Hecho en South Carolina: K-12 Latinx Educators Made in, and Remaking, El Sur Latinx

Timothy P. Monreal

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HECHO EN SOUTH CAROLINA: K-12 LATINX EDUCATORS MADE IN, AND REMAKING, EL SUR LATINX

by

Timothy P. Monreal

Bachelor of Arts
University of California, Santa Barbara, 2008

Master of Arts
Loyola Marymount University, 2010

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy in

Foundations in Education

College of Education

University of South Carolina

2020

Accepted by:

Kara Brown, Major Professor
Payal Shah, Committee Member
Daniella Cook, Committee Member
Sophia Rodriguez, Committee Member
Cheryl L. Addy, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
DEDICATION

To those who work(ed) harder, reach(ed) higher, suffer(ed) heavier, and/or deserve(d) better, but have never had an opportunity for something different.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Mijo, where there is a will there is a way.” I can’t remember the first time I heard my grandmother utter that phrase, maybe I was outside with her on a swing during a hot Valley evening, maybe I was in the backseat of her car, maybe I was in her kitchen devouring chorizo and eggs. Regardless, it is a bit of wisdom my grandmother has repeated throughout my life, from the time I was a not-so-little kid who dreamed of being the star centerfielder on the San Francisco Giants to the present when I explained I needed to write “a book” to finish my doctorate degree. And while I wish my grandmother’s words always held true, mi abuela’s consejo echoed in my mind during the most difficult of writing days. I am forever grateful to the seemingly endless people, places, and things that enabled me, loved me, supported me, reassured me, and pushed me to find, even (re)create, a way, some way. This dissertation is a result of your love, and if I neglect to mention you, I do hope you know I would not be here, without you.

First and foremost, I want to thank my family. My wife Liz has been more amazing then I could ever imagine, truly. From California to South Carolina to New York you have accepted many late nights, early morning alarms, and lost weekends as I stared at the computer screen and left large stacks of books on the kitchen table. To my two daughters, mija #1, Irie James, and mija #2, Leary Toña I thank you for your seemingly magical ability to sense when I needed a break from writing, study, or reading. I will forever cherish our air guitar sessions, monster games, snack breaks, and arts and crafts hours. To my eight younger brother and sisters, gracias for all the text messages, visits to
watch the girls, and honest engagement with my ideas. You all are the best. The same goes to the aunts and uncles, cousins, and family friends who supported me in their own ways from near and afar. My in-laws for watching the girls and offering their home this last year. Finally, mom and dad, words cannot express my gratitude and love for your unceasing sacrifice, support, and care. I was unbelievably lucky to be raised by you.

I want to acknowledge my dissertation committee for their patience, encouragement, and careful consideration of my work. In particular, special thanks goes to Kara Brown for your absolute support, steady eye, and detailed feedback. I have so enjoyed our chats, our back and forths over parentheses, and your belief in me as a scholar. Who would have known my first class at South Carolina would come to mean so much? To Daniella Cook for encouraging me to find a space in the academy, to value my practitioner experience, and to be creative in my writing/research. To Payal Shah for your authentic interest in my intellectual growth and development and helping me realize my desire to wed subjugated knowledges with “academic” theory. Your classes were high points in my doctoral preparation. Finally, to Sophia Rodriguez. Whatever I was to share in this brief acknowledgement could never come close to what your mentorship has meant to me. I can honestly say that our chance meeting in 2016 was among the most impactful of my entire life. I do hope you know how important you have been to my development as a thinker and to my growth as a person.

I have often heard that institutions cannot love you. And while that may ring true, it does not prevent the people inside such institutions from doing so. The University of South Carolina’s faculty, staff, and students were unwavering in their support of my studies and dissertation research. From Craig Kridel’s initial hospitality and mentorship
to the last-minute texts with fellow students, I was fortunate to be in such company. Similarly, a number of close relationships were forged from particularly AESA, but also AERA and CUFA. The support of senior scholars, junior faculty, and graduate peers in these organizations has led to exciting opportunities, crucial insights, and lasting friendships.

I count myself lucky to have taught middle school for nearly 11 years and am indebted to the thousands of students who found their own ways to teach me. My final four years in the classroom in South Carolina proved most influential, not only in developing my research agenda, but also in challenging me to be better and do better. In fact, to the hundreds of friends, organizers, and activists/advocates I met in South Carolina, thank you. You taught me patience, humility, complexity, and grace in struggle.

My participants. It was truly an honor to spend months traveling South Carolina interviewing, communicating with, listening to, and learning from you. It was amazing and humbling to consistently see the care, love, and resiliency of so many educators that persist through really tough situations and unequal systems to try and make a difference for all students. This study, in a small way, speaks to your lasting impact in the state of South Carolina and El Sur Latinx.

To the Spencer Foundation and the Southern Regional Education Board. Your financial and relational support allowed me to develop this dissertation in ways I never could have imagined. Thank you for believing in the importance of this research and allowing me to chart a course to make it impactful.

There are countless other friends, compadres, colleagues, elders, nurses, doctors, coworkers, mentors, family members, maintenance staffs, community members, writing
partners, kind strangers, social media connections, food supply workers, and baristas that have a hand in this work. I’m sorry I cannot name you all. I would however like to call special attention to Kaitlin Popielarz and Bretton Varga for their unflinching support during this writing year. A million thanks for the texts, emails, and messages. We did it.

Finally, Dr. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto (1989) explains “To be rasquache is to be down but not out (fregado pero no jodido)…In an environment always on the edge of coming apart (the car, the job, the toilet) things are held together with spirit, grit, and movidas” (p. 5). In short, beauty and agency are created both spiritually and aesthetically, from “molding worthiness out of perceived deficiencies” (Ybarra-Frausto 1989, p. 7). This dissertation is a result of years and years and years of rasquachismo from so many. Gracias a todos.
ABSTRACT

While there are burgeoning, and separate, lines of research about the shifting demographics of Latinx in the U.S South generally, as well a lack of diverse teacher representation nationally, there remains a dearth of research on how these two phenomenon intersect. This dissertation centers post-structural understandings of subjectivity and relational space with a qualitative social-spatial methodology to investigate how Latinx educators in South Carolina produce, affirm, reconstitute, refuse, and disrupt the social spatial relations that mark the boundaries of their subjectivities. I conducted interviews, photovoice, and (eco)maps with 25 Latinx K-12 educators in South Carolina to collect data and create narrative cartographies of Latinx educators which I used to demonstrate my findings.

The narrative cartographies worked to map the shifting, contingent, and fluid subjectivities and spaces of Latinx K-12 educators in South Carolina and illuminate a multiplicity of centers, a variety of entry points, to challenge practices that marginalize and exploit as well as highlight the ingenuity and creativity of educators’ own solutions to establish other spaces, other relations, other lines of flight to become otherwise, and to make possible the previously unthought. I argue that Latinx educators, even though naming their spaces as hostile, express concurrent in/exclusion, detailing multiplicity rather than dichotomy. Such relations of in/exclusion are (inter)dependent on the spaces, the sets of relations, Latinx educators find themselves in. Although I outline a number of subject positions, such as “professional,” “international teacher,” “Maestra,” “cultural
ambassador,” “role model,” and “unicorn” that Latinx educators (co)construct, (co)maintain, (co)legitimize, and (co)resist in South Carolina, most important is how such subjectivities are fluid, contingent, and locally negotiated. Latinx educator subjectivities are neither free from nor external to, but rather co-constitutive of knowledge/power
discourse about both Latinx and educators that is used, internalized, refused and/or hailed by/within different sets of relations (spaces). Thus, it is vital to reject notions about both a static, timeless South, and a static, timeless Latinx teacher, to allow for more just spaces of becoming (the self). For Latinx educators and El Sur Latinx are more than containers for singular stories of temporality, bodies toward predestined being(s); but instead the products, the becomings, of countless relations, intra-actions, and meeting points.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Vignette: Meeting El Sur Latinx

I closed my car door and stepped outside to meet the hot, sticky, and generally uncomfortable weather that marked June in South Carolina. No matter, I was excited. The school year (2016-2017), my second as a middle school social studies teacher in South Carolina, neared its conclusion, summer vacation was in full view, and I was about to step inside a state-wide conferencia\(^1\) of Latinx\(^2\) activists and advocates. The meeting, organized by some of the most trusted and long-lasting Latinx organizations in South Carolina, was thought to be one of the first of its kind in South Carolina. I found the registration table, grabbed a black Sharpie, and fashioned my name tag with three big letters, T-I-M. I followed some printed signs, climbed a flight of stairs, and found a seat, one of those heavily-used, rather creaky, gray, metal folding chairs. A feeling of anticipation and eagerness filled the room that matched, or rather emanated from, the cacophony of enthusiastic chatter. Spanish, English, and Spanish-English conversations settled to a trickle as the first speaker took to the podium and welcomed the crowd, “Bienvenidos.” After a few announcements, including the explanation of the rationale to hold the event in Spanish to make it community centered, a review of the schedule, and

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\(^1\) “Conference.”

\(^2\) For a definition of Latinx, and my explanation for the word choice see the “A Note on Language and Key Terms” subsection later in Chapter One (p. 16).
an opening keynote that included song, dance, and a call to action, we took a quick break for coffee and snacks.

As I stared at the fruit cocktail and readied myself for another cup of coffee, a young woman turned around, smiled, reached out her hand, and said, “Hola, I’m Sandra.” “Hi, I’m Tim!” She continued the conversation in English, “Where are you from? What do you do?” I explained I was a teacher and doctoral student before I returned the question. Sandra shared she was working to finish up her bachelor’s degree while working as a medical interpreter. She mentioned she lived in a small town, one I had never heard of, in a rural part of South Carolina and had gradually taken to community advocacy for the large Latinx population that lived in that area of South Carolina. We chatted continuously for the next fifteen minutes, and I eventually told her of my own background, a Mexican-American father and a White mother. She was rather surprised to find out I was “Mexican,” something common given my light skin tone, and proceeded to ask, “so then... *hablas español?*”³ As per usual, I muttered some sort of “kind of, maybe, well no, *mas o menos, puedo tener conversaciones pero*” I’m not fluent by any means.”⁴ For the rest of the day she pushed me to speak only in Spanish as we continued to chat through lunch and a number of breakout sessions. At the end of the day we exchanged phone numbers and social media information. Over the next few years, we stayed in contact, met at occasional events, and messaged each other with news, questions, and action items. During that time, I also saw Sandra gain prominence in both her local community, leading efforts for an inclusive park, improved public transportation, and an

³ “Do you speak Spanish?”
⁴ “More or less I can have conversations but I’m not fluent by any means.”
expanded bilingual book section at the library, and at the state-wide level in South Carolina, participating in calls, meetings, and conferences.

In short, Sandra was an inspiration to me, a leader who worked tirelessly to better her community and advocate for Latinx in the state. I also kept Sandra informed about my doctoral journey and my dissertation research. When she told me she accepted a job in education as a bilingual receptionist and community outreach support at an elementary school, she asked if she could join my study. Although I had initially conceptualized the dissertation study as concentrating solely on classroom teachers, given the relative dearth of Latinx teachers in South Carolina and participation interest from individuals across a spectrum of school positions (e.g. administrators, new teachers who had previously worked in part-time ESOL positions), I expanded the sample to include those who worked full-time in schools and considered themselves educators; hence Sandra and I believed her role as community outreach support staff would provide important insights about Latinx teacher/educators.5 Additionally, Sandra recruited her cousin, Serena, who, self-described as the town’s first “Hispanic” art teacher, wanted to share her perspective being a Latina teacher in a small South Carolina town. As my primary research question sought to explore how Latinx educators were made in, and remaking, their contexts in South Carolina, I could not imagine a “better” pair of participants. I was humbled they wished to share their experiences and insights with me, and in our first interview, Sandra shared her family’s path to South Carolina:

Sandra: So, I am from [town name], South Carolina, born and raised. I’m a first generation born in the United States, and my parents are from Mexico so that makes me Mexican-American.

5 I explain this decision further in my methodological approach in Chapter Three. Given the participant sample I often use teachers and educators interchangeably.
Tim: Why did your parents come to the United States and [town name in South Carolina] in particular?

Sandra: Okay, so when they migrated back in the 80s from Mexico to the United States, the first cities that they hit were Chicago and New York. So, they were at the Big Apple and the Windy City, is what they are called right? And they first went to those two locations because family were already there, and they were told this is where work is at, so that’s why they were heading to those places. New York was where my oldest brother was born, in Brooklyn, and they were there because work, and you know my mom was working in a manufacturing plant, and my dad was working at the time at the Rockefeller Center…Yeah, so pretty much the cost of living was getting expensive there, transportation you know, my mom had two children at that time, and they moved to little [town name], South Carolina because of work, so they followed the work, it was a manufacturing plant…They [the plant] relocated, so actually they [the plant] grew from New York, and they [the plant] came down here to [town name], it was a textile company. That’s why they [parents] moved here. So, then my middle sister was born, she’s 32. She was born here in [town name]. She was the first one born here, she is the middle child, and myself, and then my little brother, and then other family, like Serena, too...

Before my parents left New York, they were granted residency through the amnesty law that passed during Reagan…Ronald Reagan, which my mom adores him even though he has passed away. My dad is like “gracias a ese presidente,6 we’re able to have, be considered you know. We were working, we could move.” They were not so worried even though they were coming to a very conservative state, not knowing that obviously they just followed the work. So, amnesty law passed through, they were granted the residency and now they’re relocating right? So, they moved and then they moved to [town name]. When they moved here there was no Hispanic stores. There was, was no Mexican-Americans, there was no, it was really like they landed in a land where everyone was White. They were one of the first settlers and everything was new to them. They were making their own gatherings so they can feed the others [newly arrived Latinx], rest of the family members, kind of make a little bit of money, and then just try to share with each other, the culture, the food. When they moved to [town name], they were staying with my grandparents because there was nowhere else to go so my grandparent’s house became the home that all the immigrants would go. Downstairs was the basement, and that’s where getting ready for school growing up as a child I would like be seeing other people…we were like the hub to go to and everyone knew that grandma was making tortillas, and pan7 in the wintertime, so people would come and buy it from her. So, my grandma was making food from home to feed the rest of the Hispanics...

6 “Thanks to that president.”
7 “Bread”
When I was growing up I told my mom, “Why did you move from New York? We could have had a lot of opportunities; you know mom we didn’t have to go through all this? and there is nothing here.” That was my mindset. I didn’t like it here and then my mom’s like “it was bad over there [in New York], the neighborhood,” she was like, “No! Aquí [in South Carolina] esta mejor,⁸ we can raise a family here.” And I said, “but mom nobody likes us here, nobody likes us…” As a child that’s what I would experience, ya...but then we are having other families being here, being raised, then they are calling their uncle, their great uncle, their aunt and they’re coming down here, too. (Interview, October, 2019)

The truth is that in my nearly five years living, teaching, and researching in South Carolina I attended a number of events similar to the conferencia and met many, many people, families, and communities like those of Sandra and Serena. I include the above interview quote to not only personalize the ongoing Latinx transformation of the U.S. South (Odem & Lacy, 2009), but also because this initial portion of Sandra and Serena’s story—why (amnesty, Immigration Reform Control Act; Gill, 2010; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Massey, 2010; Odem, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006 and economic shifts; Mohl, 2005; Odem, 2010; Ribas, 2015) and into what contexts (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005; Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr, 2015; Kochhar, Suro, & Tafoya, 2005; Salas & Portes, 2017; Stacy, Hamann, Murillo Jr., 2015) Latinx moved to the U.S. South⁹—is the segment most documented by academic research. Less academic literature investigates what happens next to people like Sandra and Serena, Latinx who complete university education (or arrive highly educated), enter profession careers, work toward, or into, the “middle class,” gain prominent leadership positions, and most specific to this study, work in Southern schools. Given the fact that the Latinx population in the U.S. South continues to grow rapidly, and families like Sandra’s and Serena’s with

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⁸ “Here it is better.”
⁹ For an explanation, and definition, of my word choice for geographic references see the “A Note on Language and Key Terms” subsection later in Chapter One (p. 20).
its 40-year history of now four generations living in a small South Carolina town are increasingly common, it is necessary to examine in greater nuance how Latinx are taking/making visible roles in Southern education spaces. Even for my participants that were not born and raised in the U.S. South, they now call the region home, they take on publicly visible roles in school spaces, and their experiences of teaching and serving as educators are relatively invisible in research about both the U.S. South and Latinx education. As such, it is (past) time for scholarship to investigate the opportunities and challenges, the promises and pitfalls of Latinx educators in the South that are positioned to take on, negotiate, and refuse spaces and subjectivities\(^{10}\) that continually marginalize students and communities of color broadly, and Latinx specifically. To this end I ask two main research questions about Latinx teachers and educators in South Carolina:

- 1) How are Latinx K-12 teacher/educators both made in, and (re)making, their contexts (in South Carolina)?
  - 1a) How do individual teachers/educators understand their experience as a Latinx K-12 teacher within their specific social, spatial, and historical power relations (in South Carolina)?
- 2) How is Latinx K-12 teacher/educator subjectivity constructed, maintained, legitimized, and resisted (in South Carolina)?

These are important questions that challenge a fixed and unchanging view of Latinx (education) in the U.S. South while problematizing binary logic such as exclusion and inclusion, new and old, rich and poor, and Southern/non-Southern. A more contested, complex, and fluid view of the people, places, spaces, and context of what I outline as El Sur Latinx (to be discussed in detail later in this chapter) escapes current academic

\(^{10}\) I define, and explain my use of, this word/concept in the “A Note on Language and Key Terms” subsection later in Chapter One (p. 22).
literature. Thus, it is necessary to challenge the notion that Latinx teachers and educators are coming into a static, timeless South toward the view that Latinx teachers and educators are (re)creating and (re)negotiating a productive and emergent set of multiplicitous relations, spaces, that always already contain the potential for something different. Therefore, in this dissertation I center the particularly visible and public role Latinx educators occupy as simultaneous products of, and interventions in/against, spatial entanglements and processes that often reproduce limited, racialized, and marginalized subject positions for Latinx in South Carolina. This attention to nuance, this examination into the relations of power that underlie and reveal the different possibilities of spatial orderings and arrangements of Latinx teachers in El Sur Latinx is a significant contribution that I return to over the course of this study.

**Coming to Research on Latinx Teachers in South Carolina and the U.S. South**

*Each of my works is a part of my own biography.* (Foucault, 1988, p. 11)

This qualitative investigation into the co-constitutive spaces and subjectivities of Latinx teachers and educators stems from my own experiences in South Carolina where I taught middle school for four years. I did not start graduate school with the intent to study this topic, however as I (re)made my life in South Carolina three major observations shifted the focus and trajectory of my studies, teaching practice, and community advocacy. First, I found the large and growing pockets of Latinx in the state to be a fascinating *remezcla*\textsuperscript{11} of space, place, and Latinidad. Prior to moving to South Carolina I was unaware of the vibrant, dynamic, and growing Latinx communities that have made the U.S. South home.

\textsuperscript{11}“Remix.”
Second, I entered South Carolina in the fall of 2015 during a moment of seemingly daily anti-Latinx discourse advanced by then candidate Trump at the national level, but also put into horrifying practice by South Carolina state and local policy (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017). Such discourse circulated through schools as Latinx students asked me, “Mr. M., What might happen to me if Trump is elected?” or when district officials and coworkers advanced deficit notions, stereotypes, and inaccuracies about Latinx. It was impossible to ignore the pain, hurt, and sometimes fear that resulted from this context, and I felt compelled to work against such injustices aimed at the larger Latinx community.

Third, my own frames and experiences particularly my identification as Chicano\textsuperscript{12} were both radically different from, but also immanently interrelated with those of my students, and as I came to meet them, Latinx teachers in the state. I struggled to make personal sense of what it meant to personally be(come) a Chicano teacher in the spaces and places of South Carolina where I ended my middle school teaching career as opposed to the spaces and places of Southern California where I began my teaching career. As I continually rethought, reworked, and reimagined my scholarship in and with Latinx in the South, it was clear that like Foucault explained, “this work was/is part of my own biography” (Foucault, 1988, p. 11).

Such an understanding of my self/ves with/in the research, “as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the process

\textsuperscript{12} I define Chicano/a/x as a self-descriptor for a person of Mexican descent, usually, but not always, born in the United States. For an extended explanation of descriptors I employ in this dissertation see the “A Note on Language and Key Terms” subsection later in Chapter One (p. 16).
of research itself” (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 124), was thus an ongoing responsibility to approach all parts of the project reflexively (Fine, Weiss, Weseen, & Wong, 2003). Specifically, at the beginning of the research project this meant challenging my initial urge to draw upon a representation of the U.S. South that was both unchanging, forever the “Old South” of popular imagination, and a larger Latinx narrative that I rooted in other geographic and symbolic locations. With this inclination in hand, it was easy for me to initially conceptualize, and even regurgitate, an understanding of Latinx in the South as a solely temporal, novel, and sudden phenomenon.

Yet, as I met more people like Serena and Sandra, and entangled myself with the Latinx community of South Carolina, I saw a much more diverse and emergent picture come into focus. Rather than viewing South Carolina as on page one waiting to catch up with its classmates in a previously written story about Latinx settlement and growth, I found “a contested, fluid, dynamic space” (Delerme & Passidomo, 2017, para. 2). Similarly, as I began to research the role of Latinx educators, I noticed a matching propensity to collapse all such educators into a monolith group, usually from the United States (South)West, whose experiences innately corresponded to, and were a one-for-one match with, the experiences, needs, and desires of their students and the local Latinx community (Singh 2018a,b, 2019). I started to grasp two, interrelated, problems to untangle; the trappings of an a priori, transcendent Latinx educator that somehow stands apart from, and outside, the very contingent, unequal, and racialized socio-spatial power relations that give rise to the experiences and knowledges about the self and the perpetual construction of Latinx in the South through a temporal frame of newness, as a uniform tale of suddenly arrived, minimally schooled, low wage earners, rather than an impactful,
nuanced, and multifaceted group of space-makers. As I outline the problem statement, significance, and contribution of this study next, this problematization of static Latinx and Southern spaces and subjectivities impacted the theory I drew upon as well as the way I held my own positionality in tension with the research process. If I was to concentrate the shifting, contingent, and fluid subjectivities and spaces of Latinx teachers in South Carolina I had to constantly interrogate my own thinking, understanding, and ways I saw myself vis-a-vis participants, spaces, and findings.

**Problem Statement and Significance**

While there are burgeoning, and separate, lines of research about the shifting demographics of Latinx in the U.S South generally, as well a lack of diverse teacher/educator representation nationally, there remains a dearth of research on how these two phenomenon intersect. Scholarship that focuses Latinx teachers (Bybee, 2015; Flores, 2011, 2015, 2017a; Galindo, 1996; Griffin, 2018; Ochoa 2007; Urrieta, Jr., 2007, 2010) largely ignores the complex experiences of Latinx educators in the U.S. South (Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr., 2015) as there also exists a gap in the academic literature about Latinx K-12 teachers in the growing field of scholarship about Latinx education in the U.S. South (Salas & Portes, 2017). For example, in two major edited books about education in the so-called “New Latino Diaspora” (Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr., 2015; Wortham, Murillo Jr., & Hamann, 2002) and one about the “Latinization” of the U.S. South (Salas & Portes, 2017), not a single chapter is devoted to investigating Latinx K-12 educators. Hence, while scholarship engages closely in much-needed investigation about Latinx education in Southern contexts, there has been general neglect to the positioning and subject-formation of K-12 Latinx educators in these areas.
Therefore, this study is significant for nuancing study of Latinx in the U.S. South, inviting the (micro)spaces of the U.S. South into literature about Latinx educators, furthering literature on teacher representation, and providing schools, districts, and individual teachers with points of concern, improvement, and potential. In short, there is a pressing need for investigation into how Latinx teachers and educators are made in, and remaking, their spatialized relations (to themselves) in the U.S. South.

