned from Across Ethnic Communities**

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Introduction

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The United States is situated with a complex history. It represents one of the most powerful examples of democratic governance in human history on the one hand, but a nation born on the back of two holocausts – the effects of the colonial take over of the existing indigenous nations resulting in unprecedented loss in the indigenous populations surviving into the 19th century, and the enslavement of millions of Africans followed by over a hundred years of legal apartheid (Jim Crow). Citizenship entails how persons living in the U.S. and its territories understand what citizenship means and how they can and should engage that citizenship. This envisionment of citizenship is particularly salient for populations who have historically had to wrestle with de facto and de jure discrimination and who have and continue to disproportionately experience inequalities. Groups who have most persistently faced such challenges include ethnic/racial minorities, those facing inter-generational poverty, often first generation immigrant groups at particular points in our history including those without legal citizenship status, especially today, and women. Certainly there are other groups – those designated as disabled, LGBTQ community, certain religious minorities, among others. However, the focus of this paper will be on this first set of communities. We focus on how these wrestlings around the meanings and enactment of citizenship unfold in agentive education in these communities.

We examine in historical and current contexts the factors and forces that shape what citizenship means – its opportunities and constraints – and how through civic action these communities demonstrated agency and resilience; and in so doing moved the nation forward in coming closer to achieving the goals articulated at its founding – the preservation of the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In so doing, these contestations over achieving the fullest sense of citizenship recruited complex knowledge about navigating the nation’s system of checks and balances, imagining and crafting ways of interrogating established and entrenched powers in ways that cumulatively over time represent successive compromises. These include compromises that shifted balances of power. The examples of community agency in pursuit of the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness offered here are also intended to illustrate the complexity of what such pursuits mean.

The equal protection clause of the 14th amendment ("nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.") is about persons, including citizens, aliens and the undocumented. The most commonly referenced and frequently litigated phrase of the 14th Amendment is the equal protection of the law clause. Over time it has figured prominently in a wide variety of landmark Supreme Court cases, including *Plessy v. Ferguson* (segregated schooling), *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, *Parents v. Seattle School District*, (racially discriminatory schooling), *Korematsu v. United States* (Japanese Internment) *Loving v. Virginia* (interracial marriage), *Afroyim v. Rusk* (right of citizenship), *Roe v. Wade* (reproductive rights), *Reed v. Reed* (gender discrimination), *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* and *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Fisher v. Texas* (Affirmative

45 Action in Higher Education), *Plyler v. Doe* (the right of children of undocumented immigrants to
46 public education), and most recently *Obergefell v. Hodges* (same-sex marriage).

47

48 Since we continue to live in times when so many dominant group Americans believe they have
49 constitutional rights as “citizens” that do not extend to marginalized groups and undocumented
50 groups, it’s critical that our civic education cultivate an awareness of the rights of persons
51 under the equal protection clause in contradistinction to the rights of citizens. The fact that
52 such rights are consistently denied speaks to the failure of democratic practice to live up to
53 constitutional law and democratic principles. The case of *Plyler v. Doe* (the right of children of
54 undocumented immigrants to public education) exemplifies a good civic lesson that
55 distinguishes the rights of “person” under the U.S. Constitution.

56

57 Certainly, there are some once-settled questions being contested today, but citizenship cannot
58 be included in the once-settled questions. From the 1790 naturalization act to contemporary
59 efforts to repeal the 14th Amendment, the question of citizenship reflects problems of racial
60 ideology, nationality, and identity that remain with us since our colonial beginnings. Debates
61 over citizenships have been continuously contested in theory, law and politics throughout
62 American history. Struggles over citizenship are issues that have zigzagged throughout the
63 American experience, emblazoning the history of U.S. democracy with conflict and ambiguity
64 whenever the question of citizenship has arisen. The bitter disputes of today echo loudly the
65 issues of birthright citizenship, naturalized citizenship, racial heritage, assimilation, and national
66 identity that were debated a century and a half ago during the passage of the 14th Amendment.
67 Some of the major concerns voiced today-- who is entitled to be a citizen, who should be
68 allowed to enter the United States, how they should be treated when they do enter, can they
69 be assimilated into the “American way of life”, and what are the social consequences—date
70 back to the debates over the citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment and the concurrent
71 amending of the naturalized citizenship act. Indeed, the long-standing struggles over citizenship
72 and immigration have generated centuries of political debate, major judicial decisions and
73 stacks of federal and state legislation. Further, disputes about citizenship and immigration
74 invariably include an examination of what it means to be an American, cutting across the social
75 fabric and interweaving themselves into issues of education

76 ¹, law², race³, gender⁴, class⁵, sexuality⁶, and national identity⁷. The citizenship question should
77 be examined as the long citizenship struggle that is also manifested in contemporary orders to
78 ban Muslims from entering the country, efforts to revoke the citizenship of American born
79 children of unauthorized immigrants, and presidential calls for American citizens to “go back
80 where they came from.” To be sure, these are provocative and sometimes explosive issues.
81 Nonetheless, they are part and parcel of the long citizenship struggle. [end section from Jim
82 Anderson]

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84 We argue that understanding these histories over the meaning of citizenship and the examples
85 of civic agency within different communities offered in this paper are important in efforts to
86 prepare our students to engage in civic reasoning, discourse and action. These are stories that
87 inspire hope that our system of government can be navigated. These are stories that
88 demonstrate how addressing the needs of those most vulnerable in our society also support
89 the healthy development of all. They also demonstrate the complex processes of negotiating
90 difference, differences in point of view, in interests, in relations between majorities and
91 minorities, between the state and the individual.

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93 These histories of ethnic minority communities navigating access to and the demands of
94 citizenship represent a conundrum that may be particularly unique to the United States. The

¹ *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982), a Supreme Court case affirming the right of children of undocumented immigrants to public education. Benjamin R. Barber, "Public Education and Democracy." *Kettering Review*, Vol. 19, Number 2 (Spring, 2001); James Gilreath (editor), *Thomas Jefferson and the Education of a Citizen* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1999)

² *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 393, 400 (1857); *Elk v. Wilkins* 112 U.S. 94 (1884); *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark*, 169 U.S. 649 (1898); *Takao Ozawa v. U S*, 260 U.S. 178 (1922); *U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, 261 U.S. 204 (1923); *Perez v. Brownell*, 356 U.S. 44 (1958); and *Afroyim v. Rusk*, 387 U.S. 253 (1967).

³ Jeff Diamond, "African-American Attitudes Towards United States Immigration Policy," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 32, Number 2 (Summer, 1998), 451-470; James A. Tyner, "The Geopolitics of Eugenics and the Exclusion of Philippine Immigrants from the United States," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 89, Number 1 (January, 1999), 54-73; Moon-Ho Jung, "Outlawing 'Coolies': Race, Nation and Empire in the Age of Emancipation," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 57, Number 3 (September, 2005), 677-701.

⁴ Nancy F. Cott, "Marriage and Women's Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 103, Number 5 (December, 1998), 1440-1474; George Anthony Peffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration Before Exclusion*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Nira Yuval-Davis, "Women, Citizenship and Difference," *Feminist Review*, Number 57 (Autumn, 1997), 4-27

⁵ James R. Barrett, "Americanization From the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 79, Number 3 (December, 1992), 996-1020.

⁶ Siobhan B. Sommerville, Notes Toward a Queer History of Naturalization, *American Quarterly*, Vol. 57, Number 3 (September, 2005), 659-675.); Bruce Burgett, *Sentimental Bodies: Sex, Gender and Citizenship in the Early Republic*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1998);

⁷ Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Significance of Immigration in the Formation of an American Identity, *The History Teacher*, Vol. 30, Number 1 (November, 1996), 9-27; David A. Hollinger, "National Solidarity at the End of the Twentieth Century: Reflections on the United States and Liberal Nationalism, *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 84, Number 2 (September 1997), 559-569; Linda K. Kerber, "The Meanings of Citizenship," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 84, Number 3 (December 1997), 833-854; John Brenkman, "The Citizen Myth: Civic Republicanism for a Multicultural Era" *Transition*, Number 60 (1993), 138-144; Roger M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

95 U.S. is a relatively young nation compared to others in the world. The construct of the nation
96 state is complex in human history as national borders shift over time, influenced by patterns of
97 migration and warfare. In many cases, the construct of ethnicity has a longer consistent history
98 than nationality. For example, one finds ethnic groups such as the Roma distributed across
99 national borders in Europe (Spain, southern France, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria), but also in
100 other parts of the world. In multi-ethnic societies such as the U.S., people are often navigating
101 multiple categorical identities, that is the meaning and boundaries of ethnic identity (or multi-
102 ethnic identity) and national identity. The mixed history of immigration policies in the U.S.
103 highlight these complexities (Ewing, 2008): restrictive immigration policies around the Chinese,
104 the Irish, eastern Europeans, Jewish people, and most currently Muslim and Latinx populations.
105 In each of these cases – spanning several hundred years – these populations have been
106 targeted in both the media and public policies as “the other”, positioned negatively. At the
107 height of the Eugenics movement in the U.S. in the early part of the 20th century, short tests
108 presumed to scientifically measure I.Q. were administered and policy briefs reported these
109 people were intellectually inferior and therefore should not be admitted to the country (Gould
110 1981). These deficit meta-narratives were also picked up and reflected in the organization of
111 and goals for schooling. It was not just a matter of segregation of populations by
112 race/ethnicity, but also by the nature of their educational experiences (Tyack 1974). One
113 extreme example, of course, are the boarding schools to which Native American children were
114 forced in the late 19th century (Adams, 1995; (Churchill 2004)).

115
116 We have consciously used the term ethnicity as opposed to race. The distinction is important
117 for the very problem space this paper seeks to explore. Race as a construct is relatively new in
118 human history (Gould 1981). It is a category created explicitly to warrant European
119 colonization and efforts to enslave particular populations, based on the argument that there
120 are hierarchies of human communities that can be distinguished by skin color and that those
121 determined to be “white” were superior; and based on that innate superiority were authorized
122 to subjugate those who were determined not to be “white.” Charles Mills (1997) in The Racial
123 Contract provides a comprehensive history of the evolution and unfolding of this ideology.
124 Interrogating this construct of race is deeply important if we are to prepare our young people
125 to engage in civic reasoning and discourse precisely because the underlying assumptions behind
126 the construct so deeply inform policies, practices along multiple dimensions, historically across
127 our history in the U.S. There is substantive scientific evidence that there is no biological validity
128 to the construct of race (Blackburn, 2000; Kolbert, 2018). It is an artificial category that has in
129 interesting ways been contested across our history. For example, there is evidence that when
130 groups such as the Irish and Italians began immigrating in larger numbers to the U.S., they were
131 not considered white (Ignatiev 1996). Policies around racial segregation have shifted over time
132 in different regions of the country around whether a particular group was identified in policy as
133 white (Williamson, Rhodes et al. 2007).

134
135 Ethnicity, on the other hand, places groups of people in history (Helms and Talleyrand 1997). In
136 particular, for peoples of African descent in the U.S., ethnicity rather than race places them in a
137 history that extends far back in human history, beyond the period of enslavement in the
138 Americas. But there is also an additional complication even with ethnicity. In the context of

139 the U.S., pan-ethnicity emerges in unique ways. For example, immigrants from Mexico,
140 Columbia and Venezuela become Latinx when they enter the U.S.; immigrants from China,
141 Japan, and Viet Nam become Asian Americans; Indigenous nations and tribal communities –
142 Navajo, Cheyenne, Lakota become Native American. People who are descendants of those
143 enslaved from primarily west Africa, persons of African descent who immigrate from Jamaica,
144 Nigeria, and Ghana become African American. In the case studies of education offered in this
145 paper aimed at preparing young people in these communities for civic engagement, one will
146 see how the experiences in these communities reflect both pan-ethnic shared actions as well as
147 distinct experiences by virtue of their intra-ethnic identities. And while much of this paper
148 traces histories of educational efforts within these four broad pan-ethnic groups, it is equally
149 important to understand how ethnicity plays out within European descent communities within
150 the U.S. At this point in our history, European descent ethnic group distinctions – the Irish, the
151 English, the Germans, the Italians, etc. – do not have the political constraints they previously
152 had in our history. However, the distinctions for many still play out in terms of inter-
153 generational family cultural practices and extended social networks beyond the U.S. With all
154 pan-ethnic immigrant groups, the generational status of families matters – 1st generation
155 versus 2nd and 3rd generations. With regard to African American, Native American, Asian
156 American and Pacific Islander and Latinx pan-ethnic groups, however, there are political and
157 economic challenges that remain to be wrestled with through active civic engagement, civic
158 engagement informed by reasoning and through discourse both within these communities and
159 across the nation. We have consciously included a section of this paper on Appalachian
160 communities for several reasons. First, poor white communities have and continue to be
161 absent from discussions around equity and reaping the rewards of citizenship. Second, it is a
162 community that also captures interesting dimensions of how we understand ethnicity and how
163 it plays out in the U.S. On the one hand, historically white Appalachians tend to be of Scottish-
164 Irish backgrounds. On the other hand, the region includes a historic African-American
165 community (Afrilachia). While a community that historically and continues to wrestle with
166 inter-generational poverty, it is also a community with evidence of resilience in how the
167 community organizes its schools and communities to prepare young people to wrestle with the
168 challenges of achieving the rewards of citizenship. The Appalachian community illustrates how
169 issues of class and inter-generational poverty are systemic, and confound our assumptions
170 about white privilege.

171
172 The citizenship questions have particular histories with regard to Native American, African
173 American and Latinx populations. For Native Americans, of course, they represent the original
174 inhabitants, the existing nations that were here when colonial powers invaded. We have tribal
175 nations that have complex sovereign status within the U.S. African Americans who are the
176 descendants of the enslaved did not immigrate to this country by choice. Despite the
177 contentions over immigration from Central and South America today, there are Latinx
178 populations in southwestern states who became part of the U.S. by virtue of annexation of
179 territories that were originally part of Mexico. So these histories are complex and must be
180 understood in terms of civic discourse in the public domain. Their histories complicate our
181 conception of citizenship.
182

183 The citizenship question – what it entails, what rights and opportunities it requires – must be
184 understood in broader terms than the nation state. If there is anything this recent coronavirus-
185 19 pandemic has made abundantly clear is how we are inter-connected as a human community
186 across the world, across national borders. There are so many ways that our general health and
187 well beings as humans in the 21st century are so deeply inter-twined with knowledge,
188 technologies, economics developed within and across nations. In many ways, modernity is
189 perhaps the most powerful construct at work across the world. And so the question arises not
190 merely of what does citizenship in a nation mean, but equally important what does it mean to
191 be a citizen of the world. This question, a question of fundamental human rights, in many ways
192 supersedes the question of national citizenship. As noted earlier, the 14th amendment of the
193 U.S. Constitution states “nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property,
194 without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection
195 of the laws.” It does not say any citizen. These foundational ethical propositions are reflected
196 in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights., adopted in 1948 after World War II. Article
197 1 states:

198
199 All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason
200 and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

201
202 This is virtually the same ethical proposition articulated in the U.S. Declaration of
203 Independence:

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205 We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed
206 by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the
207 pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men,
208 deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of
209 Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to
210 abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and
211 organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and
212 Happiness.

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214
215 So the ethical commitment to the idea of human rights is at the heart of civic reasoning and
216 should inform and propel civic discourse and action. Understanding how ethnic communities in
217 the U.S. have wrestled with this humanistic goal in the organization of schooling is important
218 and a goal of this paper. We understand in this work that education broadly speaking includes
219 but is not limited to schooling. It includes work in communities as well as social and political
220 organizing efforts. Social and political movements teach the public, albeit not necessarily with
221 the same take aways. And how these efforts have unfolded reflecting agency and resilience in
222 these communities is important. Understanding the multi-faceted goals these communities
223 have articulated is equally important as they wrestle with what are often dual goals of national
224 identity and sustaining the rights of these cultural communities to self-determination. In many
225 ways, the complexities of these tensions are reflected in the kinds of tensions the founders
226 anticipated, structuring a system of government with checks and balances to provide ways to

227 navigate tensions between majority and minority rights, individual rights and the state, scope of
228 powers between federal, state and local governments, scope of powers among the 3 sectors of
229 the executive branch, pathways through which the Constitution can be amended, pathways for
230 resistance. Ultimately it is this complex civic problem space that our young people need to
231 understand, need to be able to interrogate.

232

233 Each of the sections that follow offer historical and contemporary illustrations of how these
234 ethnic communities have organized schooling, have organized key stakeholders, and organized
235 both schooling and informal educational experiences for youth with the explicit goal of
236 preparing young people to wrestle with the complexities of civic engagement, including the
237 need and responsibility for such engagement.

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282 **Native Peoples and Civics Education in the 21st Century**

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315 *Who could we collectively become?*
316 *What roles, relations, and responsibilities do we have with each other?*
317 *With other-than-human life?*
318 *With the land and the waters upon which all life depends?*
319 *How should we nurture and uphold those relations?*
320
321 At the core of Indigenous education are our ancestral teachings about the what and how of
322 living a good life, of our responsibilities to be good relatives, what we very reluctantly might call
323 Indigenous civics in English. Central to these ancestral teachings are what we think of as
324 communal responsibilities to intergenerational kin relations and the ways in which these senses
325 of responsibility generate the routine practices of everyday life. Kin relations in this sense are
326 not bound by human centrism or supremacy. Learning communal responsibilities is critical for
327 young Indigenous people and each generation has found different ways to reanimate and
328 uphold these responsibilities. Further, Tribal communities, a term we use throughout this piece
329 and mean it expansively to refer to Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians as well, have
330 continued to evolve their practices of teaching these responsibilities, despite the forced or
331 coerced schooling imperatives imposed by the United States. Although some of the harms
332 inflicted on Native peoples across history are better known, like those of boarding schools, we
333 suggest harm continues to emerge in routine classroom practices, both implicitly and explicitly,
334 by teachers and by students, currently. Importantly, schooling and education are not
335 synonymous. We think of education as happening across many contexts, and is where
336 Indigenous ways of knowing and being in good relations continue to be taught. Schooling for us
337 typically has emerged from non-Indigenous paradigms. We take up aspects of both in this
338 piece.
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340 In spite of schooling's challenges, Tribal communities across time have adapted and
341 imaginatively and resiliently created the conditions for the continuation of Indigenous forms of
342 education and the cultivation of communal responsibilities in each new generation. Thus, we
343 write this section aiming to support and amplify the ongoing efforts of Indigenous resurgence
344 by Tribal communities (the at least 633 Tribal Nations, Alaska Villages, and Hawaiian Homelands
345 and the many "off reservation" communities with which the U.S. shares these lands) who
346 continue to develop forms of their own civics education towards their own thriving and that
347 prepare young people to resist the ongoing assimilative demands and process of erasure
348 characteristic of systems of education defined by settler-colonialism. We aim to articulate some
349 of the core challenges of US based civic education for Native youth and put forth aspects of
350 Indigenous civics education as a way to fulfill our own ongoing responsibilities to stop harm,
351 and also to insist on the fullness of Native peoples lives (e.g. Tuck, 2009). Perhaps the most
352 important need for civics education, Indigenous or US, is continuing to develop our collective
353 capacities to see the beautiful, brilliant, adaptive ways that young people, their families, and
354 communities persist and change. We argue that grappling with challenges of civic education for
355 Native youth, as well as learning from Native communities' persistence, is consequential for all
356 people. Indeed, it is fundamentally necessary for just democracies to be possible (e.g. Borrows,
357 2019).
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359 From our perspectives, forming just, ethical and sustainable societies, the endeavor any civics
360 education should be reaching for, must be predicated on developing our collective capacities
361 and responsibilities with the lands, waters, and peoples with which we live. In our minds this is
362 the heart of Indigenous civics education. Collective capacities refer to the systems of
363 relationships set in place within Tribal communities to ensure the well-being of all life (e.g.,
364 relationships with lands, governance, child welfare, etc.) (e.g. Whyte, 2012). We use lands and
365 waters here as expansive relational terms, not reductive to substances. In order to really
366 engage the core question we opened with – *what could we become?* – one must also ask if
367 civics education will continue to pursue forms of logic and practice that are predicated on our
368 erasure as present and future sovereign Indigenous peoples (e.g. Deloria; 1974; Tully, 1995;
369 Samson, 1995)? That is, can civics education cease to position Indigenous peoples of North
370 America as only in the past by creating a civics education that cultivates U.S. democracy's
371 commitment to Indigenous thriving and sovereignty? This cannot be accomplished without
372 understanding and reckoning with coloniality, settler-coloniality, racism, and the histories and
373 structures that have created the present. Civics education has, and continues to have, a role in
374 the kinds of historicity that become commonplace in peoples' sensibilities in the present and in
375 imagining the future. Thus, we also ask: Can civics education cultivate a vision of U.S.
376 democracy that strives to strengthen collective capacities to understand the whats and hows of
377 anti-colonial and anti-racist societies? And perhaps, most expansively: Can civics education
378 learn from Indigenous communal responsibilities – meaning engage Indigenous civics and civics
379 reasoning in grappling with the question of how we should nurture and uphold relations – in
380 ways that create the possibilities of thriving for not only Indigenous students but all students?
381 There are whole fields of history, philosophy, and legal studies amongst others, and generations
382 of communal expertise, experience, and governance, that have taken up versions of these
383 questions with profound insights. We are not experts in these fields. We are educators. We are
384 working to understand the implications of these fields for engaging young people and for civics
385 education broadly and write this to the fields of education. Megan is of Ojibwe and Italian
386 descent and studies human learning and development and the design of learning
387 environments. Bryan is Lumbee and studies higher education and the development of
388 Indigenous leadership and nationhood.

389
390 We suggest the following five dimensions are necessary, but not sufficient, for civics education
391 in North America that can cultivate our collective capacities to enact just, sustainable, and
392 culturally thriving societies. These include 1) understanding and confronting the ongoing
393 dynamics of settler-coloniality in U.S. history and narratives of the United States that
394 perpetuate violence, erasure, and invisibility of Native peoples, 2) developing the political and
395 ethical commitments, meaning the civic responsibility, to uphold Native sovereignty and engage
396 in nation-to-nation relations; 3) ethically hold and grapple with the heterogeneous conditions
397 of migrations that differentially shape experiences and the racialization of "peoples of color,"
398 and subsequently the complex work of relational solidarities across communities and with
399 Native peoples – including our now multi-racial nations - towards collective thriving; 4) creating
400 forms of education that cultivate collective capacity to understand and generatively engage
401 Native peoples, our histories, sovereignties, knowledge systems, and our distinct experiences
402 with racialization and its impacts on our communities; and 5) supporting the development of

403 civic education for thriving Tribal nations and engaging the broader possibilities they open
404 towards liberatory futures for all peoples. Accomplishing serious engagement with these
405 dimensions is predicated on the ontological foundations of the conversation.

406
407 The ontological foundations, or what Lyons (2002) has called the “terms of the debate” and
408 who sets them matters. US civics education often unreflectively reproduces coloniality in a
409 myriad of ways, but it is especially pronounced through reductive discourses of Native peoples
410 and our histories in ways that perpetuate the erasure of Indigenous sovereign presents and
411 futures in civic reasoning. This happens through the positioning of Native peoples as of
412 particular pasts, through the transformation of tribal diversity into singular discourses of race,
413 and of racist processes of invisibilizing and minimizing our knowledges, our forms of
414 governance, and our lifeways. In short, US civics education tends to be a site in which violence
415 against Native peoples is normalized and co-constructed with US democracy itself. Part of our
416 task here is to make plain how some violences are lived and felt in US civics education for
417 Native youth. However, this is not sufficient. Educators must also come to understand Native
418 peoples and Indigenous civics education from, and in service to, Indigenous communities. This
419 piece alone can only invite and motivate that. Accomplishing that would require much longer
420 engagements and partnerships with Tribal Nations. Perhaps this piece can help to cultivate the
421 relational conditions for such partnerships to be liberatory.
422

423 *So, who could we collectively become?* The positioning of Native peoples sits at the ethical and
424 political heart of American history and democracy and who we could collectively become. The
425 recognition of Indigenous peoples’ ongoing sovereignty must be central, not momentary, to US
426 civics education if just forms of life are to be possible. We define sovereignty as the inherent
427 rights of Indigenous peoples and their Tribal Nations to determine their own futures. It is an
428 inherent right, not defined by another government entity. However, it has come to manifest as
429 a legal and political status that is established through the unique relationships between Tribal
430 Nations and the U.S. federal government. In creating the United States, not only did settlers
431 remake their homelands on the territories of Tribal Nations across North America through
432 violence, but they also crafted and signed treaties that recognized Tribal sovereignty and
433 territory. To protect their collective capacities, Tribal Nations and communities signed these
434 treaties, under various conditions, and in doing so, ceded 2 billion acres of land, (though some
435 ceded lands we continue to engage through our subsistence rights) with the understanding of
436 three fundamental promises of health, education, and the general welfare of their peoples
437 would be upheld (Deloria & Lytle, 1982). Treaty making and these fundamental promises
438 continue to be central parts of governance for both the U.S. and Tribal Nations, including Alaska
439 Natives and Native Hawaiians. Thus, civics processes in the U.S. have been fundamentally
440 shaped by trust responsibilities to and with Indigenous peoples, and relations with Indigenous
441 peoples have shaped the making of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and
442 many other bedrocks of U.S. democracy.

443
444 We emphasize treaty rights and trust responsibilities because we think it is important to fuse
445 the idea that while there is a history that speaks to the beginnings of the relationships between
446 Indigenous peoples, the U.S. federal government, and larger questions around civics, there is

447 also very much a present and reframing non-Native peoples understandings of them are central
448 to Indigenous futures. Tribal Nations relentless insistence on upholding treaty rights across U.S.
449 history is in itself evidence of Indigenous peoples remarkable agency and speaks directly to the
450 difference in historicity under-girding Indigenous and US civics. To be clear, the upholding of
451 Native sovereignty and US trust responsibilities is not only the domain of Native peoples. The
452 cultivation of civic reasoning and everyday forms of communal life have always been implicitly,
453 if not explicitly, in a dialogic relationship with treaties and should be central to who U.S. citizens
454 understand themselves to be. If US civics education wants just and ethical democracies, it must,
455 at minimum, work to cultivate all peoples collective sensibilities and ethical responsibilities to
456 nurture and uphold Indigenous sovereignty. Native sovereignty is a shared endeavor, a
457 continuing endeavor, and it is tied to the understanding of communal rights and collective
458 responsibilities central to civics education, and more broadly history and social studies. Thus as
459 educators consider what roles, relations, and responsibilities with each other they should be
460 cultivating with students, they must engage with Native peoples histories and sovereignties
461 over the past, present, and future.

462

463 Critically important however, is the recognition that not just any presences of Native peoples in
464 civics education will do. Our conceptual presences, or absences, across time are routine sites in
465 which US nation-state perspectives are reproduced. These formations are also the educational
466 interactions that tend to socialize people into what their communal and civic responsibilities
467 are (or the justification of their absence) to Native peoples (e.g. Sabzalian, 2019). Alcoff (2007)
468 argues that racialized societies are in a constant state of myth maintenance due to a desire to
469 perceive its own actions as moral, or at least excusable. Indigenous scholars and allies have
470 argued that that settler-colonial societies have a particular investment in forms of myth
471 maintenance with respect to Indigenous peoples as a way to justify Indigenous land theft;
472 Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) have called this form of myth maintenance “genesis amnesia”
473 and Tuck & Yang (2012) discuss a similar concept as “settler moves to innocence” (see also
474 Calderon; 2014).

475

476 The United States is a settler-colonial nation. Settler-colonialism is defined as a form of
477 coloniality characterized by the ongoing occupation by settlers of Indigenous territory, which
478 form foundational societal structures and shape everyday life in the U.S. (Wolfe, 2006). Settler-
479 colonial myth formation rests on the perpetual erasure and dehumanization of Indigenous
480 peoples – from these territories and others. One routine and problematic narrative in civic
481 classrooms is that Native people are of the past, have since been eliminated, or that the state-
482 sanctioned injustices inflicted upon Native people and our territories are a part of ancient
483 histories (e.g. Calderon; 2014; Shear et al, 2015). Important work by Shear et. al. (2015) found
484 that 86.6% of state-level standards relating to Native peoples are related to pre-1900 content.
485 These historicized positionings are often coupled with reductive or minimizing narratives that
486 recreate hierarchical human organizations that are inflected through white and western
487 supremacism. Meaning, civics classrooms routinely characterize Indigenous peoples lifeways,
488 relations to lands and waters, systems of governance, knowledges, beings, even the very
489 population sizes of Indigenous peoples and territories, as explicitly and routinely less than,
490 underdeveloped, unimportant, or erased entirely. It is important to note the civics is not alone

491 in these forms of erasure, it is shared across many domains. A more subtle, yet equally harmful
492 narrative, is one that fabricates or elevates flattened constructions of Native peoples'
493 cooperation and consent to participate in the disfigured forms of life being imposed through
494 violence. And while US history has reimagined treaty agreements as always peaceful and
495 desired interactions between Tribal Nations and newly settled colonists, they were often forced
496 or coerced. Signing a treaty to avoid total genocide isn't a just or humane form of consent or
497 governance practice. These forms of erasure teach that issues of sovereignty, that Indigenous
498 knowledges and ways of being are not central to the struggles for justice now, to collective
499 problem solving and future making.

500
501 Indigenous practices of sovereignty are more than abstracted concepts or only political terms
502 for Native peoples, they are the fabric of our everyday lives. Indigenous sovereignty and
503 communal relationships are defined by forms of consent, reciprocity, and respect that
504 considers mutual lives and lifeworlds, as evidenced in ceremonies, forms of Native governance,
505 and other intellectual traditions (Simpson, 2014; Kimmerer 2012), and thereby are explicitly not
506 defined by forms of coercion. They are how we show dignity and respect as living beings to one
507 another. They are the ways in which our knowledge systems are enfleshed in our day-to-day
508 interactions, in our generation-to-generation interactions, and in interactions with our
509 extended kin relations. Sovereignty in this sense is living and evolving – it is in the making and
510 being of life: sovereignty matters (e.g. Barker, 2005; NCSS, 2018). Thus our routine cultural
511 practices and everyday forms of life are fundamentally connected to sovereignty and the
512 foundational promises and responsibilities that form the beginnings of the US through treaties
513 and accompanying trust responsibilities. Civics education engaging with Indigenous meanings of
514 sovereignty could be central to serving all students to develop into citizens that can live
515 responsible lives and contribute to more just worlds (see a resonate argument from Jacobs et
516 al. 2018).

517
518 Excavating what Dahl (2018) names as “democratic theory’s implication in and dependence
519 upon settler colonialism for its foundational value and logic,” and transforming the conceptual
520 terms with which educators teach about Native peoples is paramount for creating just civics
521 education (see also Writer, 2012). The ongoing formation of Native peoples as historical is a
522 central and deeply problematic conception that is reproduced in civics education, with
523 devastating impacts to not only Native peoples, but also people across the US broadly. This
524 formation creates the conditions for the negation of Indigenous peoples’ futures. It produces
525 citizens who have no ethical attunements to the violence they are participating in or feel no
526 ethical responsibility to stop them. Recent research examined the difference in people’s
527 conceptions between those that supported Indigenous Peoples Day and those who wanted
528 Columbus Day upheld. Those that wanted Columbus Day upheld had higher stereotyped
529 perspectives about Native people and stronger national identities, suggesting an oppositional
530 correlated relationship between negative perceptions of Native peoples and positive
531 perceptions of national identity (Eason et al., 2020). Indeed, many people are socialized into
532 denying our presence as sovereign peoples, as a necessary function of their pathways to justice.
533 We suggest that this socialization is ubiquitous because Indigenous erasure is a necessary
534 corollary to the continued occupation of Indigenous territories. We see the erasure and

535 systematic denial of Indigenous peoples sovereign presences and futures as perpetuating an
536 American mythology that makes western constructions of human supremacy, its expressions of
537 white supremacy, and coloniality, normative (Brandzel, 2016). These dynamics are
538 accompanied by repeated forms of the logics of terra nullius and (white) human entitlement to
539 the use and extraction of life - dehumanized human life and other-than-human life. We are
540 suggesting here that the denials of Native peoples sovereign presences and futures are central
541 conditions for civic and social society; and yet the denial does harm to everyone. The central
542 challenge of civic education for all human beings is related to the climate crisis that has placed
543 every single life on the planet at risk. Despite this collective challenge, the logics of Indigenous
544 erasure and denial continue to ignore opportunities to restore or cultivate right relations with
545 lands and waters. Thus, continued dismissal of Indigenous peoples and our knowledge systems
546 will prevent the necessary decision-making and adaptive capacities for societies to thrive, and
547 survive. Indigenous scholars have argued for decades that engagement with Native peoples and
548 our ways of knowing are necessary and beneficial for all people (e.g. Wildcat & Deloria;
549 Kimmerer, 2013; Velta et al. 2020; LaDuke, 1999).

550
551 A particularly central and growing challenge in the United States is in wading through dynamics
552 of Indigenous erasure and processes of racialization that have unfolded over time and their
553 current manifestations and dynamics both within Tribal communities as well as Tribal
554 communities relations with and across the broader US and specifically, communities of color.
555 Tribal Nations are distinct political and cultural entities each with their own homelands,
556 histories, governments, cultural practices, languages, values, desires, and needs for civic
557 education – not a uniform racialized group. The collapsing and erasure of Native Nations as
558 distinct peoples into a homogenized racial group is central to the erosion of Tribal Nations'
559 sovereignty (e.g. Brayboy, 2005; Calderon, 2014; Sabzalian, 2019). Indeed, processes of
560 racialization and race-based rights (both arguments for racial inclusion and exclusion) are
561 processes within settler-colonial nations that have been used as tools to erode Native peoples'
562 sovereign rights and to create ongoing discord within and between racialized communities.
563 Importantly, for educators this means working with and beyond an understanding of civics
564 education as singularly tied to racial formations in the United States. For example, it becomes
565 necessary to understand how settler colonialism has racialized entire populations through
566 hierarchical human organization towards particular ends (e.g., Native peoples as relegated to
567 the past or eliminated, Black peoples being dehumanized and enslaved, linguistic assimilation
568 and extinctions, exploitive and violent forms of labor, detention, and deportations particularly
569 with immigrant, migrant, and undocumented communities). Coming to understand these
570 dynamics is necessary - not only for Indigenous peoples of these territories, but also for raced
571 Indigenous peoples from other places that have come to new identities, and for settlers that
572 have created communities and life (e.g. Shear et al. 2018). The ways we understand and
573 transform the complexities and multiplicities of conditions of migratory pathways (e.g. from
574 enslavement, to asylum, to desires for better lives, and many others) for the different
575 communities and the histories that have unfolded to create the present will consequently
576 shape all of our collective futures.

577

578 Communities and nations across the world are working towards grappling with what might be
579 called “pluriversality” or what the Zapatistas have come to be known as saying “a world of
580 many worlds” (e.g. Escobar, 2010; Jackson, in press) which carries important distinctions from
581 multiculturalism. The United States is such a world and has been, though it works to deny this
582 truth, often resulting in the equating of Native peoples as only a racial group. This has become
583 increasingly complex over time as Native communities are multi-racial communities and
584 discourses of race are further fracturing on our ancestral systems of kin relations and
585 belonging. The lived complexity of learning the interplay and liminality of Native sovereignty
586 and being racialized are central challenges that often impede Native youth development
587 (Brayboy, 2005), highlighting how important it is that educators take up issues of Native
588 sovereignty and racialization. Understanding the complexities of these dynamics are the
589 demands on Native youth today. They are central to that task of developing healthy identities,
590 and the ethical and intellectual clarity we all will need of our next leaders who are tasked with
591 navigating the challenges that all communities will face in the future.
592

593 To imagine and enact just futures for all living beings, we must engage with and examine the
594 relational construals that are settled, assumed, normed. Educators, in particular, are tasked
595 with facilitating child and human development, often through civics education, and as such
596 must understand how these constructs operate in order to imagine new worlds elsewhere to
597 settler-colonial domination. The formation of western conceived nation states globally rest on
598 the simultaneous eradication of Indigenous nationhood and formation of racialized subjects
599 (e.g. Wynter, 2003). Central to the ethical and political imagining for just worlds is the necessity
600 to grapple with the co-constitution of race and processes of racialization alongside Indigenous
601 erasure that together create paradigms of human supremacy and its dominant expression of
602 white supremacy. That is, race--and the hierarchies that emerge from it--connected to the
603 erasures of the original inhabitants of the U.S. (Indigenous peoples) created the conditions for
604 western normativity to be the enclosed grounds of future formations (Lyons, 2002). Although
605 these dynamics are foundational, they are not ontological for Native people. Put plainly –
606 Native peoples being definitionally positioned as only a racial minority is an act of erasure
607 because it claims race and not sovereignty as the singular grounds by which we will be known.
608 Native peoples presences and futures being engaged through discourses of racial inclusion only,
609 erases our origins as peoples and creates the conditions for our personhood to be defined
610 through whiteness and the Nation state – even if a racially just nation state could be achieved.
611 Racialized discourses are also always defined by the settler-state, resulting in definitions
612 designed to confine or restrain Indigenous peoples while allowing settler-states off the hook for
613 stealing land and dishonoring treaties (Coulthard, 2014). What is central here is to recognize
614 how the politics of inclusion and recognition co-mingle in ways that perpetuate harm on Native
615 peoples, past, present and future and how this perpetuation continues to harm all living beings.
616

617 To seriously engage Indigenous civics education would require the sifting through of these
618 complex dynamics carefully as often these relations are animated through settled, normative
619 perspectives of US nation-state histories, practices, and rhetorical forms. The challenge of this is
620 profound. In part because the harms, including the theft of lives and humanity, that have
621 happened, continue - they haven't stopped. It is hard to create new worlds and relations that

622 aren't defined by our negations, our loss, our survival. And yet, communities have also created
623 joyous, thriving life, despite relentless structural violence. Educators are tasked with facilitating
624 human development; doing so without consideration of Native sovereignty, they reify the
625 conceptual foundations of settler colonialism and perpetuate harm against Native students. We
626 take as our responsibility to work towards disrupting these harms and also to deeply
627 understanding how ancestral forms of agency, love, dignity, and continual worldmaking has
628 made it possible for us to continue, and to insist that the fullness and beauty of this also be a
629 part of the work. That is, we insist that the conceptual foundations of Native peoples be more
630 than colonial negations and racialized forms.

631

632 Native children and youth, are tasked with navigating these multiple demands and paradigms
633 with respect to "civic life." Youth must learn what their responsibilities are to and within Tribal
634 communities, while also developing capacities to respond to the civic demands of life in relation
635 to the United States. Centrally this has meant continuing to insist that the United States respect
636 and uphold sovereignty and to fulfill its trust responsibilities per the law. Learning to skillfully
637 assert that Native people have the right to exist and to continue to develop as peoples is not a
638 simple task. It is complicated by the need for Native youth to also learn to refuse to allow these
639 definitions to define who they are, and also who they may become. That is, the Native youth
640 must also learn to disallow the negations of their personhoods as Native peoples to become
641 their core sense of identity and intellectual life. These demands are, at best, incommensurate,
642 and require a certain level of emotional, intellectual and identity dexterity.

643

644 We suggest it is more accurate to understand these demands as structuring a central task of
645 Native children's childhoods to learn to navigate what Brayboy & Chin (2020) call terrortory.
646 They define terrortory as the "simultaneous presence of the imaginary Indian and the absence
647 of an actual Indigenous person" (Brayboy & Chin, 2020). They argue that the "logics of
648 terrortory rely on disconnection - on obscuring the continuum of violence and domination."
649 Their work importantly adds affective language to the dynamics of settler-colonialism - the how
650 it feels to experience these dynamics. What we want to emphasize here are the ways in which
651 Native students - classrooms and schools enact terrortory. These demands stand in resonate
652 tension with what Deloria called the affective dimensions of spatial knowing and the
653 possibilities of human maturation for Native people – but also all people (e.g. Deloria, 1979;
654 Richardson, 2007). Living, present-day Native students are regularly erased in learning
655 environments – that is they are subject to people enacting their ontological denial. Their real
656 persons become absent while learning environments produce imaginary Indians. These
657 dynamics structure their lived experiences beyond content in the classrooms - it structures the
658 dynamics of their relations and routine interactions with peers, with teachers, with staff. They
659 learn that their personhood must become an incomplete aberration of their whole selves.
660 Scholars have documented that the perpetual micro-assaults, a form of being pushed out, often
661 result in school departure (Johnston-Goodstar & Roholt, 2017). And while Native communities
662 have longstanding strategies to combat such systemic oppression, we are committed to futures
663 where our children are no longer faced with these demands as a condition of their education.
664 It's important for readers to recognize that our articulations here are wholly incomplete given
665 the complexity of these challenges. Also that the issues and ideas we are trying to communicate

666 are not new. Other Indigenous leaders and scholars before us have articulated and struggled to
667 bring light to these issues for broader audiences.

668

669 We have chosen to utilize a vignette of one of the author's son's experiences across three acts
670 to concretize the conceptual ground we have articulated and to mark what a lived experience
671 of civics in schooling represents for Native youth. We include a fourth act aimed at recognizing
672 the forms of education that have emerged from within Native communities and the ways these
673 give rise to fundamentally different forms of civic education. We utilize these vignettes to
674 illuminate the lived resiliencies of Native youth and Native Nations that do and must navigate
675 the complexities of the demands we have just articulated. The acts are introduced through a
676 prologue of historical moments aimed at making clear the kinds of historicity persistently
677 reflected in Indigenous communities perspectives on civic responsibilities and the ways Native
678 peoples have pursued these issues over generations. We end with an epilogue that we intend
679 to demonstrate the echo of these issues currently and what might be central for movements
680 towards just worlds in which Indigenous peoples help to lead.

681

Prologue

682 Indigenous communities have long engaged in robust systems of education that taught young
683 people of the many different aspects and demands of communal life. These forms of education
684 ranged from understanding histories, sciences, spirituality, economics and trade, land and
685 water stewardship, governance structures and practices, and child rearing, amongst many
686 others. Indigenous education also taught people about civic responsibility and there is no
687 documentation of the creation of long-term imprisonment practices in Indigenous societies of
688 North America. The point here is that Native communities developed a sense of living together
689 in ways that respected the rights of each other and created practices and routines on mutual
690 consent, and the resolution of disputes and differences. Our purposes are not to detail this
691 history - we are not historians-- but we would be remiss to start a prologue that began with the
692 great disruptions to these systems of education that came with contact and the beginnings of
693 the United States. Thus, we fast forward to the founding of the United States.

694

695 After the end of the revolutionary war, in 1789, the US placed departments pertaining to Native
696 relations in the newly formed War Department. Some treaties, that include trust
697 responsibilities to education, had already been ratified at this point. Three decades later, on
698 March 3, 1819, the U.S. Congress passed a law called the Civilization Fund Act. The Act's intent
699 was to provide monetary resources for missionaries to educate Indigenous peoples on
700 reservations. More specifically, the Act noted, "That for the purpose of guarding against the
701 further decline and final extinction of the Indian tribes, adjoining the frontier settlements of the
702 United States, are for introducing among them the habits and arts of civilization..." It continued
703 by noting, "and an account of the expenditure of the money, and proceedings in execution of
704 the foregoing provisions, shall be laid annually before Congress" (Prucha, 2000, p. 33).
705 Embedded in the Act was a sum of \$10,000 to be used annually for these purposes. The
706 fundamental goal of this was to "civilize" Native peoples by assimilating them into a white
707 education and ways of engaging the world. The timing of this Act is important, because it was
708 an early demonstration of the ideologies that guided the 1830 Indian Removal Act (IRA). The

710 IRA set into place the possibilities for Andrew Jackson (known for his hostilities toward
711 American Indian peoples) to push Native peoples west. Removal included the so-called Five
712 Tribes (Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole). Forms of education emerging
713 within tribal communities on the heels of removal were fundamentally shaped by Jacksonian
714 elimination policies and the civilization act laid the ground for the further development of what
715 is commonly known as Indian residential schools or boarding school era, infamously
716 exemplified by the Carlisle Indian Industrial School founded by Richard Henry Pratt in 1879.
717 While educational efforts that removed children from tribal communities with the intention of
718 assimilating them had been in motion since as early at 1634 in what is now Maryland, as well as
719 at both Harvard and Dartmouth in the same century, the civilization fund act created the
720 conditions for the emboldened scaling - through violent and coercive means -- of these forms of
721 educational policy.

722
723 Almost 100 years after the Civilization Fund Act, Seneca scholar Arthur C. Parker in his classic
724 article entitled “The Social Elements of the Indian Problem” (1916), names the civic challenges
725 of the time again. In his article, Parker writes, “We wish to lay down seven charges, out of
726 perhaps many more, that the Indian makes at the bar of American justice. Whether the white
727 man believes them or not, true or not, he cannot discharge his obligation to the red man until
728 he considers them and understands that the Indian makes them because he at least feels that
729 they are just” (p. 254). This seven charges included robbing the American Indian of:
730 (1) freedom of actions;...(2) economic independence;...(3)social organization;...(4)...a race of
731 men--the American Indian--of intellectual life;...(5)moral standards and of racial ideals;...(6)a
732 good name among the peoples of the earth;...(7)a definite civic status. (pp 254-255)

733
734 These are serious claims published In the *American Journal of Sociology*, 8 years before
735 American Indian peoples--the *original* inhabitants of the lands that would become the U.S.
736 would earn the right to vote. More specifically of education and “intellectual life”, Parker
737 writes:

738 Human beings have a primary right to an intellectual life, but civilization has swept down upon
739 groups of Indians and, by destroying their relationships to nature, blighted or banished their
740 intellectual life, and left a group of people mentally confused.... The Indians must have a
741 thought-world given back. Their intellectual world must have direct relation to their world of
742 responsible acts and spontaneous experiences. (p. 258)

743
744 Parker points to the importance of relationships to land and the connections with their
745 intellectual life. Despite this law many states continued to deny Native peoples the right to vote
746 through claims to their own state constitutions. Arizona for example did not allow native
747 people to vote until 1948. Utah was the last state to allow Native peoples to vote in 1962. And,
748 over 100 years later, American Indians continue to fight for our intellectual worlds and for our
749 self-determining rights to engage in our own educational and schooling practices on terms that
750 suit us. Two hundred years rush by with a blink of an eye as it relates to American Indian
751 peoples and their education. The rush elides the erasure of the history, erasure and presence of
752 Native peoples. Many of the challenges that Parker outlined in 1916 remain relevant and are an
753 important part of understanding the civics of American Indian peoples.