Stacy, Hamann, and Murillo Jr. (2015) ask researchers and practitioners to expand the conversation about “new” Latinx communities to generate novel ideas and create emergent spaces of inquiry. Specifically, they ask us to think of ‘possible dialogic ‘next turns.’ Which voices have been included? Excluded? Who still needs to respond?’ (p. 345). As there has been a serious, and striking, dearth of research that focuses Latinx teachers in the U.S. South (Colomer, 2014, 2018), this study presents both a call, and a theoretical/methodological path, to critically listen to, learn from, and problematize productions of, Latinx educators in the U.S. South. Further, and to these ends, such research must critically challenge normalizing discourse and knowledge about who/what Latinx teachers and educators are hailed to be, where. While I echo a general belief, supported by the literature, that increasing the number of Latinx teachers in the South will lead to better, more just outcomes for schools and students, it is necessary to continually question the explanatory and limiting mechanisms for such thinking that often implicitly rests on essentialized practices, identities, and constructions of Latinx teachers. With this in mind I designed the research project I trace next.
Research Design

I maintain that existing research about Latinx teachers and educators struggles to incorporate and interrogate “the way[s] that power relations develop in tandem with spatial relations, each exerting a distinct but not necessarily deterministic pressure on the other” (Mills, 2007, p. 51). The outcome results in a rather static Latinx teacher subject that ignores the particularities of lived, emergent, spatial experiences. Without thinking through how Latinx teachers contingently (re)negotiate themselves through power relations and spatial arrangements (e.g., in the “South,” classroom location, curriculum, schedule, students, Latinx communities) at the local/micro level—how Latinx teachers simultaneously and multiplicitously challenge, accept, antagonize, internalize, even ignore who, what, and where they are hailed to become—calls to increase educator representation will continue to proceed with limited success.

Thus, there is the need to bring different theoretical frames and methodological approaches to push against the oversimplification, determinism, and rigidity that marks the essentialized and homogenized categorizations of both the U.S. South and Latinx teachers. For this reason, my study centers post-structural understandings of subjectivity, a decentered and contingent subject, with relational ideas of space as processual, productive, and emergent. I entangled this theoretical framing with a qualitative social-spatial methodology to investigate how Latinx teachers in South Carolina produced, affirmed, reconstituted, refused, and disrupted the social-spatial relations that marked the boundaries of their subjectivities. I used interviews, photovoice, and (eco)maps, conducted from August 2019-January 2020, with 25 Latinx K-12 educators in South Carolina to collect data and create narrative cartographies of Latinx educators which I use
to demonstrate my findings. The narrative cartographies work to map the shifting, contingent, and fluid subjectivities and spaces of Latinx teachers and educators in South Carolina and illuminate a multiplicity of centers, a variety of entry points, to challenge those practices that marginalize and exploit as well as highlight the ingenuity and creativity of teachers’ own solutions to establish other spaces, other relations, other lines of flight to become otherwise, and to make possible the previously unthought.

**Overview of Chapters**

The organization of this study is as follows. In the remainder of Chapter One I outline key terms and then provide a contextual overview of Latinx in both the U.S. South and South Carolina. Such a contextual overview is important in introducing the intersecting yet dispersed relations and discourses that work to produce the categories and norms that define Latinx teachers. Moreover, and elucidated in my theoretical framing (Chapter Three), when bringing a post-structural spatial lens to this broader context it becomes clear that Latinx in the U.S. South are but one of many Souths, relationally (re)creating and (re)negotiating a multiplicity of racialized Southern spaces that outline the boundaries of who they might be(come), their subject positions.

In Chapter Two, I review a broad body of literature on teachers and educators of color that has, thus far, largely failed to interrogate the regional and spatial dynamics of Latinx teachers living and working in the U.S. South. A central argument I maintain throughout this chapter is that there rests a tension between the demonstrated need for, and efficacy of, Latinx teachers and the proclivity to, then, assign essential qualities and attributes to all Latinx teachers. Unfortunately, as much scholarship leaves this tension un(der)examined there results a rather static Latinx teacher subject that strengthens the
bound(arie)s of neoliberal subjectivity (Ball, 2016; Kuntz, 2019), (re)creates the Latinx teacher as an object of/for intervention, limits radical becomings, and reinforces the status quo while also ignoring the particularities and possibilities of contingency (Singh, 2018a,b, 2019). In sum, although research suggests that many Latinx teachers, indeed, develop special skills, attitudes, and beliefs based on their own experiences that in turn work to benefit students and schools, it is crucial researchers don’t equate such practices to core, inherent, or transcendent attributes of the Latinx teacher. For then, academic literature falls into the trap of creating an a priori Latinx educator that somehow stands apart from, and outside, the very contingent, unequal, and racialized socio-spatial power relations that give rise to such experiences and knowledges about the self.

My articulation of Latinx in the U.S. South (Chapter One) along with the need to problematize narratives of teacher representation (Chapter Two) presents the imperative for a theoretical frame and methodological approach that centers nuance and contingency. As such, Chapter Three outlines my use of post-structural, specifically Foucauldian, ideas of subjectivity, in conjunction with relational views of space to detail how space and subjectivity are mutually constitutive. Importantly, this “places” a decentralized and dispersed Latinx teacher within their ever-changing, yet frustratingly unequal spatialized relations rather than as a coherent whole unflinchingly following a linear and temporal path of predetermination. This opens the methodological door to engage inquiry as cartographic work, mapping and “locating” the stratified and shifting processes, practices, and relations that produce the boundaries of (Latinx teacher) subjectivities in the many spaces of El Sur Latinx.
In Chapter Four, I present findings and analysis that map out three broad relations to what many participants often described as hostile school spaces. In brief, I argue that Latinx teachers, even though naming their spaces as hostile, expressed concurrent in/exclusion, detailing multiplicity rather than dichotomy. Yet such systems of in/exclusion were (inter)dependent on the spaces, the sets of relations, Latinx teachers found themselves in. The key, then, is to not simply advocate for more “inclusive” relationships for Latinx teachers, but rather to interrogate, challenge, and disrupt the localized functioning, and effects, of power(knowledge) that underlies, invites, and produces the terms of such in/exclusion.

Chapter Five works in concert with Chapter Four to more closely (re/un)blur the bounded subject positions of Latinx teachers that emerge through, and are embedded with/in, certain topologies, topographies, and regimes of truth. I present findings and analysis that map out the contested, relationally dispersed, and positively produced subject positions that emerged through my intra-actions\(^\text{13}\) with participants. Although I outline a number of subject positions, such as “professional,” “international teacher,” “Maestra,” “cultural ambassador,” “role model,” and “unicorn” that Latinx teachers (co)constructed, (co)maintained, (co)legitimized, and (co)resisted in South Carolina, most important was how such subjectivities were fluid, contingent, and locally negotiated. I argue that Latinx teachers reproduce and also reconfigure knowledge about themselves, thus posing potential cracks (“wounds or opportunities;” Foucault, 2017, p. 11) in the connection(s) between their subjectification and subjection.

\(^{13}\) I define, and explain my use of, this word/concept in the “A Note on Language and Key Terms” subsection later in Chapter One (p. 23).
Finally, in Chapter Six I briefly review arguments and insights from the previous chapters before presenting a visual “map” that brings together findings from Chapters Four and Five to outline how Latinx teachers are made in, and remaking, El Sur Latinx. I sketch a series of implications, for Latinx scholarship (in the South), for research on/with Latinx teachers and teacher representation, for theory and method, and for teachers, schools and districts in El Sur Latinx, that result from this dissertation.

A Note on Key Terms and Language

In this section I outline how I use and/or operationally define certain terms that feature prominently throughout this study. I first discuss my choice and usage of Latinx, Hispanic, and Chicanx before explaining my use of race, racialization, and racism. I then address my choices and tensions about geographic and spatial references, particularly the U.S. South, the Southeast, and South Carolina. Finally, I close with brief definitions of subject position and subjectivity, intra-action, and a reflection on other language conventions that appear in the dissertation.

Latinx/a/o, Hispanic, Chicanx/a/o

Throughout this study I use the word Latinx as the identifier and term in reference to people that have familial and/or personal origin from Latin American countries. I prefer Latinx as an inclusive term that represents a spectrum of gender identity rather than the masculine/feminine binary of Latina/o. Although I hold such language use as making a political statement, I also recognize that the term Latinx is contested and used contextually in communities of practice (Martínez-Prieto, 2019; Salinas Jr., 2020). To be more specific, while Latinx is gaining preference with certain academic and activist circles, Latinx may or may not be recognized, understood, and/or preferred by people
outside those circles. This is the case for my own family, as my dad describes such language as “loco,”\(^{14}\) and participants were often confused when I referenced the term Latinx. Thus, while I use Latinx, I keep the preferred terminology of authors/participants in their own references.

Similarly, the term “Hispanic” is both a self-identifier and an official identification category promoted by the U.S. government for people from Spanish-speaking countries. While I abstain from using the word because I believe it marks Eurocentrism and colonization, for example people from Spain and the Iberian Peninsula are included, Hispanic is still a norm for government statistics and continues to be the preferred identifier for many people. Therefore, when referencing government, and other statistical, data I, too, keep reference terminology as it often corresponds to survey methodology (i.e. Latinx is not a U.S. Census category). I try to use quotation marks (" ") to denote when data or documents utilize Hispanic or Latino/a.

Finally, I self-identify as Chicano. I define Chicano/a/x as a politically aligned identification to denote a person of Mexican descent, usually, but not always, born in the United States. Chicano/a/x is a self-descriptor and can be used regardless of immigrant status and generational length of residence. For example, my family has been in California (from Mexico) for multiple generations, but not everyone in my family chooses to adopt the descriptor. I see Chicano as a self-conscious selection to explicitly counter a continual deficit perspective of Latinx communities and as a move toward “positive identification with a unique cultural heritage” (Mirandé, 1985, p. 2). For the most part, Chicano/a/x was not used by participants, as most were from Latin American

\(^{14}\) “Silly.”
countries other than Mexico, and I use the term only in self-reference or when referring to literature that uses the term.

**Race, Racialization, and Racism**

My operationalization of race, racialization, and racism is informed by Omi and Winant’s (2015) thorough text, *Racial Formation in the United States*. Consistent with my larger theoretical frame of post-structural subjectivity and relational space, I view race as a social and spatial construct, (re)produced in relational ways with corresponding material consequences. Race is neither reductive nor fundamental; it is a process, continually in (re)formation as both social/historical/spatial structures and sets of accumulated signifiers. Stated succinctly, “race is a concept, a representation or signification of identity that refers to different types of human bodies, to the perceived corporeal and phenotypical markers of difference and the meanings and social practices that are ascribed to these differences” (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 111). The act of “race-making,” or defining racial groups, is relational in that the boundaries, classifications, and categories of “othering” constantly shift and realign to/with/from other groups and peoples in racial hierarchies and fields (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 105). For example, depending on different spaces and times the racial classification of Latinx in the United States, closely tied to Mexicans, has generally shifted from and between “nonwhite,” “White,” “Indian,” “no classification,” “Mexican” as a race, and Latinx as any race (Bybee, 2015; Molina, 2014; Ortiz & Telles, 2012).

Throughout the dissertation I use the term racialization to point toward such processes of relational racial (re)formation. According to Omi & Winant (2015), racialization is a constitutive process “of imparting social and symbolic meaning to
perceived phenotypical differences” (p. 111). However, beyond mere physical markers, racialization also refers to the “the extension of racial meaning[s] to a previously racially unclassified [or differently classified] relationship, social practice, or group” (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 111). Racialization is the result of the interplay between social structure and everyday life, between macro and micro spaces, histories, and moments.

Racialization, thus, gives meaning to images, media, language, ideas, and informs common sense understandings of race (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017). Important to this study, such an understanding of racialization leads me to identify Latinx as a racialized group (Molina, 2014) in which nationality, language, ethnicity, and legal status work at different times and in different spaces and in different relations to (re)create and (re)produce the boundaries of racial Otherness.

Finally, my understanding of racism extends beyond narrow conceptions that tie individual hatred, intent, and superiority with overt prejudicial action. I am of the opinion that it is important to disrupt the persistent regime of truth that holds racism is the result of individual deficiency, choice, and animus rather than an intricate web of overlapping institutional norms and structures (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Kendall, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Mirandé, 2014; Omi & Winant, 2015). Thinking more broadly, racism is entangled, embedded, and (re)produced within the ideologies, policies, and practices in a variety of institutional arenas that normalize unequal, unequitable, and unjust racial practices and outcomes (Omi & Winant, 2015). Despite this view of institutional racism, my participants rarely shared their schools or districts viewed racism along these lines, and instead communicated an implicit and/or internalized belief that it was the job of teachers (of color) to educate racism out of “misinformed” individuals.
U.S. South, Southeast, South Carolina

As with most regionalizations there is contestation and controversy over the use, and definition of, the U.S. South. The United States Census Bureau (n. d.) lists 16 states\(^{15}\) and the District of Columbia under Region 3, the U.S. South. In this dissertation, however, I use the term U.S. South in reference to a collection of states, sometimes referred to as the Lower South or Deep South, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana. These “Lower South” states have populations that have traditionally viewed race/racialization within a Black/White binary, have more recent, although not exclusively “new,” patterns of Latinx growth, and have a history of de jure racialized (schooling) practices such as segregation. In this view, states such as Texas, and Florida, with the second and third largest number of “Hispanics” (Lopez, 2011), stand apart from my regional designation as they have longer histories of Latinx communities.\(^{16}\) Additionally, given geographic proximity, and shared borders, with my focus state, I center further the Southeastern triad of Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Thus, references to the South(east) correspond to these three states more specifically. All this to say that I use the term U.S. South throughout the dissertation as both a geographic location and a broader reference to spaces that typically are thought to be outside conceptions of the Latinx Diaspora broadly defined. Finally, I often use U.S. South and South Carolina interchangeably. I do this neither to collapse differences nor

\(^{15}\) Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas.

\(^{16}\) I would argue, however, that despite large Latinx populations, there is a general shortage of research on the lived experiences of K-12 Latinx educators from those states as well.
out of desire to make sweeping generalizations about Latinx teachers in the U.S. South, however given the dearth of research in this (geographic and academic) area, this study does initiate an important, and needed, conversation about Latinx teachers in the South.

I also want to acknowledge, and speak a few words about, an admitted tension between the state and regional geographic markers I employ alongside a theoretical frame of relational space. This is a tension Doreen Massey (1998a, b), a scholar I lean heavily on throughout this dissertation, wrestles with as well. She writes:

For me [Massey] this generated an internal conflict. On the one hand I absolutely rejected the claims to local exclusivity and the terms on which they were being made. On the other hand I absolutely did not want to give up on the ability to appreciate local difference (it is one of the reasons I became, and remain, a geographer)...My response was to set about trying to re-imagine place (or, more generally, geographic specificity) in a way which was (i) not bounded (ii) not defined in terms of exclusivity (iii) not defined in terms of counter position between an inside and an outside, and (iv) not dependent upon false notions of an internally-generated authenticity...Instead, it meant beginning to argue for an understanding of the identity of places as constructed through relations with elsewhere[s]...it is this kind of approach, I believe, which may enable us to argue for a political position which allows both the appreciation of local specificity and the firm maintenance of an internationalist stance. (Massey, 1998b, pp. 40-41)

Thus, like Massey, I hold that it is possible to name a bounded, literal space (the South/South Carolina) within an examination of unbounded relational spaces. The friction in defining a physical, demarcated place along with the idea that space is a product of emergent interrelations speaks to the potential and possibilities of “many Souths.” In this way, it is possible to acknowledge and appreciate space’s “local specificity,” its identity in relation with “elsewhere[s],” (Massey, 1998b, pp. 40-41) its structuring power, and the multiplicitous, and heterogenous, relations of space that impact the resourceful and resilient, contextually fluid and negotiated ways marginalized communities use power to recreate and remix the worlds they traverse, inhabit, and
embody. Perhaps clearer, I use the U.S. South, even South Carolina, as socially constructed and labeled envelopes of space-time (Massey, 1998a, p. 22), events so to speak (Rodriguez, 2017b), whose boundaries are significant, but not deterministic, inherent, natural, “exclusive,” or defined by “an inside and an outside” (Massey, 1998b, p. 40). My argument for Latinx in the U.S., El Sur Latinx, as one of many Souths, which I outline in Chapter Three, speaks, then, to this much more expansive understanding of re-imagining place, geographic specificity, and relational space.

**Subject Positions and Subjectivity**

I explain subject positions and subjectivity at length in the theoretical framing (Chapter Three), but it is important to give a brief overview as I use the terms and concepts throughout the dissertation. According to Foucault (1982) there are two meanings of the word subject, “subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (p. 781). However, more than top-down, juridical notions of control and dependence, it is necessary to examine how dispersed and capillary forms of power, discourses, knowledges, even spaces, “impose a law of truth” on individuals which they must recognize and be recognized as (Foucault, 1982, p. 781). Such forms of powers, what Foucault refers to as technologies, intersect with wider socio-spatial institutions to create subject positions within webs of power relations. As an example, Latinx educators are made subject to myriad discourses and knowledges about teaching in general, for example what it means to be a “professional,” in addition to the restrictive policies and deleterious discourse that constructs Latinx as Othered threats, criminals, and deviants (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017). Post-structuralists, then, shift away from theories of a subject and toward an understanding of
the ongoing processes of subjectification and subjection. Subjectivity refers to how individuals affirm, reject, disrupt, and co-produce their “self-image, [their] sense of self and others, and [the] possibilities of existence” (De Lauretis, 1986, p. 5) vis-à-vis these ongoing processes of subjectification and subjection.

**Intra-action**

Throughout the text I use the word/concept intra-action to denote mutual constitutions and entanglements. Intra-action is a neologism introduced by quantum physicist, Karen Barad (2007) that attempts to capture the emergence of things, ideas, forces, and agencies through immanent, but unequal, relationships between non/living actors. Whereas any *interaction* takes place between two independent actors, *intra-actions* occur from within, when two or more entities become inseparable. In other words, “the notion of intra-action recognized that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, inter-action” (Barad, 2007, p. 33).

**Other Language Conventions and Choices**

There are a few other language choices I want to briefly acknowledge. First, while not extensive, there is a fair amount of Spanish and translanguaging mixed throughout the text. I decided to add (my own) translation as footnotes so the original words stand on their own, but readers who may need translation can still access the meaning. In some instances, authors/participants include their own translation, and as such I keep that in the main body. Also, throughout the inquiry I employ a liberal use of parentheses and backslashes to temper the binaries of certain words, acknowledge the interactions and complexities of certain relationships, and/or to open/embrace a (contingent) continuum of
meaning and understanding (Barad, 2013). Such writing is an attempt to entice the reader to carefully craft and explore the possibilities and problematizations of the text.

**Context: Latinx in the U.S. South and South Carolina**

In the second half of this introductory chapter I provide a contextual overview of Latinx in the U.S. South and South Carolina. I outline social, political, historical, spatial, and educational entanglements that locate a fast-growing Latinx population within a delineated lived topography (Grossberg, 2013), the U.S. South and South Carolina. I start by explaining the broader demographic and geographic shifts that scholars name the New Latino Diaspora before narrowing down on the U.S. South and South Carolina. I then move to literature about Latinx education in the U.S. South and South Carolina to signal how the micro spaces of schools intra-act with myriad processes of policy, discourse, and subject-formation to sketch the parameters of Latinx teachers in South Carolina. Such a contextual overview is important in introducing the intersecting yet dispersed relations and discourses that work to recreate the categories and norms that define and assemble Latinx teachers.

This contextual picture, then, describes the localized specificities of the spaces and places my participants live and teach with/in. In this way, I offer the U.S. South and South Carolina as a literal space, a socially constructed and labeled envelope of space-time (Massey, 1998a, p. 22). At the same time, and noted previously in the chapter, this literal, circumscribed space of the U.S. South and South Carolina is in tension with my theoretical frame of relational and symbolic, yet materially consequential, space that is emergent, multiplicitous, and unbounded. I note this paradox and offer Latinx in South Carolina and the U.S. South as a constructed space in which boundaries are significant,
but not deterministic, inherent, or natural, and a multiplicitious process of relational becoming that opens possibilities and uncharted trajectories. Moreover, and elucidated in my theoretical framing (Chapter Three), when bringing a relational space lens to this broader context it becomes clear that Latinx in the U.S. South are but one of many “new” Souths. These “many Souths” are the products—the meeting points—of immanent relations between peoples, things, and elsewhere that reproduce, maintain, and place unequal spatial relations of power while also containing the potential for different narratives, thresholds, and resistances.

**New Latino Diaspora**

“There is no Alamo to remember, nor occupied territories to claim, nor a legendary Aztlán to recreate.” (Murillo & Villenas, 1997 as quoted in Villenas, 2002)

I begin with a high-level snapshot of the changing United States Latinx population. More specifically, the Latinx population is shifting geographically and has been for some time. True, the Latinx population of the United States is still anchored in traditional settlement areas like California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and the Southwest (Brown & Lopez, 2013; Flores, 2017b), but increasing numbers of Latinx are (re)making home in places like the suburbs of the South (Weise, 2015), the villages of New England (Wortham & Contreras, 2002), “fly-over” states like Indiana (Grady, 2002), Kansas (Morales, 2015), and Iowa (Farley, Bruna, Oropeza, & Ayala, 2019), and relatively rural destinations in-between (Kandel & Cromartie, 2004; Kandel, Parrado, & Furseth, 2006; Martinez, 2002; Mendez & Nelson, 2016). As a result, the moniker New Latino Diaspora (NLD) gained traction with scholars in the 1990s to describe increasing...

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17 Remarkably, the Los Angeles metro area is home to roughly 9% of the United States “Latino” population (Brown & Lopez, 2013).
numbers of Latinx settling outside the places of the “traditional” Latinx diaspora (Hamann & Harklau, 2010, 2015; Wortham, Murillo Jr., & Hamann, 2002).

New Latinx settlement patterns roughly mirrored changing patterns of U.S. labor markets that established more consistent employment like construction, manufacturing, and meat and poultry processing in increasingly Southern and Midwestern locations (Furuseth & Smith, 2006; Hamann & Harklau, 2010, 2015; Johnson & Kasarda, 2009; Mohl, 2005; Odem & Lacy, 2009). As more Latinx followed these jobs (recruited both by firms and family), created new ones, and found/made comunidades mas tranquilos\(^{18}\) (Cooper-Lewter, 2013; Guerrero, 2017; Lacy, 2007, 2009; Torres, Popke, & Hapke, 2006), areas with relatively limited histories of Latinx populations became the primary spaces and places of the NLD. While there are (largely silenced) histories of Latinx in places as diverse as Kansas (Donato & Hanson, 2017), Louisiana (Weise, 2015), and the Pacific Northwest (Sifuentez, 2016) what is remarkable about contemporary Latinx decentralization is the rapid and dramatic shift in the settlement patterns, especially in areas where the majority population are unaccustomed to large numbers of “Hispanics” (Kandel & Cromartie, 2004). For example, in 1990, over 60% of “Hispanics” lived in just five States: Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. However, from 2000-2010 the Midwest (49.2%) and South (57.3%) regions had much larger percentages of “Hispanic” population growth than that of the West (34.3%), which barely outpaced the Northeast (33.1%; Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). At a microlevel during 2000-2010, of the ten fastest growing counties (by percent change) for “Hispanics,” three were

\(^{18}\) “More tranquil communities.”
in Georgia while South Dakota, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, 
Virginia, and North Carolina each had one a piece (Brown & Lopez, 2013).

**El Sur Latinx**

“Why study El Sur Latino?...For too long, folks both inside and outside the region have 
seen the South in ways that veer toward stereotype, that oversimplify, that elide 
uncomfortable or sometimes beautiful realities. (Delerme & Passidomo, 2017, para. 1)

They lead vibrant lives in a region our ancestors never expected to live in. In a region 
still feared by non-residents as a nightmare for people of color, Latinos have not just 
created a home for themselves—they're now increasingly defining what’s next for the 
South...They don’t just teach Southerners about Latino life; they teach the rest of us Latinos. (Arellano, 2019, par. 33, 34)

Emerging as a focal region of the New Latino Diaspora, the “Hispanic”
population in the U.S. South continues to grow at a faster rate than any other place in the 
United States, and as of 2010, 36% of “Hispanics” live in U.S. South (Ennis, Rios-
Vargas, & Alberts, 2011; Jones, 2019). The result of political, economic, and socio-
spatial intra-actions and entanglements in both the United States and Latin America
(Bess, 2012; Lacy, 2007; Lacy et. al, 2007; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Odem & 
Lacy, 2009; Young, 2005), the Southern United States has attracted newer waves of 
(im)migrants with a relatively cheap cost of living and the promise of year-round 
employment in meat processing, poultry, and construction (Guerrero, 2017; Johnson & 
Kasarda, 2009; Odem & Lacy, 2009; Ribas, 2015; Torres, Popke, & Hapke, 2006).

Narrowing the focus to Southeastern states bordering my focus state of South 
Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina were respectively 10th and 11th for all states in 
regard to the total number of “Hispanic” residents in 2010 (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 
2011). Numerically, in 1980 there were approximately 44,216 “Latinos” in Georgia. In 
1990 that number increased to 108,922 and by 2010 the population had climbed to 
853,689 (Rodríguez, 2012). Across the same time span, North Carolina’s “Latino”
population grew from approximately 42,370 to 76,726 to 800,120 (Rodriguez, 2012). South Carolina, the geographic focus of this dissertation had a 172% increase in its “Latino” population from 2000-2014, nearly tripling in that time frame from 95,000 to 258,000 (Stepler & Lopez, 2016). Hence, across the Southeast, Odem and Lacy (2009) write, “one now finds Mexican panaderías, tiendas, and restaurants, Spanish language newspapers and radio programs, Latino nightclubs, and December processions in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Odem & Lacy, 2009, p. ix).” Such large demographic shifts are significant for receiving locations (as well as newcomers and all those in-between) that have relatively little experience of Latinx communities and histories of problematic race relations. Key to this examination of Latinx educators is how these changing cultural, political, and social relations entangle with teachers’ publicly visible role in schools spaces.

Scholars have forwarded a number of different frameworks and descriptors to describe the changing demographics of the U.S. South. Among the most popular include the New South (Hamann, 2003; Jones, 2019), the Nuevo South (Guerrero, 2017; Mendez & Nelson, 2016; Winders, 2011), the Nuevo New South (Alvarez & Alvarez, 2016; Mohl, 2005), the New Latino South (Carrillo, 2016; Kochhar, Suro, & Tafoya, 2005; Moll, 2017; Odem, 2016; Portes & Salas, 2015; Powell & Carrillo, 2019; Salas & Portes, 2017), and the Newest New South (see Oliver Merino in Washburn, 2015). As a whole, this scholarship describes and documents, “who (Latinx), where (places were Latinx have not previously lived in significant numbers) and encountering what (improvised

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19 In a fascinating juxtaposition there were only two Mexicans in South Carolina in 1900 and 1910. This number climbed to 176 in 1920. North Carolina and Georgia counted 30 and 50 Mexicans, respectively in 1920 (Rodriguez, 2012).
interethnic interaction)” (Hamann & Harklau, 2015, p. 5, emphasis original). Odem and Lacy (2009) use the following themes to map scholarship about Latino immigration and the transformation of the U.S. South: immigrant transnationalism, economic incorporation and impact, place-making and community building, changing racial dynamics, and Southern responses to Latino immigration. Ribas (2015) argues it is possible to further narrow this academic literature into two broad areas, the challenges of unprecedented change for communities unaccustomed to dealing with Latinx im/migration (although less emphasis has been applied to how Latinx communities themselves are changing; see Winders, 2011; Winders & Smith, 2012), and the processes/trajectories of incorporation into a supposed Black/White binary. More specific to education, researchers have identified an enduring and persistent improvisational and ad-hoc response to changing schools and districts (Allen, 2015; Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo, Jr., 2015; Stacy, Hamann, & Murillo Jr., 2015). As Guerrero (2017) writes, “with respect to dealing with the sheer growth of school-age children and accommodating Spanish-speaking students, districts have typically been unprepared, overwhelmed, and underfunded” (p. 45). The importance of this growing body of work on Latinx in the U.S. South cannot be understated, however a dominant lens on temporality has largely concentrated on newly arrived im/migrants, low wage earners in industries like food and meat processing, agriculture, and manufacturing, and the education of English Language Learners leaving aside professional and middle class Latinx in the South, and, with regards to education in particular, the experiences, challenges, and opportunities of K-12 Latinx educators in the South.
In order to signal a slight shift away from a discourse defined by “newness,” throughout this dissertation I use the term *El Sur Latinx* as a descriptor for Latinx in the U.S. South. *El Sur Latinx* is not an original term yet it appears scarcely in academic literature about Latinx in the U.S. South. One organization that consistently uses *El Sur Latinx* is The Southern Foodways Alliance (n.d.), a member-supported organization based at the University of Mississippi’s Center for the Study of Southern Culture “that documents, studies, and explores the diverse food cultures of the changing American South” (see also Arellano, 2017; Milam, 2018). That organization and its sponsored publications, conferences, and materials use *El Sur Latinx* because:

We understand...the South as a contested, fluid, dynamic place comprised of people and stories that come to us from all over the world. We focus on the people and stories of *El Sur Latino*—the Latino South—because these are the stories that increasingly represent a Southern experience...we know that the U.S. South is *El Sur Latino*. (Delerme & Passidomo, 2017, para. 2, 4)

I use *El Sur Latinx*, then, to highlight that Latinx “have not just created a home for themselves—they’re now increasingly defining what’s next for the South” (Arellano, 2019, par. 33) and as such Latinx in the South are now part of the people, places, spaces, stories, and intra-actions of the South itself. In this way, I see the “newness” and rapid demographic growth of Latinx in the South as one of a multiplicity of narratives about/within an ever-changing set of placed intra-actions. It can be true that there are both new(er) and old(er), local and global, patterned and divergent relations operating across, and remaking, the (Latinx) U.S. South.

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20 I also favor the intentional Spanish hybridity of *El Sur Latinx* to signal the discordant *remezcla* (“remix”) that brings together the entanglements of our globalized, more than temporal (micro)worlds.
The educators in my study speak to, intra-act with, and are a product of a multiplicity of such relations across the U.S. South and South Carolina. For example, a number of my study’s participants grew up and received their educations in places like California, Ohio, and Michigan, but moved “South” for better weather, further education, work opportunity/recruitment, and/or a cheaper cost of living. On the other hand, some were born and raised in South Carolina, have older generations of family that call(ed) the state home, and are now raising their own children in Carolina del Sur. Some were raised in lower socio-economic communities in the United States or abroad while other come from middle income or professional households. Some are recent immigrants from a variety of Latin American countries while some are here on temporary work visas as the study counts a handful of “international teachers.” These international educators are technically part of cultural exchange programs that come to the United States to teach for three to five years on a J-1 visa. The South Carolina Department of Education facilitates the recruitment of “international teachers,” and they are increasingly used to fill long-term vacancies as they are substantially cheaper and (can) have little recourse for unsatisfactory working conditions and assignments (Bowers, 2017). The vast majority are hired to teach Spanish followed by Math and Special Education (Self & Dulaney, 2018). Finally, where these educators work varies. Some teach in majority Latinx schools and neighborhoods, and some are one of a handful of Latinx in their community. However, across the board, the participants have very few, if any, Latinx colleagues at their school sites.

21 “South Carolina.”
My larger point is that El Sur Latinx is both a temporal narrative of “newness,” and a time-space where “specificity (local uniqueness, a sense of place) derives not from some mythical internal roots nor from a history of relative isolation…but precisely from the absolute particularly of the mixtures of influences found together there…[it is] open, porous, invented and particularised as a product of interaction” (Massey, 1998, p. 22).

Crucial to my research, Latinx educators are remaking and made in, embedded and enmeshed with, the contexts they travel, and I maintain a spatialized view of the “many new Souths,” which I outline further in the theoretical framing in Chapter Three, opens understandings of such processes. Thus, one of the contributions of this study is to nuance the literature on El Sur Latinx towards these ends. In this next section, I outline the broad context of El Sur Latinx in my focus state of South Carolina.

**Carolina del Sur**

Although there is a long history of Latinx in South Carolina, including the creator of Columbia’s *The State* newspaper, the older Latinx community in South Carolina was rather small and consisted of relatively “skilled” and “educated” im/migrants (e.g. military personal, Colombian textile and manufacturer workers, Cuban middle/upper

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22 The son of a Cuban father, Narciso G. Gonzales was born on Edisto Island, South Carolina in 1858. From a young age he was active in state politics and although his views appeared to be more “moderate,” (pro-labor union, opposition to some Jim Crow legislation) than his party kin, Gonzales tied his fate to conservative Southern Democrats. His “political proclivities” led him to a career in journalism and after various stints at different South Carolina papers, he launched Columbia’s *The State* which remains in circulation today. For more information on Gonzales see Jones (1973) and Marrs (2016).

23 Textile manufacturing served to recruit some of the first Latinx to South Carolina as Colombian textile workers from Medellín ventured down to the U.S. South after stops in Northern textile strongholds like Rhode Island during the 1970s and 1980s (Chomsky, 2008, Wagner, 2018). The Upstate region of South Carolina continues to be one of the fast-growing Latinx areas of the state signaling the importance of social-spatial networks
class refugees\textsuperscript{24}, short-term agricultural migrants, and a small group of year-around farmworkers.\textsuperscript{25} Using U.S. Census data, LeBlanc (2003) estimates in 1970 there were about 11,000 (1 in 236 people) “Hispanics” in South Carolina. Foreshadowing a greater jump that would come in the near future, that number climbed to 33,667 (1 in 93 people) by 1980. Thus, even though South Carolina has a long presence of Latinx in the state, it has a particular arrangement and articulation of social-spatial relations that are related to, but also distinct from more traditional Latinx areas. In this way it is possible to hold in tension Latinx historical influence along with a reality that in comparison to traditional destination areas, South Carolina, for the most part, “lacked the large, multigenerational communities that could provide new immigrants with social and emotional resources as well as political and economic clout” (Lacy, 2009, p. 5).

However, starting in the mid 1980s through the 1990s this notion of a smaller Latinx community shifts rapidly. In line with macro entanglements (immigration policy,\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} For an example of how churches in South Carolina sponsored highly educated Cuban refugees see the story of Miguel Navarro (Hispanic Alliance, 2018).

\textsuperscript{25} The Aqui Estamos (2017) project includes a collection of oral histories about this topic. For example, Diane Salazar (2013) shares that even though her father was a “white Mexican,” he was expected to eat in the back of Charleston restaurants in the 1960s with black patrons. See also Haynie (2007).

\textsuperscript{26} In particular, as part of bi-partisan compromise Congress passed the Immigration Reform Control Act (IRCA) in 1986. IRCA continued a pattern of increasing immigration restrictions, but also provided one-time amnesty in hopes of wiping the slate clean (Gill, 2010; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Massey, 2010; Odem, 2010; Portes
international economic arrangements, changing context in U.S. West, etc.), Latinx start to drop out of the East Coast seasonal farmworker circuit, take advantage of expanded, and more geographically stable, job opportunities, and follow social networks to parts of South Carolina. As Sandra and Serena’s story from the beginning of this chapter illustrates, more Latinx came to settle permanently in South Carolina setting up

& Rumbaut, 2006). The amnesty that was part of IRCA functioned to give new freedoms and rights to nearly three million previously undocumented people, while an increase in border funding and enforcement mechanisms limited more cyclical returns of undocumented immigrants to their home countries (Bess, 2012; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Massey, 2010). In short, those granted amnesty could now more freely move around the country, apply for different kinds of work, and sponsor their families to come to the U.S. legally, while those without amnesty were forced to remain in the United States permanently as the price and risk of crossing the border rose dramatically. Perhaps counterintuitively, IRCA, then pushed undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States as the policy was not nearly as successful at blocking entry into the United States as it was at limiting cyclical trips, *ida y vueltas*, back to Mexico and other Central American countries.

27 In particular, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would have disastrous consequences for small Latin American farmers as large-scale agri-business in the United States grew with the advent of new markets (Carlsen, 2013; Cereijido, 2019; Clark, 2006; Guerrero, 2017; King & Kasun, 2013; Odem, 2010; Plaza, 2009). Small scale farmers, *campesinos*, fled Mexico (and other Central American countries) at the same time United States firms, in search of less costly alternatives to compete in a globalized marketplace, saw a goldmine in the U.S. South because tax incentives, low wages, few regulations, and limited worker protections worked to increase profitability (often at the expense of labor) (Mohl, 2005; Ribas, 2015). Agri-business, construction, and light manufacturing boomed in states like North Carolina, Georgia, and South Carolina, building the scaffold for continued migration to the region.

28 For example, in 1994 California was the center of a fierce anti-immigration and anti-Latinx movement, a nativist retrenchment culminated by Proposition 187. The so-called “Save Our State” Initiative sought to block social services, health care, employment opportunities, and public education to undocumented immigrants in The Golden State. The negative public attitudes symbolized by Prop 187 further pushed immigrants away from places like California towards spaces *mas tranquilo* (more tranquil) out South (Butler, 1998a,c,d,e; Guerrero, 2017; Lacy, 2007, 2009; López-Sanders, 2011; Torres, Popke, & Hapke, 2006). Around the same time, Latinx newcomers to places like North Carolina and Georgia found (at least initially) an ambivalent, if not welcoming, set of spatial relations (Butler 1998b; Jones, 2019; Weise, 2015) and large-scale policy discrimination against Latinx im/migration in the U.S. South was weak to non-existent (Mohl, 2005).
cultural enclaves across the state and establishing social linkages and population pipelines between the “sending” and “receiving” communities. As the growing communities demonstrated a demand for labor, knowledge of the labor demand, and desirability of the opportunity, social networks built by migrants “act(ed) as veritable human transmission belts” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, p. 17). As journalist, Pat Butler (1998i) writes, “Pretty soon, a family from Mexico or Central America—and sometimes even an entire town—is re-created in South Carolina.” To get a personalized view of this changing South Carolina context, and how it intersects with the diverse ways Latinx educators come to work in schools, I now share a few vignettes, the first two gleaned from media accounts, and the last three from participants.

Elias Negrete first crossed the U.S./Mexico border in 1954 at the age of 18. Although he did not have proper documentation, he paid a coyote $300 to get him from Tijuana to Northern California. Like many other Mexican immigrants at the time he labored in the agricultural fields of California before a cousin invited him to work in Michigan’s horse-racing tracks. The horse-racing circuit took Negrete to New York and soon thereafter he was recruited to Aiken, South Carolina becoming the first Mexican to work in the area’s horse stables. Impressed with his work ethic, Negrete’s boss asked if he knew anyone else that might want similar work. In 1985, Elias Negrete sent for four sons and a daughter. Soon after, other relatives, friends, and neighbors from his pueblo in Michoacán followed. The amnesty provision of the 1986 IRCA law allowed many of the newcomers to become legal permanent residents and thus they sent for wives, children, and bought property, trailers, and homes. The county eventually allowed the expanding enclave to name a new street adjacent to their growing development, and soon Michoacan Lane, rather than Michoacan, MX was home (Butler, 1998c-g; Lacy, 2009).

Similarly, Bernardo Galindo’s journey took him from the heart of Mexico, first, to the emerging maquiladoras29 of the 1970s near the Rio Grande, to the United

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29Maquiladoras are export-driven, factory and assembling plants, typically for electronics, auto parts, and apparels, near the U.S./Mexican border. Criticism of maquiladoras rests on belief they are a form a (gendered) labor exploitation. Proponents contend they are vital to attract investment into the Mexican economy.
States borderlands and, finally, to South Carolina. Although Bernardo had an office and a secretary as a supervisor at the maquiladora, him and his wife, Elvia, found work in a Greenwood, South Carolina hog-processing plant. There, the couple made more money and lived in a safer environment. The Galindos slowly brought their family to Greenwood, and helped recruit new employees as needed. Yet, the plant they worked at continued to expand and one day in 1994 a bus arrived from Texas carrying about 350 Latinx ready for work. Seemingly overnight, Greenwood joined a list of small(er) South Carolina towns that experienced rapid, mostly Mexican, Latinx growth, and schools, doctors, public safety offices, and churches scrambled to respond adequately. As one principal stated her school had previously never enrolled a Hispanic student and lacked linguistic and cultural resources (Butler, 1998c-h).

When I [Sandra] was growing up I told my mom, “Why did you move from New York? We could have had a lot of opportunities; you know mom we didn’t have to go through all this and there is nothing here.” That was my mindset. I didn’t like it here and then my mom’s like “it was bad over there, the neighborhood,” she was like, “No! Aqui esta mejor, we can raise a family here.” And I said but mom nobody likes us here, nobody likes us...as a child that’s what I would be experience, ya...but then we are having other families being here, being raised, then they are calling their uncle, their great uncle, their aunt and they’re coming down here, too (Participant interview, October, 2019).

I was born in Ohio and went to college at a small university there. Then, I went to graduate school to work in higher ed administration. I went to [major Midwest university] and, um, worked in residence life, and I was the hall director and supervised the resident assistants and then eventually I followed a girl and moved to South Carolina, um, to work in higher ed at the university here. But when I was at the University of South Carolina, I had the opportunity to teach University 101, and I was teaching that as well at [major Midwest university] and I loved, um, loved that but I also really enjoyed working with kids. Um, and so during that time, there was a teacher shortage and so they paid me to go back to school to be an [elementary teacher] (Derek, participant interview, October, 2019).

Um, when, when I was, um, it was like two years after I got my degree [in Colombia] that we heard about some broker brokers, companies, like back, back in the day. The first ones were VIF (company name) and we heard about, and so we [wife and I] applied. So, we applied on a Friday, then on Monday we got a call. Well, it’s just too early... and I said maybe in a year. And they called, they called us in a year after that and we came here the first time in the year 2004 we, um, we’re here for three years. Those times, uh, things were different with visas. So, there was, um, like a drawing and I could extend, well, I could apply for the forthcoming visa, which is from a J-1 turns into H-1 visa (Manny, participant interview, October, 2019).
Across these briefs vignettes we see how a whole set of factors worked together to bring Latinx to South Carolina and also attract a growing, vibrant, diverse, and resilient Latinx community of which Latinx teachers continue to be entangled with/in. Hence, it is no surprise that the Latinx community continued to grow in South Carolina. The “Hispanic” population in South Carolina more than doubled from 30,551 in 1990 to 95,076 in 2000. At the micro level during this time period three counties in South Carolina experienced growth rates of over 900%, Jasper County (1,624.6%), Saluda County (1,529.1%), and Newberry County (942.9%) (Vander Mey & Harris, 2004). Just two years later in 2002, there were 109,285 “Hispanics” and by 2010 it stood at 235,682 (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). In 2017, the number of “Latinos” in South Carolina had climbed to 267,398 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017a). Moreover, these numbers are probably significantly undercounted for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to cultural differences in defining households, individual/family mobility, legal (authorized vs. unauthorized) status, fear or distrust of government, and language barriers (Lacy, 2007; McElveen & Washington Jr., 2015).

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30 U.S. Census (2018) estimates of the “Hispanic” resident population are slightly higher with a total number of 308,006. This count also includes racial identification of the “Hispanic” population. Of the 308,006, 253,998 selected White, 32,980 Black or African American, 12,205 American Indian and Alaskan Native, 5,133 Asian, and 2,690 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Once again, this confirms the extremely diverse group of Latinx in South Carolina.

31 Using U.S. Census Bureau data pooled from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation, the Migration Policy Institute (n.d.) estimates about 87,000 unauthorized people live in South Carolina. Of 87,000, 85% are from Mexico, Central America, and South America. More specifically, 56,000 (64%) are from Mexico, 6,000 (7%) are from Guatemala, and 4,000 (5%) are from Honduras.
The “Hispanic” population is also remarkably young, as the Hispanic child population ages 0-4 increased 200.3% from 2000-2013, while the non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black child populations increased 1.1% and 1.4%, respectively (Mesa, Torres, Smithwick, & Sides, 2016). This young population has profound implications for S.C. schools, and by extension the communities of which my participants, Latinx educators, work, serve, and remake. In 2006, only 3.7% of all S.C. public school students identified as “Hispanic” (Lacy et. al, 2017). In 2019, by contrast, “Hispanic” students made up 11% of all public-school students in the state (South Carolina Department of Education, 2019). To give a few examples, the elementary school that Sandra now works at (the same one that she attended and her daughter now attends) is over 30% “Hispanic” (South Carolina Department of Education, 2019). The largest school district in the state, Greenville County, counts 12,273, about 16%, “Hispanic” students of a total of 76,930 (The School District of Greenville County, 2019). The number of majority Latinx schools continues to increase across the state as Greenville, Spartanburg, Saluda, North Charleston, and Hilton Head have at least one such school (Smith, 2010; South Carolina Department of Education, 2019). Thus, as the Latinx community grows internally, new im/migrants, including increased numbers of unaccompanied minors from Central American, further arrive (Trevizo, 2019), and a smaller group of Latinx agricultural workers continues to migrate seasonally (Halani, 2018). Public schools and teachers

32 Greenville, South Carolina emerged as a “Latino” hypergrowth area, defined as growth more the twice the national average rate for metro areas, or more than 3000% in the 20 year-period, with a 397% increase from 1980-2000 (Suro, 2002; Vander May & Harris, 2004).

33 South Carolina is one of the top 10 states for H-2A visas. These visas are reserved for “guest workers,” typically temporary agricultural workers. Although these workers have
face the task of providing a just and quality education within a state context that has shifted from initial ambivalence about Latinx to increasingly severe anti-Latinx (state/local) policy and discourse.

Outside schools/education, there are myriad social/spatial and political implications of Latinx demographic growth in South Carolina. The shift has led to a profound impact on the social-spatial fabric of the state in areas like economics, health care, religious institutions, cultural groups/events, and politics. “Latinos” in South Carolina continue to be overwhelmingly employed in construction, agriculture, meat processing, landscaping, light manufacturing, and low-wage service jobs (Lacy et. al, 2007; U.S. Census Bureau, 2017b), however in 2017 the U.S. Census Bureau (2017b) listed over 22,000 “Latinos” in the management, business, science, and arts occupations. Although the 2020 U.S. Census promises more recent data, in 2010 South Carolina “Latinos” had a purchasing power of nearly $4.5 billion, and owned more than 6,000 businesses employing over 9,000 people (Cooper-Lewter, 2013; Davis, 2014; see Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3). Churches, many of them Catholic, have added Spanish-language masses, Latinx focused ministry and religio-cultural celebrations, and social services programs such as immigration law support, employment assistance, and food pantries (López-Sanders, 2011; Odem, 2010; Wilson, 1997).\(^{34}\) Beyond Catholic churches, Latinx

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\(^{34}\) The role of religion and churches, in particular, adds interesting nuance to understanding the subject formation of Latinx in South Carolina. For example, Odem (2009) writes how Latinx church spaces are both a product of, and resistance to, social-spatial exclusion. López-Sanders (2011) shares how church membership in South Carolina provides key (economic) support and opportunity, but also acts as an intra-ethnic Latinx wedge between class/race/length of time in South Carolina. Finally,
also have started a substantial number of evangelical churches, sometimes in rural areas, sometimes in the middle of the historic main drag (González, 2016; see Figures, 1.4, 1.5).

Figure 1.1. Author personal photograph, Latinx store and market. Saluda, SC.