754
755 Seventy years later, in 1987 a congressional hearing of the select committee on Indian affairs
756 was held to introduce S.Con.Res.76. A remarkable set of leaders (e.g. Orion Lyons, Suzan Harjo,
757 Vine Deloria, Richard Real Bird, and many others) from across multiple Tribal nations (e.g.
758 Onondaga, Quinault, Red Lake, Lummi, Mille Lacs, Oneida, and Crow) presented oral and
759 written testimony at the hearing detailing the intellectual, political, and communal systems that
760 Tribal communities have continued to cultivate. The session engaged and recognized that the
761 ideals of democracy and systems of representation reflected across the Iroquois confederacy of
762 Nations as well as other Tribal Nations served as the intellectual foundations of the
763 constitution. Across the testimonies they also argued that the legitimacy of the constitution
764 was bound to Native nations inextricably. The bill passed in 1988 and contained 4 key points,
765 including: an acknowledgement of the historical debt of the United States to the Iroquois
766 Confederacy and other Indian nations for their demonstration of democratic principles and
767 their example of a free association of independent Indian nations (the founding of statehood);
768 it reaffirmed the government-to-government relationship between the United States and
769 Indian tribes; it reaffirmed the trust responsibility and obligation of the Government to Indian
770 tribes, including Alaska Natives; and it acknowledged the need to exercise good faith in
771 upholding treaties with the various tribes. Importantly the final clause of the bill reads:
772
773 “Congress also acknowledges the need to exercise the utmost good faith in upholding the
774 treaties with various tribes, as the tribes understood them to be. And the duty of a great Nation
775 to uphold its legal and moral obligations for the benefit of all its citizens so that they and their
776 posterity may also continue to enjoy the rights they have enshrined in the United States
777 Constitution for time immemorial.”
778
779 We hope what is made poignant here is that the relations between Native peoples and the civic
780 responsibilities of the US has been constant - it is not bound to any singular time in history. A
781 civics education that fails to fundamentally engage Native peoples fails to uphold its legal and
782 moral obligation - ones routinely conceived and committed too. This starts with a serious and
783 critical examination of “rights” and how these create belonging (what often is discussed
784 through discourses of citizenship) as core concepts much of civics education is built upon.
785
786 We suggest that a fundamental issue in considering civics in the United States, is the
787 construction of the individual in relation to groups and what kind of ethics and logics this
788 relational construal establishes. It strikes us that communal--or group--rights are often erased
789 by what is a singular or preferred focus on individual rights and that this fundamental
790 difference in construal is consequential to the core of what civics education is or can be. This
791 fundamental concept or model of relations is an important one for Indigenous peoples and
792 perhaps a core challenge for Native learners to understand and navigate. Indigenous peoples
793 recognize individual rights; however, individual rights are often placed secondary to an
794 emphasis on group rights: the rights of a nation, or a community, or peoples. Further
795 Indigenous rights aren’t wielded to exclude or to create privileges for some. They are claims to
796 fundamental dignities of life. The link between rights and responsibilities is an important one
797 and fundamentally shapes what communal or civic responsibilities are. If Indigenous peoples

798 are in relation with one another, with our lands, with ideas and materials, we are necessarily
799 responsible to and for them – we are kin. One cannot divorce rights from responsibilities. These
800 are not obligations; they are a recognition of and a maintenance of connections or relations. If
801 we live well, the relationships are reciprocal; we care for others, who care for us. This is not to
802 be confused with a quid pro quo, but one of mutual assistance, care, relationality, and kinship.
803 This is the “why” of rights. In Indigenous communities rights are made purposeful insofar as
804 they enable people to fulfill their responsibilities to and with others. Many Indigenous
805 Knowledge Systems are characterized by many sets of relationships and responsibilities that
806 give rise to the how of our cultural and communal practices. Taking up these multiplicities of
807 meanings could enhance the education of all young people.

808
809 Civics is often rooted in the past; in histories of new countries. Of sacred documents. Of
810 aspirational moments and treatises. This raises for us a question of how we make sense of
811 beginnings. And origins. What kinds of historicities do we engage with as we formulate our
812 collective presents and futures? As we have noted elsewhere (Brayboy & Chin, 2020; Brayboy &
813 Tachine, In Press; Vaught, Chin & Brayboy, In Progress) beginnings and origins are not always
814 the same things. Indigenous peoples’ communal rights (held by our communities and nations,
815 but embodied in individuals) are located in the lands and waterways from which we emerged.
816 Our origin stories tell us we are of the earth. These are our origins and our beginnings. Civics
817 starts with some other place. It is located in a document. It may be the Magna Carta. Or Plato’s
818 Republic. The Declaration of Independence. These are beginnings, but not origins. Indigenous
819 peoples emerged from the earth, waters, and sky, and have dwelled in place since it birthed us,
820 and continue to live here now and into the future. We respect and honor the past, but we
821 actively refuse being locked in and through it.

822
823 What does this mean for civics education? Our response exists in four parts. Centered by our
824 present and future. In our communities and in our children. Or, in this instance, Megan Bang’s
825 son. Bryan Brayboy’s sons could find their places in these narratives. So could Megan’s
826 daughters. Or our nieces, nephews, and grandchildren. And we include our work as educators
827 and scholars in the final act. Our intention here is to root these issues in lived presences, in
828 relational presences, in the learning experiences of young people in the midst of forms of civic
829 education across the multiple contexts of their lives.

830

Act I: Erasure and Invisibility

831

832
833 *When my (Megan’s) high schooler, who is a citizen of Walpole Island Ojibwe First Nation and
834 Navajo, also eligible to be a citizen of the Navajo Nation, was assigned to read the Declaration
835 of Independence for school, I bought him the “Merciless Indian Savage” t-shirt that is common
836 across Indian country and suggest he wear it to class. We laughed that he should sit under the
837 “Blackhawks” hockey flag that hung in his classroom too. His school civics project could start
838 with him going to every “Blackhawks” flag in the school and take a picture with different Native
839 t-shirts on and then make a meme that says “Where are the Natives?”*

840

841 First to note, Megan's son is navigating citizenship across four nations: Walpole Island, Canada,
842 Navajo Nation, and the United States. He is officially recognized as a citizen of Walpole Island
843 Ojibwe First Nation and the United States. He is eligible for citizenship in both the Navajo
844 Nation and Canada, but is not currently. The past and the present come together here in deeply
845 lived ways for him. There is an aspirational document that frames the U.S.'s origin story. That
846 document is called the Declaration of Independence. Its second paragraph opens thusly, "We
847 hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by
848 their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit
849 of Happiness." These are aspirational statements, even though their formations were also
850 deliberately exclusionary. Twenty nine paragraphs (or statements) later, the document reads,
851 "He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the
852 inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an
853 undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." Life, liberty and the pursuit of
854 happiness married to the merciless Indian savages. There is no acknowledgment that the
855 Constitution and the bicameral legislature and generally the three bodies of government are
856 rooted in structures credited to the Haudenosaunee (often referred to as the Iroquois
857 Confederacy). The past erases the contributions of Indigenous peoples and frames us as
858 savages. In the current moment, however, the lesson for civics is that Megan's son is
859 surrounded by caricature that erases and makes his present-day status invisible. While these
860 experiences may not be central for Native children who attend tribal schools or on-reservation
861 public schools in K-12. It is important to recognize that only 24% of school age Native youth go
862 to schools that are on reservations and even fewer are tribally controlled schools. Another and
863 important way of saying this is that 76% of Native children live in urban and suburban contexts
864 where they are often the only, or one of very few, Native children. That is the experience of
865 being minoritized in these ways is a normative experience for Native youth. And for children
866 who have completed their K-12 schooling on-reservation that are college going, they too will
867 come to face these dynamics as only 8.7% of college going Native students go to Tribal colleges,
868 expanding the number of Native youth who experience these demands. These dynamics are
869 routine and shared by Native youth, they are not exceptional.

870
871 Thus, while these issues are exemplified in particular ways in this vignette, to mindfully and
872 genuinely engage Indigenous peoples and civic education in the 21st century is to make them
873 visible and present as both peoples who once were, who still are, and who could and should be
874 leaders for all communities in the future. The stories of the past are rooted in violence, land
875 theft, and failure to live up to the promises embedded in treaties and laws. They are also
876 rooted in rich inventions, nuanced knowledge systems that are relevant today for not only
877 Indigenous peoples, but everyone else as well. The past is connected to communal senses of
878 care and relationality. In the 21st century, the presence is in the 5.4 million Native peoples in
879 the U.S. and in their roles as children, mothers, grandparents, CEOs, teachers, stay-at-home-
880 dads, and many other contributors in today's world. Native people should not be only seen as
881 caricatures tied to sports teams or as mythical figures from the past. The visibility must be on
882 terms that do not create entrapments to colonial conquest. Presence must prevail over
883 absence.

884

885 **Act II: On Attempts of Erasure's Permanency**

886

887 *We (Megan's family) live on our original territories, on the shores of Lake Michigan and close to*
888 *the Chicago river and other waterways that have been central to the movement of our people.*
889 *The place that is the homelands of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi people - the three fires*
890 *people. We live in a place that has been an inter-tribal place since time immemorial where the*
891 *diaspora of tribal nations, Sauks, Meskwakis, Kickapoos, Hochunk, Menominee, Miami and*
892 *others would frequent for trade and exchange. We live in a place where a black man, Jean*
893 *Baptiste Point du Sable, married a Potawatomi woman, Kitiwaha, in the 1770s, had two children*
894 *and made life here as the political claims to the territory between the French, English, Spanish,*
895 *and eventually the United States unfolded across their lifetimes. We live in a place that was*
896 *ceded through a number of treaties over time starting in 1795, that were focused on our*
897 *waterways eventually leading to the Treaty of Chicago that began in 1821 and more later in*
898 *1833. We live in a place where Indigenous leaders contested the validity of some of these*
899 *treaties, where Black Hawk led a resistance of Sauks, Meskwakis, and Kickapoos to resettle on*
900 *their original territories. An effort that was met with open gunfire by a frontier militia*
901 *orchestrated by U.S. officials. We live in a place where others would contest the legitimacy of*
902 *the ceding of these homelands for decades, and centuries to come. We live in a place now called*
903 *Evanston, founded by John Evans, the former governor of the Colorado Territories, whose*
904 *leadership is responsible for the Sand Creek Massacre of Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples, and*
905 *whose fortune that the town was founded on was made by his policy work of opening the west*
906 *for land grabbing and railroads.*

907

908 *We live in a place whose histories of migrations and segregation is present in every turn in the*
909 *city, in the legacies of schooling, in the reparations that hang in the air and the ballot. The*
910 *streets we travel are named after this history in every way, with Tribes' defeats and generals'*
911 *names valorized at every turn. The town and schools don't celebrate Native Heritage month, at*
912 *all. I used to think, and mostly still do, that heritage months were an implicit ceding of invisibility*
913 *in all the other months. But no month, just nothing about Native peoples at all, has a surprising*
914 *sting of ontological denial and dismissal of history, of relevance, of personhood. It's not that*
915 *there's nothing. The town held the Custer Street Fair for years. The fair was moved to another*
916 *town in 2019. Some students have asked for Indigenous Peoples Day, though it hasn't*
917 *manifested substantively. My children have been asking for several years that the schools at*
918 *least create a land acknowledgement and that teachers be trained to implement it – but there's*
919 *been little traction. And they endure the territory in schooling every day. The plea, for a day, of*
920 *an acknowledgement, is really more about the desire to have some way of asserting our*
921 *presence, our right to be.*

922

923 *Thankfully, we live in a place where the oldest urban Indian Center in the country was formed by*
924 *peoples who survived forced, coerced, and chosen migrations here through relocation policies.*
925 *We live in a place where there are dozens of community organizations that create programs and*
926 *opportunities for all of us to continue to learn and nurture our responsibilities. We live in a place*
927 *where Nimkii continues to learn about his kin relations and communal responsibilities through*
928 *programs, community members and elders. We live in a place where people travel to other*

929 *tribal communities to continue to learn and exchange. Where we travel to Walpole, to Navajo.*
930 *We live in a place where community members work to revitalize their language use. We live in a*
931 *place where we continue to make life together as Native peoples grounded in our own*
932 *sovereignties and civics, despite coloniality.*

933
934 There are many places like Evanston, built on or through the violent removal and killing of
935 Indigenous peoples. Many of the individuals who live in those places are unaware of the history
936 or the beginnings of the place. The history begins with the sign on the side of the road that
937 reads, “Evanston, est. 1863.” That term, “est.” erases much of what came before; those
938 erasures are permanent. So much so that, without irony, Indigenous Peoples Day is ignored,
939 while the tradition of the Custer Street Fair continues. Evanston could be anywhere. And
940 everywhere. The Civics of the 21st century must be aware of the beginnings of its current state.
941 History and presence matters. While those who live in Evanston are physically distant from
942 Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples, the “est. 1863” should be linked there. The massacre
943 of Cheyenne and Arapaho people in the territories in which John Evans was the governor,
944 allowed those lands to be opened, and railroads to be built. The building of railroads led to
945 Evans’ creating wealth, and his ability to buy land – that land he bought is the original
946 territories of the three fires peoples and has contested legal history. This is what established
947 Evanston. This is what continues to define Evanston.

948
949 We would argue that one role of Civics Education in the 21st century is to recognize these
950 presences and these connections. Land becomes place when peoples imbue it with meaning.
951 There can be, however, different meanings attached to the same set of lands, making the same
952 land different places. There is an opportunity to expand meanings of the interconnections
953 between peoples and place in both the past and present. We should know where we live and its
954 histories to understand its present and future.

955
956 Given the legalized required participation in schooling and its current state of practice, schools
957 and schooling create significant developmental challenges for Native youth who, like all youth,
958 are trying to make their way in the world and figure out issues of identity, belonging and
959 purpose. They must not only learn to survive and navigate the onslaught of epistemic violence
960 and ontological denial of their very existence that schooling imposes but they must also learn
961 their roles and responsibilities in their Tribal Nations. Indeed Native youth must learn the truth
962 that US democracy is imposed on Indigenous peoples (Champagne, 2005; Dahl, 2018), and
963 “wielded with impunity as the first and most violent weapon of mass destruction” (Grande,
964 2015, p. 50). However, these critical perspectives alone are not sufficient for Indigenous civics
965 education. Indeed, criticality alone in civics education, even if focused on injustices, can
966 participate in erasure. In creating the conditions for Native youth to form identities, their
967 knowledges, their reasoning based in the harm, in coloniality, in racism, in the negation of who
968 they are as Native people. This can put in motion forms of life that put the problems of harm
969 and coloniality above the work of making life with kin relations. This is not only true for Native
970 youth, the problems of criticality alone are shared with other youth and communities.

972 Many Tribal Nations and communities have developed their own forms of education that have
973 centered teaching and learning in Native culture, language and traditions while also cultivating
974 youths capacities to contribute to Tribal Nations needs and to navigate non-Native societies.
975 Rough Rock Community school in Chinle, AZ, that opened in 1966, is such a place. While the
976 school has significantly transformed over the years its core vision states “Our students will be
977 resilient, lifelong learners who are skilled in the Dine language and culture, college and career
978 ready and contributing citizens in a global multicultural society.” The school continues to
979 educate hundreds of Native youth annually. In 2013, tribes in Washington State in partnership
980 with the office of public instructions, created the State-Tribal Education Compact Schools that
981 marks an important new era of Tribally developed forms of schooling that best serves Tribal
982 communities needs. These are but two examples, of thousands. What is crucial to recognize is
983 that like continuing to demand the recognition of Tribal sovereignty, Tribal communities have
984 continued to create forms of education, including Indigenous civics, towards community
985 wellbeing.

986

Act III: Citizens of Multiple Nations--Living in Good Relations

988

989 As Nimkii, Megan’s son, prepares to hunt this fall, so we and our extended family have our
990 traditional foods, he is also learning of our ancient treaties with the deer people who have
991 agreed to feed us if we treat them and the lands and waters we share right. We are also reading
992 our treaties with human peoples, those with the United States and with Canada. He is frustrated
993 that we have to navigate Illinois hunting lotteries to access lands. He wishes we could just go to
994 Canada to hunt at Walpole. We are talking about how we will be hunting in a place close to
995 where Black Hawk led resistance. We are learning about why the protection of our lands and
996 our hunting, fishing, and harvesting rights is fundamental to who we are. We are thinking about
997 what the fires in the west mean for Native Nations there. We are discussing why re-learning our
998 language is important. Why things like blood quantum and epigenetics are growing challenges
999 for Native nationhood. Why passing the “Violence Against Women Act” has been hard. Or how
1000 policies of assimilation, relocation, or the cutting of supply chains of basic subsistence to
1001 reservation communities is a persistent strategy of the US. Why structural data invisibility of
1002 Native people in the census or with COVID is so harmful. Why when he is 18, voting in tribal
1003 elections is important but also voting in American elections is important. About how many of
1004 our relatives have served in the military and why they have done that. We are talking about how
1005 the foundations of democracy aren’t an American invention and are reflected in the
1006 Haudenosaunee confederacy. How Native peoples have always had our own political systems
1007 and expectations about how to be a good member of our communities. How those are different
1008 across our Nations and not all the same. Why our ongoing struggle for existence is a problem of
1009 structure and ongoing practice – not a historical exception. How it’s a fundamental challenge
1010 that we as Native people have to grapple with as central to our life. We seem to always end
1011 these conversations on the core of our ancestral teachings of mino-biimadaziwin – that our job
1012 is to continually work at being a good human being, to live an ethical life. He is learning why it is
1013 important that he is upholding our treaty with the deer people even on ceded territories. He is
1014 learning to understand our place and responsibility as human people with our lands, waters,
1015 and our extended kin relations, other humans as well as the rest of life we share places with.

1016 *The politics of that basic idea are hauntingly complicated in a settler colonial state and yet
1017 central to his adolescence.*

1018

1019 The lives of Indigenous peoples are complicated because of our multiple citizenships and
1020 equally our lack or denials of citizenships. The fact that Nimkii (Megan's son) hunts isn't just to
1021 feed his family and be in good relations. It is, as she and her family have constructed it, fulfilling
1022 his treaty rights. While we have, in some ways, pushed the past away, it is important here. The
1023 1885 Treaty of Walla Walla noted that tribal peoples could hunt and fish "at all usual and
1024 accustomed places and stations..." The right to do so has extended beyond the Yakama peoples
1025 who signed the treaty. The other lessons being imparted to young Indigenous peoples (like our
1026 children) is that they are part of different nations. They have responsibilities across those
1027 nations. And, they have challenges in them because of the tensions between the nations.
1028 History matters. So does power. The U.S. has long-standing relationships with tribal nations and
1029 communities rooted in treaties, in their promises, and in their recognition of a unique status.
1030 Simultaneously, because so many have either never learned or have forgotten the beginning
1031 (borrowing from Bourdieu and Passeron, they suffer from genesis amnesia), our children must
1032 continue the fight for their rights. Our work is to make sure they remember. And to recognize
1033 that they have a membership; that is, they are part of a community or nation besides the U.S.
1034 memory and beyond a politic of recognition.

1035

1036 With that memory comes elements--as we noted earlier--responsibilities. Act III is a direct
1037 commitment to be in good relation with other peoples, with place (lands that have been
1038 imbued with meaning), with our knowledges, and with ourselves. Relationships matter. They
1039 must be recognized. Honored. Nurtured. Maintained. They are reciprocal. We care for others
1040 and they care for us. The land feeds us, and we care for it. Indigenous civics education starts
1041 with communal rights and the concomitant responsibilities. It teachers us about how we should
1042 nurture and uphold relations. How we should uphold our responsibilities across generations,
1043 past, present, and future. And all of this emanates from the fundamental relationships between
1044 rights and responsibilities that Indigenous civics is grounded in.

1045

1046 **Act IV: Native Nations, Leadership & Educational Self-Determination**

1047

1048 *What does self-determinations look like, I, Bryan, asked myself as I reflected on my travels
1049 across the US and engagements with tribal peoples who are working toward creating futures of
1050 their own making. I reflected on the work of the Kamehameha Schools, established through the
1051 trust of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, that seeks to meet the educational needs of Native Hawaiian
1052 children to engage in high level schooling, including Hawaiian language and culture. She passed
1053 away in 1884; the almost 400,000 acres she left as a gift to shepherd her peoples through
1054 education is now worth approximately \$12 billion. The foresight and love of the gift and visions
1055 humble me.*

1056

1057 *I consider the Waadookodading immersion school founded to ensure the continuation of Ojibwe
1058 language. The name means "to help each other." It teaches the language and the culture rooted*

1059 *in relationships and larger notions of rationality. It had created the conditions for elders to talk*
1060 *and walk homelands with Ojibwe youth in Ojibwe again, totally.*

1061
1062 *And, I think about the fishing camps throughout Alaska, the northwest continental U.S. or the*
1063 *hunting camps throughout the midwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast where children*
1064 *learn to not only provide for their families, but to also learn how to be in relation to place and*
1065 *the animals that inhabit that space. This is where children learn to be members of their*
1066 *communities and parts of their place. I realize that learning is ubiquitous; so is teaching and*
1067 *foresight.*

1068
1069 Kamehameha schools, building on the foresight, care, and generosity of Bernice Bishop,
1070 educates over 6,000 Native Hawaiian children a year. It provides them with opportunities to
1071 excel in a schooling environment, while also ensuring that they have the opportunity to learn
1072 their language, customs, culture, and have a sense of pride knowing that they can be both
1073 grounded as members of their community and excel in school. Waadookodading provides a
1074 similar setting 3,500 miles away for Ojibwe children to be immersed in their language and
1075 culture, while excelling in school. They think and process in Ojibwe, while also facing the
1076 challenges of 21st century. And, the camps along the Yukon river, in communities in northern
1077 Arizona, where Nimkii hunts, and in Robeson County, North Carolina are places where children
1078 learn to be in good relation with all around it and they hear lessons on the importance of
1079 schooling. In our work with tribal communities, neither Megan nor Bryan have ever had anyone
1080 say that learning to read, write, and do math is unimportant. What many members of tribal
1081 communities have said is that the ability to learn to do those things should not come *at the*
1082 *expense* of learning to be in good relation with other humans, animals, and places. There is a
1083 clear vision that one can, in fact, do both. That is wisdom. And generosity. Foresight.
1084

1085 Learning happens by and through doing. We learn to be in relation with one another and place
1086 through big acts. And small ones. By understanding that we learn in and through place. And, we
1087 learn “book knowledge” and the education of our communal rights and responsibilities. Issues
1088 of “civics” and questions about what young people need to learn about political systems, about
1089 governance, and communal participation is not a new question – all societies grapple with this
1090 and these challenges change over time. They are necessary to our being in good relation with
1091 and in imagining and enacting our futures. The erasure of Indigenous peoples and contributions
1092 from the public sphere of civics education does not mean that we are not engaged in self-
1093 determining acts. Imagine if all young people were given the opportunities to learn about these
1094 remarkable endeavors and the forms of life communities continue to strive for.
1095

1096 Epilogue

1097
1098 Even as we write this, there is a national debate raging around the importance of “patriotic
1099 education.” We are somewhat unsure of what this means and whether or not it is different
1100 from civics education. We suspect it is. The former is nationalist in nature, while the latter is
1101 focused on creating a shared sense of history. What we are proposing here is potentially a
1102 disruption of the “origins” or neat stories of the U.S. The intent is not to be radical or to

1103 unnecessarily agitate; it is to re-frame commonly held beliefs that we know to be mythical on
1104 some level. In their recent article on the concept of territory, Brayboy and Chin (2020) argue
1105 that myths become truth through erasures and violence (Brayboy & Chin, 2020). Pointing to the
1106 existence of “Merciless savages” as a truth has become re-framed as the work of radical
1107 activists. We reject that framing of re-examining history. We are almost 250 years away from
1108 these aspirational words: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created
1109 equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among
1110 these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Our histories, realities, and presences are
1111 not equal. And calls for the inalienable right of sovereignty are viewed with derision and framed
1112 as undermining, forestalling equitable futures. Asserting communal rights is not unpatriotic.
1113 Civics education must recognize sovereignty and the original inhabitants of the lands that now
1114 comprise the U.S.