Figure 1.2. Author personal photograph, Tire and auto-repair shop. Greenville, SC.

Christian faith communities also further narratives of “good” and “bad” immigrants, creating precarious spaces of welcome for those deemed “deserving” (Ehrkamp & Nagel, 2014; Nagel & Ehrkamp, 2016). The authors argue that even in “welcoming” congregations in South Carolina, immigrants are expected to prove their worth, demonstrate merit, and “be better than ordinary Americans” (Nagel & Ehrkamp, 2016, p. 13). Further, and key to subject-making, the researchers share that church members aimed “to create meritorious immigrants and to prod immigrants to transform themselves and/or to prove their worth reflects, in part, the recognition that this is what society demands of newcomers” Nagel & Ehrkamp, 2016, p. 13). I saw this firsthand as I worked with a South Carolina church that declared itself a “sanctuary church.” It was clear that sanctuary would be offered for only certain “types” of undocumented immigrant, namely ones that lacked criminal records, were vetted by community members, and had a “decent shot” at legal success.
Figure 1.3. Author personal photograph, La Virgen shrine. Mexican restaurant in Hartsville, SC.

Figure 1.4. Author personal photo, Latinx evangelical church. Near Batesburg-Leesville, SC.
Health care providers in South Carolina have been slow to provide specific resources like bilingual mental health counselors, accessible information, and affordable preventative care (Cooper-Lewter, 2013; Lacy et al, 2007; Mesa, et al., 2016; Roth & Grace, 2015b), often in ways that reinforce geographic and racial divides (Barrington, Messias, & Weber, 2012), yet the Latinx community, itself, has worked to change that. One such organization, PASOs (n.d.), uses a Community Health Worker (CHW) model hiring Promotores to nurture grassroots leaders within communities and build a trusted bridge between services and needs such as health, nutrition and childcare.

Similar to PASOs, a number of Latinx groups have formed in South Carolina to promote Latinx culture, advocate for the broader Latinx community, and work to (re)make space. One such group is Palmetto Luna (n.d.) that seeks to “foster an understanding of the Hispanic/Latino culture by promoting artistic creation and providing opportunities for cultural expression for the community in South Carolina.” The organization creates art shows, sponsors artists/gallery space, produces theater, organizes poetry contests, facilitates community events, puts on concerts, and connects art to
activism (see Figures 1.6, 1.7). In 2017, Palmetto Luna was part of a team of organizations that helped to create Visiones, a yearlong theme centering Latinx issues for one of the largest film and art festivals in the South(east), Indie Grits (Mejia, 2017; Visiones, n.d.).

Figure 1.6. Author personal photo, Día de Los Muertos event. Columbia, SC.

Figure 1.7. Author (pictured) personal photo, Mighty Latina Art Exhibit. Columbia, SC.
Finally, although Latinx show growing political influence, especially in public organization and coordination against restrictive immigration policies (Brooks, 2012; Lacy & Odem, 2009; Weise, 2015; see Figure 1.8), South Carolina is one of the few states to never have a state-wide elected official who identifies as Hispanic (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2018; Rojas, Félix, Gómez & Corbella, 2016). Thus, while grassroots organizations continue to push for improved working, schooling, housing, and legal conditions for Latinx, the larger community lacks representation at the highest levels of government. In sum, this contextual overview outlines how both South Carolina and Latinx are negotiating the (re)making of both the literal spaces of the South as well as more symbolic, yet materially consequential, spaces of relational becoming. Importantly, Latinx educators are immanent to, products of, and deal with the effects that stem from these relations. Thus, to better understand the multifaceted and interweaving assemblages that produce and resist Latinx teachers in South Carolina it is essential to grasp the social, political, historical, spatial, and educational entanglements that place Latinx teachers in relation to and with the larger Latinx community—especially the ever-increasing context of criminalization and Latino threat (Chavez, 2008) I turn to next.

Figure 1.8. Author personal photo, Immigration rally. South Carolina Capitol building.
Despite the impact Latinx continue to have in South Carolina, and a relatively warm, if not ambivalent, reception Latinx received throughout the South in the 1980s and 1990s (Jones, 2019; Weise, 2015), the 21st century seemed to usher in a contemporary era marked by increasing anti-Latinx individual and institutional racism and discrimination. The notion that Latinx in the South(east) could be “managed” through productive acts of paternalism, benevolence, and charity (Villenas, 2001, 2002; Weise, 2015) was challenged as a larger population emerged from the “shadows.” In short, it was fine when Latinx remained “out of sight, out of mind” (Torres, Popke, & Hapke, 2006, p. 46), but the situation was much different when Latinx came into greater contact with White neighborhoods, politics, and schools (Weise, 2015).

Through their research in rural North Carolina, Torres, Popke, and Hapke (2006), argue that the increased visibility of the Latinx community challenged a “silent bargain.” Such a “silent bargain” was/is a tacit agreement, “in which the Latino presence within the community is acceptable to established residents as long as it remains relatively unobtrusive; and the harsh conditions of life and work in rural areas is acceptable to Latinos as long as they are given the relative space to live in peace” (p. 45). However, Latinx, and their Southern neighbors, increasingly found it difficult to accept the framework of this “bargain,” and the power relations behind it that worked to manage, discipline, and control a growing Latinx community and their individual bodies solely as (invisible) worker. At roughly the same time of the September 11 attacks, renewed anti-immigrant discourse coincided with Latinx in the South asserting political rights (Brooks, 2012; Weise, 2015), majoritizing schools (Cereijido, 2016; Hardee & Johnson, 2019; Salas & Portes, 2017), working in schools (Colomer 2014, 2018, 2019; Reed, 2017),
opening businesses (Cooper-Lewter, 2013; Davis, 2014; Lacy et al., 2007), (re)creating space (Guerrero, 2017; Odem, 2009; Weise, 2015; Winders & Smith, 2012), and generally making social-spatial claims to the(ir) South. Political retrenchment and backlash politics soon followed (Jones, 2019; Omi & Winant, 2015).

Political retrenchment and backlash politics lead to a number of public socio-political responses along with more private acts of individual racism aimed at dealing with the self-constructed “problem” of Latinx. In particular, the 2000s brought a rapid shift toward more restrictive and explicit anti-Latinx state/local policy that marks life for Latinx in the U.S. South today. In lieu of national immigration reform, many states, counties, and municipalities throughout the South enacted their own policies regarding Latinx population growth and immigration, often with the feeling of trying to one-up their respective neighbor (Jones, 2009; Lacy & Odem, 2009). These state policies and local ordinances, intra-acting with inaccurate, inflammatory, and racialized rhetoric/action, and passed at a furious rate, were overwhelmingly restrictive and affected housing, driving, policing, education, and access to resources; thus, materially limiting the lives of Latinx. Policy also worked to further racialize Latinx, not only as Othered

35 Playing on the South’s history of segregation, the overlapping and diffuse tapestry of localized punitive measures earned a foreboarding nickname; Juan Crow (Brooks, 2012). For example, In 2011, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act was signed into law in Georgia granting law enforcement officers the ability to inquire and request information about immigration status while also increasing penalties for individuals the employ or harbor undocumented immigrations (Brown, 2011). Many North Carolina counties were early adopters of the 287g program and relationships between I.C.E. and local law enforcement paved the way for North Carolina to account for a quarter of the nation’s deportation requests in 2008 (ACLU of North Carolina Legal Foundation & Immigration and the Human Rights Policy Clinic of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 2009; Jones, 2019). In South Carolina, H. 4400 passed in 2009 bars undocumented students from public higher education in addition to receiving state-based
minorities, foreigners, and (low-skilled) workers, but also as dangerous criminals, targets, and threats to a national/state security vision that emphasized border (in)security (Vargas, Sanchez, & Valdez Jr., 2017). Their subjectivities, then, constructed and tied to the politics and policies of (assumed) immigration (status) (Jones, 2019; Lacy & Odem, 2009; Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017). Hence, policy proved to be a precise vehicle of power to create new mechanisms, new subjectivities, that aimed/worked to (re)control, to (re)discipline, and to (re)restrict (Lacy & Odem, 2009; Odem & Browne, 2014; Rodriguez, 2018; Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017).

Such public policy was felt and lived at the individual material level; as a 2007 survey of Mexican immigrants in South Carolina, Lacy (2007) found almost 40% of respondents experienced some form of discrimination in the state. In that particular study, Mexican immigrants described being ignored in stores and governmental offices, being called derogatory names, being assigned heavier workloads, being followed by law enforcement officials, and being accused of taking jobs from native-born Americans. This treatment mirrors the results of the 2009 Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) report Under Siege, Life for Latinos in the South. The SPLC found Latinx encountering widespread hostility, discrimination, and exploitation which some participants likened to the racial subordination of Blacks during Jim Crow. For example, 41% of respondents experienced wage theft, 47% know someone treated unfairly by police, and 77% of

merit scholarships and financial aid. Thus, South Carolina joins Alabama as the only two states in the United States that completely prohibit undocumented students from attending state colleges.

36 At least three teachers in my sample shared explicit acts of racism at the hands of law enforcement. One teacher in the middle part of that state recalled being pulled over and asked for her green card. Another teacher believes police ignored her phone calls for help after a car accident because of her accent.
Latina women say sexual harassment is a major problem on the job. Thus, in another report by the Sisters of Charity, Cooper-Lewter (2013) concludes “Latino immigrant families in South Carolina often face economic hardship, educational challenges, and difficulty in accessing health care” (Cooper-Lewter, 2013, p. 14).

Most striking, this negative context appears to be growing increasingly worse for Latinx in the South, rather than better. Indeed, there is a growing sentiment among Latinx in the South that they feel more unwelcome, more excluded, and increasingly racialized in this moment as compared to the past (Gill, 2010; Jones, 2019). Such notions are not reserved solely for working-class and undocumented Latinx im/migrants as Jones (2019) argues, “all Latinos felt its [institutional exclusion] effects…many Latinos who were authorized or were citizens also reported being profiled by law enforcement, bureaucrats, and area residents” (p. 88). The teachers in my study consistently, although not uniformly, agreed that regardless of their middle class profession they, too, experienced a growing anti-Latinx context in the schools and communities.37 Even as my participants were enthusiastic about the visibility of Latinx cultural festivals and “little things like a place to get a dress for a quinceanera” (Interview, September, 2019), they were saddened and alarmed by the rise of nativist rhetoric, policy, and discourse. As one high school teacher, Kim, who grew up in South Carolina said:

I feel like it has gotten worse...I feel the general political mindset and the way it has turned...but I feel that when I was growing up and that was a while back, it was almost a rarity in that “oh that’s cool you’re Cuban,” whereas now it’s like “oh are you an immigrant?” You know that type of thing. I don’t know, I can’t explain it. (Interview, October, 2019, emphasis participant)

37 Ortiz and Telles (2012) find that middle class Latinx report higher levels of discrimination, prejudice, and racism than their working-class peers. They theorize that this may be a result of increased interactions with White colleagues and clients.
Similarly, Lisette blamed the election of President Trump with accelerating, and making more public, hostility toward Latinx:

The climate of the United States since Trump took office has been getting worse and worse. Before Trump became the President discrimination existed, of course it has never gone away, but it was more discrete, like under the table. Now it is becoming more and more open and explicit, you know. (Pilot interview, March, 2018).

The larger point being that this Othering, essentializing discourse affects/effects Latinx subjectivity generally, and intra-acts with a variety of localized relations and discourse of Latinx educators specifically, to sketch the boundaries of what Latinx educators might become. Such discourse collapses difference and multiplicity and reduces “their [Latinx teachers] being to a simplistic, one-dimensional one that can then be preyed upon by power and policy” (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017, p. 786). Importantly, Latinx teachers intra-act with such contextual entanglements in ways that reproduce, complicate, reject, and reconstitute the spaces, places, and peoples of El Sur Latinx. As I outline further in Chapter Three, positing a post-structural frame of subjectivity and space to make sense of such contexts opens the potential of previous unimagined trajectories, different provocations, unheard stories, radical (refusals of) subjectivities, and more just ways of becoming (Massey, 1998a,b).

Schools (as well as school districts, classes, etc.) represent localized material and symbolic set of relations that entangle with the broad context of El Sur Latinx I presented in this section. Thus, formal educational settings and the relations that constitute/emerge/stretch-beyond these places are yet another intra-action, perhaps one of the most important, to examine how Latinx educators understand themselves in relation to others and the world; how they are made in, and remaking, El Sur Latinx. Therefore, I move next to Latinx education in El Sur Latinx.
Latinx Education in El Sur Latinx

In general, Southeastern school systems have met the increased numbers of Latinx students with an improvised and ad-hoc educational response (Beck & Allexsaht-Snider, 2002; Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005; Colomer, 2014, 2019; Hamann & Harklau, 2010, 2015; Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr, 2015; Harklau & Colomer, 2015; Portes & Salas, 2010, 2015; Salas & Portes, 2017; Stacy, Hamann, Murillo Jr. , 2015). As *Revisiting Education in the New Latino Diaspora* co-editor Edmund Hamann said in a podcast, “Our [book editors] storyline...was the interaction is often improvisational, it is often well-meaning, it’s often amateurish” (Allen, 2015). There are two general hypotheses about this improvisational approach. One is of general optimism, that in areas with little history of Latinx school failure and institutionalized anti-Latinx racism educational improvisation may lead to better outcomes. The second is of general pessimism, that racialized patterns of schooling in traditional Latinx communities (like California and Texas) will be transferred and reenacted in NLD areas (Hamann & Harklau, 2015). Despite some initial hope (Stamps & Bohon 2006), Hamann and Harklau (2015) conclude the former “prospect seems too often realized. There are some success stories, but not yet any large-scale success systems” (p.19). As such, however well-meaning schools may be, scholars argue current literature signals systemic miseducation of Latinx and immigrants in El Sur Latinx (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005; del Castillo-González, 2011; Portes & Salas, 2010, 2015; Rodriguez, 2018).

While my scholarship and practitioner experience teaching in the South (Monreal, 2017, 2019a) leads me to agree with broad claims of miseducation, I believe the dual hypothesis is exceedingly temporal and overly binary, a type of placeholder for El Sur
Latinx to “catch up” with a presumptive, if not predetermined, trajectory of Latinx education that is either/or. In this regard, “newness” continues to be an excuse for school and district apathy as they can cover their unwillingness to devote resources, energy, and space to Latinx under the veil of (perpetual) surprise and shock (Stacy, Hamann, & Murillo Jr., 2015). To get an idea of such discourse, at a recent conference about immigration to the United States Southeast the ESOL coordinator from a large school district in South Carolina remarked that even though the district had seen large numbers of ESOL students for 25 years, “they operated under triage, lacked a guiding vision, and needed to pause and take stock of the program” (field notes, February, 2020).

The theme of improvisation extends to teachers as scholars find Southern educators are relatively unprepared for Latinx students. As a participant in McDaniel, Harden, Smith, & Furuseth’s (2017) study of teacher understanding of the increase of Latinx students in Charlotte explained, “I don’t think the teacher population maybe has been ready for it [Latinx student growth]...And the amount, I think is probably the biggest part of it because if was sudden” (p. 32). In the study, teachers also shared a lack of resources, minimal experience with best practices, and concern with rapid integration of students to “new environments” (McDaniel, et al., 2017 p. 33). Teachers also expressed that systemic mandates, especially uncompromising standardized testing policies, inhibit newcomer experiences, cause stress and unproductive results, and lead to unfair assumptions about both the school and its newcomer students.

A general concern that results from/with teacher lack of knowledge is the reinforcement of deficit notions about Latinx students that already circulate these spaces (Monreal & McCorkle, 2020; Murillo Jr. 2002; Rodriguez, Monreal, & Howard, 2018;
Villenas, 2001, 2002). Such deficit notions stretch beyond school(places) and into the home as teachers do not acknowledge the intellectual resources (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Gonzales, 2015; Villenas & Moreno, 2001), funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzales, 1992), and academic insights of families (Huddleston, 2015), instead blaming individual failure on cultural differences and lack of parental motivation (Fernandes, Civil, Cravey, & DeGuzmán, 2017). Further to this point, Monreal & McCorkle (2020) and Rodriguez, Monreal, & Howard (2018), respectively, find teachers’ socio-political knowledge about Latinx in the South buttresses inaccurate beliefs about immigration, provides false information about educational opportunities, and prevents empathic advocacy with Latinx students. For example, teachers may rely on Social Studies textbooks that equate immigration to economic and security risk and/or tell youth everyone is eligible for public universities and financial aid (Monreal & McCorkle, 2020). This is important as teachers and schools may indeed be well-meaning, but are actually furthering problematic discourse, even false information about Latinx (in the South).

Deficit views, lack of understanding, and improvisation extend to language as well. Teachers still set English monolingualism as the standard and norm, sometimes equating Spanish language use to criminality and moral (in)aptitude (Mellom, Straubhaar, Balderas, Ariail, & Portes, 2018). English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs are often inadequate, and if present, sometimes lack certified educators, native language speakers, and inclusive connections to the larger school environment; all of which work to compound marginalized education policies for Latinx (del Castillo-González, 2011; Mellom et al., 2018; Roth & Grace, 2015a,b; Tarasawa, 2013; Tefera,
Gonzalez, & Artiles, 2017; Young, 2005). Even with significant increases in second and third generation Latinx students in the South, there remains a propensity to collapse all Latinx students to English Language Learners (Salas & Portes, 2010, 2015), even mapping perceived language proficiencies as a proxy for legal status (Dabach, 2014). Somewhat paradoxically, but in line with deficit (power)knowledges, Latinx in mainstream foreign language classes see their Spanish skills criticized as not good enough, demeaned, and singled out for not being “proper” enough (Harkleau & Colomer, 2015). Such second language programs are unsurprising given Southern political attempts to use education policy as a way to demand one-way assimilation and to craft pernicious “English-only” policies aimed at rapid “Americanization” (Beck & Allexsah-Snider, 2002). In a context that lacks a sustained drive toward just and additive language policies, the transformation of certain programs often falls to single individuals which at best produces isolated improvement, and at worst strengthens and entrenches inequities (de Varona, 2014; Rodriguez, Monreal, & Howard, 2018).

Teacher preparedness, insufficient teacher knowledge, and deleterious language policies are but a few of the educational barriers researchers have identified for Latinx in the South. Using qualitative interviews and focus groups, Bohon, Macpherson, and Atiles (2005) identified six key barriers to Latinx educational attainment in Georgia: (a) lack of understanding of the U.S. school system, (b) low parental involvement in the schools, (c) lack of residential stability among the Latino population, (d) little school support for the

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38 One participant, Susana, shared a story from the 1990s about being placed for an entire year in an ESOL classroom when she moved to South Carolina from New York even though she didn’t speak Spanish. She thinks it was because she had a “Hispanic last name” and her dad spoke Spanish (Participant interview, September, 2019).
needs of Latino students, (e) few incentives for the continuation of Latino education, and (f) barred immigrant access to higher education. The researchers concluded, “with the massive influx of Latinos to Georgia, new forms of educational inequalities have surfaced…the immediate future looks dim” (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005, p. 56).

In addition to these findings scholars have reported increased (in)school segregation (del Castillo-González, 2011; Tarasawa, 2009; Tefera, Gonzalez, & Artiles, 2017), insufficient translators and interpreters (Colomer, 2010; Hamann & Harkleau, 2010; Roth & Grace, 2015a), general feelings of isolation and alienation for Latinx youth (del Castillo-González, 2011; Straubhaar & Portes, 2016), and parental desires to have more bicultural, Latinx staff (Villalba, Brunelli, Lewis, & Orfaneldes, 2007).

This collective research is important because it shows how educational spaces and policies work with local/state policies in El Sur Latinx, for example restrictive immigration laws, housing ordinances, and limited access to higher education, to create knowledges about Latinx that exclude and target them, setting them outside the “norm,” of the schooling process. That is, policy intra-acts with/in discourse “to engender or ‘manufacture’ something that does not as yet exist, that is, ‘fiction’ it” (Foucault, 1980, p. 193). Of significance toward understanding the spaces and subjectivities of Latinx teachers, participants stand in immanent intra-action with these power-laden and fiction-making processes, relations, constructions, and consequences.

Even Latinx students and individuals who navigate this context and overcome systemic barriers in El Sur Latinx to attain some degree of educational merit struggle through/with their marking of “good” students. That is, this “achievement” does not come without a cost to how they see themselves with/in the spaces and places they travel.
Urrieta Jr., Kolano, & Jo (2015) use participant testimonio to illuminate the pain and struggle of being an undocumented Latinx student in North Carolina. The participant, Roberto, shares the expectation that Latinx give up their culture to be deemed a “successful” student. In his testimonio, Roberto clearly critiques the notion that his is a story of hope and optimism just because he graduated from the University of North Carolina:

Here in North Carolina, to be “successful” (laughs), it’s unimaginable…I feel that we (the family) are a failure, not a success, because somewhere else I would have had more success, you know? I had dreams in Mexico, here I have anger and resentment. By being here in North Carolina, as a child, I feel I sacrificed one of the most valuable things one has in life, and that’s life itself. (Urrieta Jr., Kolano, & Jo, 2015, p. 60)

Roberto’s story demonstrates how immigration policy and education policy come together to restrict not only chances of upward mobility, but also how individuals understand their achievements vis-a-vis their self/ves. The testimonio shows how power relations produce a knowing subject, one that sees himself as a failure despite outward signs of triumph. His story also shows how undocumented students, even those who play the game of school, are considered undeserving of some state resources like financial assistance for college. Similarly, Carrillo & Rodriguez (2016) develop the concept of “smartness trespassing” to explain how another Latinx student in North Carolina, Maria, navigates unfair tracking and deficit thinking to accomplish academic success. Still, she is made to feel out of place and ostracized in AP and honors classrooms/spaces as other students rewrite her subjectivity and sense of self, often saying, “She doesn’t even act Mexican. She is actually kind of smart” (Carrillo & Rodriguez, 2016). Thus, Maria actually affirms categories of knowledge of Latinx because she is different, an outlier, from the “rest.” Maria’s materialized practices and spatialized relations (enrollment in AP
and honors courses) produce, transform, and trespass her sense of self, while both transforming, trespassing, and affirming what others understand about Latinx generally.

**Latinx Education in South Carolina**

“We discourage (teachers) from speaking Spanish to the children,” Gerald said. “Because the students will rely on that language rather than learning the new language. We’re here to teach English.” (Smith, 2010)

The preceding quote, part of featured newspaper article on the growth of Latinx in South Carolina schools, was from a Title 1 Coordinator in Jasper County and indicates one type of response to Latinx students in the state. In the same article, Smith (2010) highlights a majority Latinx school in Spartanburg, South Carolina that has taken a distinctly different approach, creating inclusive spaces, and impressive academic achievement. As such, there are a spectrum of responses to growing Latinx student-bodies in South Carolina, however, it appears that the former example is all too common.

To this point, participants from a 2015 Hispanic Forum, a meeting featuring more than 50 people that are part of, and/or serve, the Latinx community of South Carolina, shared the following educational challenges: a) keeping kids in school (reduce dropouts in high school), b) fear of colleges and lack of funds (don’t see a reason to graduate), c) bilingual teachers (need more with SC Certification), d) stereotypes in school (parents feel like they might not be welcomed), e) public awareness for resources at the public library such as practice testing. Their proposed action steps included 1) to bring awareness of resources to the Hispanic community, and 2) to have students mentoring other students (encouragement) (McElveen & Washington Jr., 2015). These concerns are similar to a South Carolina Ad Hoc Committee convened nearly 10 years prior that found ESOL programs were generally under-funded, understaffed, unmonitored, and uncoordinated, there was poor communication with parents including a lack of bilingual personnel, and
no evidence of Spanish testing (Young, 2005). Despite these demonstrated concerns, there has been sparse academic research about Latinx education specific to South Carolina. Thus, the four studies I sketch below offer a small glimpse into that state and demonstrate the need for more research.