1115
1116 We refuse to end our work here, in the negation. Civics education has the potential of leading
1117 in the questions we opened with. In supporting the development of new generations capable of
1118 dreaming who we might collectively become in ways that are not enclosed by harm. Engaging
1119 issues of US civics and Indigenous civics carefully and deeply raises important questions and
1120 possibilities not only for Native youth but also youth whose own communal histories and
1121 conditions of forced enslavement or migration to the United States intersect with settler
1122 colonial paradigms to imagine beyond their negations as well. Civics education that
1123 meaningfully engage Indigenous peoples and paradigms could cultivate the ethical sensibilities
1124 to foreground relations and responsibilities with each other rather than individualisms and
1125 hierarchies of harm. It could help cultivate leaders with the sensibilities that are capable of
1126 leading through the challenges of the 21st century, particularly those around adapting to a
1127 changing climate. Those that see transforming the social, political, and economic assumptions
1128 and arrangement of life that have created them as ripe with possibilities for nurturing new
1129 forms of life and new forms of relations. The construction of relations and positions of
1130 Indigenous peoples globally past, present, and future is core to this endeavor, for all peoples.

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1245 **African-American Education as Preparation for Civic Engagement, Reasoning and Discourse**

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1253
1254

1255 **African-American Education as Preparation for Civic Engagement, Reasoning and Discourse**

1256

1257 This historical overview of African-American education focuses on efforts within the community
1258 from Reconstruction through the 21st century to design and carry out educational efforts aimed
1259 at preparing young people to understand, resist and wrestle with the challenges to citizenship
1260 rights rooted in the nation's history of slavery, legal apartheid, and on-going structural
1261 impediments to full equity. These efforts involve professional educators working
1262 collaboratively within schools and professional associations, families and community members
1263 taking the lead, as well as influences of social, political and cultural theorists over the decades.
1264 These efforts also involve alliances among community, professional and social movement
1265 organizations. This history is offered as evidence of agency around addressing the challenges of
1266 civic engagement and as a consequence civic reasoning and discourse that go beyond political
1267 organizing around desegregation of schools, representing internal priorities within the African-
1268 American community over the centuries. This history is not intended to suggest that there is a
1269 monolithic conceptualization of how to prepare African-American youth for taking on the
1270 responsibilities and opportunities of citizenship, but rather to convey that despite
1271 heterogeneity there has been a consistent internally driven set of efforts rooted in beliefs about
1272 the power of this community, not seeing itself simply as subjects and objects of oppressive
1273 beliefs, practices and policies, but rather as agents of their own change.

1274

1275 **Black Education Post Emancipation**

1276

1277 Upon Emancipation it became readily apparent that the former enslaved population emerged
1278 from the “peculiar institution” with a vision of citizenship that included a civic commitment to
1279 universal education. The underlying foundation of their social and political movement for
1280 universal education rested on their deep sense of self-reliance, self-determination and their
1281 newly acquired citizenship, specifically the power to vote and shape the politics of the
1282 postbellum South. From the outset the former enslaved population envisioned universal
1283 education based on state constitutional provisions, statutes and local regulations of public
1284 education. They could not achieve their vision, however, until they were able to register to vote
1285 under military Reconstruction in 1867. Meanwhile, from the outbreak of the Civil War until
1286 military reconstruction, the Freed People built a “Sabbath School System” throughout the South
1287 that operated mainly in the evenings and on weekend. The Sabbath schools reached thousands
1288 of children and adults unable to attend weekday schools. By 1869 The Freedmen’s Bureau
1289 offered a conservative estimate of over 1500 Sabbath schools enrolling over 107,000 students.
1290 Such schools were established, paid for and sustained by Black communities as part and parcel
1291 of their movement for freedom and equality. Still, the Freed People’s most important campaign
1292 to implant a new vision of universal education in the South was the incorporation of tax-
1293 supported public education into southern state constitutional law.

1294

1295 Under the Military Reconstruction Acts passed in 1867, Congress empowered its occupying
1296 armies to register all eligible voters and call for new state constitutional conventions.
1297 Consequently, the former Confederate states witnessed for the first time the massive
1298 registration of Black voters as well as their critical participation in reshaping southern

1299 constitutions. Of the approximately 630,00 whites and 750,000 Freed People that registered in
1300 10 former Confederate states, newly registered Black voters comprised a majority in South
1301 Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida and Alabama. The South immediately saw a new and
1302 different civic vision inserted into southern constitutional law. Some of the new civic values
1303 included tax-supported universal public education, the explicit forbidding of racially segregated
1304 schooling in the constitutions of South Carolina and Louisiana, and the barring of school
1305 segregation in the Mississippi constitution. More important, with their newfound political
1306 power the Freed People set on a course to build a system of free and equal public education.
1307 Although the Freed People did not accomplish all they envisioned, they effectively changed the
1308 course of southern education from Reconstruction until the end of the 19th century. To be sure,
1309 education curriculum and facilities were not exactly equal in all categories between whites and
1310 African Africans, but the postbellum political power acquired by Black voters and the education
1311 equality principles inserted into the new southern constitutions established and sustained a
1312 system of relative equality from emancipation to the end of the 19th century.

1313
1314 The political power of Black voters and resulting system of more or less education equality
1315 maintained from Reconstruction to the dawn of the 20th century stands in mark contrast to the
1316 era of disenfranchisement and gross education inequality of the Jim Crow era. As southern
1317 whites recaptured southern state governments in the late 19th century, they altered or
1318 eliminated the provisions calling for funding equality between whites and blacks as well as
1319 clauses explicitly forbidding or failing to embrace racially segregated schooling. In their place
1320 the white “redeemers,” as they were called, created a legally mandated system of racial
1321 segregation and inequality, attended by an elaborate set of unwritten and customary practices
1322 of racially separate and unequal schooling. This system remained intact for the first seven
1323 decades of the 20th century in spite of the *Brown vs Board* decision that declared it
1324 unconstitutional in 1954.

1325

1326

1327 **Black Education During Legal Apartheid in the 20th century: The Work of African American 1328 Teachers**

1329

1330 In 1919, Georgia educator Mildred Lewis Rutherford, a verbal advocate for restoring lost
1331 knowledge about the Confederacy, announced at a meeting of United Confederate Veterans
1332 that she would crusade for the “truth of history.” She expressed her concern that 81% of white
1333 students studied from Georgia texts that did not elevate states’ rights, including the right of
1334 secession; noted slavery as the rationale for the war between the states; focused on the cruelty
1335 of slaveholders; and elevated Lincoln. The Rutherford Committee’s subsequent publication, “A
1336 Measuring Rod to Test Text Books,” became the guide she and other white women used to
1337 conform the Georgia curriculum into way of allowing schools to become the conduit through
1338 which the wisdom of Jim Crow and restriction of black opportunity could be perpetuated
1339 through the training of generations of white citizens(McRae, 134-136). Collectively, they erased
1340 African American history from textbooks and crafted a celebratory American history, with
1341 “great leaders and great causes, thus producing proud patriotic (white) citizens” (McRae, 144).

1343 Many historic texts assume that Rutherford and subsequent generations of efforts by white
1344 women to elevate white superiority through textbooks created reduced aspirations among
1345 black educators and their students (e.g. Ferguson, 2002) Unfortunately, these characterizations
1346 fail to illuminate the power of the black educator working in concert with their local, state, and
1347 national organizations and using their interconnected network to infiltrate the curriculum of
1348 black schools. In at least four ways, black education became a means through which the plans
1349 of Rutherford could be disrupted. These include the utilization of a counter-curricular strategy,
1350 the weaponizing of civics, the building of resilient students, and the modeling of civic activity.
1351

1352 One way black educators countered strategies to construct a history dominated by white glory
1353 and laudable values and victories was a counter curricular strategy that infused black history
1354 into the visual and invisible curriculum of black schools. While Rutherford would not formally
1355 introduce her plan to elevate whiteness in the national memory until 1919, black educators
1356 already understood the ways blacks were diminished in the nation in the years after
1357 Reconstruction. As early as 1908, when race violence became particularly viral they already
1358 understood the need to counter in schools the public representations of who black children
1359 could be, and Black history appears in schools (Givens, In Press; Walker, 2018). By 1915, former
1360 educator of 30 years, Carter G. Woodson, had launched the Association for the Study of Negro
1361 Life and Culture. He used this organization and his presence in the teacher association
1362 meetings—Woodson was a former teacher—to introduce black educators widely to curricular
1363 materials that could be used to infuse black culture into black school communities. (Givens, In
1364 Press).

1365

1366 Throughout the decades that follow, teachers counter the substandard and southern-
1367 perspective textbooks with a viable counter-curriculum for black students that infused black
1368 art, history, and culture in varied ways through many southern, segregated, black schools
1369 (Walker, 2018). The educators utilized oratory contests and dramatic presentations to celebrate
1370 the poetry of blacks, and they enthusiastically embrace Woodson's vision of black history week
1371 as a yearly celebration of black accomplishments (Givens, In Press; Walker, 2018). In addition to
1372 pedagogically countering the limited historical textbooks, the numerically-strong teacher
1373 organization in Georgia also fought directly against the lack of inclusion of black
1374 accomplishments in the textbooks. It was an organizational fight for the inclusion of blacks in
1375 textbooks that was echoed in other ways in other states across the south over decades (Walker,
1376 2018).

1377

1378 However, in addition to crafting a counter parallel plan of black infusion to refute American's
1379 diminishment of their contributions and humanity, black educators also intentionally
1380 weaponized civics education. This second plan coincides with the year Rutherford proclaims her
1381 intent to reclaim the values of the confederacy in textbooks. Her plan is rejoined indirectly by a
1382 black educator also from Georgia, Lucy Laney, during the annual meeting of the National
1383 Association of Colored People in 1919 Cleveland. Laney proclaimed that black educators had
1384 already been working to overthrow inequality. However, now they would begin a new strategy.
1385 "We are going to start anew in a way we know is going to be effective. We are gong to start at
1386 the bottom with the children. We'll teach them history, vote, government" (Walker, Lost Ed, p.

1387 154). Laney also imagined a generational strategy, but a different one that would allow Black
1388 educators to appear to school boards to be fulfilling state mandates as they taught civics
1389 education. In reality, however, she was articulating an intent to lay a curricular foundation for
1390 resistance.

1391
1392 The ways educators embraced Laney's vision of using civics to create a generational strategy for
1393 resistance is evident in remaining materials from varied schools that exemplify engaged
1394 democratic activities in segregated schools. In 1924 when the first public high school for black
1395 children since Reconstruction opened in the state of Georgia, Booker T. Washington High
1396 School, Principal Charles Harper began to teach lessons on political awareness. As the years
1397 progressed, he involved all students and the surrounding community in aggressive campaigning
1398 and electoral activities as students in the Independent and Progressive Parties fought for power
1399 and were rewarded with office taking during elaborate ceremonies in the courtyard in front of
1400 the school—complete with bands, banners, and flags for the winning party (Walker, 2018).

1401
1402 In the 1930s, the principal at Velena C. Jones School in New Orleans, Louisiana organized her
1403 entire elementary school into a republic. Each classroom represented a state with elected
1404 officers that ranged from governor, lieutenant governor, treasurer, secretary of state, senators,
1405 judges, police officers, and so on. The students were required to develop parliamentary
1406 procedures, make rules, and pass resolutions for the good of the republic. A generation later, at
1407 Beach High School in Savannah, Georgia, the students created a plan to get everyone in the city
1408 registered to vote (Walker, 2018). In the 1960s, Principal Ulysses Byas crafts a plan to allow
1409 students to practice democracy through engagement in a student self-regulated democratic
1410 study hall. These select examples of activities encouraging segregated black students to learn
1411 the principles of democracy appear in numerous schools throughout the south (Walker, 2009).

1412
1413 Principal Byas explains the sentiment for the focus on civics set in motion by Laney. By creating
1414 a curriculum that taught students what America was supposed to be, the students would be
1415 able to learn that they were the victims of unfair American practices. He explained that people
1416 have to know someone did something to them, and that when people know *that* he/she is
1417 being harmed, the foundation is laid to become indignant. Ultimately, indignance at
1418 mistreatment can lead to change. The accuracy of Byas' 1960 summation about the role of
1419 civics in the black schools is presciently captured starkly in the *Atlanta Daily World* in 1932.
1420 Referring to the democratic practices the editors witnessed in the Booker T. Washington High
1421 School in Atlanta, the paper observed: "If the young of today are trained in the use of the ballot
1422 . . . these same young people. . . will not sit passively . . . and let themselves be barred from
1423 complete citizenship" (Walker 2018, p. 4). In 1938 the paper foresees the birth of a civil rights
1424 movement because of the curricular strategy utilized in black schools.

1425
1426 In a third, equally significant strategy, black educators build students who have the resilience to
1427 counter oppression. In English classes, teachers appropriated European poetry such as "If" or
1428 "Invictus" and insisted that children across the south memorize these and other poems with
1429 similar ideas. Lines such as "keeping [their] heads when all around them were losing [theirs]
1430 and blaming it on [them]" or being victimized by the "bludgeonings of chance" but having an

1431 “unconquerable soul” helped build students whose heads might later be “bloody, but
1432 unbowed.” As far as white school boards could discern, the teachers were but teaching poetry.
1433 Yet, the teachers themselves reportedly give messages to students that tell them to make sure
1434 they are listening to the words. In other words, as students memorized particular selected
1435 poems—importantly, the same poems across the south—the wording created a foundation to
1436 enable numbers of children across states to believe they could achieve in a segregated and
1437 oppressive world. Through the intentioned messaging in their literature, the teachers built
1438 resilient self-efficacious students who would refuse to be daunted because of challenging
1439 circumstances (Walker, 1996).

1440
1441 The intentioned messaging also appeared in assemblies and widely-embraced black teacher
1442 beliefs. “You can be anything you want to be,” they postulated, though indeed during
1443 segregation the students could not become anything they wanted to be (Walker, 1996). At
1444 assemblies, one principal reminded students that they needed to “love themselves” as black
1445 people, notwithstanding the negative images they encountered in white America. He told them
1446 they were more than the Little Black Sambo character the Rosenwald Foundation, through its
1447 library fund first put into Black schools, that indeed the pharaohs of Egypt looked like him, like
1448 them. In his words and the many replications in the other mandatory assemblies that
1449 comprised part of the curriculum of black schools, teachers and principals intentionally
1450 prepared the students to have the confidence to create and live in a world the educators fully
1451 expected would one day be created. As one president of the teachers’ organization explained at
1452 a teachers’ meeting in 1944, the job of the black educator was to prepare the children “for the
1453 world of tomorrow” (Walker, 153). Through verbal affirmations, the teachers repeatedly
1454 engaged this process of resilience building.

1455
1456 A final form of citizenship activity might also be observed among black educators in black
1457 schools, although this activity is less visible to students in earlier decades. This aspect is one
1458 where the educators engage and model democratic practices. Through their organizations, the
1459 educators lobbied state school boards, federal education agencies, presidents, and others as a
1460 way of forcing into public conversation the need to provide equality for black schools. In the
1461 earliest decades of the formation of NAACP chapters, educators are among the people who
1462 launch these chapters. In the 1940s, some educators led citizenship groups in the community to
1463 spur registration in the black community. By the 1950s, among the activities are black
1464 educators registering, taking students to register to vote, marching to protest inequality, and
1465 running for public office. Throughout, the educators use their classroom and school assembly
1466 platforms to repetitively affirm students to believe they could become a part of America
1467 (Walker, 2018). Indeed, among the activities that led to the infamous Bloody Sunday in Selma
1468 were the marching of black teachers, an activity some youth report as having inspired their own
1469 engagement (<https://www.teachingforchange.org/selma-bottom-up-history>).

1470
1471 Rutherford may have intended the continuation of Jim Crow and limited civic participation
1472 through her plan for textbooks. But, throughout their years in segregated schools, black
1473 educators engaged in counter-messaging designed to address directly the reductionist vision
1474 for black children planned by Rutherford and many others. Their success can be measured by

1475 the students they produced—the Martin Luther Kings and Thurgood Marshalls and Oliver Hills,
1476 blacks smart enough to overthrow the system under which their educators labored. It can be
1477 measured by the multitude of southern black children, educated in segregated schools, who
1478 one day did begin the process of resistance now referred to as the Civil Rights Movement
1479 (Favors, 2019). To suggest black people had no resilient response to the plans of whites against
1480 them is to miss fully the work of black educators in black segregated schools.

1481
1482 The counter-messaging or the different kind and quality of literacy and civic reasoning
1483 envisioned and practiced by African Americans in the Jim Crow era rested squarely on the
1484 choices their ancestors made during the antebellum and Reconstruction eras. The first
1485 generation of post-slavery Black educators comprised men and women who struggled
1486 successfully to become literate under the oppressive constraints of slavery (Williams, 2005).
1487 They carried into the post slavery environment complex and complicated historical experiences
1488 learned over nearly two and one-half centuries of slavery. As Phillip D. Morgan documents, on
1489 the eve of the American Revolution, nearly three-quarters of all African Americans in mainland
1490 British America lived in the Chesapeake and Low Country region. This regional concentration
1491 provided structural support for the creation of a distinctive African American culture and the
1492 intergenerational transmission of patterns of meaning and shared values within the constraints
1493 of a dominant slaveholder's culture. Folklorist Roger Abrahams characterized this subterranean
1494 process as two cultures living "cheek to jowl for a matter of centuries, entertaining each other,
1495 subtly imitating each other in selective ways, but never fully comprehending the extent and
1496 meaning of these differences" (Abrahams, xxiv). As for African Americans, over the centuries
1497 within in shared spaces they accumulated new historical experiences to which they
1498 transformed into cultural practices, institutional arrangements and alternative belief systems,
1499 through which they interpreted, arranged and hammered out the meaning of education for
1500 their communities, even as they interacted with power holders imposing severe constraints
1501 upon them. Hence, it should come as no surprise that they emerged from slavery with a
1502 distinctive consciousness of literacy and long-standing conceptual models in which dominant
1503 values of literacy were borrowed, redefined, and transmuted into their own ideas of civil
1504 society. Within the walls of dominance and subordination African Americans created and
1505 recreated a distinctive and resilient value system of education and civic reasoning.
1506

1507 Jelani M. Favors has documented this subterranean process ("second curriculum") in his long
1508 history of Black college student activism (Favors, 2019) and Vanessa Siddle Walker has done the
1509 same for black public educators during the Jim Crow era (Walker, 2018). The "Hidden Heroes"
1510 of the Jim Crow era stood on the shoulders of the first post-slavery generation of African
1511 American educators. Although their definitive story is yet to be told, anecdotal testimony here
1512 and there provides windows into the nature and content of their pedagogical beliefs and civic
1513 reasoning. The testimony of two prominent Black educators in the early 1880s gives us a clue as
1514 to how they evolved education values of their own.
1515

1516 In 1883 Richard R. Wright, principal of Augusta, Georgia's "Colored High School" (later renamed
1517 E.A. Ware High School) was sworn and examined by the United States Senate Committee on
1518 Education and Labor. The Senate Committee toured southern states to collect evidence on the

1519 conditions of capital, labor and education in support of the Blair Education Bill that proposed
1520 millions of dollars in support of primary and secondary education (Jenkins and Peck,
1521 forthcoming). Although the bill never became law, the Committee collected volumes of
1522 information on labor, capital, social, education and racial conditions in the southern states.
1523 Being the principal of the first and only public high school for Black students in the State of
1524 Georgia made Wright a prime educator to interrogate about race, education and labor in the
1525 postwar South. Following a series of questions about “colored farm laborers and farmers” in
1526 the state of Georgia the investigation shifted from issues of labor and education to a query by
1527 Senator Henry Blair regarding Wright’s views on the “Race Question”. Wright readily
1528 understood the inquiry as an interrogation of his views regarding the comparative superiority
1529 and inferiority of the black and white “races”. His response provides a window into the history
1530 and civics taught in Black schools. One can only imagine the Committee’s (which included
1531 Senators from Virginia, Mississippi, Florida and Alabama) reaction to Wright’s understanding of
1532 arguments about race, particularly presumptions of white supremacy. As he informed the
1533 committee:

1534

1535 It is generally admitted that religion has been a great means of human development and
1536 progress, and I think that all the great religions which have blest this world have come
1537 from the colored races---all. In other words, what is called the Aryan race has not
1538 originated a single great religion. I believe, too, that our methods of alphabetic writing
1539 all came from the colored race, and I think the majority of the sciences in their origin
1540 have come from the colored races. (Report of the Committee of the Senate, 813)

1541

1542 Realizing that he was speaking to an all-white committee that routinely extolled the supremacy
1543 of white civilizations, beginning with Egyptians, Wright expressed his belief in the Egyptians as a
1544 Hamitic or colored race:

1545

1546 Now I take the testimony of those people who know, and who, I feel are capable of
1547 instructing me on this point, and I find them saying that the Egyptians were actually
1548 wooly-haired negroes. In Humboldt’s Cosmos (vol. 2, p. 531) you will find that
1549 testimony, and Humboldt, I presume, is a pretty good authority. The same is stated in
1550 Herodotus, and in a number of other authors with whom you gentlemen are doubtless
1551 familiar. Now if that is true, the idea that this negro race is inherently inferior seems to
1552 me to be at least a little limping (Report of the Committee of the Senate, 813).

1553

1554 The mere fight against teachings of Black inferiority compelled Black educators to resist both
1555 teachers and pedagogical content exalting white supremacy. W. H. Spencer, for eight years a
1556 teacher in public schools in Columbus, Georgia, objected to the employment of southern white
1557 teachers in Black public schools because they would teach white supremacy to Black children.
1558 Having taught in and observed schools that employed southern white teachers, Spencer
1559 observed that white teachers “would always teach [Black] children that they were inferior.”
1560 (Report of the Committee of the Senate, 580) Consequently, Spencer stressed the need for
1561 Black teachers and anti-racist white teachers.

1563 The campaign by Mildred Lewis Rutherford to foster a false narrative of Confederate honor and
1564 white supremacy echoed loudly the resistance and counter curriculum activities that Black
1565 educators like Wright and Spencer waged during the Reconstruction and Gilded eras. From an
1566 outer gaze and a position of dominance Jim Crow's champions failed to understand that white
1567 power was not the whole story, not even the main story. For African American educators and
1568 students, the main story unfolded off stage, beyond the direct observation and control of Jim
1569 Crow power holders. This off stage or second curriculum was produced and reproduced over
1570 generations, transmitting values and fundamental meanings that contradicted the teachings of
1571 white supremacy and undermined the constraints of Jim Crow power relations. Shaped and
1572 modified for each new epoch African American subterranean culture, including its counter-
1573 curriculum, constantly evolved a resiliency and civic reasoning angled toward a democratic
1574 citizenship of freedom and equality. In vital respects, the counter-curriculum in Black culture is
1575 the most democratic value system in American history. It's no wonder that the products of this
1576 value system leads the contemporary assault on systemic racism, social and economic
1577 inequality

1578

1579 **African American efforts in the Post-Brown Era: Community Organizing and Social
1580 Movements**

1581

1582 The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision declared legal segregation of K-12 schools by
1583 race unconstitutional, but the decision met with heavy resistance and little immediate success
1584 in the South. States outside the region were not bound by the decision, and racial segregation
1585 in schools continued there, too. African Americans did not necessarily equate desegregation
1586 with equality of education, but they did recognize that "separate but equal" schools were a tool
1587 to maintain and buttress white supremacy. For instance, in 1950 in Farmville, Virginia, 477
1588 Black high school students attended a school meant to hold 180. The overflow met in tar paper
1589 shacks or a parked school bus, and students used umbrellas inside classrooms since the roof
1590 leaked. The school had no gymnasium, no cafeteria, no school nurse, and no proper
1591 laboratories while the local white high school boasted each and more. The highest paid teacher
1592 at the Black school earned less than the lowest paid teacher at the white school (Titus, 2011).
1593 As John Stokes, former vice president of the student body remembered, "by...providing schools
1594 that were grossly unequal to the ones white children attended, the white power structure was
1595 programming us to fail" (Digital SNCC Gateway, n. d.).

1596

1597 Even when school desegregation did occur, Black students often suffered. Though some
1598 contemporaneous scholars and federal reports absolved schools of responsibility and pointed
1599 to Black communities and families as the root of Black underachievement (Coleman, 1966;
1600 Mosteller and Moynihan, 1972) others indicted schools and school officials for perpetuating
1601 white privilege and white supremacy (Hamilton, 1969; Clark, 1965). More contemporary
1602 scholars make the same argument, that schools deliberately stunt Black educational and
1603 therefore, civic potential. Black students encounter an alienating curriculum and pedagogy that
1604 privileges white vantage points, a cultural disconnect between school environments and Black
1605 students' social and cultural backgrounds, a system of tracking that targets them for remedial

1606 or special education classes, and a continued under-funding of predominantly Black schools
1607 (Lomotey, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Douglass Horsford, 2011).
1608

1609 As has been previously discussed, Black communities never sat idly by and allowed Black
1610 children to be demoralized, demonized, and undereducated. The same held true for the post-
1611 *Brown* era, and the effort to bolster the quality and relevance of education for Black youth
1612 continues into the 21st century. Fed up with the large discrepancy between expected results
1613 and actual achievements of Black children in desegregated schools, Black communities and
1614 activists have taken several paths to deploy education and schools as a means to make real the
1615 promises of the Constitution. Three of those paths include forcing changes to existing schools,
1616 creating alternate formal schooling options, and creating informal educational opportunities.
1617 One way Black educators sought to remake existing schools was through the community
1618 control movement. A thoroughly democratic idea, community control allows community
1619 residents to participate in policymaking, have more power over hiring and curricular decisions,
1620 and more fully link the school to the community. Advocates argue that the inclusion of Black-
1621 centered materials, use of students' backgrounds as a springboard for learning, incorporation of
1622 different perspectives of reality into the classroom, and connection of education to real-life
1623 situations and the community—all of which are lacking in white-controlled schools—boost
1624 students' self-esteem, feelings of belonging, and cultural pride. Such an education produces
1625 well-rounded and intelligent individuals ready to use their knowledge to initiate social reform
1626 and improve the conditions of the communities from which they came.
1627

1628 The most famous community control effort took place in the predominantly Black and Puerto
1629 Rican New York City neighborhood of Ocean Hill-Brownsville in 1968. Parents and community
1630 members there took advantage of a new opportunity put forth by the New York City Board of
1631 Education which allowed residents to elect their own local school boards with power over
1632 curricular and personnel decisions. They moved quickly to infuse Black content in the
1633 curriculum and hire teachers who knew and valued Black and Puerto Rican children. They
1634 argued these and other changes would transform local schools into the kind of institutions that
1635 emphasized unity and collective responsibility and taught students "that you are a person, that
1636 you are of value, that you are of worth" (Perlstein, 2004, p. 127; see also Podair, 2002). The
1637 famed author and activist, James Baldwin, applauded the community control experiment as an
1638 antidote to what New York schools (and other white-controlled schools) regularly taught Black
1639 children:
1640

1641 It is the school that makes vivid to the child his helpless inferiority. It does this by having
1642 no respect whatever for the child's experience. ...The school assures him...that he
1643 deserves his condition. ...When the school is finished with him...he is ready for the
1644 streets, the needle, the jail, the army, the garment center, ready to be used in nearly
1645 any way whatever (Baldwin, 1974, p. xi-xii).
1646

1647 The community control movement was larger than the Black community or New York City
1648 schools. Local activists across the country sought to de-bureaucratize the system and create
1649 smaller districts with increased community input. The impetus resembled Thomas Jefferson's

1650 own admonitions against centralized authority in the early 1800s, before public schools existed
1651 in any meaningful way. According to Jefferson, “if it is believed that these elementary schools
1652 will be better managed by ... general authority of the government, than by the parents within
1653 each [district], it is a belief against all experience” (Jefferson to Cabell, 1817). The republican
1654 ideal of community control looked different during Jefferson’s time than it did in the late 1960s
1655 or in the present, but the goals of self-determination and local responsibility live on.

1656
1657 The same spirit of remaking existing schools in the image of their local communities—as well as
1658 accurately representing the breadth of the American populous—can be found in the battles
1659 over curriculum and pedagogy in today’s schools. There, Black educators (and allies) leverage
1660 their demands for black representation with a desire to increase the educational and life
1661 chances of other minoritized groups. For instance, they have advanced the notion of
1662 multicultural education, defined by Banks and Banks (2001) as “an idea, an educational reform
1663 movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational
1664 institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are
1665 members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to
1666 achieve academically in school” (p. 1). Similarly, advocates of culturally responsive pedagogy or
1667 culturally sustaining pedagogy argue that schools should be places that either connect learning
1668 to students’ cultural knowledge and lived experiences (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995)
1669 or as sites that “perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as
1670 part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response to demographic and
1671 social change” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 88; Paris & Alim, 2017). The demands and guiding
1672 principles of Black Lives Matter activists fit here, as well (Black Lives Matter, n. d.). All these
1673 curricular and pedagogical efforts seek to transform existing schools into spaces that promote
1674 social transformation, equity, justice, and human dignity.

1675
1676 A second way Black communities have sought to bolster the educational and civic potential of
1677 Black youth is through the creation of alternate formal schooling options. Like W.E.B. DuBois
1678 before them, they do not fall for the trap of equating *segregated* schools with *separate* schools.
1679 As DuBois declared in 1935,

1680
1681 ... separate schools for Black youth are needed just so far as they are necessary for the
1682 proper education of the Negro race. The proper education of any people includes
1683 sympathetic touch between teacher and pupil; knowledge on the part of the teacher,
1684 not simply of the individual taught, but of his surroundings and background, and the
1685 history of his class and group; such contact between pupils, and between teacher and
1686 pupil, on the basis of perfect social equality, as will increase this sympathy and
1687 knowledge. If this is true, and if we recognize the present attitude of white America
1688 toward black America, then the Negro not only needs the vast majority of these schools,
1689 but it is a grave question if, in the near future, he will not need more such schools
1690 (DuBois, 1935, p. 328).

1691
1692 Black independent schools were born from this impetus (Shujaa, 1994; Ratteray, 1992; Rickford,
1693 2016). Many African American parents come to the conclusion that mainstream schools fail to

1694 provide their children an education that prepares them to be productive citizens prepared to
1695 face the challenges of an increasingly technological and global society. With the centering of
1696 Black knowledge systems, cultures, and histories, the expectation is that children will be
1697 encouraged to understand themselves as a part of the African Diaspora, important contributors
1698 to the progress of the human race, and agents in social reform equipped to uplift and
1699 strengthen the black community (Karenga 1993; Asante, 1987, 1991).
1700
1701 The African centered educational movement was a major community based effort from the
1702 1970's forward (Lomotey and Brookins 1988, Shujaa 1994). The Council of Independent Black
1703 Institutions (CIBI) was founded in 1972 and served as the organizational umbrella for
1704 independent African centered schools in cities across the country – New York, Chicago,
1705 Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Atlanta, among others. These schools in many ways
1706 were a natural outgrowth of efforts in the Black community to affirm education as a tool for
1707 community empowerment through developing students with a strong sense of identity, rooted
1708 in a comprehensive understanding of African and African diaspora history and culture (Bond
1709 1935, Bethune 1939). These efforts were directly influenced by the work of scholars and
1710 activists like Arthur Schomburg who with John Edward Bruce established the Negro Society for
1711 Historical Research in 1911 (connected to efforts leading to the establishment of the
1712 Schomburg Center for Black Culture in 1926 in New York City), Carter G. Woodson who
1713 established the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in 1915 (who
1714 wrote the prophetic volume *The Miseducation of the Negro* in 1933) (Woodson 1933/1969)
1715 which inspired what has become Black History Month in February of each year. Similar
1716 attention to a shared Black culture rooted in African traditions was also reflected in the arts in
1717 movements such as the Harlem Renaissance during the 1930's and 1940's and again in the
1718 Black Arts Movement of the 1960's and 1970's.
1719
1720 It should be further noted that there is parallel focus in the fields of Black Psychology and
1721 Human Development on how immersion in the study of African, African-diaspora and African-
1722 American history and culture, especially as principles derived from such studies are embodied
1723 in pedagogical practices, contribute both to a positive sense of identity as well as positive
1724 academic outcomes (Bowman and Howard 1985, Hale-Benson 1986, Sellers, Chavous et al.
1725 1998, Boykin and Bailey 2000, Chavous 2000, Spencer, Fegley et al. 2003, American
1726 Psychological Association Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and
1727 Adolescents 2008). Among the two oldest schools in this tradition still operating are New
1728 Concept School of the Institute of Positive Education (established in 1972) and the Betty
1729 Shabazz International Charter Schools (established in 1998), both in Chicago (Lee 1994). While
1730 many of these Afrocentric schools started as independent, some are currently serving as either
1731 charter schools or public schools. These schools serve as exemplars of community centered
1732 schools in the Black community established to build a strong sense of community and agency to
1733 prepare new generations of young people who understand the need for and urgency of being
1734 active in civic life in order to address inequities experienced by peoples of African descent in
1735 the U.S.
1736

1737 Advocates of Afrocentric schools, a subset of Black independent schools, argue that it is
1738 valuable in all K–12 subjects, not just the arts or humanities where such content is often
1739 relegated. Carol Lee (1994), for example, describes how, at the New Concept Development
1740 Center in Chicago, Illinois, students working through a unit on aeronautics built a model wind
1741 tunnel and studied air pressure, air lift, and the nature of aerodynamics while researching the
1742 story of the Tuskegee Airmen. Those studying architecture tested the strength of certain
1743 shapes in construction as well as the Egyptian pyramids.

1744

1745 Another, though now defunct, example of an Afrocentric educational model is the set of
1746 schools created by the Black Panther Party. As the fifth point in their Ten Point Platform and
1747 Program, the Panthers proposed an education for our people that exposes the true nature of
1748 this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our
1749 role in present-day society. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a
1750 knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and
1751 the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else (quoted in Heath, 1976, p. 249).
1752 The Panthers' vision was most fully realized in their Oakland Community School (OCS), a model
1753 for Afrocentric schools operated by Panthers and others across the country that was
1754 operational from 1971 to 1982. It ran year-round and educated hundreds of students in its
1755 lifetime. The school implemented (to varying degrees) pedagogically progressive ideas with an
1756 Afrocentric twist. The mission of the school shifted over time but was always anchored in
1757 serving the local community and equipping Black youth with the mindset, skills, and knowledge
1758 they needed to succeed. (Brown 1992; see also Huggins and LeBlanc-Ernest, 2009). The school
1759 drew recognition from black community members, lawmakers, and an assemblyman for its
1760 efforts. In 1977, California Governor Edmund "Jerry" Brown issued OCS a commendation for its
1761 high quality work (Brown 1992).

1762

1763 Boarding schools and homeschooling are additional examples of alternative formal schooling
1764 options. For instance, the Piney Woods School in rural Mississippi is an independent
1765 coeducational boarding school that focuses on the education of Black students from the United
1766 States and abroad. It embodies what Akoto (1992) found to be the case at other historically
1767 Black boarding schools, that their attention to cognitive development, the cultural orientations
1768 of the child, and social and emotional maturation create lasting positive impacts on students
1769 (see also Alexander-Snow, 2011). Some parents turn to homeschooling for similar reasons.
1770 According to Puga (2019), homeschooling-parents even consider their decision an act of protest
1771 against the racism and alienation their children experienced in formal schooling contexts (see
1772 also Mazama & Lundy, 2012; Mazama, 2015).

1773

1774 A third way the Black community has sought to improve the educational conditions and
1775 outcomes for Black youth is the creation of informal educational spaces. The most famous
1776 example of informal education as empowerment, resistance, and politicization was the Student
1777 Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Freedom Schools in Mississippi in the summer 1964. The
1778 Freedom Schools blended the teaching of traditional academic subjects and what they called a
1779 "Citizenship Curriculum" with the explicit purpose of "train[ing] people to be active agents in
1780 bringing about social change" (Mississippi Freedom School Curriculum, 1964/1991, p. 9).

1781 Charles Cobb (1963/1991), an architect of the schools, argued, “If we are concerned with
1782 breaking the power structure, then we have to be concerned with building up our own
1783 institutions to replace the old, unjust, decadent ones which make up the existing power
1784 structure” (p. 36). Students, then, were expected to use their newfound knowledge to force
1785 changes in their formal schools and work for racial equity inside and outside the classroom.
1786 Evidence indicates that students did, in fact, use their knowledge to challenge Mississippi
1787 power structures.

1788
1789 Students at one Freedom School wrote their own version of the Declaration of Independence
1790 and argued, “In the course of human events, it has become necessary for the Negro people to
1791 break away from the customs which have made it very difficult for the Negro to get his God-
1792 given rights. ... We do hereby declare independence from the unjust laws of Mississippi which
1793 conflict with the United States Constitution” (Freedom School Students of St. John’s Methodist
1794 Church, Palmer’s Crossing, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, 1964/1991, p. 35). Others expanded legal
1795 protections for school-aged youth by challenging the prohibition against wearing “freedom
1796 buttons” on school grounds (*Blackwell v. Issaquena Board of Education*, 1966; *Burnside v. Byars*,
1797 1966). Still others reflect back on their time in a Freedom School as an inspiration for future
1798 activism. As former-student Eddie James Carthan put it, “The Freedom Schools shaped my
1799 future, my thinking, my outlook on life, they challenged me to do the things I’ve done and to
1800 have the mindset that I have. If I had to attribute anything to my community involvement, I
1801 would attribute it to my attending the Freedom School” (Hale, 2016, p. 1). Lastly, the Children’s
1802 Defense Fund continues the tradition of Freedom Schools through summer literacy and cultural
1803 enrichment programming (Children’s Defense Fund, n.d.).

1804
1805 Another example are rites of passage programs for Black youth, which focus on the aspects of a
1806 child’s development and learning that occur outside any formal schooling context. The purpose
1807 of such programs, according to Warfield-Coppock (1992), is “instilling a strong, positive sense of
1808 self and achievement in African American youth and returning a sense of empowerment to
1809 African American families and communities (p. 472). Black youth engage in a set of activities or
1810 celebrations that mark the transition from one stage of life to another but also bond them
1811 together, integrate them into the wider Black community, and reinforce cultural traditions. For
1812 instance, the Brotherhood/Sister Sol’s Rite of Passage Program, in New York City, offers weekly
1813 sessions that encourage critical thinking skills, leadership development, global awareness, and
1814 community responsibility for Black and Latinx youth (The Brotherhood/Sister Sol, n.d.). Those
1815 that complete the program create an “Oath of Dedication” and assume additional leadership
1816 roles in the organization.

1817

1818 Conclusion

1819

1820 Black community efforts, whether before or after *Brown*, that link education to the creation of
1821 the good and just society are the ideological descendants of ancestors like the abolitionist and
1822 author Frederick Douglass. After being told by his enslaver that learning would “forever unfit
1823 him to be a slave” he remembered, “from that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery
1824 to freedom” (Douglass, 1845/1988, pp. 58, 59). Douglass understood the benefits of education

1825 beyond his own literal personal freedom. As he told a group of Black students in 1894,
1826 “Education...means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting the soul of
1827 man into the glorious light of truth, the light only by which man can be free. To deny education
1828 to any people is one of the greatest crimes against human nature” (Douglass, 1894, p. 12). It is
1829 this pursuit of light, truth, and emancipation that has propelled Black communities in their
1830 battle to remake schools or in their creation of alternative spaces. And, it is this pursuit that
1831 can propel American education—and democracy—forward.

1832

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2075 **Historicizing Latinx Civic Agency and Contemporary Lived Civics**
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Historicizing Latinx Civic Agency and Contemporary Lived Civics

We bring to this discussion of civic action among Latinx populations in the United States an expanded notion of agency and resilience and a reframing of civics as a form of lived Latinx civics (Cohen, Kahne, Marshall, 2018; de los Ríos & Molina, 2020). Here we use resilience not to talk about individuals but instead locate resilience in larger sociocultural systems—e.g., families, communities, institutions, and organizations. This notion of resilience focuses on groups of people developing and employing agentic practices, with ingenuity and in ways that amplify culture. In particular, we focus on ecological resilience in which diversity is not a deficit but an essential resource of any resilient and sustainable ecology across longer time scales and institutions (Gutiérrez, 2016). While the focus of this section is on Latinx peoples in the U.S., we do so mindful of the shared histories of legal, social, and educational inequities Latinx communities have endured, as well as the significant variance experienced by Latinx peoples. By situating the histories of resistance and agency in their particular geographical, historical, local, linguistic, and sociopolitical specificities, we hope to call attention to the forms of exclusion from civics and citizenship experienced Americans of Mexican and Puerto Rican origin.⁸ These forms of exclusion were explicitly designed (in codified law, as well as in lived practices) to limit access to social and educational institutions, and political, cultural, and economic life.

We engage in this conversation about Latinx civics mindful of the critiques against the term “Latinx.” The term is meant to bring under an umbrella category different communities from distinct nations and racial backgrounds that have some shared colonial past and linguistic history such that they can be grouped for political purposes. But in an effort to create a unifying term, several racial nuances are ignored, flattening out differences and histories that matter. For example, some argue that Latinx centers Spanish/European ancestry, marginalizing Indigeneity, and ignoring African roots (Banks, 2006; Bost, 2003; M. Santiago 2019a). The term also does not take into account differences between Latin American nations, does not include the Caribbean, nor does it consider the distinct immigration experiences that are intertwined with colonialism (Salazar, 2019). Puerto Ricans, for example, are U.S. citizens because Puerto Rico is a territory of the U.S. Yet, Puerto Ricans are misidentified as Latinx immigrants from other nations (Doubek & Campbell, 2018). It is within this context that we discuss Latinx civics, fraught with complexities regarding race/ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, and language.

⁸ We focus on communities of Mexican- and Puerto Rican origin communities' experience, as these are the two cultural communities for which there is the most literature, but recognize the shared history of experiences across a more pan-Latinx analysis. There is limited documented histories of central and southern American origin communities in the US.

2121 a result, Latinx communities have developed various forms of resistance practices in response
2122 to the shifting labels imposed on them and their attendant forms of oppression. Some of these
2123 histories have been more documented than others.

2124
2125 For example, while there is a well-known history of civic activism in Afro-Latinx communities,
2126 there are few academic accounts recorded before the 1970s, as racializing practices categorize
2127 Afro-Latinx peoples as either Black or Latinx. As a result, documented Afro-Latinx civic agency
2128 before the 1970s is difficult to find despite their rich histories of activism. Such dichotomous
2129 forms of racialization relegate their presence as historical actors to one group, thus erasing
2130 their complex racial experiences and unique historical contributions as Afro-Latinxs. The few
2131 documented events of Afro-Latinx resistance surfaced in the late 1960s when many Puerto
2132 Ricans embraced an identity rooted in the African diaspora and Blackness. Black nationalism
2133 helped inform and develop these identities (Torres & Velasquez, 1998). However, the
2134 documented Black Puerto Rican experiences are not representative of other Afro-Latinxs, such
2135 as Afro Colombianxs or Afro Cubanxs. Thus, it is challenging to discuss Afro-Latinx contributions
2136 when social and historical structures have obscured their identities and experiences. We note
2137 this history, as it is important to discuss shared civic engagement and histories of U.S. Latinx
2138 people without promoting reductive notions of what it means to be Latinx.

2139
2140 At the same time, where there is oppression there is resistance and rich forms of learning and
2141 cultural and civic life, in which civics are appropriated in the home and community's cultural
2142 practices. These are also intergenerational forms of learning in which agentic and resistance
2143 practices are situated in cultural and sociopolitical practices. Here we draw on a transformative
2144 understanding of agency generally defined as "clusters of volitional actions which break away
2145 from well-established [sic] constraining frames (Virkkunen, 2006) and concretely contribute to
2146 the changing of specific circumstances" (p. 1). These actions involve inquiry and a search for
2147 new openings, which "typically start with individual initiatives and then expand toward
2148 collective endeavors" (p. 1) (in Gutiérrez, et al., 2019). Our theoretical and empirical work on
2149 agency focuses on people becoming historical actors in which people negotiate everyday
2150 dilemmas and push against the intentions of systems and their designers (Harrell, 2013). As we
2151 will discuss, historical actors repurpose tools, such as the law, toward new ends, and to resist
2152 local and historical sociopolitical inequities (Gutiérrez et al., 2019). For example, one such
2153 response, as we detail below, involved engaging with the legal system, the development of new
2154 forms of schooling which privileged educational dignity, and engagement in intergenerational
2155 linguistic, cultural, and civic practices in the home and community to make possible new forms
2156 of participation across institutions in which one's full humanity could be realized. Such analyses
2157 necessarily require explicating the fundamental notion of what counts as citizenship, civics,
2158 agency and resilience.

2159

2160 The Disconnect Between Latinidad and School Civics

2161

2162 Civics education in K-12 classrooms tends to focus on themes related to patriotism,
2163 government, and laws. This common pedagogical approach is a reflection of how state social
2164 studies content standards privilege narrow ideas about what counts as civics and citizenship.

2165 Social studies education researchers have acknowledged these limitations and instead
2166 emphasize the need for pedagogical approaches that consider greater complexity of what
2167 counts as civic agency (Salinas et. al., 2016; Salinas & Alarcon, 2016; Torney-Purta et. al., 2007;
2168 Jaffee, 2016. Researchers have proposed a number of strategies toward this end. For example,
2169 classroom simulations may help empower students of color to engage in political processes
2170 (Lo, 2017). Action research positions students as civic agents who research a community
2171 problem and develop and implement action plans (Levinson, 2015). These pedagogical
2172 approaches, although promising, do not directly address the civic divide between schools and
2173 home. For example, some Latinx translingual youths—those who draw from multiple
2174 languages, symbol systems, and modalities of communications from their unitary semiotic
2175 repertoire (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Wei, 2013)—deploy Spanish as a civic tool. Many
2176 Latinx students regularly translanguish—move fluidly across their “named languages”
2177 (Otheguy, García, Reid, 2015)—as they attain, sharpen, and share political and civic
2178 information. While not all Latinx youths identify as bi/multilingual, even Latinx students who
2179 identify as monolingual often have their language practices marked and sorted (Brooks, 2019;
2180 Flores, Kleyn, & Menken, 2014) based on how their bodies are racialized in classrooms (Flores &
2181 Rosa, 2015).

2182
2183 School's narrow understanding of language has supported racialized “common sense” notions
2184 of “Standard English” as the primary medium through which civic education can be taught and
2185 engaged (Haney-López, 2003). As a result, the language practices of many Latinx bi/multilingual
2186 students and their families and the everyday cultural practices of which they are a part are
2187 often not recognized or viewed as a rich resource for learning civics (Salinas et al., 2016).
2188 Historically, the ideals of U.S. citizenship and what counts as civically-informed people converge
2189 around ideas of a White Anglo-Saxon nation of English-dominant speakers who embody middle-
2190 class markers. For most of its history, U.S. citizenship laws were used to legally subordinate and
2191 make ineligible a significant majority of its racially and language minoritized populations (Smith,
2192 1997). In this context, the socializing mechanisms of schooling have helped to sustain notions
2193 of the “ideal civic participant” as an English-speaking citizen engaged in a particular set of civic
2194 practices that do not always index the civic dispositions, discourses, and linguistic identities of
2195 Latinx youth.