Two of the studies focus heavily on language. Clary-Mills (2004) surveyed school principals of South Carolina elementary schools with Latinx populations over 10%. The responses of twenty-one principals indicate general district ambivalence, insufficient staffing to communicate with Spanish speaking students and their families, and inadequate plans to support teachers. Without additional resources and structured support, Clary-Mills predicts a continued achievement gap for Latinx students. Unfortunately, Clary-Mills largely invokes a language as problem frame to account for such disparities and sees programmatic improvements as a path to improve English language acquisition so that students might test better. This work reifies Latinx in South Carolina as a monolithic group of struggling English language learners. De Varona (2014) takes a different approach, conducting a case study of a successful ESOL program in one school district near Beaufort, South Carolina. De Varona attributes the success of the ESOL program in large part to the strong leadership of the ESOL coordinator. The coordinator reallocated funds to stress technology, sought to increase the prestige of ESOL teachers,

39 In my four plus years of living, teaching, and researching in the state I heard similar concerns. For example, during a statewide community meeting of South Carolina Latinx activists called Voces Comunitarias in 2017 and 2019, attendees found stereotypes, barriers to post-secondary education, and lack of Latinx educators to be most troublesome.

40 A Department of Justice investigation launched in 2015 found Myrtle County School District was not fulfilling its legal obligation to provide students who do not speak English equal participation in state and district education programs. The school district settled by spending more than $600,000 to improve its programs (Powell, 2018).
improved collaboration between ESOL and classroom teachers, mandated language training, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), for all teachers, and ensured only SIOP-trained (mainstream) teachers taught EL students. The driving idea behind the reforms was that ESOL teachers were no longer the sole source of language instruction for the students. Although the research presents a potential model for change, de Varona also shares individual teachers were sometimes hesitant, fearful, and demonstrated negative attitudes. As one teacher stated, “I hate these [ESOL] students. They are the bane of my existence and they should learn English.” (de Varona, 2014, p. 108). We must also question whether larger change is sustainable if hope rests on individual leaders rather than structural change.

Del Castillo-González’s (2011) research is significant because it is the only piece of literature that explicitly centers the voice of South Carolina Latinx youth. Using semi-structured interviews with 30 Mexican students in central South Carolina high schools, del Castillo-González concludes that students experience fear and racism, in addition to feeling extremely isolated both geographically and socially, in schools. Despite Latinx structured social-spatial isolation (e.g. location of ESOL classroom, placement in lower-level classes, and minimal efforts at relational interaction), she also explains students are made to be hyper-(in)visible, “Their native peers either ignore them or harass them. The hallways are places where they are insulted or ignored, and nobody seems to notice” (del Castillo-González, 2011, p. 159). The majority of Latinx have been labeled as “wetbacks” or “illegals,” labels they resent, but then use to refer to themselves. Their teachers are generally agreeable and kind, but rarely advocate for them, stop racist comments, or understand the trauma students carry. Still, del Castillo-González ardently
states Latinx are resilient in their resolve to take advantage of new opportunities, to better themselves, and to remain optimistic about the future. The research communicates the nuances, complexities, and even contradictions of Latinx students in South Carolina, yet leaves spatial illusions dangling. For example, she notes, but neglects to expand upon, the spatial organization of Latinx bodies in schools when she asks, “If the community around them isolates them not only as language learners, but also as citizens of a school, then is it too far-fetched to think that these students do not want to even attempt being a part of a place that holds them at arm’s length?” (del Castillo-González, 2011, pp. 147-148). The spatial ramifications of this prompt are rich with potentiality and reveal a notion that spaces and subjectivities are mutually constructive. In the end, del Castillo-González argues South Carolina (schools) have failed Latinx students and relatively simple (spatial) efforts of integration might have outsized impact. Given del Castillo-González’s research, it is unsurprising that Portillo de Yúdice’s (2015) finds systemic barriers, at the school, state, and community levels, that limit Latinx college enrollment, and completion of post-secondary education. Specifically, Portillo de Yúdice notes that there is a complete lack of Latinx representation in higher education governing boards and committees in the state which, in turn, impacts targeted efforts to remove such barriers.

I close this review of Latinx education by highlighting a success story, a school that appears to have intentionally crafted and created inclusive spaces of opportunity, in lieu of using “newness,” “change,” and improvisation as an excuse. Rather than see its growing Latinx student population as a problem to be managed, this particular elementary school in Spartanburg, South Carolina views students as community ambassadors, emergent bilinguals that will serve as future leaders. Profiled in numerous
newspaper articles, the school, its staff, and the principal believe in fostering connections with their community, transforming a once-typical school into a year-round community center complete with movie nights, computer access, parent breakfasts, food pantries, and myriad free resources (Adcox, 2011; Smith, 2010). The principal’s goal is clear, make the school a community hub where parents feel safe to come, no matter what their immigration status is. There is no mention of rapid growth, even temporality, rather, he states, “It’s about people—establishing relationships with people in your community. Then, the learning will come” (Smith, 2010). This school, thus, points to the potentiality of relational spaces and space-making, a point I develop in Chapter Three, in El Sur Latinx that “can be created to actively support creativity, curiosity, expansive subject positions, and social critique” (Jones et al, 2016).

**(Toward) Latinx Teachers in the South**

Scholarship that centers Latinx education in the U.S. South focuses on changing demographics, impromptu responses, English Language Learners, insufficient resources, and teacher readiness but thus far has left aside important questions about post-first-generation students, intra-group nuance, and detailed examination of highly educated Latinx teachers. As a result, there is a gap in knowledge about the complexities and contradictions, opportunities and challenges, assumptions and surprises of becoming Latinx K-12 teachers with/in South(eastern) spaces and places. Despite a growing field of scholarship about Latinx education in the South, there remains a dearth of research about Latinx K-12 teachers across the region generally, and their micro relations and

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41 Although her research occurs outside schools in a library space, Rodriguez (2019) finds that building such community hubs with centralized resources, asset-based programming, and political information increase feelings of belonging for newcomer students.
entanglements with/in specific schools and communities specifically. For example, in a recently edited book titled *US Latinization: Education and the New Latino South* (Salas & Portes, 2017) there lacks specific discussion or research about Latinx teachers.

Similarly, in another major edited book about education and the New Latino Diaspora (Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr., 2015) there is not a single chapter devoted to the experiences of Latinx K-12 educators in the New Latino Diaspora, let alone the United States South. In the introductory chapter of the aforementioned text Hamann and Harklau (2015) pose the question, “How does the particular lack of Latino educators in new diaspora communities matter?” (p. 15). It is evident there is little to no scholarship devoted to answering that question despite the fact that Latinx continue to (re)make and (re)create the South, and the number of Latinx students in Southern schools continues to grow. In fact, outside a few first-person accounts (Burgos-Carnes & Burgos-Kelly, 2014; Martinez, 2016; Monreal, 2019a) and a handful of studies I review in the next chapter (Colomer, 2010, 2014, 2018, 2019), academic researchers know little about the lives, experiences, and subjectivities of Latinx teachers in the South. Stacy, Hamann, and Murillo Jr, 2015 ask us to expand the conversation, to generate new ideas, and create emergent spaces of inquiry about newer Latinx communities. Specifically, they ask us to think “possible dialogic ‘next turns.’ Which voices have been included? Excluded? Who still needs to respond?” (p. 345). I posit it is (past) time for us to learn from and listen to the Latinx teachers that are both made in and remaking (school) spaces across the U.S. South.
Conclusion

In the first half of this opening chapter I outlined the overarching description, rationale, and significance of the research project, and in second half of this introductory chapter I provided a contextual overview of Latinx in both the U.S. South and South Carolina. Thus, this chapter presents an entry point (Kuntz, 2019) to understand how we (might) come to interrogate the literal, relational, and symbolic places and spaces Latinx teachers live, work, create, and are created in, a context I name El Sur Latinx. I gave a brief description of demographic and geographic shifts that scholars name the New Latino Diaspora before narrowing down on the U.S. South and South Carolina. I then moved to literature about Latinx education in the U.S. South and South Carolina to signal how the micro spaces of schools intra-act with myriad processes of policy, discourse, and subject-formation to sketch the parameters of Latinx teachers in South Carolina. Such a contextual overview signals the myriad and dispersed relations and discourses that work to recreate the categories and norms that define Latinx teachers.

While it is true that Latinx in the South(east) face an increasingly restrictive and racialized context, they continue to (re)make the spaces they traverse. Most importantly, Latinx educators are not outside this context, they are intimately entangled with it. To this point, Jackson and Mazzei (2010) write that “subjects are in a double-process of being produced as well as transforming themselves [and their intra-actions]” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 62). Moving, then, toward the next chapter, a literature review of Latinx teachers and teacher representation, we can start to interrogate how teachers and educators might (or might not) see themselves differently as they intra-act with/in El Sur Latinx. For El Sur Latinx, and the Latinx teachers that live and work with/in it, is a
complex and cacophonous harmony, a seemingly discordant \textit{(re)mezcla}\textsuperscript{42} that brings together the entanglements of our globalized, more than temporal (micro)worlds. This also means moving past Latinx in the South as an exception, an Othered thing \textit{(in of itself)}, seemingly different in kind, and toward a \textit{a doing}, an emergent relational entanglement with/in an accepted part of the Latinx story in the United States (Murris & Bozalek; 2019; Winders & Smith, 2012).

Latinx educators in the South(east) \textit{(re)produce/stand in/move as/are dispersed through/create an assemblage at the crossroads of myriad processes that \textit{(re)make} their subject positions. For example, Latinx educators, despite their professional and class status, feel the strains of negative discourse and police leveled against Latinx in the U.S. South broadly, and although not employed in the food processing, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors can, too, be exploitable, racialized workers sought for their perceived Spanish instruction, translating ability, and cultural skills in/for a new, globalized, and diverse Southern economy, but limited in their sharing of professional knowledge, striving of leadership opportunities, and expression of political advocacy. Conversely, such position(ings) set the stage for new acts of subjective resistance and political action (Foucault, 1982). These (political) entanglements and processes—micro and macro, historical and current, spatial and social—work with/in Latinx teachers exceptionally visible and public role serving youth and community in Southern locales like my focus state of South Carolina. This contestation of subjectivity is a political fight that does not stand outside other neoliberal processes the construct the modern (Latinx) teacher professional. What these diverse entanglements \textit{(re)produce} is ultimately the driver of

\textsuperscript{42}“\textit{(Re)mix.”}
this research. With this in mind, I turn to the next chapter the centers scholarship on
teacher representation and Latinx teachers.
CHAPTER 2
A LITERATURE REVIEW: BEING AND BECOMING
LATINX TEACHERS

Introduction

But I know they will try to put me as a Spanish teacher. I was terrified...I was literally like regretting saying anything. I was like you took it [bilingual] off your resume, you should have stuck to it. I was terrified because I even called the district, what should I do?...And even the district lady was like you could always take a Spanish position (Participant interview, September, 2019)

In the last chapter I mapped a broad context of El Sur Latinx relations that Latinx teachers travel. Although it was a rather macro look I also pointed to the import of micro-level entanglements, power networks, and intra-actions that co-construct, and mediate, the spaces individual Latinx live and work. As Webb (2009) contends, “what is needed is an understanding of the symbiotic, often emergent relations that develop between micro- and micro- environments” (p. 48). Thus, El Sur Latinx is always becoming with Latinx (teachers), and Latinx (teachers) are always becoming with El Sur Latinx.

To get a better understanding of this process, how Latinx teachers and educators are both made in, and remaking, El Sur Latinx, I zoom into the life and work of Latinx teachers and educators. I draw from a broad body of research on teachers of color, and Latinx educators specifically, to map the boundaries of Latinx teacher experience vis-a-vis a larger discussions of teacher representation. What follows is another entry point to explore the present conditions and spaces (webs of power relations) in which Latinx teachers operate, expanding the limits of the immediate now, and pushing the boundaries
of normative subject statuses (Ball, 2016; Kuntz, 2019). In particular, in this literature review I focus on the knowledges academic literature constructs, reifies, and contests about Latinx teachers in order to think through “the truths we might tell about ourselves...and the truths that we might tell others” (Ball, 2016, p. 1134). I explore claims about Latinx teachers in the academic literature, as well as their (subject) positioning in schools and community spaces, that a post-structural approach to teacher subjectivity, that I introduce in full in the next chapter, might problematize, complicate, and/or develop.

Although there is a growing body of academic literature about Latinx educators, research tends to emphasize barriers to, and rationales for, diversifying the teacher workforce, while also typically focusing on the experiences of Mexican-American/Chicanx educators in traditional Latinx areas like California, the Western United States, and Texas (Arce, 2004; Bybee, 2015; Clark & Flores, 2001; Flores, 2011, 2015, 2017a; Galindo, 1996; Griffin, 2018; Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Ocasio, 2014; Ochoa 2007; Rios, 2008; Turner et al., 2017; Urrieta, Jr., 2007, 2010). As a result, our understanding of the experiences, identities, and in my case subject positions (and on-going re/subjugation; Foucault, 1980, p. 97), of Latinx educators, is often constrained to large urban areas with long histories of Latinx (mostly Mexican) communities (Arce, 2004; Bybee, 2015; Flores, 2011, 2017a; Ochoa, 2007). For example, two significant books centering Latinx teachers, Learning from Latino Teachers (Ochoa, 2007) and Latina Teachers (Flores, 2017a) draw exclusively from educators in Southern California. Even with research that looks outside urban geographies, (South)Western contexts dominate the literature.
There is a good reason for this focus given historical legacy and the sheer number of Latinx in those areas, however it leads to research unintentionally collapsing and homogenizing the rich social-spatial spectrum of Latinx educators. This is not to say that regions are fixed, inherently different, containers, but rather it is to say that current research minimizes multiplicity, and the extensive yet specific entanglements of (micro and macro, spatial and temporal, productive and restrictive) social relations. In short, academic literature, more often than not, works to create and reinforce a rather static understanding of an “ideal” Latinx teacher (Singh 2018b, p. 291), one presented as an homogenized, even essentialized, representation of inherent cultural traits (Singh, 2018a,b, 2019). Such a discursive creation ignores the notion that the “self becomes through spaces and processes that are fluid and shifting, relational and local, and embedded and embodied” (Guyotte, Flint, & Latopolski, 2019, p. 2). This presents an imperative for post-structural research to interrogate normative subject positions (emergent with/in certain spaces), and the self-configurations that follow (Singh, 2018a,b). Hence, moving toward the end of this chapter and into the next on theoretical framing, I argue that the literature on Latinx teachers (and their subjectivities) must be expanded toward addressing/exploring different ways of becoming, beyond present treatment as a numerical proportion, neoliberal representative and object of “diversity,” (Singh, 2018a; Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Flores, 2019a), translator/interpreter (Colomer, 2010, 2014; Griffin, 2018; Neil, 2018), racialized token (Flores, 2011), and role model (Singh, 2018b).

This relative lack of academic attention to the social-spatial complexities of/across Latinx teacher worlds has material consequences as recent policy and scholarly
interest in remedying the teacher representation gap folds back on metanarrative and
decontextualized, ephemeral solutions. This is particularly stark in El Sur Latinx social-
spatial locations such as South Carolina where there is a dearth of academic research
attending to complex questions about who/what Latinx teachers are made to be(come),
and/or resist becoming (Colomer, 2018, 2019; Monreal, 2019b). Lacking a substantial
foundation of research about the distinct, and sometimes contradictory, subject positions
(made) available to Latinx educators in the South, academic literature prescribes the
expansiveness of becoming something different and clouds the already faintly visible
power relations that present simultaneous challenge and opportunity for such actors. In
sum, simplified views of Latinx educators not only unnecessarily restrict, but also
produce, certain understandings of Latinx teachers and the resulting macro and micro
efforts to recruit and retain them in schools.

The outline of this chapter mapping the literature and limitations/gaps about
Latinx teacher experience is as follows. First, I give a broad historical and contemporary
demographic overview of Latinx teachers in the United States. This helps sketch the
current moment, and accounts for so-called “pipeline problems” (Carver-Thomas, 2018;
Garza, 2019a,b; Ocasio, 2014; Turner et. al, 2017)43 where Latinx teachers are severely
under-represented in comparison to Latinx students (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Boser 2011,
2014; Shapiro & Partelow, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Next, I present
various rationales cited across the literature for improving Latinx teacher representation.
Then, I provide an overview of research pertaining to the general experiences, and

43 For an alternative non-linear metaphor toward reimagining higher education access and
going processes see Pitcher and Shahjahan (2017).
accompanying subject positions, of Latinx teachers. This research tends to speak to racial/ethnic matters, language, teaching as a middle class profession, and “special skills, beliefs, and attitudes” (Bybee, 2015, p. 65). Although the academic literature overwhelmingly centers “traditional” Latinx communities, I highlight a few instances of emerging work in the United States South. I close by problematizing the tendency in and out of academic literature to essentialize Latinx educators by interrogating Latinx role model discourse (Singh 2018a,b; Singh 2019; Monreal, 2019b). Not only does role model discourse illuminate a narrow understanding of subject positions for Latinx teachers, it highlights the need for the expanded theoretical frames I detail in the next chapter.

Latinx Teachers: A Historical and Contemporary Demographic Overview


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44 I borrow the language “special skills, beliefs, and attitudes” from Bybee’s (2015) own literature review about themes in the research on Latinx and minoritized teachers.
with increasing calls to diversify the teacher workforce, K-12 educators remain overwhelming middle class, White, monolingual, and female (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; de Brey et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). 45

A Historical Portrait

Whereas there is a rather robust academic record that chronicles the respected and central community role of African American teachers prior to mass displacements resulting from Brown vs Board (Baker, 2011; Bell, 2005; DuBois, 1903/1994; Foster, 1998; Kridel, 2015; Milner & Howard, 2004; Pawlewicz, 2020; Walker, 2013), there is little evidence to suggest a parallel phenomenon existed among Mexican-American and/or Hispanic teachers prior to the 1940s and 50s. 46 Thus, while some Black teachers facilitated a pedagogy of protest (Baker, 2011) and exposed students, however shrewdly (Hale, 2018), to critical thought from the likes of Carter Woodson (2011), Latinx students (mostly Mexican and/or Mexican-American) were taught almost exclusively by White teachers, if not systematically excluded from schooling altogether (Santiago, 2019).

45 According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), although nearly 50% of public-school students identify as students of color, 82% of public-school teachers identify as White. This marks a slight improvement since 1999-2000 when data indicate 84% of teachers were White, non-Hispanic (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005, p. 114).
46 This is neither meant to erase the long history of Latinx/Mexican/Chicanx activism around public education (Santiago, 2016, 2018), nor argue Latinx communities passively accepted the lack of Latinx teachers. For example, Salinas (2000) writes of efforts by middle class Mexicans in Texas in 1897 to create El Colegio Altamirano that valued Spanish, celebrated Mexican/Tejano culture, and recruited teachers from Mexico. Similarly, Chacón and Bowman (1974) outlined the systematic failure of teacher education departments to create programs that would recruit, retain, and properly train Latinx teachers. They spotlight the work of Chicanx activists and educators that created Chicano Alternative Schools in the 1970s in an effort to create schools staffed by Mexican Americans.
Despite the fact that the Treaty of Guadalupe guaranteed Mexicans educational, cultural, and linguistic rights, it is more accurate to assert that any type of schooling for Chicanx students (re)produced their unique position as an internally colonized people (Acuña, 1981; Gomez, 1973; Mirandé, 1985). It is no surprise, then, that more than forty years ago Gomez (1973) writes, “If the education of Spanish surnamed [people] is tragically and woefully inadequate, the reasons lie buried in the past” (p. 48). This “woeful inadequacy” stretches to the relatively low numbers of Latinx teachers today.

Although the sheer number of Latinx educators is rapidly growing today (Flores, 2017a; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014; Turner et. al, 2017), this historical legacy leaves an onerous uphill climb to achieve anything close to Latinx teacher-student parity (Boser, 2011, 2014; Putman, Hansen, Walsh, & Quintero, 2016). A 1971 report titled, *Ethnic Isolation of Mexican Americans in Public Schools of the Southwest*, by the United States Commission on Civil Rights states, “a very small proportion of the classroom teaching staff is Mexican American...In all states Mexican Americans comprise substantially less of the teaching staff than they do of the student population” (p. 41). In data from 1968 Spanish surnamed enrollment in public schools nationally was 4.6%, yet nearly 18% of Southwest (California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado) public school students were identified as Mexican-American (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1971). Additional data from the report reveals approximately 3.6% of the teaching staff was Mexican-American in the Southwest, compared to 88.6% Anglo, and 6.4% Black.47 In the Southwest as a whole there were

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47 These numbers mirror nationwide totals during the time period. According to Snyder (1998), the public-school teaching force in 1971 was 88.3% White, non-Hispanic, 8.1%
roughly 120 Mexican American pupils for every Mexican-American teacher, 39 Black pupils for every Black teacher, and among Anglos it was 20 to 1. Numbers for Mexican-American school secretaries and janitors were much higher, so much so that over 20% of the non-teaching staff was Mexican-American in the Southwest. Many of these trends continued well into the 1980s as the percentage of Hispanic teachers in public elementary and secondary schools hovered around 3-4% despite an ever-growing growing Hispanic student population (Gomez, 1973; Villegas, 2007). Reflecting the general geographic concentration of research to the Southwest, the report does not include Hispanic teacher-student rations in other regions.

Contemporary Latinx Teacher Representation: A National Snapshot

Given this historical portrait, and the general belief in the desirability of a diverse teaching workforce (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005, p.7), a number of school districts, colleges and universities, and state departments of education sought to create specialized programs in the 1980s and 1990s to increase the number of Latinx teachers. Examples include early recruitment “pipeline” programs, career ladder programs for paraprofessionals, alternative routes to certification, and so-called grow your own initiatives (Villegas, 2007). Contrary to popular belief, such initiatives have actually proven effective in recruiting, although not necessarily retaining, Latinx educators.

African-American, and 3.6% other minorities. In 1976, and 1981 the proportions were 90.8%, 8.0%, and 1.2% and 91.6%, 7.8%, and 0.7% respectively.

48 This is a story I can personally attest to as mi abuela (my grandmother) was a school secretary at Las Deltas Elementary school in rural California throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

49 The 1971 report does include a 1968 estimation of “Spanish surnamed enrollment” (though not teachers) in South Carolina (n=208), North Carolina (n=482), and Georgia (n=1,370).
(Aponte 2018; Flores, 2017a; Griffin, 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014; Turner et. al, 2017). For instance, in 1999, 4.6% of teachers in the U.S. identified as “Hispanic” (Villegas, 2007) and those numbers grew to about 8% for the 2011-2012 school year (Lindsay, Blom, & Tinsley, 2017; U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

However, despite the numerical rise of Latinx teachers, the gap between the number of Latinx teachers and students continues to balloon because the Latinx population continues to expand, is young, and is entering schools in higher numbers (Boser, 2011, 2014; Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Putman et. al, 2016). More worrisome, and mirroring patterns of teachers of color generally (Sun, 2018), Latinx teachers are exiting the profession at higher rates than their White colleagues (Aponte, 2018; Griffin, 2018; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Griffin, 2018). Thus, “it seems clear that the teaching force will remain primarily white...for the foreseeable future” (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005, p. 41) and as a result Zumwalt and Craig (2005) assert the “demographic of most concern is the racial and ethnic composition of the teaching force” (p. 136). In sum, even as scholars Irizarry & Donaldson (2012) write, “nowhere is the ‘Latinization’ of the United States more evident than in K–12 schools,” (p. 156) one must question when the teacher workforce will align with such a statement. I now turn to a specific demographic look at Latinx teacher representation in South Carolina and the U.S. South.