2196
2197 We push back on social science research that argues Latinx families are the least likely to
2198 participate in political activism (Bloemraad et al., 2011; Martinez, 2005). Employing a “lived
2199 civics” framework, we delineate the savvy ways that Latinx youth and families indeed have
2200 done and continue to “do” politics across modes and languages. We expand Cohen et al.’s
2201 (2018) concept of “lived civics” as it provides fecund soil for thinking about the community-
2202 based literacies through which Latinx youth explore issues of related concern, contest racialized
2203 narratives, and resist oppressive legislation and practices in their communities. A lived civics
2204 framework sees students’ lived experiences as the critical starting point to explore and
2205 interrogate inequality and applicable methods for social change. School-based civics content
2206 delivery frequently engages current event discussions, simulations of democratic processes,
2207 and service-learning projects often steeped in white middle-class norms (Mirra & Garcia, 2017;
2208 Rubin, 2012; Salinas et.al., 2016; Vickery, 2015). These approaches, however, too often fail to

2209 explicitly address the interests, racialized and linguistic identities (Salinas & Alarcon, 2016;
2210 Jaffee 2016), and lived experiences of Latinx youth, “whose perspectives on the state and
2211 democratic processes are often dramatically different than so-called mainstream attitudes”
2212 (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 2). We build on these approaches that conceptualize meaningful civic
2213 learning experiences as those that connect deeply to the racialized and linguistic identities and
2214 lived cultural experiences of historically marginalized Latinx youth (de los Ríos & Molina, 2020).
2215 Such approaches are attuned to the increasingly consequential and complex ways that
2216 advanced technologies intersect with issues of race, power, immigration, language, literacies,
2217 and historical and contemporary in/equity.
2218

2219 In the following sections, we first historicize and exemplify civic agency across three salient
2220 approaches taken up by Latinx communities : 1) a legal case that centered youth and
2221 community lived experiences, 2) alternative education spaces that prioritized Mexican identity
2222 and culture, and 3) community organizing that engaged in confrontational actions modeled
2223 after Black power movements. We then situate contemporary forms of lived civics across Latinx
2224 communities. We showcase several of the agentic practices through which Latinx youth and
2225 families continue to participate in their historical and current struggle for self-determination
2226 and civil and educational rights and dignity, as they advocate for their well- being. As we argue,
2227 activism and resistance have always been central to the social fabric of Latinx communities’
2228 livelihoods, identities, and lived practices. Our aim here is for this discussion of the lived civics
2229 of Latinx communities to further research on Latinx civics and provide the field with more
2230 expansive and situated understandings of Latinx communities’ agentic and resistance practices
2231 that advocate for a new kind of civics for social and structural change.
2232

2233 **Historicizing Latinx Civics**

2234
2235 Legal Advocacy: *Francisco Maestas et al. v. George H. Shone et al.* in Alamosa, Colorado (1912-
2236 1914)

2237
2238 *Francisco Maestas et al. v. George H. Shone et al.* is one of the first documented legal
2239 challenges to Mexican-origin school segregation. As in other school districts, Alamosa,
2240 Colorado had no school segregation laws on the books against Mexican-origin children. Up to
2241 this point, it was customary for Mexican-origin children to attend white schools. But in 1910
2242 the new school district policy required Mexican-origin children to attend “Mexican schools” to
2243 segregate them from white children (Donato, et al., 2017).

2244
2245 In response, community members formed the Spanish American Union to challenge the
2246 segregation order. Whereas other challenges to Mexican school segregation relied on support
2247 from the Mexican consulate (Donato & Hanson, 2017), the Alamosa community came together
2248 to mobilize through a multi-pronged approach. Initially, parents met with school officials and
2249 made their grievances known via local newspapers to no avail (Donato et al., 2017). When this

2250 proved unproductive, the community led one of the first school boycotts rather than to send
2251 their children to the “Mexican school”.⁹
2252
2253 Unlike other cases—such as *Mendez v. Westminster* and *Gonzales v. Sheely* (Valencia, 2005)—
2254 that would follow *Maestas*, the Maestas et al. attorney did not apply the “other white” legal
2255 strategy, which claimed that Mexican-origin children were white and therefore should have
2256 access to white schools. Instead, the Maestas et al. attorney “used the Colorado State
2257 Constitution to challenge segregation because it was illegal for schools to distinguish and
2258 classify children in public schools according to color or race” (Donato et al., p. 4, 2017). Rather,
2259 it was the school district attorney who argued that Mexican-origin children were white, and, as
2260 such, could not be racially segregated.

2261
2262 The racial dodging made language (instead of ethnicity) a key aspect of the court trial. School
2263 district officials and their attorney argued that Mexican-origin children lacked English
2264 proficiency to attend white schools. Attending segregated schools would allegedly offer
2265 Mexican-origin children a more supportive environment where they could learn English
2266 (Donato et al., 2017). The plaintiffs challenged deficit ideas about bilingualism, specifically that
2267 Mexican-origin children could not speak English, when in fact they could. Spanish language
2268 became a proxy for racial segregation, one that was repeated in other regions of the country
2269 (Saenz, 2004). The language argument was one of many legal loopholes (M. Santiago, 2019c)
2270 along with claiming that Mexican-origin children were racially Black (Donato, 2017) or
2271 Indigenous (Madrid, 2008) that was enacted in various parts of the country.
2272

2273 **Alternative Education Spaces**

2274
2275 *Colegio Altamirano in Hebronville, Texas (1897-1958)*
2276

2277 With either poor or no schooling facilities, Mexican-origin families sought to create an
2278 educational space for their children where one did not exist. These informal and formal
2279 learning spaces became known throughout Texas as escuelitas (Barrera, 2006). Escuelitas were
2280 community initiated, funded, and controlled (Goetz, 2020), which gave parents and other
2281 community members the opportunity to develop their own curriculum—one grounded in
2282 Mexican culture, identity, philosophy, and Spanish language.
2283

2284 Colegio Altamirano was one of the longest running escuelitas to offer such an education to
2285 Mexican-origin children in Texas. Initially funded through middle class Tejanos and later
2286 continued with mutualista (Mexican-origin community-based mutual aid groups) support,
2287 school organizers sought out well-educated teachers and resources for their students (Goetz,
2288 2020). The school was named after Mexican philosopher Ignacio Manuel Altamirano (Barrera,
2289 2006), an Indigena Mexican nationalist novelist and philosopher (Rulfo, 2014), whose name is
2290 reflective of the values and philosophy that the school, its educators, and students hoped to

⁹ The first Mexican-origin led school boycott took place only two years earlier in San Angelo, Texas (De Leon, 2015).

2291 espouse. “The escuelita’s goals were also to ‘prepare every Mexican child with the knowledge
2292 of their mother tongue to facilitate the learning of the English language.’ A bicultural existence
2293 was essential in the new social order” (Salinas, p. 84, 2001).

2294
2295 Spanish was the primary vehicle for retaining Mexican nationalist identity, culture, and ideals.
2296 Tejano families in Hebbronville did not see preparing their children to participate in the U.S.
2297 and retaining Mexican identity as dichotomous; in other words, lived civics was multicultural
2298 and multilingual where their Mexican-origins supported them to excel (Mireles, 2006). Many
2299 escuelitas relied heavily on Spanish-language newspapers in part because of the limited
2300 financial resources to purchase textbooks (Goetz, 2020). This meant that children enrolled in
2301 escuelitas read about such topics as the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) el Partido Liberal de
2302 México’s struggle for political and economic freedom, labor organizing, separation of church
2303 and state, and the need for free press and speech. As a result, escuelitas became a unique
2304 space that invested in preparing children to become active civic agents in the U.S., but one
2305 founded on Mexican Revolutionary ideals.

2306
2307 *Alternative Mexican Schools in Chicago (1910-1940)*
2308

2309 During this same time period 1400 miles away, Mexican-origin families were leading similar
2310 alternative Mexican schools in Chicago. As early as 1910, families and community members
2311 relied on their networks with supporters of the Mexican Revolution to create community-led
2312 educational programs. Fearing a “demexicanization” process that students were encountering
2313 in schools, these alternative education spaces were meant to supplement a U.S. education
2314 system that dismissed and devalued Mexican culture and knowledge (Rios, forthcoming).

2315
2316 Similar to Colegio Altamirano, the Chicago alternative schools relied on a form of transnational
2317 pedagogy. Whereas Hebbronville families relied on their proximity to Tamaulipas, Mexico to
2318 access curricular resources in Spanish and hire Mexican teachers, Chicago community members
2319 took a different approach. In this case, many of these alternative schools were framed around
2320 a 1920s nationalist identity and philosophy that permeated during and after the Mexican
2321 Revolution (Rios, forthcoming).

2322
2323 Like in *Maestas* and Colegio Altamirano, Mexican-origin families in Chicago recognized that
2324 English was the language of power in the U.S. Hispanos, Tejanos, and Midwestern Mexican-
2325 origin families understood that English was necessary to navigate in the U.S. “Language
2326 functioned as a signifier for power, and the escuelitas operated as a vehicle for communities to
2327 negotiate” (Goetz, 2020, p. 3). Although English was the necessary language, Spanish was the
2328 language of resistance. Speaking Spanish in a space where it was actively discouraged,
2329 challenged negative stereotypes of Spanish and bilingualism. It also defied the notion that civic
2330 identity in the U.S. was exclusively tied to English, white identity and culture.

2331
2332 Escuelitas in Texas and the various alternative schools in Chicago were part of coordinated
2333 efforts to retain Mexican identity in direct defiance of americanization. The schools’

2334 sustainability across different geographic locations and time scales, and their grounding in
2335 revolutionary ideology were more than happenstance.

2336

2337 Efforts to resist americanization and center Latinx cultural practices continued long after
2338 escuelitas and alternative schools closed their doors. Huelga (strike) schools in Houston (as part
2339 of an effort to boycott Houston Independent School District in the early 1970s), Escuela
2340 Tlatelolco in Denver (1971-2017), and the current Academia Cuauhtli in Austin, Texas are all a
2341 part of a 100-year legacy of Mexican-origin resistance against narrow ideas of who and how
2342 one is considered a civic agent in the U.S. “Escuelita history from the late nineteenth century to
2343 the mid-twentieth century provides us not only with an origin story for Mexican American
2344 studies but also with the paradoxical understanding that a decolonized space in the margins can
2345 also be a liberating force in the center” (Goetz, p. 168, 2020).

2346

2347 Shortly after the end of Colegio Altamirano and other alternative education systems, the Black
2348 and Brown power movements emerged. While previous forms of Latinx resistance in the
2349 Southwest, for example, centered Mexican nationalism, Black and Brown movements of the
2350 1960s and 1970s, although distinct in a number of important ways, were both grounded in
2351 revolutionary philosophies and advocated self-liberation and self-determination (Muñoz, 2007;
2352 Farmer 2017). Similar to the generations of activists before them, the Young Lords, Brown
2353 Berets, and other youth organizations across various Latinx communities centered their
2354 activism in their cultural identities. Puerto Rican youth emphasized their Blackness and saw
2355 themselves as part of a Black diaspora; whereas Chicanx youth claimed Indigeneity (San Miguel,
2356 2005; Torres & Velasquez, 1998). In the Southwest, the Chicanx movement was exemplified
2357 through resistance practices such as the 1968 student walkouts (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Muñoz,
2358 2007). What remained constant across generations was Chicanx youth demand for access to a
2359 quality education that centered their histories and cultural identities (Gutiérrez, 1998; Garcia &
2360 Castro, 2011). Puerto Rican communities in New York made similar demands, but took a
2361 distinct approach.

2362

2363 **Community Organizing**

2364

2365 *Community Controlled Schools in New York (1966)*

2366

2367 Similar to Mexican-origin family efforts, parents in New York took the lead in demanding
2368 transformative change through a community control movement. Unlike the previous examples
2369 of legal challenges and the formation of alternative schools, Black and Puerto Rican families in
2370 New York did not try to gain access to existing schools or create new spaces for education.
2371 Instead, New York parents sought out leadership positions in existing schools in the community.

2372

2373 After years of attempting to work with district officials to improve schooling conditions for their
2374 children, African American and Puerto Rican parents turned to grassroots efforts. United Bronx
2375 Parents—led by Evelina López Antonetty, an Afro Puertorriqueña—one of the organizers, shifted
2376 from seeking partnership with schools to more confrontational political methods more aligned
2377 with those of the Black power movement (Lee, 2014). The tension between the school district

2378 and community members came to a head in 1966, when African American and Puerto Rican
2379 parents successfully boycotted I.S. 201 in Harlem. This was part of a larger effort to gain
2380 community control of the school after the Board of Education stated that I.S. 201 “would be
2381 integrated because it would be half black and half Puerto Rican” (Lee, 2014, p. 173). As with
2382 Mexican Americans in Houston four years later (San Miguel, 2005), school officials exploited
2383 Puerto Ricans racial ambiguity to categorize them as white when convenient for integration
2384 purposes.

2385

2386 The result of the community control effort was a community-elected governing board that
2387 oversaw three decentralized school districts (Pritchett, 2002). Similar to las escuelitas in Texas
2388 and alternative schools in Chicago, Puerto Rican community members hired Puerto Rican
2389 teachers and centered Puerto Rican culture, but this time also privileged Black culture and
2390 history. The resulting “culturally nationalist pedagogy” (Lee, 2014, p. 169) was grounded in
2391 Puerto Rican and Spanish speaking identity as the “basis for their political empowerment” (Lee,
2392 2014, p. 2). As with the Mexican-origin resistance practices, Puerto Rican community members
2393 emphasized the importance of their children learning English to function and advocate for
2394 themselves in the U.S., but not at the expense of Spanish. This activism would eventually lead
2395 to the establishment of P.S. 25, the first bilingual school in the Northeast, which continues to
2396 operate today (Lee, 2014). This emphasis on bilingualism led to greater advocacy for bilingual
2397 education for Puerto Rican students, including the 1974 ASPIRA Consent Decree that
2398 established bilingual education in New York city public schools (I. Santiago, 1986).

2399

2400 In this section, we have situated historically the resilience and agentic resistance practices of
2401 various Latinx communities in asserting their right to participate fully in civic life with their
2402 identities, cultural histories, and aspirations intact. Through the centering of Latinx cultural
2403 practices, parents and community members leveraged with intentionality Latinx history,
2404 culture, and home language to support the development of children’s agentic practices.

2405

“Lived Civics”: The Ingenuity of Latinx Youth Cultural Practices of Political Participation

2406

2407 The last two decades have been replete with grassroots movements composed of Latinx,
2408 immigrant-origin, and other youth of color working to dismantle racial and systemic inequality.
2409 Increasing cruelty enacted against Latinx families through legislation—including detention and
2410 family separation of asylum seekers, anti-sanctuary city policies, termination of Temporary
2411 Protection Status, and efforts to rescind DACA protections—coupled with aggressive anti-
2412 immigrant rhetoric, have served as fertile grounds for Latinx communities to respond agentively
2413 and hone youths’ critical literacies to name their worlds (Ayon, 2016; de los Ríos, 2019; de los
2414 Ríos & Molina, 2020; Pallares, 2014; Terriquez et al., 2018; Zepeda-Millán & Wallace, 2018).
2415 Scholars argue that Latinx family discussions in the home about these experiences of
2416 marginalization can foster a sense of collective responsibility to elicit social change (Wallace &
2417 Zepeda-Millán, 2020). Toward that end, there has been an expansion in creative lived political
2418 action among Latinx young people and families.
2419

2420

2421 One prominent example is the rise of young Latina girls in Texas employing “activist
2422 quinceañeras,” in which they leverage their cultural rite of passage practice of “quinceañeras”
2423 (sweet 15 birthday parties) as a site for mass voter registration for their families, friends, and
2424 greater neighborhood (Pinetta et al., 2020). These young women and their families often work
2425 in partnership with youth advocacy groups like “Jolt Initiative” who oversee and run the voter
2426 registration logistics for their predominantly Latinx guests at their quinceañeras (Gamboa,
2427 2019). This practice has become a prominent act of resistance and has spread across Latinx
2428 youth communities around the nation. Latinx youth movements for justice are drawing from a
2429 number of innovative civic strategies, like “activist quinceañeras,” to bring awareness to their
2430 communities’ intergenerational concerns and often do so through “communal actions” (Wray-
2431 Lake et al., 2018). In this next section, we briefly highlight other recent and notable ways that
2432 Latinx youth and families are leveraging their ingenuity for political participation in their
2433 grassroots communities.

2434

2435 **Youth-Led Immigrant Rights Movement: DREAMers and Anti-deportation Techniques**

2436

2437 Undocumented immigrant youth and their allies have been leading one of the most vibrant,
2438 creative, and inclusive youth social movements of the 21st century (Patler, 2018; Patler &
2439 Gonzales, 2015; Terriquez et al., 2018; Zimmerman, 2016). Shortly after the bipartisan
2440 legislative proposal called the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (The
2441 DREAM Act) made its initial congressional appearance in 2001, there was a steadfast charge of
2442 immigrant youth-led activism focused on raising awareness for the DREAM Act (Olivas, 2020).
2443 Most versions of the DREAM Act bill argued it would provide conditional permanent residency
2444 for certain eligible undocumented young adults who were brought to the United States as
2445 children, and a possible eventual path to citizenship (Patler, 2018).

2446

2447 When the latest version of the Dream Act failed to pass in the Senate in December 2010, many
2448 undocumented youth began to take their own “autonomous path” (Márquez-Benítez &
2449 Pallares, 2016) that rejected the criminalization of their parents, denounced the need for youth
2450 exceptionalism, and instead worked to foster a larger and more inclusive undocumented
2451 community (Pallares, 2014). Terriquez (2015) noted the important early leadership of multiply
2452 marginalized identities like undocumented LGBTQ students at various levels of leadership
2453 within the broader movement and how it catalyzed “intersectional mobilization,” which
2454 Terriquez defines as high levels of activism among an oppressed subgroup within an already
2455 marginalized constituency.

2456

2457 Various sit-ins, hunger strikes, protests, and social media campaigns were initiated and
2458 conducted by youth-led activist organizations in efforts to urge the Obama administration to
2459 stop deporting undocumented young people (Zimmerman, 2011). Later, youth-led activism
2460 evolved with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the discretionary program
2461 established by President Obama in 2012, which emerged out of Congressional failure to enact
2462 comprehensive immigration reform. The greater undocumented youth movement’s shift to
2463 civil disobedience reflects how the undocumented youth-led movement changed to one that
2464 has “increasingly used direct action to bring attention to broader issues of immigrant, civil, and

2465 human rights as a strategy for social and policy change" (Zimmerman, 2011 p. 14). Since 2013,
2466 the youth immigrant movement and its allies have primarily concentrated on executive action
2467 to stop deportation, rather than advocate for legalization, with an emphasis on individual anti-
2468 deportation cases to underscore the contradictions and abuses of immigration policy (Márquez-
2469 Benítez & Pallares, 2016).

2470

2471 Sanctuary Pedagogies in Homes and School

2472

2473 Immigrant communities in the United States continue to live in what has been theorized as "the
2474 enforcement era" (Chen, 2020). In this climate, many parents are pushed to negotiate and
2475 model strategies for overcoming complex oppressive forces impacting their and their children's
2476 everyday livelihoods. For example, when targeted Latinx neighborhoods become sites of hyper
2477 immigration enforcement, immigrant and mixed-status families swiftly learn to shift their
2478 routes to K-12 school and work, change their routines, and everyday cultural practices to
2479 protect themselves from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Valdivia, 2019). In her
2480 Southern California study, Valdivia has theorized these intergenerational family practices as
2481 "strategies for sanctuary-making." Some of these sanctuary making practices have included
2482 changing the time parents and children leave to and come home from school and work,
2483 sometimes leaving several hours before or after the designated time. Another example Valdivia
2484 provides is families choosing to shop and pay more at grocery stores like Sprouts and Trader
2485 Joes, which are found primarily in white affluent neighborhoods, instead of Mexican grocery
2486 stores like Vallarta and Northgate situated in working-class Latinx neighborhoods, where ICE
2487 officers tend to congregate.

2488

2489 Taking up a lived civics framework in schools urges a reconsideration of the narrow push to
2490 assimilate students into existing political systems by attending to students' identities and
2491 localized civic perspectives, allowing them the space to reimagine and enact new social futures.
2492 One example is a school's appropriation of the familiar Catholic Mexican religious ritual of
2493 Posadas as a means for mobilization and raising awareness around targeted political issues and
2494 policies through candle-lit processions with family members, school actors, and the local labor
2495 community. The Social Justice Posadas model (de los Ríos et al, 2015; de los Ríos & Molina,
2496 2020) is a partnership founded in 2008 between a high school Chicanx/Latinx Studies program
2497 and a prominent day laborer center in Southern California. In its appropriation, this spiritually-
2498 grounded cultural ritual is reinterpreted through an immigrant rights lens. The central
2499 metaphor of Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus seeking refuge in the original Posadas cultural
2500 practice is replaced with immigrants seeking sanctuary, human rights, and pathways to
2501 citizenship. This approach transforms civic pedagogies of rote memorization of knowledge
2502 about the branches of government into participatory inquiry in which students pursue scholarly
2503 readings and remedies to self-identified community issues like immigration enforcement.
2504 Students in this partnership have led participatory research projects, created and circulated
2505 media to raise awareness that matter to them, conducted close readings of local, state and
2506 federal legislations impacting immigrant families, as well as mobilized to halt rampant police
2507 checkpoints in their communities and contributed to the larger passing of California Assembly
2508 Bill 60, The Safe and Responsible Driver Act, in 2014.

2509

2510 *Digital testimonios, digital protests and hashtag movements*

2511 Latinx activist communities have increasingly leveraged new media technologies to participate
2512 bi/multilingually in US civic and political life, especially through digital testimonios (Benmayor,
2513 2012; Zimmerman, 2016), translingual podcasts (de los Ríos, in press), and digital protests and
2514 hashtag movements for racial justice (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015). Specifically, scholars have studied
2515 how young people engage in “participatory politics” (Kahne, Middaugh, & Allen, 2015) to
2516 challenge anti-Latinx, anti-Black, and anti-immigrant sentiments, practices, and policies. Bonilla
2517 and Rosa (2015) emphasize the power of digital protests and hashtag movements within Black
2518 and Black Latinx struggles for racial justice. Bonilla and Rosa contend that some of the most
2519 important hashtag campaigns that emerged out of #Ferguson were targeted at “calling
2520 attention to both police practices and media representations, suggesting that social media can
2521 serve as an important tool for challenging these various forms of racial profiling” (p. 8). Another
2522 example of online contentious politics includes Zimmerman’s (2016) study of Latinx
2523 undocumented youths’ “coming out” events where they declared their legal status at protests
2524 and meetings and across social media, including digital stories, blogs, and podcasts. As a form
2525 of participatory politics, Zimmerman refers to these practices as forms of “transmedia
2526 testimonios” in which activists give accounts of their immigration experiences, reveal their legal
2527 status, and document their participation in civil disobedience. Through the concept of digital
2528 and transmedia testimonio, Zimmerman demonstrates how undocumented youth agentically
2529 expand the confines of state-sanctioned public spheres and what it means to participate
2530 politically.

2531

2532 **Black Lives Matter**

2533

2534 Latinx communities' support of and participation in the Black Lives Matter movement have
2535 been overwhelmingly strong (Hope et al., 2016; Zepeda-Millán & Wallace, 2019). An essential
2536 part of the Black Lives Matter movement is that it advocates for *all* Black lives concentrating on
2537 those who “have been marginalized within Black liberation movements” (n.p.), especially
2538 women and members of the LTBTQ community. This call-to-action inherently also includes the
2539 lives of Afro-Latinx and Black Latinx people, which make up a significant portion of the Latinx
2540 community in the United States. According to a 2016 [Pew Research Center survey](#), a quarter of
2541 the nearly 60 million Latinxs residing in the United States identified as Afro-Latinxs or Afro-
2542 Caribbean or of African descent with roots in Latin America.

2543

2544 As Lorgia García-Peña (2020) recently stated, “Two struggles—Black liberation and immigrant
2545 rights—are intertwined and must be confronted together, which means acknowledging there is
2546 racism in the project of Latinidad” (n.p.). With increasing calls to recognize and dismantle anti-
2547 Blackness in the greater pan-Latinx community by grassroot activists and academic scholars, it
2548 is important to recognize the vital leadership and civic participation of Black Latinxs in the Black
2549 Lives Matter movement. Importantly, moreover, Black Latinx and non-Black Latinx communities
2550 are increasingly hitting the streets to participate in the Black Lives Matter protests nationally
2551 and internationally throughout Latin America (Campos Lima, 2020).

2553 There are certainly a number of historical reasons for this renewed focus on Black identities;
2554 notably, the Black and Brown power activists of the 1960s emphasized Black and Latinx
2555 identities that previous generations had not (San Miguel, 2005). This reconciliation with
2556 Indigeneity and Blackness is part of a larger history that continues to evolve today. For
2557 example, Krista Cortes (2020) documents Afroboriqua mothering as an AfroLatinx¹⁰ multi-
2558 generational practice in spaces that center Blackness through Afroboriqua cultural practices
2559 and activism in the California Bay Area. In this space, Bomba workshops are more than dance
2560 and music classes. They function as sites of intergenerational cultural resistance, continuing
2561 traditions that were once banned to repress rebellions while simultaneously fostering kinship,
2562 revolutionary parenting, and Black Boriqua activism that challenged homophobia on the island
2563 and celebrated queerness in the community.

2564

Creative Performance and Songwriting with Corridos

2565

2566 Broadly, songwriting can be a vehicle through which young people navigate and assert their
2567 multiple identities. Youth songwriting often draws from issues of personal, social and political
2568 importance and is shared with audiences such as family members and peers (Deroo & Watson,
2569 2020; Kinney, 2012; Watson & Beymor, 2019). For many Mexican and Central American-origin
2570 youth, Mexican Regional music remains an indelible part of their transnational youth popular
2571 culture (García-Hernández, 2015; Villa, 2019), where the close reading, songwriting, and
2572 cultural performance of corridos (border ballads) have been theorized as critical and creative
2573 translingual forms of resistance (de los Ríos, 2018, 2019).

2574

2575 Corridos—Mexican ballads that embody the musical, poetic, and oral tradition of struggle
2576 (Paredes, 1958)—have historically been seen as “for the *pueblo* [...] one of the most typical
2577 expressions of the Mexican masses” (Simmons, 1957, p. 7; emphasis in the original). Like a
2578 grassroots form of news and journalism, the Mexican corrido once disseminated news about
2579 the battles of the 1910 Mexican Revolution and future combat to the general populace.
2580 Corridistas (balladeers) would put current events into songs, attuning the structure and
2581 cadence in its traditional form (Paredes, 1958). As a form of intergenerational storytelling,
2582 Latinx youth have drawn upon their unitary linguistic repertoire to author, compose, and
2583 perform corridos across digital platforms and physical spaces—like public school campuses—to
2584 bring awareness to issues that matter to them, including harmful Immigration and Customs
2585 Enforcement policies and practices, linguistic racism, and social in/justice (de los Ríos, 2019).
2586 Some of the most recent examples include the virality of originally authored and performed
2587 corridos in Spanish critiquing the mass shooting in an El Paso, Texas Walmart targeting Mexican
2588 communities (Blanco, 2019) as well as corridos in support of #BlackLivesMatter and racial
2589 justice (Hermanos Herrera, 2020).

2590

Latinx Indigenous Communities and Cultural Sustainability as Civic Practice

2591

¹⁰ We use Cortes (2020) use of the terms "AfroLatinx" and "Afroboriqua" to describe her scholarship, as she argues those two identities are inextricable and intertwined.

2594 Similar to other Latinx activism, comunidades Indigenas from Latin America also resist erasure
2595 through cultural practices, specifically through teaching youth music, religion, and literature,
2596 and languages. As in Tejas, Colorado, Illinois, and New York, Maya Guatemalan community
2597 members in Los Angeles have also created their own educational settings, in this case, courses
2598 to teach Maya-origin youth K'iche' and Q'anjob'al to children of Mayan immigrants children
2599 (Batz, 2014). Again, these minoritized Indigenous languages are of particular importance in
2600 terms of maintaining an Indigenous cultural identity and rebuffing attempts to homogenize
2601 Indigenous people as part of a Latinx diaspora with its Spanish language hegemony. Youth
2602 learning their Indigenous languages is also fundamental to advocacy. Indigenous youth engage
2603 in sophisticated translanguaging practices when they interpret for previous generations who
2604 must navigate legal (Carcamo, 2016) and public services unavailable in their minoritized
2605 Indigenous languages (Miller, 2020).

2606

Conclusion: The future of Latinx Civics Remains Intergenerational

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2609 Despite the important geographic and cultural heterogeneity in Latinx communities, the
2610 intergenerational character of their resistance, revival, and civic practices persists, with
2611 parents, grandparents, and other family members involving younger generations in side-by-side
2612 participation in cultural practices. It is through these intergenerational practices that youth
2613 have “learn[ed] about the marginalization and systemic barriers affecting the Latinx
2614 community” (Pinetta, 2020, p. 9). Through these parental and caregiver cultural practices,
2615 young people can develop a “sense of collective responsibility to help members of their
2616 community who are in need” (p. 9). Oftentimes, such responsibility manifests itself through
2617 intergenerational lived civic actions and participation in social movements that advocate for the
2618 well-being, humanity, and civil and educational rights of Latinxs as exemplified in the activist
2619 quinceañera, Social Justice Posadas, and the Black Lives Matter movement described above.

2620

2621 With the centrality of Black Lives Matter social movement and the consequential upcoming
2622 Presidential election, the urgency of civic engagement is heightened. In particular, Trump's
2623 acute discrimination toward Latinx and immigrant families has elevated Latinx youths' social
2624 consciousness and political participation (Wray-Lake et al., 2018; Zepeda-Millán & Wallace,
2625 2019). As Wray-Lake et al. (2018) argue, “Latinx youth are actively making sense of what
2626 today's political context means for them, their futures, their families, and their ethnic/cultural
2627 groups, often in emotional terms” (p. 201). The result is increased everyday engagement in
2628 participatory politics, intergenerational grassroots organizing, and the reinvention of cultural
2629 traditional practices to participate politically in their communities (de los Ríos & Molina, 2020).

2630

2631 In closing, we hope this discussion has called attention to the expansive ways Latinx
2632 communities have enacted lived civics historically and in the current moment. We argue that
2633 ecologies help to confer resilience and transformative agency and that such understandings
2634 should trouble extant notions of such constructs—constructs that are predicated on
2635 understandings of agency and resilience as intrapersonal rather than interpersonal
2636 accomplishments. Further, we have pushed on civics education conceived ahistorically and
2637 principally in terms of access to participation; instead, this paper asks participation into what?

2638 And has elaborated, instead, transformative forms of participation as essential to rethinking
2639 what counts as civic engagement, its practices and social organization in cultural communities.

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2642

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Asian American Exclusion & the Fight for Inclusion

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Asian American Exclusion & the Fight for Inclusion

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3027 took almost four decades before Fred Korematsu's criminal conviction was overturned in 1983
3028 due to the efforts of two Nisei (second generation Japanese Americans) attorneys and their
3029 supporters (Hashimoto, 1996). Concurrently, grassroots civil society organizations such as the
3030 Japanese American Citizens League launched a successful redress campaign which resulted in
3031 the formation of a federal commission to examine the government's actions, proclamations by
3032 Presidents Ford and Reagan acknowledging the that the internment was unjust, and the
3033 passage of the Civil Liberties Act in 1988 (Tateishi & Yoshino, 2000).

3034
3035 As with other minoritized communities, Asian Americans' struggle for inclusion and belonging in
3036 the US has involved the fight for educational opportunities, including access to public schools.
3037 In the 1870s and early 1880s there were approximately three thousand Chinese children living
3038 in California with most of the population in San Francisco. Despite the large number of Chinese
3039 children in San Francisco, however, there were no public schools that allowed Chinese children.
3040 In 1884 Joseph and Mamie Tape, Chinese immigrants, sued the San Francisco Board of
3041 Education for denying their daughter admission to the local school because of her Chinese
3042 ancestry. In 1885 the Superior Court ruled in favor of the Tapes, and the California Supreme
3043 Court later upheld the decision. California exclusionists responded by passing an act authorizing
3044 segregated schools for Chinese students (Ngai, 2010).

3045
3046 The US Supreme Court Case of *Lum v. Rice* (1927) involved the American-born daughter of
3047 Chinese immigrants, Martha Lum, who had been denied entry to the White school in their town
3048 of Rosedale, Mississippi on the basis of her race. In *Lum v. Rice* the U.S. Supreme Court
3049 unanimously upheld the decision of the Mississippi Supreme Court, citing the 1896 *Plessy*
3050 decision. Although the *Lum* decision was not officially overturned until the Supreme Court
3051 outlawed school segregation in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision,
3052 Chinese families were able to gain access to White public schools for their children in some
3053 Delta towns by the late 1930s and to many by the late 1940s (Lee, 2017).

3054
3055 While early Asian American resistance to exclusion focused on single ethnic groups, during the
3056 Civil Rights Era, Asian American activists embraced a panethnic identity as Asians and/or Asian
3057 Americans. By organizing multiple national-origin groups under a pan-Asian label, Asian
3058 American activists focused on common experiences with racial discrimination. This
3059 instrumental response allowed relatively small ethnic groups to form a bigger voice in the fight
3060 against racism (Espiritu, 1992). Asian American activists during this period also built cross-racial
3061 coalitions with other communities of color to fight against racism, economic inequality and
3062 global imperialism (Maeda, 2005; Prashad, 2001).

3063
3064 Significantly, Asian American activists during this period rejected the characterization of Asian
3065 Americans as "model minorities" that the dominant group used to silence the concerns raised
3066 by Civil Rights activists (Maeda, 2005; Pulido, 2008). In the post-Civil Rights era student
3067 activists, including Asian American college students, demanded cultural recognition in the form
3068 of Ethnic Studies and since the 1980s, resistance to the model minority stereotype has been
3069 central to the work of Asian American Studies (Prashad, 2006). The rise of an Asian American
3070 political consciousness and resistance to the use of the model minority stereotype was

3071 important because it was a repudiation of the stereotype's assimilationist, exploitative, and
3072 racist assumptions. The model minority characterization, for example, not only ignored the
3073 diversity of the lived and material realities of different Asian American groups but also
3074 simultaneously situated Asian Americans within the larger national myth of progress and
3075 freedom while positioning them as a clearly defined Other within a national racial order
3076 dominated by White Americans (Wu, 2013).

3077
3078 The Asian American population has grown tremendously since the Civil Rights Era and the
3079 demographic changes have created new challenges to uniting under a common racial category.
3080 Asian Americans from Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent argue that the Asian
3081 American category privileges East Asians and masks the diverse histories and experiences of
3082 Asian Americans. Critical refugee scholar, Yen Le Espiritu (2006) has argued that "if Asian
3083 Americans are to build a self-consciously panAsian solidarity, they need to take seriously the
3084 heterogeneities among their ranks and overcome the narrow dominance of the professional
3085 class and that of the two oldest Asian American groups" (p. 418).
3086

3087 While some Asian Americans trace their histories in the US back more than six or seven
3088 generations, many more live in immigrant or refugee families. Among more recent arrivals,
3089 some have relatively clear pathways to legal citizenship but others face exclusionary
3090 immigration policies. Notably, there has been an increase in the deportation of immigrants with
3091 criminal convictions, including Southeast Asians who came to the US as refugees (Chen, 2019).
3092 The US has repatriation agreements with Cambodia and Vietnam, and is currently negotiating
3093 with Laos to accept nationals with final removal orders (Mentzer, 2020). Approximately 16000
3094 Southeast Asian Americans have received final orders of deportation since 1998, most for
3095 criminal convictions for which they have already served time. Although some Asian Americans,
3096 including some Southeast Asian Americans, have extensive transnational ties, most of the
3097 Southeast Asians who are at risk of being deported do not have strong ties in Southeast Asia.
3098 Crucially, the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) and other Southeast Asian
3099 American organizations have been active in fighting for immigration policies that are "grounded
3100 in the principles of fairness, family, and second chances" (SEARAC, 2020, n.p.).
3101

3102 Although the dominant narrative surrounding undocumented immigrants focuses on Latinx
3103 communities, approximately 1.7 million undocumented immigrants are of Asian descent
3104 (Ramakrishnan & Shah 2017). Many undocumented Asian immigrants live in relative social
3105 isolation in the shadows, which makes them vulnerable to exploitation and their children
3106 isolated from social capital (Yoshikawa 2013). However, some undocumented Asian Americans
3107 have ventured out of the shadows to organize for immigration rights. In fact, the "original
3108 Dreamer," Tereza Lee, is a Korean American who continues to fight for immigration reform
3109 nineteen years after she inspired the first Dream Act. The fight for comprehensive immigration
3110 reform, including the rights of undocumented immigrants, has led to collaborations between
3111 Asian American youth groups and older established Asian American organizations. For example,
3112 the organization Revolutionizing Asian American Immigrant Stories on the East Coast (RAISE), a
3113 pan-Asian undocumented youth-led group, has been working with the Asian American Legal

3114 and Education Fund. Central to RAISE's mission is the disruption of the "model minority racial
3115 tokenism" that erases the struggles within the Asian American community (RAISE, 2020, n.p.).
3116 As Asian American communities continue the fight for equity and justice in the 21st century,
3117 there has been a growing divide among Asian Americans regarding the role of cross-racial
3118 coalitions. Some Asian Americans view the interests of Asian Americans as being separate from
3119 the interests of other groups of color, while others argue that Asian Americans should stand
3120 together with Black, indigenous and Latino communities. Attitudes regarding affirmative action,
3121 for example, reflect the diverse opinions regarding cross-racial solidarity among Asian
3122 Americans. In 2014, Students for Fair Admissions sued Harvard, alleging that the holistic
3123 admissions process, which considers the whole person including racial background,
3124 discriminates against Asian Americans. A vocal coalition of Asian American organizations joined
3125 the call to end affirmative action, and have embraced the stereotype of Asian Americans as
3126 deserving model minorities in their fight. Chinese Americans are the most vocal opponents to
3127 affirmative action among Asian Americans, but there exists a significant generational divide
3128 whereby younger Chinese Americans are much more likely to support affirmative action than
3129 their parents' generation (Poon & Wong, 2019). While anti-affirmative activists have received a
3130 lot of attention in the media, a much larger number of Asian American organizations support
3131 affirmative action and the related goals of remedying the legacies of systemic racism against all
3132 communities of color, expanding definitions of eligibility, and democratizing education. Not
3133 insignificantly, Asian Americans who support affirmative action have criticized the model
3134 minority stereotype for failing to capture the diverse experiences of Asian Americans and for
3135 the implicit anti-blackness at the core of the stereotype. The Federal Court upheld Harvard's
3136 race conscious admissions in October of 2019, but the battle continues with Asian Americans
3137 on both sides of the debate actively engaging in advocacy.

3138

3139 **Representations of Asian Americans in K-12 Curricula**

3140

3141 Ideas and perspectives regarding Asian Americans are produced and reproduced through the
3142 formal curricula and for decades, Asian Americans have consistently struggled for equitable
3143 representation within K-12 school curricula. Groups such as the Sikh Coalition and the Lao
3144 Advocacy Organization San Diego, for example, have fought for the inclusion of different voices
3145 within social studies curricula in large part because of the increased levels of discrimination,
3146 bullying, and hate crimes that have occurred, especially post-9/11 (Constante, 2017; 2019).
3147 Some of these groups have achieved several notable legislative and policy successes, including
3148 the passing of a California bill mandating the teaching of Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Hmong
3149 history in schools and the development of revised social studies standards in Tennessee to
3150 include Sikhism (Constante, 2019).

3151

3152 Studies reviewing how Asian Americans are represented within social studies curriculum
3153 standards and textbooks across the country have similarly noted that how marginalized Asian
3154 American stories are to the dominant historical narratives. Within the formal curriculum,
3155 scholars have found that Asian Americans are primarily situated historically within particular
3156 time periods, for example, early Chinese immigration in the 19th century and the Japanese
3157 American internment in World War II (An, 2016). This representation is deeply problematic

3158 because it perpetuates stereotypes and renders invisible the complicated and diverse
3159 experiences of Asian Americans (e.g. Filipinos, Vietnamese, Indians, and Koreans) over time
3160 (Harada, 2000).

3161 Even when Asian American experiences are included in the curriculum, their stories are
3162 depicted in assimilationist ways that do not challenge the master narrative of American
3163 progress, freedom, and opportunity. For example, the various forms of prejudice faced by
3164 Chinese and Japanese Americans in the late 19th century and in the 1940s are part of the
3165 narrative of Asian Americans overcoming discriminatory obstacles, working hard, and
3166 eventually achieving the American dream (Suh, An, & Forest, 2014). This problematic portrayal
3167 of Asian Americans as model minorities not only serves to reinscribe the existing racial
3168 hierarchy within the U.S. but also ignores the continuing economic and social disparities both
3169 within the Asian American population, and between Asian Americans and Whites (Wu, 2013).
3170 Asian Americans, are, in addition, frequently depicted as passive agents in textbooks and
3171 curricular standards. Many curricula, for instance, greatly minimize the civic actions taken by
3172 early Chinese railroad workers and Japanese American internees (e.g. strikes, protests, and
3173 petitions) to resist the unjust and harsh treatment that they received. Similarly, the significant
3174 role of Filipino farmworkers fighting for increased worker rights in the farmworkers movement
3175 is omitted, with the curriculum standards largely focusing on the role of Mexican farmworkers
3176 and leaders such as Cesar Chavez (An, 2016). In a similar vein, most of the state curriculum
3177 standards are largely silent about the role of Asian Americans during the Civil Rights Movement
3178 even though scholars have documented how Chinese and Japanese Americans joined the
3179 multiethnic coalition supporting the NAACP in its civil rights lobbying and also for its work in
3180 landmark civil rights cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (Wu, 2013).
3181

3182 The diverse histories of immigration among Asian Americans pose significant challenges to
3183 conventional conceptions of state-based citizenship and national identity that are promulgated
3184 in schools. In many ways, however, the lived experiences of Asian Americans strongly suggest
3185 that a society-based *transnational* citizenship framework is far more relevant than a state-
3186 based conception of citizenship (Fox, 2005) because the transnational networks and activities of
3187 Asian Americans have shaped the multiple identities, mores, and affiliations of generations of
3188 Asian Americans in a myriad of ways. Studies, for example, have shown how different groups of
3189 Asian Americans such as Chinese Americans and Filipino Americans have consistently been
3190 engaged in political, civic, and economic activities across national boundaries, thus resulting in
3191 conceptions of citizenship that are more *flexible* and fluid (e.g. Ong, 1999; Rodriguez, 2002).
3192 Simultaneously, many Asian American groups, including Pakistani Americans continue to be
3193 associated with cultural, religious, or familial networks that transcend state boundaries. These
3194 networks, especially when positioned in oppositional ways to narrowly defined national
3195 discourses about citizenship, can potentially contribute to a sense of alienation or feelings of
3196 what Ghaffar-Kucher (2015) calls “imagined nostalgia” (p. 203)—an idealized conception of a
3197 time and place—of the home community. It is, however, important to note that these
3198 transnational networks are not unique to the Asian American community but instead mirror the
3199 kinds of global linkages, discourses, and structures that have historically been an integral part of
3200 U.S. society (Columna, 2006).

3202
3203 Much of the civic education curricula found in schools, however, presumes a unitary national
3204 identity and a conception of citizenship that is primarily centered on the nation-state. This
3205 conception of citizenship is deeply problematic for students, especially Asian American
3206 students, because it ignores the many global networks and transnational cultural, economic,
3207 and familial linkages that exist within communities within the U.S. This limited citizenship
3208 framework, furthermore, does not recognize students' fluid and multiple constructions of
3209 identities and affiliations that exist independently of their formal legal status. South Asian
3210 immigrant youth, for example, need to navigate multiple affiliations that impact their linguistic,
3211 religious, class, and cultural identities (Maira, 2008).

3212
3213 Such curricula, in addition, frequently explicitly or implicitly juxtapose "good" American culture
3214 or values with the "problematic" home culture or religion of students, thus positioning these
3215 students as outsiders. Studies, for instance, have shown how teachers' perspectives of Islam as
3216 oppressive send young Pakistani American youth messages that being a Muslim is not
3217 compatible with being an American (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2015). Notably, in spite of these
3218 problematic constructions of citizenship within the curricula and in schools, other studies have
3219 also shown that young American Muslims from communities with significant transnational links
3220 actively draw on their different identities and affiliations to assert their place in U.S. society,
3221 address injustices, and call for greater inclusion (El-Haj et al., 2011).

3222
3223 Conclusion
3224
3225 As this brief discussion of Asian American civic engagement demonstrates, Asian Americans
3226 represent a complex and heterogeneous pan-ethnic group with varied histories and
3227 experiences in the United States and wide-ranging responses to exclusionary policies and
3228 practices. Despite the vast differences among Asian American groups, however, all are
3229 subjected to the stereotypes of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners and/or model
3230 minorities. In the face of exclusion and discrimination, however, Asian Americans have always
3231 been active agents in fighting for justice and inclusion. The diversity of experiences and
3232 perspectives within the Asian American category and the active agency of various Asian
3233 American communities are not adequately reflected in the national narratives regarding Asian
3234 Americans or in the curricula on Asian Americans. As we move forward, we call for a more
3235 nuanced representation of Asian American perspectives in national dialogues and in the
3236 curriculum. Finally, we call for a more inclusive and broader definition of citizenship that
3237 incorporates and recognizes the complexities of the multitude of national and transnational
3238 affiliations that exist within many Asian American communities, and indeed within many other
3239 communities. A narrowly defined state-based conception of citizenship and national identity
3240 that positions other transnational identities and affiliations as inferior or antithetical to the
3241 values of the national community will serve to further marginalize diverse Asian American
3242 youth. Nevertheless, we are heartened by the willingness of many Asian American youth to
3243 challenge racist hierarchies, actively assert their rights and place within the larger national
3244 community, and work towards a more just and inclusive society.

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An Appalachian Spring: Hope and Resilience among Youth in the Rural South

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An Appalachian Spring: Hope and Resilience among Youth in the Rural South

Gabrielle¹², also known as Gabby, is an adolescent girl growing up in a remote corner of the Blue Ridge Mountains, in the heart of Southern Appalachia. The boundaries of her community, known to most as Laurel, are marked on one side by the East Tennessee state line, on the other by the beautiful Laurel River. She lives in what locals would call a *holler* – a place where the hills give way to clearings for roads and clusters of homes and other buildings. In every direction, mountains and hills mark the landscape, and on these hills wood frame homes are scattered alongside single and doublewide trailers. And standing tall are the small rural churches that are central to community life.