**Teacher Representation in the U.S. South**

This so-called Latinization of K-12 schools nationally is applicable to the ambiguities, tensions, and possibilities of intercultural intra-action with/in the shifting social geographies of the U.S. South (Salas & Portes, 2017). Promise and pitfall
simultaneously flow as Latinx communities boost enrollments, challenge the linguistic
and cultural norms of educational spaces, and ultimately remake schools with/in fiscally
limited contexts still unprepared for changing demographics (Kandel & Cromartie, 2004;
Kandel, Parrado, & Cromartie, 2006; Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr., 2015). In more
rural areas of the U.S. South, schools and districts already scrambling for teachers face
the additional layer of recruiting and retaining ESOL teachers, interpreters, and bicultural
support staff (Kandel & Cromartie, 2006; Krupnick, 2018). These immediate needs,
evident in places like South Carolina which has experienced a staggering 610% growth in
the number of students whose primary language is something other than English between
2000 and 2011, lead to improvised and ad-hoc solutions (Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo
Jr., 2015; Krupnick, 2018). Such resource constraints often exacerbated by neoliberal
policies, in combination with nativist and anti-immigrant discourse, contribute to the
reemergence of ‘‘Mexican rooms’…in the form of ESOL transitional programs where
xvi). Given this overall context it is unsurprising that the U.S. South, too, has a woefully
disproportionate number of Latinx teachers to Latinx students.

Much like the United States as a whole, the teacher workforce in the U.S. South is
not reflective of the multicultural United States student body. Outside Texas and Florida,
most states in the U.S. South have a “Hispanic” teaching force of between 1-4% (Table

50 National figures show rural schools have the most White teaching cohorts. There is a
higher percentage of teachers from minority racial/ethnic groups in city schools (31
percent) than in suburban schools (18 percent), town schools (12 percent), or rural
schools (11 percent) (de Brey et al., 2019; Geiger, 2018). Thus, nonwhite teachers are not
only sharply outnumbered by white teachers in America’s classrooms, but they also tend
to work in different school environments.
Moreover, although the number of Latinx teachers continues to grow nationwide, this may not necessarily be the case for some Southern states. For example, from 2001 to 2013, the percentage of Black or Latinx teachers in North Carolina declined slightly from 15.61% to 14.95%, while the share of Black or Latinx students rose from 33.63% to 39.35% (Lindsay & Hart, 2017). Similarly, in South Carolina “Hispanic” teachers have consistently hovered around 1-2% of the state’s teachers (Table 2.2). Additionally, a large share of “Hispanic” teachers in South Carolina are “international teachers” (a subject position in itself; see Chapter Five) that face visa restrictions and limited length of stay (Reed, 2017; Self & Dulaney, 2018; The State, 2018). I estimate that on the lowest end about 20% of all Latinx teachers in South Carolina are “international teachers” recruited through private companies, specialized programs, and cultural exchange (J-1) visas. This estimate comes from experience working throughout the state in combination with South Carolina State Department of Education data (Self & Dulaney, 2018; South Carolina Department of Education, 2016a).51

Table 2.1 Hispanic K-12 Teachers and Students in Select Southern States, 2015-2016*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Hispanic K-12 population</th>
<th>Hispanic K-12 teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51 Strikingly, almost 7% of all teachers in South Carolina are hired as international teachers from abroad. In some districts more than a quarter of all teachers come from another country. The vast majority are hired to teach Spanish followed by Math (Self & Dulaney, 2018). These teachers, technically part of cultural exchange programs, are increasingly used to fill long-term vacancies as they are substantially cheaper and (can) have little recourse for unsatisfactory working conditions and assignments.
North Carolina 14% 2%
Florida** 29% 17%

Sources. South Carolina Department of Education (2016b, 2019); Lindsay, Blom, & Tilsley (2017)
*The five states were selected for their grouping by The U.S. Census as part of the South Atlantic Designation within the U.S. South Region as well as the geographic grouping of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia I center in this dissertation.
**As previously mentioned, Florida is typically considered apart from scholarship on El Sur Latinx because of its larger population, and history, of Latinx communities. I use it here for comparative purposes.

Table 2.2 South Carolina Teachers by Race and Gender, School Year 2015-2016*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total**</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>49,922.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>31,715.8</td>
<td>7,582.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(63.5%)</td>
<td>(15.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>6,062.3</td>
<td>1,388.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12%)</td>
<td>(2.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>540.9</td>
<td>145.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1%)</td>
<td>(0.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>370.5</td>
<td>111.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.7%)</td>
<td>(0.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.1%)</td>
<td>(0.02%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source. South Carolina Department of Education (2016b)
*The title (and naming conventions) mirrors that used by The South Carolina Department of Education.
**Total percentages do not add to exactly 100% as gender and/or ethnicity is not completely reported by some districts.

More concerning, given the expanding post-first generation Latinx population in the spaces and places of the Southern United States, there are only a handful of small programs that aim to increase the share of Latinx teachers. For example, a few university
programs in the Southeast have taken steps to increase Latinx teachers throughout the region. Hardee and Johnson (2019) highlight the potential of district-university partnerships in north Georgia. Georgia Southern University (2018) has a special scholarship for Latinx undergraduates that want to be teachers, and Pratt (2016) reports on a program at Lipscomb University in Tennessee that aims to increase the number of Latinx teachers. Although I do not know of a university program in South Carolina, one administrator shared his district launched a program to hire 100 male teachers of color over the next five years. Although he was encouraged by this push, he also was frustrated that Latinx are not a focus of the initiative (Participant interview, October, 2019). In sum, it is clear that an increasingly diverse Southern student population has increasingly divergent socio-economic, cultural, linguistic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds from the teaching workforce. I now turn to various rationales cited across the literature for disrupting this trend, and improving Latinx teacher representation.

**Rationale for Improving Latinx Teacher Representation**

In this section I review the most common rationales and arguments for diversifying the teacher workforce and increasing the representation of Latinx teachers. Policy-makers, researchers, and other stakeholders generally agree that there is severe underrepresentation of teachers of color in the teacher workforce, such underrepresentation is a problem, and public education writ large would be improved by addressing this problem (Boser, 2011, 2014; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Childs, 2019; Tosolt, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). In line with the previous section, such overarching arguments stem from a “demographic imperative” (Bybee, 2015) that holds teachers should be more
representative of the increasingly diverse classrooms and communities they work with/in. While achieving some vague notion of racial/ethnic student-teacher parity might be seen as an end unto itself, a line of academic research seeks to ask more substantial questions about the value of teachers of color in providing more equitable school outcomes for students. Specifically, Villegas and Irvine (2010) identify three main rationales across the academic literature for diversifying the teacher workforce: (1) teachers of color serve as role models for all students; (2) the potential of teachers of color to improve the academic outcomes and school experiences of students of color; and (3) the workforce rationale (p. 176). I use this triad as an organizational umbrella for the proceeding discussion.

**Teachers of Color Serve as Role Models for All Students**

The role model rationale is probably the oldest, and most repeated argument for increasing the numbers of Latinx teachers. Central to this line of thinking is the notion that the lack of Latinx teacher role models is both a function of, and a contributor to, the persistent Latinx teacher-student gap. Thus, more Latinx teachers are needed not only to provide an important example for Latinx students, but also to disrupt the implicit messages, values, and visuals that a primarily White workforce sends to all students (Garza, 2019a; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). A general message being the racial composition of public school teachers is but another aspect of a broad hidden curriculum that implicitly communicates a larger idea about the distribution of power in United States society, and the pernicious belief that some groups are more worthy than others.

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52 Lortie’s (2002) classic sociological study of teaching maintains that we see education from a singular vantage point, the (rather visible) interactions with our own teachers. In line with this view, it is possible to see that general perceptions of schooling, and to a degree education, become normed in the general public by the actions of their (White) teachers.
(Mercer & Mercer, 1986; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). As Zumwalt and Craig (2005) write in their demographic profile of U.S. teachers, “The case is made that not only should the authority of knowledge not be seen as the special privilege of Whites, but also that teachers of different races and ethnicities can prepare children for life in a multicultural society” (p. 136). In sum, the presence of Latinx teachers as role models opens up pathways to their Latinx students and “expose” all students to more pluralistic understanding of public authority roles.

In research centering the U.S. South, there is also the idea that more Latinx teachers are needed to provide positive representation for students. Researchers hold this is especially vital in newer Latinx communities where schools struggle to meet the needs of changing student populations. For example, Bohon, Macpherson, and Atiles’ (2005) use interview and focus group data with key “informants” (e.g., social workers, religious leaders, attorneys, policemen, county agents, educators, and health workers) to investigate educational barriers for new Latinx communities throughout Georgia. The researchers find school support would be improved with the presence of more bilingual and bicultural educators for two key interrelated reasons: (a) to bridge the gap between families and school administration and (b) to provide positive role models for Latinx youth. Villalba, Brunelli, Lewis, and Orfanedes (2007) add a vital perspective by using parent interviews to examine the academic and personal/social experiences of Latinx elementary school children in Southeastern U.S. rural schools. Through the interviews, Latinx parents shared a desire for more positive Latinx role models, “ejemplos (models),” that would help their children navigate the increased freedoms in the United States, reinforce “valores (values)” such as good manners, and bring cultural celebrations and
activities to the school (Villalba, et al, 2007, p. 508). These two pieces of research communicate that the pressure for “role models” often comes from outside the school, yet many Latinx teachers themselves see such work as an important part of their job. We might, then, think about how Latinx teacher subjectivity is conceived and produced through their own relationship to this role model discourse. What does this knowledge about Latinx teachers induce, obligate, impose, promise, formulate, and create (Foucault, 1980, 2017)? In other words what are the effects of this “true discourse” on how Latinx teachers “conduct” themselves “if there is and must be a certain truth about us” (Foucault, 2017, p. 12)?

There is evidence in the literature that Latinx teachers internalize this discourse, and at the very least, understand their subject position as role models (Flores, 2017a; Jones, Young, & Rodríguez, 1999; Ochoa, 2007). Ochoa (2007) chronicles a number of narratives from Latinx teachers that both lament their (White) teachers and school experiences, while also pointing to key role models that supported their educational journeys. Similarly, through semi-structured interviews with pre-service bilingual education teachers, Jones, Young, and Rodríguez (1999) find Mexican-American teachers recognize the importance of role models in their own education and view themselves as role models of successful bicultural and bilingual Mexican-Americans.53 Flores (2017a) highlights how some Latina teachers embrace a gender-centric role model position as an opportunity to disrupt limiting expectations for girls. To this point, one Latina in Flores’ (2017a) study shares, “This is a different era. The girls are not quiet

53 Alternatively, the Euro-American pre-service bilingual teachers in the study did not express a need for role modeling.
anymore...they [girls] have goals and we are role models for them...I’m a Latina and they see that I am a teacher” (p. 88). Many of the teachers in my study also express similar motivations to be a role model, as several participants explained that increasing the numbers of Latinx teachers was important because “children cannot be what they cannot see.” In total, many Latinx teachers view themselves as important figures for their Latinx students, agreeing with a role model imperative that, “kids in school want to see teachers who look like them, and this is something especially helpful to kids from groups that have been historically bypassed within school settings, like Latinx students” (Garza, 2019a, par. 1). Yet, however durable and enduring such role model claims have proved to be, there are serious limitations to the argument.

The role model rationale for increasing the number of Latinx teachers suffers from empirical and theoretical rigor. First, there is a dearth of empirical studies that a) examine directly this role modeling hypothesis, b) ask K-12 students of color whether or not they see their teachers of color as role models, and c) illuminate the ways in which the assumed role model function works in real classrooms and schools (Garza, 2019a; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). Second, and more theoretical, there is the implicit suggestion within the research that “by its mere presence, a teacher’s racial identity generates a sort of role-model effect that [automatically] engages student effort, confidence, and enthusiasm” (Dee, 2004, p. 196). Such thinking implicitly essentializes Latinx teachers, leaving aside nuanced discussion about what it means to

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54 There is research that suggests the mere presence of teachers of color and the impending “role model” effect are, indeed, quantifiable. Such research points to increased graduation rates when a teacher of color is part of the school faculty (see Gershenson, Lindsay, Hart, & Papageorge, 2017; Kamenetz, 2017; Pitts, 2007).
be(come) a role model, whether Latinx teachers automatically demonstrate solidarity and consciousness for their students (Cherry-McDaniel, 2019; Gilpin & Beck, 2006; House-Niamke & Sato, 2019; Jackson & Knight- Manuel, 2019; Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019; Weisman & Hansen, 2008), and why role models are posited as individual and neoliberal solutions to structural inequities (Singh 2018a,b). Disrupting such singular, ideal, and reductionist conceptions of Latinx teachers is a strength of post-structuralist theories about subjectivity I employ with this study. I return to many of these points near the end of the chapter.

The Potential of Latinx Teachers to Improve the Academic Outcomes and School Experiences of Students of Color

A second argument for increasing the number of Latinx teachers outlines the academic benefits for students of color and the (cultural/pedagogical) practices that account for such outcomes. A number of quantitative studies indicate that the racial “dynamics” between students and teachers have consistently large effects on student achievement (Dee 2004, 2005; Egalite, Kisida, & Wintersthat, 2015). More specifically, a growing body of research demonstrates that students of color do better (i.e. score higher on standardized assessments and other measures of academic achievement) when they have at least one teacher of the same racial background. For example, Dee’s (2004) analysis of data from the Tennessee Project STAR class size experiment indicates that assignment to an “own race” teacher was associated with large and statistically significant educational benefits in the form of reading and math gains for both Black and White students. Similarly, using administrative data from Florida, Egalite, Kisida, and Wintersthat (2015) find assignment to an own-race/ethnicity teacher has positive and
potentially policy relevant reading achievement impacts for Black and White students, and significant math achievement impacts for Black, White, and Asian/Pacific Island students.

Beyond measures of standardized tests, a variety of other studies point to improved academic outcomes when schools have more teachers of color. In North Carolina, Lindsay and Hart (2017) provide evidence that for Black students, exposure to same-race teachers decreases office referrals and other exclusionary discipline measures. Such teacher discretion is not only a vital factor for punitive actions, but also in recommending students for higher tracked courses. As such, Grissom and Redding (2016) suggest teachers of color are more likely to recommend Black students to gifted and talented programs. In research specific to Latinx, Grissom, Rodriguez, and Kern (2017) and Quintero (2019) show a similar relationship between an increase in school-level Latinx educators and Latinx students in high-achieving tracks and AP course enrollment. Relatedly, Sass (2017) finds that having a Latinx math and science teacher increases the likelihood that Latinx students will take STEM courses during their first year in college.

While, indeed, such academic research provides quantitative evidence for academic benefits associated with more Latinx teachers, there is a concern that the underlying assumptions of such work, numerical presence and visibility of Latinx teachers, is quite similar to role model discourse. Thus, this line of research extends to investigate teacher mechanisms and pedagogical practices that account for such outcomes. To this point, Dee (2004, 2005) differentiates between “passive” teacher effects (presence, appearance, “role models”) and “active” teacher events like bias,
unique intervention, allocation of class time, interactions with students, and design of class materials. A key distinction is that “active” practices are observable and provide greater insight into why Latinx and other teachers of color are successful with students of color. That is, what do Latinx teachers do with their students that influences student achievement. According to Villegas & Irvine (2010) teachers and students benefit from “cultural synchronicity” that aids practice and manifests in five general pedagogical advantages: a) teaching in culturally relevant and sustaining ways, b) having high expectations of students, c) building trusting and caring relationships with students, d) confronting issues of racism through teaching, and e) serving as advocates and cultural brokers.

While a complete review of these five pedagogical advantages is outside the space of this dissertation, there is a substantial body of academic literature that illuminates their implementation to aid the academic potential of Latinx students. Academic studies demonstrate Latinx teachers act as cultural guardians (Flores, 2017a; Turner et. al, 2017), foster a sense of confianza (trust) (Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005; Newcomer & Puzio, 2016; Ochoa, 2007), demonstrate higher expectations due to favorable views of Latinx students (Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012), confront issues of racism (Caldas, 2018; Villegas & Irvine, 2010), disrupt deficit views of Latinx history and culture (Gabriel, 2019).

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55 Of relevance here is Dee’s (2005) research that indicates that the racial and ethnic dynamics between students and teachers have consistently large effects on teacher perceptions of student performance. Black teachers were less likely to view students of color as disruptive and inattentive. Related to the geographic focus of my research, Dee’s findings were most statistically significant in the Southern region of the United States.

56 Another way of looking at this work is how it adds another, particularly (emotionally) stressful and exhausting, demand on their daily work lives. As Brazas and McGeehan (2020) write, “Educators of color are expected to take on antiracist work in their classrooms, schools and districts—while managing colleagues’ white fragility” (par. 11).
Martinez, & Obiakor, 2016; Martinez, 2016; Monreal, 2017), and engage in culturally relevant teaching practices (Aviña, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Morales, Aviña, & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Wortham & Contreras, 2002) like emphasizing student strengths through understanding funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). In short, there is a general belief that teachers of color draw from their own experiences to address race and other inequities in pedagogically fruitful manners.\footnote{Cherng and Halpin (2016) find that all the students, including White students, had significantly more favorable perceptions of Latinx versus White teachers across the board, and less significant but still more favorable perceptions of Black versus White teachers. They hypothesize that teachers own experience (successfully) navigating school contexts are highly germane to their classroom success (Kamenetz, 2016).}

However, while research related to this academic outcome rationale portends to focus on teacher practices and mechanisms, rather than inherent characteristics, the literature is less clear in it divorcing the two. For example, Villegas and Irvine’s (2010) “cultural synchronicity” argument states that teachers of color bring, and \textit{apply} pedagogically, a deep understanding of the cultural experiences of students of color. This gives such teachers an advantage over their White colleagues. Yet, there appears to be a latent assumption that a shared racial/ethnic background creates an \textit{a priori} cultural “match,” that accounts for certain teacher actions. To some degree, this fails to address intersections of class, culture, gender, language, and space, prescribes a narrow conception of identity, collapses difference, and maintains a view that Latinx are a monolithic group, whose experiences are a one-for-one pair with their students. What about teachers of color that share deficit views and perspectives about their students and their communities (Gilpin & Beck, 2006; House-Niamke & Sato, 2019; Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019)? What about teachers that may have been educated and trained as
practitioners in a different country? What about teachers that do not see their work in terms of social justice and equity (House-Niamke & Sato, 2019; Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019; Weisman & Hansen, 2008)? What about myriad structural concerns that challenge teachers’ pedagogical and curricular autonomy and produce the teacher’s sense of self (Au, 2016; Popkewitz, 1991, 1998)? What about White teachers who are excellent educators for/with students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2009)? In short, there is a danger in assuming and assigning inherent cultural responsiveness without critically interrogating the productive capabilities of a larger education system and discourse built within White supremacy and settler colonialism (Cherry-McDaniel, 2019; Paris & Alim, 2014).

I want to be clear that I am neither discounting the experience, success, and impact of Latinx teachers, nor implying that shared experiences (e.g. of immigration, racialization, schooling) are impossible. As Daniels and Varghese (2019) contend, minoritized teachers draw upon experiential knowledges and divergent ways of being to challenge benign and neutral practices that reinscribe and normalize Whiteness in education. What I am stating is that a flattened view of innate correspondence ignores the nuance and diversity of Latinx teachers and educators, creates a fairly static Latinx teacher subject, and actually limits the potentialities of Latinx teacher subjectivities. In effect, “we impose a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him,” (Foucault, 1982, p. 781) and as such risk turning the Latinx teacher into an object, an anchored site of interventions and deployments of power (Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1982, 2007c) rather than a relational multiplicity. Once again, this makes the case for different theoretical approaches, specifically post-structural, to teacher subjectivity.
The Workplace Rationale

The workplace rationale is based on two basic arguments. First, teachers of color are not only an untapped solution to increase the overall “supply” of teachers generally, but also a remedy for specific schools/districts that struggle to recruit and retain employees. Second, a more diverse workplace benefits students as well as school staff, meaning all teachers, administrators, and employees. Stated simply, teacher shortages and non-diverse staff present a pressing workforce problem (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Although I outline literature regarding these dual lines of thought, I spend a comparatively brief amount of time doing so because a) much of it is descriptive and b) I return to workplace interaction in the section on teacher experience.

To begin, I address the idea that Latinx and other teachers of color present a key opportunity to staffing concerns. Researchers, and government reports, consistently find that teachers of color are disproportionately distributed in specific schools—schools serving disadvantaged and marginalized students (i.e. students of color, high poverty; Carter Andrews, Castro, Cho, Petchauer, Richmond, & Floden, 2019; Cowan, Goldhaber, Hayes, & Theobald, 2016; de Brey et al., 2019; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Sun, 2018; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Such schools have considerably higher rates of teacher turnover and are often classified as hard-to-staff (Guarino et al., 2006; Holmes, Jabbar, Germain, & Dinning, 2017; Sun, 2018). Thus, Latinx teachers not only broaden the teacher workforce, but also expand the specific supply of teachers for schools that have the most persistent need. Along these lines, teachers of color are often more willing

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58 Pawlewicz (2020) argues that conceptualizing teachers of color as a supply problem ignores the racist history of systemically purging the professional of Black teachers on multiple occasions.
to stay in such schools, perhaps helping to “alleviate the high rate of attrition in those settings” (Villegas & Irvine, 2010, p. 186).

While it is indeed true that schools with high employee turnover would benefit from more stable faculties and staffs, this rationale rests on the implicit assumption that Latinx and other teachers of color are inherently suited by virtue of some “core” identity or set of practices to teach/work in specific places and spaces. Hence, while many Latinx teachers state a commitment, even an obligation, to work with/in their own communities (Ochoa, 2007; Flores, 2017a), they should not be expected to do so. This was a frustration shared by many of my participants who worked in schools with high levels of poverty, students of color, and/or resource needs. Although they expressed feeling gratification, purpose, and efficacy working with particular students, families, and communities, they also stated concern with being “pigeon-holed,” passed over for promotions, and devalued as a “whole teacher.” For example, one administrator in my study, Alonso, was assigned to a school with a high Latinx population and told, “They’ll like you there. You’ll be good for them” (Interview, October, 2019). Another teacher complained she was denied a transfer to a dream job because her principal needed her to be the liaison with the Latinx community (Interview, October, 2019). Further, counting individual numbers of Latinx teachers as solutions for systemic failures (e.g. persistent school staffing, under resourced schools, marginalized communities) reifies neoliberal logic and obfuscates the need for transformative change and critical pedagogies/dispositions. In this way, circulating discourse and knowledge about Latinx teachers produces neoliberal teacher subjects, even commodities, in line with narrow visions of what they can be(come) (Flores, 2019a).
The other major argument of the workplace rationale is that school staff, including but not limited to other teachers of color, benefit from and need a diverse work environment. This fits a line of research that holds (micro)relations(hips) and networks within schools matter greatly to teacher of color experiences (Bristol, 2018; Bristol & Shirrell, 2019; Flores, 2011, 2015, 2017a; Ortiz & Telles, 2012; Sun 2018). On the one hand, hiring more Latinx teachers might decrease isolation, discrimination, general lack of comfort, and other toxic environments that push out Latinx employees (Carter Andrews et al., 2019; Flores, 2011). On the other hand, staff might gain a greater appreciation of “diverse” perspectives, people, and potentially practices. Yet there is no guarantee that simply inserting more Latinx teachers into a school space will result in anything more than minority absorption, that is treating Latinx teachers as objects of consumption, tasked with the hidden labor of “educating others” within a system of “safe” multiculturalism (Smithers & Eaton, 2019). More pointedly, there is still the propensity to askew radical and transformative change as the multiplicities of Latinx teachers are rendered uniform and static in order to fit within the norms of school institutions that both work to restrict their inclusion and produce their presence. The burden of diversifying schools falls on individual actors whose being is always already outlined.

In summary, across these three arguments 1) teachers of color serve as role models for all students; (2) the potential of teachers of color to improve the academic outcomes and school experiences of students of color; and (3) the workforce rationale, there is general confidence that the racial/ethnic background of teachers matters, not only to students of color, but to educational spaces writ large. There is a general belief that
increasing the number of Latinx teachers will lead to better outcomes for schools and
students, yet the explanatory mechanism for such thinking often implicitly rests on
essentialized practices, identities, and constructions of Latinx teachers. Latinx teachers
are not immune from the (power) effects of being schooled in a White supremacist
society, and too, need critical teacher preparation programs that challenge deficit
perspectives, undermine entrenched inequities, and develop the practice of teaching for
social justice. A growing body of research finds that the overwhelming concentration on
preparing White teachers for “diverse” classrooms, neglects the need to train teachers of
color to teach in “diverse” classrooms (Cherry-McDaniel, 2019; House-Niamke & Sato,
2019; Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019; View and Fredrick, 2011). To this point, Smith-
Kondo and Bracho (2019) write, “cultural identities are valuable, [but] they are neither a
pedagogical substitute nor universally transferable” (p. 156). Thus, “while the need for
teachers of color is undisputed,” (Cherry-McDaniel, 2019, p. 241) it is imperative to
problematize the assumption that Latinx or any other teacher of color possess inherent
qualities that transcend their social-spatial relations with/to systems of injustice. To
further examine these tensions between closed assumption and open potential, I offer the
following quote from an educator in a recent report about Latinx teachers:

they [Latinx teachers] bring a different perspective and a different outlook, a
different quality to teaching practice that recognizes, values, and honors the
legacy that my kids bring with them every single day...It creates a whole other
kind of teacher. (Griffin, 2018, p. 1, emphasis mine)

Daniels and Varghese (2019) argue that teacher education programs (in line with
macro discourse) that center transcendent and scientifically objective “core” and “best”
practices (even under the guide of culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogy), nominalize
the potential of minoritized teacher subjectivities while also normalizing and recentering
Whiteness.
This quote recognizes competing, although not necessarily dichotomous, frictions. Yes, Latinx teachers bring new(er) entanglements, link new(er) connections, create new(er) relations, and construct new(er) spaces. Yes, they are also being created as a whole other kind of teacher. This creation, this Latinx teacher subject, makes and is (re)made, produces and is (re)produced, prescribes and is prescribed within the spaces they are embedded. For subjects “are not fixed in absolute spaces, but as a series of overlapping and discontinuous spatialities of power” (Elden & Crampton, 2007, p. 12). Such overlaps include, but are not limited to, the spaces of individual classrooms, schools, and communities, teacher relations and educations, and El Sur Latinx. With this in mind, I entangle the aforementioned rationales for increasing teacher representation with El Sur Latinx.

An Additional Entanglement, El Sur Latinx

In addition to the triad of arguments for increasing teacher representation, I have previously argued (Monreal, 2019a) that Latinx educators in the South play a special role given the restrictive and racialized contexts they operate, and are embedded with/in. Such a macro context includes the general support of a President, electorally and through policy, who publicly states Mexicans to be “rapists and murderers,” and clamors for a “wall” to protect the United States against immigrant “criminals,” “threats,” and “problems” (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017). Moreover, severe anti-immigrant educational policies jeopardize or outlaw some Latinx students’ ability to access educational opportunities, in particular public higher education (Gonzales, Roth, Brant, Lee, & Valdivia, 2016; McCorkle & Bailey, 2016; McCorkle & Cian, 2018). Given this general context that I outlined in Chapter One, it is unsurprising that the integration of Latinx
students into Southern schools has not been so smooth. South(eastern) school systems have met the increased numbers of Latinx students with a misinformed and ad-hoc educational response (Beck & Allexsaht-Snider, 2002; Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005; Colomer, 2014; Hamann & Harklau, 2015) failing to provide adequate language support (Beck & Allexsaht-Snider, 2002; Tarasawa, 2013), struggling to hire bilingual teachers and services (Roth & Grace, 2015b), and advancing a deficit notion of Latinx students and culture (Carrillo & Rodriguez, 2016; Locke, Tabron, & Venzant Chambers, 2017; Powell & Carrillo, 2019; Villenas, 2001).

Thus, Latinx teachers are in a position to take on a specific and significant subjectivity that challenges and counters the hateful language and policies proposed from the highest officials in the land and advanced by the ordinary “citizen” next door. In these times and spaces, Latinx teachers in the South must find ways to creatively resist the barrage of threats facing Latinx communities, work to make schools welcoming for Latinx students, and rectify problematic categories of knowledge about Latinx communities (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017; Monreal, 2017, 2019a; Vasquez, 2018). To echo Griffin (2018), “If there ever was a time for educators to understand the experiences of Latino students, that time is now” (p. 1). Latinx teachers with/in El Sur Latinx seemingly have no choice but to face this challenge head on. Yet, once again we can’t assume they will, they will want to, or they will have the pedagogies, knowledges, or supports to do so. With that said, I now center my focus even further on research about the experiences of Latinx teachers while still sharing the concern of research reifying the/a static and stable “core” Latinx teacher subject.
The Experience(s) of Latinx Teachers

Building on research investigating the rationale for increasing Latinx teachers and other teachers of color, I now present academic literature that examines the lives and experiences of Latinx teachers in the United States. Casting a wide-net, I organize the academic research about Latinx teachers and their experiences around four areas: racialization, language, teaching as a middle class profession, and special skills, beliefs, and attitudes. I allocate a disproportionate amount of space on racialization literature as it intersects heavily with the other literature threads. Similar to Naseem Rodríguez’s (2019) concern that research on Asian American teachers primarily takes place in areas with a critical mass of such teachers and concentrates on one particular subgroup of Asians, much of the research on Latinx teachers occurs in the United States (South)West and Texas and focuses on Mexican-American/Chicanx teachers. As I show below there are a few instances that counter this prevailing reality, but generally there remains a need to expand research to the geographic and ethnic/racial diversity of Latinx teachers. This dissertation addresses the need for greater nuance in the literature.

Racialization

The role of race, and corresponding processes of racialization, in the lives of Latinx is a contentious and much debated topic within academic literature. On one end of the spectrum, scholars hold that Latinx, particularly Mexican-Americans, face a unique history of racialization that continually works to place Latinx near the bottom of the

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60 Naseem Rodriguez (2019) contends that research on Asian American teachers leaves at least three considerations unresolved. First, it's geographically limited to California and the Pacific Northwest. Second, a majority of research focuses on female teachers of East and Southeast Asian descent. Third, research has not delved into teachers’ use of Asian-American as a political-racial identity.
economic and racial hierarchy (Acuña, 1981; Chavez, 2008; Gomez, 1973; Mirandé, 1985, 2014; Ngai, 2004; Ortiz & Telles, 2012; Vasquez, 2010). In this view, Latinx are continually (re)subjected to race-based ascription and discrimination, not only for perceived physical appearance, but also for language, culture, employment, and real or putative alienage status (Mirandé, 2014).

On the opposite end, scholars contend that contemporary Latinx are quite similar to European immigrants of the past, and although they may face slightly more barriers and disadvantages, Latinx will eventually assimilate into the “mainstream” (Alba & Nee, 2003; Perlmann, 2005). These arguments tend to blame large Latinx social discrepancies on widespread economic and educational inequalities, rather than the effects of racialization. A major weakness of assimilation arguments is the failure to explain the material consequences of malleable racial policy and discourse, whether it be explicit school segregation to more implicit ideas of assumed Latinx illegality, that have stubbornly worked to (re)produce Latinx as Othered individuals outside the White norm (Chavez, 2008; Molina, 2014; Ortiz & Telles, 2012).

It is hard to disentangle the shifting racial classifications of Latinx from racial projects that (re)mark and (re)write the boundaries of racial otherness. In fact, far from being static and unchanging, the history of Latinx racial categorization in the United

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61 Another significant yet controversial model of (immigrant) “assimilation” is the theory of segmented assimilation. Portes and Zhou (1993) argue for a variety of processes including (1) straight-line/upward assimilation into the white middle class mainstream; (2) “downward” assimilation into a minoritized underclass; and (3) delayed or selective assimilation in which immigrants immerse themselves in their ethnic communities to benefit from access to specific social and cultural capitals. Vallejo and Lee (2009) critique this model as equating assimilation into minoritized culture with downward mobility.
States is one of permanent political contestation; it “has proven unstable, flexible, and subject to constant conflict and reinvention” (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. vii). Indeed, since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Mexican-Americans have had nominal legal claims to “White” status along with macro/micro racialization processes that construct Latinx as second-class citizens. As such, racial classification and proximity to “Whiteness” has been used to both challenge the legality of racial discrimination and at other times to justify it (Bybee, 2015). Showing this general ambiguity, the racial classification of Latinx in the United States, closely tied to Mexicans, has generally shifted from “no classification” to “Mexican” as a race, to Mexicans as White, to Mexicans as any race (Bybee, 2015; Ortiz & Telles, 2012). This fits with a theory of racial formation, forwarded by Omi & Winant (2015), that holds race is a way of “making up people” through sociohistorical processes by which racial identities are created, lived out, resisted, transformed, and destroyed through intricate webs of macro and micro and global and local power relations. Race, then, is constantly made and remade, it is a relational process operating in the spaces of intersections and contradictions and linking structures and significations. With this overarching view of Latinx racialization as context, I move to the specific category of first Latinx teachers followed by Latinx teachers in the U.S. South.

**Latinx Teacher Racialization**

Generally speaking, the processes of racialization, which undoubtedly affect the material realities of Latinx teachers, are frequently unexamined, or more accurately, ignored in mainstream discussion of teacher recruitment and retention (Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012). One reason this occurs is because schools, like society, are made to be
“color-blind” and “neutral” (Castagno, 2014; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Omi & Winant, 2015), even though they are Whitestreamed spaces with mostly White teachers (Castagno, 2014; Urrieta Jr., 2010). Teachers also lack critical training and preparation talking about “controversial issues” (Hess, 2018), and are thus typically uncomfortable talking about, let alone teaching about race (King, Vickery, & Cafrey, 2018; Milner, 2008a).

However, researchers contend that Latinx teachers have a visceral day to day lived experience with racialization from an early age, often starting early in their educational journeys. For some Latinx teachers the negative, racialized experiences throughout their own schooling serve as motivation to enter, and continue, teaching. Such teachers hold the belief that their presence helps counter racialized perceptions, such as deficit views, ELL (mis)classification, low expectations, and cultural stereotyping they experienced as students, and continue to see in schools (Flores, 2017a; Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Ochoa, 2007;). Directly to this point a teacher from Irizarry & Donaldson’s (2012) research about the Latinx teacher pipeline states:

I want to be that teacher that I really never had. Most of the teachers, not all but most of them, like hate Latinos. They just don’t like us. That’s it. They treat us bad and don’t teach us the right way. They don’t think we are going to make it in life, so they like don’t do anything to help us. They ban Spanish. They put us in the lowest classes. They put us ISS [in-school suspension] for stuff they let the White kids get away with. They just don’t want to teach us (p. 167).

62 As mentioned previously, not all Latinx teachers recognize or maintain the existence of systemic marginalization and racialization. For exemplars of research that offers nuanced treatment of this seeming contradiction see House-Niamke and Sato, 2019 and Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019.
In sum, this line of academic research holds that unless greater attention is paid to the racialization of Latinx students and teachers, little will be done to decenter a dominant narrative on teaching “which is largely defined by White teachers’ career histories” (Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012, p. 155). Further, greater attention to the racialization of Latinx teachers in schools is important because teaching is a profession where race, gender, and class intersect in unique ways. The teaching profession is often viewed as a “pathway” to the middle class (Flores, 2017a), yet also a space where relatively few Latinx educators interact with largely White colleagues. Research suggests that more professional interactions with White colleagues increases feelings of racial discrimination and prejudice (Flores, 2011; Ortiz & Telles, 2012). I discuss this at greater length when looking at teaching as a middle class profession.

Beyond phenotypic characteristics that mark racial boundaries in the U.S., language functions as an additional marker that indicates Otherness and subordinate racial status (Davis & Moore, 2014). Hence, there is a substantial body of research that

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63 Irizarry and Donaldson’s (2012) research employs a (Latino) Critical Race theoretical frame. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a dominant theoretical approach to critical research about Latinx education. A larger discussion of the intersection of CRT and education is outside the aims of this dissertation, however, CRT begins with the assumption that racism is natural, if not innocuous, and “normal, not aberrant, in American society” (Delgado, 1995, as quoted in Ladson-Billings, 1998). Claims of color-blindness, merit, objectivity, and reverse racism, along with the belief that racism is an individual deficiency, a thing of the past, work to maintain institutional, and often “invisible” systems of racial subordination. The more we treat racism as a personal defect, the more we entrench its institutional power. In this way, institutional (along with individual) racism becomes the dominant (grand and intractable) narrative to account for enduring inequality. This represents a more structural approach for totalizing explanations (Mirandé, 2014), that for theoretical reasons, I do not advance in this dissertation. In no way do I seek to minimize the importance and significance of CRT in the field and I believe emerging research holds exciting potential to expand our understanding of CRT. One such example, is Rosiek (2018) who recently combined posthumanism and CRT in an interesting way, suggesting racism acts with “agentic” qualities.
highlights the role the Spanish language plays in the racialization of Latinx teachers.\textsuperscript{64} Many Latinx teachers, especially veteran teachers educated in the United States during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, carry memories of how schools both explicitly denied the use of Spanish while also making Spanish language skills a tool to exclude and mark students as intellectually inferior and foreign (García, 2009; Saldaña, 2013). Similarly, newer Latinx teachers schooled in parts of El Sur Latinx like Georgia were likely educated within a “language-as-problem” (Ruiz, 1984) frame motivated by deleterious, and harmful, policies such as “English-only” aimed toward rapid “Americanization” (Beck & Allexsaht-Snider, 2002).\textsuperscript{65} Hence, whether in San Antonio in the 1950s or Georgia in the 2000s, the denial, and essentialization of Spanish language skills is an act of symbolic and cultural violence against Latinx (Beck & Allexsaht-Snider, 2002, Saldaña, 2013).

Latinx teachers respond to this type of linguistic racialization and subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) in a variety of ways. Some teachers internalize views of English monolingualism and assimilation (García, 2009; Pérez Huber, 2010), some emphasize the use of Spanish as resistance and political consciousness (Arce, 2004; Bybee, 2015; Flores, 2017a; Saldaña, 2013), some demonstrate an explicit bicultural

\textsuperscript{64} Toward these ends, Rosa & Flores (2017) theorize a \textit{raciolinguistic perspective} that holds through interaction and institutionalization race and language have been “co-naturalized” as significant markers of Otherness. Their perspective holds five key components: (i) historical and contemporary colonial co-naturalizations of race and language; (ii) perceptions of racial and linguistic difference; (iii) regimentations of racial and linguistic categories; (iv) racial and linguistic intersections and assemblages; and (v) contestations of racial and linguistic power formations.

\textsuperscript{65} Throughout the United States, but more recently in the U.S. South, “English Only” laws, policies, and discourse have specifically targeted the Spanish language and Spanish speakers (Davis & Moore, 2014; García, 2009). For example, a South Carolina Senator rationalized such a legislative attempt as a “need to preserve the common thread of our culture” (Lacy & Odem, 2009, p. 155).
mestizaje and fluidity (Sosa-Provencio, 2018, 2019), and still others prescribe various iterations of bilingualism. Bybee (2015) even explains how one pre-service teacher education bilingual program inverted the dominant social capital relationships and decentered Whiteness by creating a figured world that emphasized fluency in Spanish and Latinx cultural norms.

Language, thus, becomes a racializing process because “outsiders” disparage and attach racial meaning to Spanish, but Latinx educators, too, interpret and ascribe linguistic interactions for themselves through a racial(ized) lens (Bybee, 2015; Davis & Moore, 2014). Latinx teachers are therefore tasked with monitoring (or conducting the conduct of; Foucault, 2007c) their own actions as well as those similarly racialized. As Omi and Winant (2015) write, “distinctions are not just imposed from outside, but are also seen as intrinsic by their bearers” (p. 156). This body of research demonstrates how racialization of Latinx teachers is produced and contested, creating a variety of affirmations and cleavages not only between Othered groups, but also within them. In this way, Latinx teachers’ response to the racialization of language speaks to the negotiation and productive capabilities of multiple, local, and geographically specific powers acting upon them (Foucault, 1980, 1990, 2007b; Webb, 2009).

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66 Omi and Winant (2015) are specifically drawing upon Foucauldian concepts of governmentality (Foucault, 1991a,b, 2007), or how individuals internalize truths, discipline themselves into certain ways of being/acting based on such truths, and govern themselves and others accordingly. Omi and Winant write that governmentality (and the extended notion of biopower) “is a political technology, an apparatus of rule and subjection” (p. 156) to control individual bodies and populations.
The process of assigning inherent racial qualities to the Spanish language, and then linking poverty, immigration status, and educational ability is not a relic of the past. Throughout my research Latinx teachers shared they are automatically assumed to be proficient Spanish speakers in addition to Spanish and/or ESOL teachers. Moreover, as I discuss later, even within newer, seemingly “positive” movements for dual language programs, Latinx teachers are still racialized as neoliberal objects of language instruction (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Flores, 2019a) which is unsurprising given economically-focused, race-neutral, and conservative notions of ESOL/bilingual education teacher preparation (Arce, 2004; Motha, 2006).

As demonstrated, racialization processes are larger than discreet personal action, they are structural, relational, and socio-spatial-political phenomena, yet they can also manifest in individual actions such as microaggressions which I turn to next. Simply stated, microaggressions are the covert and innocuous ways, often through subtle interactions, that racism can manifest itself (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Aimed at Latinx teachers and educators, common examples of microaggressions include statements like, “You speak good English,” “You’re not like the rest of them. You’re different,” “I don’t think of you as Mexican,” “But you speak without an accent,” and “you’re always talking about race and justice, lighten up!” (Solorzano, 2014). Griffin (2018) shares how co-workers label Latinx educators as overly aggressive, adversarial, noncompliant, and defiant for centering the needs of students of color. Latinx teachers may hear something

67 To this point, Garcia (2009) writes, “although Spanish is a language of Latinos, it is not the language of Latinos” (p. 105). Similarly, Clark and Flores (2001) warn against lumping together all bilingual teachers together as one Hispanic group because self-identification “allows for distinct patterns to be revealed within the group” (p. 79).
like “you are just sticking up for them because you are Hispanic” or “it’s not always about race...” Paradoxically, Latinx teachers are simultaneously asked to “prove they belong” alongside accusations that they are effective just because they are Latinx (Griffin, 2018). As one teacher poignantly shares in a 2018 report about Latinx teachers titled *Our Stories, Our Struggles, Our Strengths*, “It’s like there’s such an insidious trend...where they talk how like, ‘Oh, it’s just because you’re a minority that you’re good [with students of color].’ But [they] forget and [they] discredit. I’m a really good teacher” (Griffin, 2018, p. 4).

Often times these microaggressions are a result of deficit theories about Latinx (both teachers and students) and teachers spend excess energy working to disrupt such ideas. Latinx educators are constantly confronted with deficit notions of their own work, their Latinx students, and their Latinx communities (Aponte, 2018; Arce, 2004; Colomer, 2016; Flores, 2011, 2017a; Griffin, 2018; Mazurett-Boyle & Antrop-González, 2013; Ochoa, 2007). Latinx teachers report having their opinions challenged, their classroom decisions questioned, and their intentions interrogated because they identify as Latinx (Griffin, 2018). Many Latinx teachers share they are routinely passed over for leadership opportunities, advancement, and promotions (Griffin, 2018; Montaño, 2016). This is consistent with research on other Latinx middle class professionals (Ortiz & Telles, 2012) and in step with a historical legacy of racialized hiring practices in the education field (Gomez, 1973), where Latinx traditionally hold “subordinate” positions like teaching assistants or paraprofessionals (Griffin, 2018; Flores, 2017a). Further still, even when Latinx teachers are acknowledged as teachers it is common for their status to be critiqued as “only Spanish or ESOL teachers” and solely effective for Latinx students despite
evidence that all students benefit from diverse teachers (Anderson, 2015; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Simply put this evidence suggests a belief that Latinx are either unqualified or incapable of teaching all children, regardless of evidence contrary to this belief (Cherng & Halpin, 2016).

Such deficit and racialized understanding of Latinx educators intra-act with pervasive anti-Latinx social views, policies, and rhetoric to form a tenacious and indefatigable discourse teachers must spend psychic, emotion, and psychic energy to disrupt (if they chose to; Martinez, 2016; Vasquez, 2018). As explained in Chapter One such discourse is especially strong in El Sur Latinx, and even “helping professions,” like social work, perpetuate implicit and explicit racism based on pathologized views and constructions of Latinx (Villenas, 2001, 2002). In addition to the overarching context presented in the previous chapter I briefly outline the sparse scholarship specific to the racialization of Latinx teachers in the U.S. South next.

**Latinx Teacher Racialization and El Sur Latinx**

Despite this scholarship that holds Latinx racial categorization as fundamentally protean, popular imagination and academic literature about the U.S. South often simplifies race and racial relations as a self-evident, timeless, and static Black/White binary. As such, a prevailing question about Latinx in the South is where Latinx come to fit within a supposed Black/White dichotomy (López-Sanders, 2011). It follows that these limited views hamper scholarship that emphasizes the nuances, contractions, and shifts of Latinx (teacher) racialization in the U.S South. As such, much of the scholarship about El Sur Latinx focuses on recent immigrants, “low-skilled” workers, newly established Latinx communities, rapid population growth, labor markets, and contexts of
reception, leaving aside questions of racialization and corresponding subjectivities of “educated,” middle class Latinx like teachers. Thus, little research has been conducted as to how Latinx teachers and educators, specifically, make sense of their racialized identities and subject positions with/in newer Latinx contexts like the U.S. South (Colomer, 2018). We are left to question how Latinx teachers, both by themselves and the larger society, become part of the racial paradigms normalized (Verma, Maloney, & Austin, 2017) in the (micro)spaces and places of the United States South. 

In the only empirical study I found to explicitly investigate Latinx teacher racial identity in the South, Colomer (2018) uses the theoretical frame of máscaras (process of masking through makeup) to demonstrate how individuals (re)invent themselves (mask/unmask) to negotiate oppressive and racialized local Southern contexts. Through individual case studies with six Latinx teachers in Georgia, Colomer finds these máscaras often take the form of unintentional acts of denying parts of their Latinx identity as a means to navigate the constraining racialized spaces of the South. For example, Colomer writes about one teacher participant, María:

María, who was also fair-skinned, was visibly taken aback during our first conversation when I referred to participants in this study as ‘people of color’. She quickly asked, ‘I thought this was a study of Hispanic teachers?’... In her mind, the terms ‘Hispanic’ and ‘people of color,’ were not interchangeable...When asked which term she preferred, María made it clear that the term ‘Latina’ was also off the table because a very clear image came to mind – an image with which she did not want to be associated...and she preferred a term that positioned her as an educated and professional woman...Instead, she coped by distancing herself from the Latinx community, an action grounded in self-rejection and self-hate. (p. 10)

I feel it necessary to quote this scholarship at length because it shows a contractionary, shifting, and uneasy racialized subjectivity. María, like other teachers in Colomer’s study, displays a sense of self, a relationship with how she is seen, heard, and
imagined, that is “constantly in flux,” (Colomer, 2018, p. 10) that is the site of competing racialized discourses. Maria internalizes racist constructions about Latinx, (self)surveils and (self)governs herself to appear professional and educated, and at the same time understands her presence as “Hispanic” is outside the White norm. She holds in tension that she is not White, but also not a person of color; a signal of both her struggle to acknowledge more expansive subject positions, and the influential role Whiteness takes in the racialization process of teachers (Castagno, 2014; Daniels & Varghese, 2019; Mazurett-Boyle & Antrop-Gonzalez, 2013). In conclusion, Colomer points to the need for all members of school communities in El Sur Latinx to intentionally develop racial literacy skills and to create spaces where Latinx teachers (and I would add Latinx students) no longer worry about being “unmasked” (Colomer, 2018, p. 15).