It is a beautiful place to grow up in America, but life in this remarkable landscape does not work for young people quite as it may appear to outside visitors.

For starters, there is the unique challenge of being an adolescent youth in a place so removed from the schools and town centers that offer ladders of opportunity. In the 1980s, Gabby's rural school district began a process of consolidation that started with bringing all middle school youth to a single school. As a result, Gabby's bus ride to the county's one Middle School can now be up to *two hours one way*, over winding roads for most of the journey. In 2015, the historic rural school in Laurel, once a K-12 community school, closed for good as a public K-5 school. Now, even kindergarten children face long bus rides to reach the nearest elementary school. After-school and summer learning opportunities are tenuous – difficult for many families to juggle. Virtual learning in the time of COVID-19 has deepened issues of inaccessibility related to broadband access and tools for connecting. 40-50% of students in Laurel have no access to Internet from their home.

And yet, Gabby and young people see the world outside in terms of possibilities. Gabby is a gifted, imaginative student with a special love for STEM. She can imagine becoming an inventor. "Sometimes when I see things, I just close my eyes and imagine how it works," she says. "When I got to the Leonardo daVinci page in a *National Geographic* magazine, I was like 'Wow!' He was kind of like me."

“I draw things, and I call them my inventions.”

The United States and other modern economies tend to think of inequalities and hardships from living in poverty as an “urban” problem. In opening of the third decade of the twenty-first century, our national attention has justly and rightfully turned to the suffering experienced by communities of color in our cities.

¹² All student names are fictional.

3393 But what about young people such as Gabby, and the tens of thousands of other young
3394 working-poor and working-class white youth growing up in rural parts of Appalachia as well as
3395 throughout small towns in the Southeast, Midwest, and Northwest. Shouldn't these youth
3396 have opportunities that will enable them to achieve their full potential and future careers –
3397 such as a career Gabby might envision for herself as a scientist?

3398

3399 A point of confession here: I grew up in a small town in the Blue Ridge Mountains. My
3400 hometown has things in common with the hundreds of communities such as Laurel scattered
3401 throughout Appalachia and the South.

3402

3403 It is partly for this reason that in 2010 I was drawn to found the Partnership for Appalachian
3404 Girls' Education, or PAGE¹³. In its second decade, PAGE is helping girls growing up in some of
3405 the South's most vulnerable and economically distressed areas become empowered learners
3406 and critical thinkers: prepared to engage and connect locally and globally. What can this
3407 experience teach us about creating opportunities for civic engagement among youth growing
3408 up in America's invisible poverty: the poverty known for generations by working-poor and
3409 working-class people, most of them white, in Appalachia?

3410

Resilience and Strength in Appalachia

3412

3413 For some, the very word 'Appalachia' conjures up images of white poverty. It is easy to
3414 remember photographs taken by Dorothea Lange or James Agee or the 'War on Poverty'
3415 pilgrimages of presidents and presidential hopefuls to front porches in West Virginia and
3416 Eastern Kentucky. Or maybe we picture more contemporary images of families, including
3417 children, paying a heavy price for the opioid epidemic that has cut an especially destructive
3418 path through rural, historically white communities.

3419

3420 Images of political conservatism emerge, too, many of these connected to the election of
3421 Donald Trump in 2016. Some would go so far as to place the blame for the 2016 election
3422 results on working-poor and working-class whites in places such as Appalachia. This ignores the
3423 fact that hedge fund managers in Greenwich were equally, though perhaps more quietly, part
3424 of a broad-based coalition of Trump supporters in 2016 – and beyond.¹⁴

3425

3426 News stories tend to focus on the distressing statistics. In a 2019 ranking of the "25 Worst
3427 Counties" in terms of poverty, education, and quality of life by the news and opinion
3428 publication *24/7 Wall Street*, twelve of the most distressed counties were in Appalachia.¹⁵ A
3429 special report in *The Guardian* chronicled life in what U.S. Census Bureau surveys from 2008-
3430 2012 recorded as the poorest white town in America: Beattyville, in Eastern Kentucky's Lee
3431 County. The article's portrayal of a community in the grip of the opioid epidemic is painfully

¹³ <https://pageprograms.com/>

¹⁴ Evan Osnos, "How Greenwich Republicans Learned to Love Trump," *The New Yorker* (May 3, 2020).

¹⁵ Samuel Stebbins and Michael B. Sauter, "The Worst Counties to Live in," *24/7 Wall Street* (March 21, 2019).

3432 captured in its header: “America’s poorest white town: abandoned by coal, swallowed by
3433 drugs.”¹⁶
3434
3435 These injustices and the many obstacles to opportunity are *part* of what needs to be seen,
3436 heard, and understood by those outside of Appalachia. They capture the unavoidable realities:
3437 life can be hard in this beautiful part of the rural South. For generations, people in the region
3438 have suffered – from persistent poverty and lack of sustainable, healthy jobs; from the
3439 environmental destruction of their mountains and poisoning of their water by outside
3440 corporations; from the lack of educational opportunity for students in rural communities; and
3441 now from the devastating impact of the opioid epidemic on families and whole communities.
3442
3443 Stories from inside Appalachia help capture what life can be like in America’s most invisible
3444 poverty. Consider for instance the poisoning of Appalachia’s water, one of the region’s many
3445 natural resources. Ron Rash, a novelist and professor of Appalachian Studies, writes in a *New*
3446 *York Times* Op-Ed piece about the drinking water in Eastern Kentucky’s Knott County¹⁷. ‘Some
3447 of it is brown. Some of it is yellow. Some of it smells like sulfur,’ Rash quotes from an interview
3448 with Brent Hutchinson, who directs the Hindman Settlement School in Knott County. Years of
3449 problems – from coal mining, industrial waste, old pipes – have gotten too little attention on a
3450 national level. The destruction of Appalachia’s mountains has drawn more attention, and justly
3451 so, to the ways in which rural people have paid a heavy price for cheap energy. In the
3452 documentary film, *Hillbilly*¹⁸, co-producer Silas House tells of three-year old Jeremy Davidson in
3453 southwestern Virginia, killed by a half-ton boulder. The boulder was dislodged during the illegal
3454 cutting of a road for a strip mining operation above the family’s singlewide trailer. It barreled
3455 downwards, crashing through the walls of the trailer and onto the bed where Jeremy was
3456 sleeping.
3457
3458 We need to bring to national visibility these stories and injustices, and to demand justice,
3459 human rights, and environmental rights in Appalachia. Of equal importance to these stories of
3460 poverty, exploitation, and pain, however, are stories of hope, resilience, and resistance. I am
3461 often reminded in my educational work in the Blue Ridge Mountains that the students and
3462 families we serve are proud and strong. They sometimes resent the degree to which
3463 ‘Appalachia’, especially for those living outside the region, calls up images from America’s War
3464 on Poverty that persist in today’s media coverage. Local residents want people to see a more
3465 complex and hopeful region where family, community, and local schools and churches have
3466 created the bedrock for young people to look toward a more positive future in which they can
3467 become leaders.
3468
3469 Elizabeth Catte, a public historian who lives in Virginia, points out in *What You are Getting*
3470 *Wrong about Appalachia* that stock narratives and stereotypes don’t begin to capture the

¹⁶ Chris McGreal, “America’s poorest white down: abandoned by coal, swallowed by drugs,” *The Guardian* (November 12, 2015).

¹⁷ Ron Rash, “Appalachia’s Sacrifice,” *The New York Times* (November 18, 2016).

¹⁸ *Hillbilly*, Dir. Sally Rubin and Ashley York (Passion River, 2019).

3471 history and resilience of this region¹⁹. Young people are more than ready to share more the
3472 complex stories of the region they know, *their Appalachia*. Some are joining youth across the
3473 nation and world in advocating for human rights, racial justice, and environmental justice.
3474 Black writers, educators, intellectuals, and artists have been inspired to write about their
3475 Appalachia, sometimes using the term Affrilachia. Before any of us can imagine the new
3476 communities that would engage youth from this region, we need to look and listen more
3477 deeply, to understand the diversity of strengths that already exist there.

3478

3479 A good place to start would be with three things that people in rural Appalachia value above all
3480 else: family, church, and community.

3481

3482 Life in the small towns and communities PAGE serves is shaped by the special meaning of *place*
3483 for people who, as locals might say, have generations in the soil. It means one thing to be from
3484 the Laurel community; another to be from Spring Creek. Each of these communities has its own
3485 tightly knit families, churches, and community centers. *Family* is of greatest importance in local
3486 communities. This is an enormous source of strength for young people, especially when their
3487 immediate families suffer the effects of opioids or poverty. Time and time again, we see adult
3488 members of extended families step forward in selfless ways to parent those children whose
3489 biological parents are unable to fully care for them. Great Aunts, Mamaws (grandmothers), and
3490 other extended family members take on parenting roles with total care and commitment. Their
3491 caretaking is supported by local churches that serve more than a religious function. Rural
3492 churches serve as centers of community life. Even the smallest, most rural communities are
3493 known by their churches. On Sundays, song, prayer, and good home-cooked food in the
3494 fellowship hall provide grounding for later civic engagement.

3495

3496 Then there are the small schools, also centers of community life. One of the saddest moments
3497 in my eleven-year history as a social entrepreneur in Appalachia was watching the closing of the
3498 Laurel community's beloved small school, once a K-12 community school set in a beautiful
3499 mountain valley next to Laurel Creek. From the large sunny windows of the now empty
3500 classrooms can still be seen the creek and the green of the woods behind it. Local teachers
3501 from the community itself, some having either gone to the school or were daughters and sons
3502 of former teachers, taught each student as though she were a cherished member of an
3503 extended family. "You knew you were supported and you knew that everybody's life mattered
3504 That's what our school was like," says Cynthia Belcher, a former K/1 teacher at Laurel School
3505 who had attended the school herself. With the loss of local jobs in Laurel, the demise of family
3506 farms and tobacco crop subsidies, and the movement of families closer to steady sources of
3507 work (Walmart, Lowe's, consolidated public schools), enrollment in Laurel School declined –
3508 from 99 students in 2000 to 49 K-5 students in 2015. At an emotional meeting of the local
3509 Board of Education, held in a packed school auditorium, Laurel School was permanently closed
3510 as a public school. "It felt ... to me like a *death* – because it was such a big part of my life,"

¹⁹ Elizabeth Catte, *What You are Getting Wrong about Appalachia* (Cleveland, Ohio: Belt Publishing, 2018).

3511 narrates Deborah Chandler, who graduated from Laurel School and had been a teaching
3512 assistant there.²⁰
3513
3514 The impact of these rural school closings for local people and communities has been profound.
3515 Members of the communities we serve in PAGE still talk about the closing of their schools with
3516 sadness and anger. They feel the loss deeply and acutely. In some instances, small rural
3517 schools have been reimaged as community or cultural centers and still function as centers of
3518 community life. Local people struggle to make these reimaged spaces more than museums or
3519 relics of the past – when schooling was place-based and integrated with community in a way
3520 that cannot be replicated in consolidated schools.
3521
3522 In a more positive vein, young people in Appalachia are heirs to the strong community value
3523 placed on local schools and teachers – now embodied in stories. Oral histories passed down
3524 from parents, elders, and other locals provide them with a sense of strength and identity: this is
3525 *my history too*. Education in this sense serves as even more than a “ladder of opportunity,” as
3526 today’s corporate-oriented educational language might frame things. It serves as a way in
3527 which young people can develop identities that are tremendous resources for civic
3528 engagement: pride in their regional identity, a feeling of place-based belonging, an expectation
3529 to work hard and achieve, and a deep respect for learning. Small rural schools may have been
3530 more progressive models of education than we imagine, in the sense of preparing youth for
3531 civic life and leadership.
3532
3533 A final resource for youth growing up in Appalachia thrives in the colleges and other
3534 educational institutions found across the region. These can serve as stepping stones leading
3535 students like Gabby to achieve their imagined futures. Private funding and visionary leadership
3536 have yielded exemplary models of postsecondary education for working-class rural students. A
3537 leading example is Berea College in Kentucky, founded in 1855 by abolitionists. In its first year
3538 of opening just after the Civil War, Berea served 96 Black students and 91 White college
3539 students. Since that beginning, Berea has become known for making a four-year liberal arts
3540 college degree accessible for all. No student in need of financial aid (this includes most of the
3541 College’s students) pays tuition. Berea College is known for high-quality stretching throughout
3542 its programs, teaching, and various centers. The renowned feminist scholar bell hooks is one
3543 among the many Berea College faculty who create a progressive educational experience of the
3544 highest quality for students. Many, like bell hooks, are themselves from the Appalachian
3545 region. Generations of working-class students have found their way into civic engagement
3546 through regional schools and colleges such as Berea College. They experience economic
3547 opportunity and racial justice on campus and carry these principles with them – back into their
3548 communities and out into the world.

3549
3550 **Pathways to Civic Engagement**
3551

²⁰ <https://pageprograms.com/the-girls-projects/interdisciplinary-labs/installations/the-laurel-school/>

3552 Time and time again, when you live or work inside Appalachia, the strength and resilience of
3553 local people and communities stand out above all else. On the one hand, the strengths of local
3554 communities spring from the bedrock values of family, church, and school. Then there are the
3555 strengths of Appalachian people themselves. Grit, expectations of hard work, and a strong
3556 sense of place-based identity appear over and over in memoirs from this part of America.
3557

3558 How then can we build on these strengths while creating new opportunities for youth growing
3559 up near the former coalfields of Eastern Kentucky and West Virginia, or the former tobacco-
3560 growing farmlands of Western North Carolina or Southwest Virginia?
3561

3562 This is a question that takes me back to Gabrielle, an imaginative student growing up in a
3563 remote corner of the Blue Ridge Mountains. She reflects our efforts in the PAGE initiative to
3564 provide the innovative education that could help her achieve her full potential. Rather than
3565 reinvent the educational wheel from scratch, we have drawn on some existing traditions and
3566 models of success – both from within the region and beyond – to create new pathways to
3567 opportunity. As educators, we need to imagine new kinds of community that can empower
3568 youth to think of themselves as engaging in the future both locally and beyond –as global
3569 citizens. Lessons learned from PAGE as well as prior decades of inspiring place-based teaching,
3570 can help point out new pathways to building communities of discourse and action.
3571

3572 One of these lessons connects to the popular mantra: Think Locally, Act Globally – and the
3573 many variations on this theme. Education that can empower rural youth needs to reimagine
3574 the synthesis between the two: local place-specific education and new ways to connect and
3575 engage with global communities. A synthesis of the two can yield promising kinds of teaching
3576 and learning to prepare young people to lead and engage in progressive, effective ways. In
3577 PAGE, we strive for this creative synthesis through, first, building on the traditions of place-
3578 based education in the region we serve. Settlement schools provide one inspiration for the
3579 work we do in PAGE. Schools such as the Hindman Settlement School and the Pine Mountain
3580 Settlement School in Eastern Kentucky have since the early 1900s served as models of
3581 progressive, site-specific education – combining studies of literacy and humanities,
3582 environmental education and farming, and Appalachian arts and storytelling. Similarly, we have
3583 looked to the Blue Ridge Mountains as a living laboratory for study of the humanities, science,
3584 and the arts. Our students engage with new digital tools to tell their stories, and those of
3585 people, places, plants, and even the night sky from the vantage point they have in places such
3586 as Laurel and Spring Creek. In our year-round learning opportunities, we integrate critical and
3587 cultural studies of the region, what some would term *Appalachian studies*.
3588

3589 In order for rural students to be engaged citizens of the world, they must first understand their
3590 unique places and voices within it. They need a language for talking with pride about regional
3591 identities, and for *talking back* to the most demeaning stereotypes about hillbillies and poor
3592 whites.
3593

3594 Part of this synthesis involves reimagining the role of diversity in place-based rural education.
3595 In PAGE, we seek out the narratives that may have been less visible historically in Appalachia.

3596 In 2018, an Interdisciplinary Lab engaged teams of veteran 8th-9th PAGE participants in a multi-
3597 media project about two historic schools. The story of one of these small schools, Laurel
3598 School, was more familiar to some students who, like Gabby, came from this rural community.
3599 The second, the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School, was less familiar to many. The two-
3600 room wood frame school is set on a side road in the Mount Olive community in Mars Hill, North
3601 Carolina. It was one of many Rosenwald schools built in the rural South for Black children in the
3602 time of segregated schooling, through a matching grant from Julius Rosenwald (then President
3603 of Sears, Roebuck & Company) and community donations of funding and labor. This is a critical
3604 part of the story of education in Appalachia, and an important story of the partnerships we
3605 hope to build in PAGE. Youth participants did oral history interviews with community activists
3606 seeking to reclaim the school as a community space and museum. The young people learned
3607 and applied skills in still photography and videography; they then edited the multi-media
3608 content for an evening exhibition. On an unforgettable July evening, guests moved between
3609 two installations in classrooms that had been transformed into stories, voices, and images from
3610 two historic schools.²¹

3611
3612 Diversity must also of course be experienced in global ways. We make a deliberate effort in
3613 PAGE to help girls in Appalachia connect and engage in new ways with global communities and
3614 their histories. We act on this goal is through a literature program that strives for deep,
3615 reflective engagement with books: what the child psychologist and Harvard University
3616 professor Robert Coles once described as a “literature of social understanding²².” It has been a
3617 joy and an education in teaching to watch another of our students, a girl living in a holler called
3618 “Lumptown” not far from the former Laurel School, devour book after book in PAGE. Her
3619 selections included the memoir by Nobel Prize laureate and girls’ education activist, Malala
3620 Yousafzai: *I Am Malala*. Another of our students once shared with me that the most
3621 memorable experience she had in all her years in PAGE was getting to know an elderly woman
3622 who had once known Anne Frank, when both were growing up Jewish in pre-war Amsterdam.
3623 This high school student, looking back at her years in PAGE, remembered most vividly her close
3624 reading of *The Diary of Anne Frank* – brought to life by a lengthy engagement with a woman
3625 who could speak of Anne Frank with the particularity that makes this diary so heart wrenching
3626 and important.

3627
3628 Malala Yousafzai, Anne Frank: these are voices, current and past, in a new global community
3629 that Gabby and her peers will create in Appalachia. It is critical that they see themselves as
3630 becoming able to move comfortably between deep engagement with their own local
3631 communities, and thoughtful, imaginative engagement with global voices. It is within our reach
3632 to make this kind of engagement possible in “classrooms” – that is, interdisciplinary, lab-like
3633 spaces for designing, reading, and creating. We can strive for the best mingling of place-based
3634 teaching ideas – such as settlement schools and small rural schools – with global thinking *and*
3635 action. New digital tools make it possible to connect across geographic distances in

²¹ <https://pageprograms.com/the-girls-projects/interdisciplinary-labs/installations/>

²² Robert Coles, *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989).

3636 empowering ways, guided by wise teaching and time for the reflective assessment of here and
3637 there, then and now.

3638

3639 The second lesson learned in PAGE is closely related to the first. We have learned over a
3640 decade that the humanities – story, literature, and history, integrated with visual and
3641 documentary arts – have a critical role to play in preparing young people for civic engagement.
3642 Our interdisciplinary labs have historically been humanities labs, where even our youngest
3643 PAGE participants create digital stories, do oral history research, create podcasts, and design
3644 site-specific projects that integrate writing, research, the visual arts, and new technologies.
3645 Working deeply with story, digital literacy, and extended discourse helps these young people
3646 acquire critical thinking skills and confidence. In our literature program, girls learn that each
3647 member of a small reading group has an important role to play in the understanding of complex
3648 stories, characters, and themes. In these learning contexts, with a student : teacher/intern
3649 ratio that never exceeds 10:1, PAGE participants learn how to engage with diverse ideas and
3650 other voices. They experience a supportive place for finding their own voices – for becoming
3651 young leaders in a learning community where they cannot fail. This is a beginning point for civic
3652 engagement.

3653

3654 Building on the ways that Berea College, small rural schools, and settlement schools have built
3655 community and created opportunity for rural students, we hope to help girls and young women
3656 in Appalachia connect, learn, and lead in new ways. It is a long haul that requires sustained
3657 commitment. What community leaders in Appalachia most dislike about educational research
3658 is the tendency of university teams to come in with a bold new idea and enthusiastically
3659 implement a project with a fresh influx of grant dollars, only to leave after three-five years with
3660 no plan for sustainability. Creating more civic engagement among rural white youth will require
3661 building relationships and partnerships over time, *with* local educators and community people
3662 and in collaboration with our education colleagues across the nation.

3663

3664 It is inspiring to imagine the new coalitions that could emerge with such investments in rural
3665 education. Even in communities that might, based on recurring stereotypes and assumptions,
3666 appear lost from the devastation of opioids and the demise of coal mining and tobacco farming
3667 – you can find incredible energy. Youth in Appalachia are hungry for new opportunities that
3668 will enable them to become part of national and global conversations and movements. The
3669 desire to innovate expressed by young Gabby in Laurel, a Blue Ridge Mountain community, is
3670 no anomaly but part of a larger opportunity if we can only seize it.

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Lessons Learned: Conclusion

3680

3681 Carol D. Lee

3682

3683 Citizenship is complicated and multifaceted. One dimension entails basic human rights,
3684 regardless of one's legal status within the nation state. Another dimension is legal and has a
3685 complex history of evolution within the United States. Native Americans have a unique position
3686 within this legal construct because of the 564 federal recognized Tribal nations and additional
3687 63 state recognized tribes, 233 federally recognized Alaska Native villages, the Hawaiian
3688 homelands with their own systems of governance and those who live largely outside of such
3689 tribal nations and reservations. A third relates to people's identities living within the U.S., often
3690 involving multiple identities because the U.S. is essentially a nation of immigrants – some by
3691 choice and others forced. As Chua and Rubenfeld (2018) observe: "For all its flaws, the United
3692 States is uniquely equipped to unite a diverse and divided society ... Its citizens don't have to
3693 choose between a national identity and multiculturalism. Americans can have both. But the key
3694 is constitutional patriotism. We have to remain united by and through the Constitution,
3695 regardless of our ideological disagreements."

3696

There are multiple take aways from the histories of efforts in ethnic communities in the U.S. to achieve the rights of citizenship as articulated in the country's founding documents. The first is the clear evidence of agency within communities, despite facing significant historical and persistent challenges. These histories provide clear and convincing evidence of how educators, families, and community stakeholders have played key roles in organizing both supports that have been independent of government services and simultaneously organizing to recruit government services and changing laws and institutional practices. They demonstrate that despite poverty, racism and structural discrimination, communities still have agency and power. These communities are not simply subjects, but most important agents. These complex histories are alive today and provide powerful lessons within and across communities.

3707

3708 A second take away is the evidence of the impactful roles that teachers can play when
3709 organized and connected to communities, and of how community based organizations can
3710 prepare young people to be productively engaged as active agents of change

3711

3712 A third take away is the importance of understanding the history and evolution of laws, judicial
3713 decisions, and institutional practices that illustrate the complexities and nuances of the nation's
3714 wrestling with the meaning of citizenship and with conundrums in the civic domain. How these
3715 laws, judicial decisions and institutional practices shifted by virtue of civic engagement
3716 demonstrates the breadth of pathways through which civic decision making can unfold.

3717

3718 And finally these histories are inspirational. They provide clear and convincing evidence of how
3719 communities, despite facing persistent political and economic challenges, demonstrate agency
3720 in creating visions of empowerment and in organizing structures and practices – within
3721 institutions and within families – to prepare each generation to be active participants in
3722 building a more democratic space for all.

3723

3724 We made the decision to craft this chapter because these histories are largely unknown in the
3725 general public or in the field of education broadly speaking. These histories need to be
3726 incorporated in our public education system as well as part of the training of teachers and
3727 others working in the public education sphere.