Similar to Colomer’s research that finds Latinx teachers are racialized in school spaces, two educators, sisters Jennifer Burgos-Kelly and Vanessa Burgos-Carnes (2014) share their own experiences about growing up and eventually teaching in South Carolina. They share that from an early age race was made central to their lives, how they were

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68 Colomer (2018) defines racial literacy skills as the ability to read, and appropriately react, to racially stressful situations and interactions. She writes, “Racial literacy is key to moving beyond these unhealthy responses that perpetuate the silencing of minoritized individuals” (p. 4). Thus, racial literacy is an important, and underdeveloped, skill for white individuals to develop throughout their education. Castagno (2014) argues that Whiteness prefers niceness to racial literacy for “nice people avoid potentially uncomfortable or upsetting experiences, knowledge, and interactions” (p. 9).
69 Although Colomer’s invocation of space is ephemeral, it speaks to a real need to theorize and understand spatial relationships; how space is a technique of power used not only to prohibit but also to produce ways of becoming in El Sur Latinx (Foucault, 2007a; Huxley, 2007). Hence, the novel and important use of my theoretical framing in Chapter Three.
racialized as an Other, and how such experiences impact their current teaching. In an essay named “Somos Maestras [We are Teachers],” the sisters write:

I don’t think South Carolina was ready for an 8-year-old Latina going into 3rd grade...I had come from a place where cultural differences were accepted, to a place that seemed like race was the main attraction. I began to question my culture and realized a lot of things during this time period seemed to be about Black and White. (Burgos-Carnes & Burgos-Kelly, 2015, p. 66)

The Burgos make plain that race felt overly binarized in the South and later in the essay recall being ridiculed due to their appearance, accent, and clothes as young people. Thus, starting from an early age, and continuing to the present, these two educators found themselves out of place with/in what they perceive as a static, traditional, and strict, Black/White racial binary (Beck & Stevenson, 2016). Finally, they communicate how their own racialization leads them to make more accepting spaces for their own Latinx students. In this way the two teachers both internalize the racialization processes, while also using knowledge of it to advocate for their marginalized students.

Language

In the previous section I point to the racialization of language while in this one I demonstrate how Latinx teachers are called upon by schools, communities, and researchers to play an outsized role in Latinx education, most notably with their perceived Spanish language fluency. This appears to be especially true in El Sur Latinx as Latinx teachers’ Spanish skills are often a major part of an ad-hoc and improvised approach to Latinx and immigrant students (Colomer, 2010, 2104; Wortham, Murillo Jr.,
& Hamann, 2015). For those Latinx educators who do possess Spanish speaking ability it can be a specialized skill-set to better serve Latinx students and families, a way to skirt legal mandates, and perhaps an opportunity for exploitation. Also, worth noting, again, are the large numbers of Latinx educators who operate as paraprofessionals (Beck & Stevenson, 2016; Gilpin & Beck, 2006; Ocasio, 2014) and who take on these demands that are rarely commensurable to work hours and wages.

Both the opportunities and concerns of leaning on Spanish-speaking Latinx teachers for language needs are amplified in El Sur Latinx. For example, there is often an assumption within schools that Latinx teachers can take on the additional demands of (unpaid) translation and interpretation (Colomer, 2010, 2014, 2019; Griffin, 2018). Yet, such pro-bono work is simultaneously demanded by schools and unvalued (Aponte, 2018; Griffin, 2018). Many Latinx teachers accept the further labor because they see no alternative—that is, even though few teachers are certified to translate and interpret (Aponte, 2018), there is a dire need throughout schools that do not provide adequate language services. Colomer (2014, 2019) explains that Latinx teachers in the South are caught in a double bind as they are committed to serving the Latinx community through translation/interpretation, advocacy, community outreach, and their social capital, but are employed in culturally subtractive contexts that simultaneously expect, but do not acknowledge, these efforts. Thus, such additional work might be especially onerous for

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70 In the forward to the 2002 book, Education in the New Latino Diaspora, Levinson writes, “schools are institutions where “actors - teachers, administrators, students, and their parents - develop strategies in response to one another and...mediate relationships between immigrant households and broader political-economic structures” (p. ix). It is clear that individual Latinx teachers are made to play a particular role in such “mediation” in lieu of larger systemic transformation.
Latinx teachers that are already being asked to give up lunches, planning periods, or in-class instruction for “emergency” meetings, conferences, and disciplinary issues. Perhaps most concerning, these additional “requests,” often invisible and uncompensated labor, rest on an essentialized Latinx teacher subject, one that is bilingual in Spanish, deferential to other people’s requests/work, and always available to “help.” As is the case in my own research, this is not necessarily the case across Latinx teachers.

Such uses of Spanish speaking Latinx teachers fit into what Flores (2019a) outlines as neoliberal governmentality, an effort to commodify diversity and extract value from a “post-racial” deployment of multiculturalism (see also Melamed’s [2006] conceptualization of neoliberal multiculturalism). Whereas previously established grids of intelligibility, in line with what Flores calls nation-state/colonial governmentality, helped to create “national” subjects through imposed/disciplined monolingualism (i.e. strict anti-Spanish efforts in schools), neoliberal governmentality “seeks to produce dynamic neoliberal subjects who have competencies in multiple languages that can be used to maximize corporate profits” (Flores, 2019a, p. 62). Although (most) schools are not corporations aimed at profitability, they do face the demands of a neoliberal agenda which cuts funding and resources and tasks schools to find privatized or “more efficient” (read improvised) solutions. Importantly, and interestingly, both processes are not incompatible. That is, Spanish speaking Latinx students and individuals can be schooled in monolinguisitc systems with under-resourced and deleterious ESOL programs (Beck & Allexsaht-Snider, 2002; Kandel & Cromartie, 2004; Krupnick, 2018; Portes & Salas, 2010, 2015; Tarasawa, 2013) in areas were politicians push English-Only spaces through legislative ordinances, and bilingual teachers can be seen as economically viable subjects
that “safely,” through rhetoric gestures toward post-racial diversity (Melamed, 2006), meet the demands of schools/districts by saving them from hiring professional translators/interpreters. In this way, efforts at expanding Spanish programs and communications are decoupled from social justice concerns as the production and deployment of bilingualism becomes an neoliberal economic project rather than a political one. Latinx educators, despite their relative advantage in comparison to “low-skilled” workers are still subject to, and resist, similar processes that seek to exploit labor and produce more docile bodies. Such processes extend to efforts that aim to make Spanish more available to non-Latinx students.

While schools in the South have traditionally relied on a “problem” discourse towards Spanish speakers to further conservative political ideologies and craft policies aimed at rapid “Americanization” (Beck & Allexsaht-Snider, 2002), there has been a tandem move to commodify the language resources of some Latinx teachers (Cervantes-Soon, 2014). To this end, Spanish is seen as a crucial competitive advantage for White students to (re)produce dominant group (White upper/middle class) advantages under global capitalism. This commodification can be seen in efforts to create globally minded citizens with “world class skills,” programs like the International Baccalaureate

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71 In 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education adopted the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. The Profile lists three major goals, world-class knowledge, world-class skills, and life and career characteristics. Under these three goals are skills like “global perspectives,” “multiple languages,” “work ethic,” “creativity and innovation,” and “self-direction.” The Profile was developed by a coalition of education and business leaders (more of the latter) organized as “TransformSC” under the South Carolina Council of Competitiveness (South Carolina Council on Competitiveness, 2015; South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.). There is no mention of equity, social justice, or critical pedagogy; instead it is clear such a Profile is part of a neoliberal multicultural discourse that promotes individual and global “competitiveness.” To this end, Attick
(Monreal, 2016), and framing two-way immersion initiatives as a form of gifted education (Cervantes-Soon, 2014). Such moves demand assimilation into White middle class norms about/programs for bilingual language education that erase or distort Latinx culture, repeat “systemic miseducation” (Beck & Allexsaht-Snider, 2002), and reify “a neoliberal ideology that can lead to an easy disregard of equity issues” (Cervantes-Soon, 2014, p. 70).

Cervantes-Soon (2014) utilizes the metaphor of a double-edged sword to critically analyze the implementation of two-way immersion programs, and the resultant use of Latinx Spanish speakers and teachers in El Sur Latinx. On the one hand, Latinx teachers who speak Spanish may use these language skills to lift up children, provide a relevant education, create a welcoming environment for all students (e.g. cultural guardians, Flores, 2017a), and critique and disrupt anti-Latinx, nativist, and nationalist views. However, on the other side of the sword—the sharper side in El Sur Latinx—such programs and teachers are designed for White students who benefit from the commodified and profitable objectification of Latinx teachers in order to get “an edge” in the global marketplace. Indeed, these programs can be a tool of power that help reify and reproduce existing social, economic, and academic inequalities as minoritized-language speakers benefit only as a byproduct and “remain subject to the interests, desires, and

(2017) argues that teachers are modern homo economici, working in an education system that produces (teachers as self-governing) economic subjects that conform to the rules of the neoliberal market.

72 For investigations of Dual Language Bilingual Education that center equity and justice perspectives see Zuniga, Henderson, & Palmer (2018).
fears of those in power” (Cervantes-Soon, 2014, p. 73). Importantly, Latinx teachers do stand exterior to these power relations, but play a productive and agonistic role in the (re)creation of these school spaces (Foucault, 1990) which I look at in more detail next.

As such, the discourses about Spanish, Spanish speakers, and Latinx teachers move through, and with/in, spaces, dynamically constituting spaces, and the subjects therein. Inside schools there are quite literally spaces of language (classrooms, foreign language halls, ESOL rooms, documents, conversational norms) and languages of space (outside, inside, portable classrooms, “west/east” hall) produced not only by physical demarcation, but also by the people, discourses, and relations that intersect to create their meanings. In this sense, Latinx Spanish language teachers are an influential part of a school’s linguistic landscape, defined by Menken, Rosario, and Valerio (2018) as the physical representations and discursive practices of speaking, hearing, and interacting with language, of a school. However, unless there is broad support to critically implement multilingual linguistic landscapes (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Menken, Rosario, & Valerio, 2018) Latinx Spanish teachers are often physically segregated into “special” areas, a spatialized marker of their Othered status as language teachers.

Yet even more than the boundaries of physical place, Latinx teachers are delegitimized in their daily intra-actions. As a Peruvian Spanish teacher spelled out in pilot research, “students and parents treat you differently because you are not as important as other subjects and teachers, you are just a Spanish teacher” (Pilot interview, 2018).

73 I would qualify the above quotation to reiterate a Foucauldian perspective that power is not an object one group or individual possesses; rather power is put to use and applied. To this point he writes, “Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared...power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations” (Foucault, 1990, p. 94).
March 2018). This teacher shows her exclusion is both enabled by physical space, but extended through networks of spatialized relations that go beyond the physical classroom. Space is used as a tool, a technique of power. Yes, people are arranged, placed, and organized in place, but their subjectivities, how they see themselves and how others see them, stretch beyond physical (de)marcation. Subjectivity is decentered by/with the spatial arrangements as who and what emerges with the negotiation, challenging, and/or acceptance of the “where,” networks and relations of power.

The relationships between Latinx Spanish teachers, language, and space foreshadows an integral understanding of my theoretical frame, that the “self is both constituting and constituted, motivated by agency yet produced by power relations” (Zembylas, 2005, p. 944). A visual representation of how these complex, interdependent forces—Latinx teachers, language, neoliberal notions of multiculturalism, and space—come together is a bulletin board in the language hall of the school I taught middle social studies in central South Carolina (see Figures 2.1, 2.2).

Figure 2.1. Author personal photo, Hispanic Heritage Month bulletin board in school’s foreign language hall.
The hallway bulletin board “honoring” Hispanic Heritage Month displayed cartoon images of donkeys, sombreros, and men in *sarapes*. Along with these offensive caricatures stood “great Hispanic explorers” like Francisco Pizarro alongside “accomplishments” like the California missions. Such depictions of Latinx history reify stereotypes, incorrectly portray history, and advance “safe” and “color-blind” multiculturalism in the very (s)places that are supposedly “reserved” for Latinx teachers. Perhaps more contradictory and complex, the bulletin board was designed by a teacher from Puerto Rico. Thus, relations between space, power, and subjectivity are complex; they are negotiated, refused, and encountered, constantly shifting with each encounter. In sum, the language skills of Latinx teachers in the South can disrupt and reinforce power relations, (re)create space, and be the objects of praise and commodification. These intra-actions traverse a multiplicity of other power relations such as those with/in social class and workplace which I now outline next.
Teaching as a Middle Class Profession

This section reviews literature that details Latinx teachers’ views and experiences of teaching as a profession. In particular, I pay attention to the growth of Latinx in the teaching profession, their reasons for entering teaching, class dynamics, and workplace interactions. First, it is important to note that the number of Latinx teachers and teachers of color continues to rise and, as a whole, the teaching profession is getting slightly more diverse. For example, from the late 1980s to 2011, the number of minority teachers doubled, from about 325,000 to 642,000, and, numerically there are far more teachers of color than before (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). This growth has been led by increases in Latinx teachers in Western states like California. Statistics from the 2018-2019 school year show that slightly over 20% of all California teachers are “Hispanic or Latino,” and that number surpasses 40% in Los Angeles (California Department of Education, 2019; Los Angeles Unified School District, 2018). Latina teachers have helped fuel this growth and teaching is the top “professional” occupation for first, second, and third generation Latinas (Flores, 2017a). Thus, some researchers argue that as Latinx, specifically Latina, teachers succeed White middle class women in the teaching force, there is a Latinization of schools and the teaching force (Flores, 2017a).

Despite the significant rise in the volume of Latinx teachers, the Latinx teacher-student gap continues to increase (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Boser, 2011, 2014; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014; Shapiro & Partelow, 2018). This is due in large part to the consistently rapid growth of non-White students in public schools paired with a shrinking White population in many areas. Thus, Latinx student growth
substantially outpaces the steady increase of Latinx teachers. In spite of these trends (Latinx teacher increases with proportional representative decreases), academic research has been slow to examine the professional and personal lives of Latinx teachers (Flores, 2017a). This is especially the case in so-called new(er) receiving contexts like El Sur Latinx. Thus, as I share the following academic research, starting with why Latinx choose teaching as a career, it is clear that a greater variety of Latinx teacher experiences warrant investigation.

Although there is a body of research that suggests Latinx become teachers to counter the racialized, deficit views they experienced as students, and continue to see in schools (Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Ochoa, 2007), sociologist Glenda Flores (2017a) argues that Latina teachers develop this deep social responsibility toward Latinx students after they start their careers. That is, entering teaching was more a “serendipitous fluke of fate” (Flores, 2017a, p. 71), than a calling or vocation. This complicates rationales for Latinx choosing teaching as one career among many options and leads Flores (2017a) to highlight the predominance of class push factors in this decision.

Using interviews, participant observation, and focus groups with Latina teachers in Southern California, Flores’ (2011, 2017a) research reveals how these educators “fall into teaching,” a career that was not their first choice. Similar to findings from Szecsi and Spillman’s (2012) interviews with minoritized pre-service teachers, Flores (2017a) writes that many Latina teachers grow up as high achievers and have career aspirations outside the field of education. Flores (2017a) forwards a concept, class ceilings, to help explain how working-class backgrounds in combination with other race, class, and gender inequalities shape occupational outcomes and help channel Latinas into teaching.
Specifically, as the children of working class and/or immigrant families, Latina teachers eschew initial prospects of law or medical school because they feel pressure to immediately make money post-bachelor’s degree. In effect, teaching is seen as a quick and accessible “pathway” into a professional/middle class career that will help support their family.\footnote{This is in line with research from Vallejo and Lee (2009) that finds middle class Latinx professionals (in Southern California) who grew up poor, rather than middle class, feel more of an obligation to give back and financially provide for parents and other kin. As Latinx teachers “choose” teaching as a channel to the perceived benefits of the middle class, they share a workplace with other college-educated professionals and encounter sets of relations that are classed, raced, and gendered.} Researchers share that the (micro)relations(hips) and networks within schools matter greatly to teacher experiences (Bristol, 2018; Bristol & Shirrell, 2019; Flores, 2011, 2015, 2017a; Ortiz & Telles, 2012; Sun 2018). For example, Flores (2011) finds significant differences in the workplace experiences of Latina teachers in a school with majority Latinx teachers compared to a school with White-majority staff. At the school with the majority Latinx staff, Latina teachers reported positive work relationships, shared workload, culturally relevant instruction, and communal meals and celebrations. In contrast, Latina teachers at the White-dominant staffed school shared feelings of isolation, constrained Latinx cultural expression, and more rigid occupation hierarchies.

\footnote{As noted previously, Latinx have long held disproportionate shares of “subordinate” positions (teaching assistants and paraprofessionals) and entry level jobs (custodians, secretaries, food services, and duty supervisors) in public schools (Flores, 2017a; Gomez, 1973; Griffin, 2018; United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1971). Flores (2017a) writes that Latinx family members and friends in these jobs provide social capital and links within “thick, localized, neighborhood networks” (p. 48) that pave the way and help secure teaching jobs for college-educated Latinx (often in schools they attended).}
Flores (2011) concludes that Latina teachers are “racialized tokens” in the workplace. These teachers “made it” to a certain class/professional level, but they do not necessarily seek racial integration with their White colleagues: “Rather, because of anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican sentiment, they long for the satisfaction, safety and the comfort racial self-segregation provides” (Flores, 2011, p. 333) in their respective workplaces. While Flores’ research was conducted in Southern California, Bristol & Shirrell (2019) find similar patterns of social exclusion for so-called “loners” (only teacher of color at a school; Bristol, 2018) at mid-sized districts in the Midwest. Further, there is also evidence that Latinx teachers, in line with other college-educated Latinx professionals, in majority White, middle class workspaces, report higher levels of discrimination, feel passed over for promotions, and get asked to speak on behalf of their racial/ethnic groups (Flores, 2011; Griffin, 2018; Ortiz & Telles, 2012).

Relatedly, given the numerical scarcity of Latinx teachers in the South, it is a safe assumption that many find themselves as the only, or one of the only, Latinx teachers at their schools, their workplaces/spaces. What becomes a key question, then, for Latinx teachers, schools, and El Sur Latinx, is “the way that power relations develop in tandem with spatial relations, each exerting a distinct but not necessarily deterministic pressure on the other” (Mills, 2007, p. 51). As Latinx teachers negotiate power relations and spatial arrangements (classroom location, curriculum, schedule, students) at the local/micro level, they can be simultaneously and multiplicitously challenged, accepted, antagonized, internalized, even ignored with ambivalence or ambiguity in both covert and overt ways. And as Ball (2016) queries, although individuals must necessarily antagonize, refuse, and/or struggle against the power and spatial relations they are
detrimentally made subject to, are such actions sufficient? Without more collective action or refusal, might Latinx teachers perform such resistance in secret, closing the door to teach or switching instruction style/language when an administrator walks in, inadvertently refracting surveillance mechanisms and ways of becoming back on their peers and colleagues (fabrications; Webb, 2007, 2009, 2015). Such contested, contradictory, and nuanced making and remaking of Latinx teachers with/in the spaces of El Sur Latinx gets to the heart of the research at hand.

**Special Skills, Beliefs, and Attitudes**

A large body of academic literature examines the unique cultural perspectives, knowledges, and mindsets that Latinx teachers bring to bear in their teaching experiences. Much of this research is similar to, and intersects with, the literature examined in the subsection on “The Potential of Latinx Teachers to Improve the Academic Outcomes and School Experiences of Students of Color” (see, p. 83). For example, Latinx teachers foster a sense of *confianza* (trust) (Moll & Arnot-Hopffer, 2005; Newcomer & Puzio, 2016; Ochoa, 2007), demonstrate higher expectations due to favorable views of Latinx students (Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012), model bicultural political consciousness (Ochoa, 2007), confront issues of racism (Caldas, 2018; Villegas & Irvine, 2010), disrupt deficit views of Latinx history and culture (Gabriel, Martinez, & Obiakor, 2016; Martinez, 2016; Monreal, 2017, 2019a), and engage in culturally relevant teaching practices (Aviña, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Morales, Aviña, & Delgado Bernal, 2016; Wortham & Contreras, 2002). Adding to the aforementioned list, Bybee’s (2015) review of research on Latinx and minority teachers finds they bring unique cultural perspectives and knowledge which inform practice, life history experiences that facilitate connections to
students/families, and beliefs about the nature of knowledge which foster more cooperative and understanding approaches to Latinx students (p. 75). Although many Latinx educators steer clear of radical language and attitudes such as *la lucha* or *la causa*\(^{75}\) (Urrieta Jr., 2007, see also Sosa-Provencio, 2019), it is clear that many aim to make space for community, empowerment, *cariño* (authentic loving, caring, and sharing relationships), social justice, cultural pride (Colín, 2014; Valenzuela, 1999, 2017; Valenzuela, Zamora, & Rubio, 2015), and critical hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). One such conceptualization and synthesis of these special skills, attitudes, and beliefs is what Flores (2017a) calls cultural guardianship.

**Cultural Guardian(ship)**

Flores (2017a) names the actions of Latinx teachers, especially Latina-identified teachers that honor and value students’ home/cultural lives in efforts to see them succeed, as cultural guardianship. She sees it as a skill that Latina teachers develop during their teaching careers, and a major impetus to continue in the profession. More specifically, Flores (2017a) describes cultural guardians as “upwardly mobile Latina teachers who are in direct contact with underprivileged students and who consciously deploy a range of sanctioned and unsanctioned strategies in order to protect and help children they see as sharing their cultural roots” (p. 65).\(^{76}\) Some of these specific strategies include culturally responsive teaching, asset-based framing, Spanish language maintenance, intentional mentorship, welcoming families to school spaces, “more-than-routine-service,” sharing personal vignettes of overcoming adversity, providing financial assistance, exposing

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\(^{75}\) The fight or movement (for equal rights for Latinx).

\(^{76}\) This echoes what many Black teachers did during de jure segregation and continue/d to do after (Baker, 2011; Foster, 1998; Kridel, 2015; Pawlewicz, 2020; Walker, 2013).
students to middle class norms, gently disrupting gender norms, and challenging school rules. While some of these strategies are perhaps easier to deploy in traditionally Latinx areas (like California where Flores’ research takes place), Latinx teachers in the South also find spaces to perform aspects of such guardianship.

To this point, Colomer’s (2014) research with Latinx Spanish teachers in Georgia asks, “What types of capital do Latina Spanish teachers exchange with Latino students in new Latino communities?” (p. 350). In one of the few empirical studies that centers the experiences of practicing Latinx educators in the South(east), Colomer (2014) places a heavy emphasis on teachers’ social capital in communicating and using institutional knowledge about schools. As lack of understanding of the U.S. educational system and low parental involvement in the schools are identified barriers in the South(east) (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005), the institutional knowledge of Latinx teachers acts as a key bridge for the broader Latinx community. How Latinx teachers use this form of social capital was quite diverse and locally negotiated. Some teachers explicitly advocated for Latinx students to be put in different tracks, passed along knowledge about free programs, and made parents aware of their rights. At the same time, Latinx teachers protected the capital they had earned and were forced “to tread lightly to stay in the game” (Colomer, 2014, p. 358) as too-much effort would raise the ire of non-Latinx colleagues, parents, and school administration. In some cases, this meant looking negatively with a deficit lens at Latinx students who might not be “worth their investment” of capital because they refused to play the rules of the game. Colomer

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77 It is important to note, however, that the study was confined to Latina Spanish teachers and not Latinx teachers as a whole.
concludes that institutional support is a key variable in understanding the use of this capital because “Latina Spanish teachers who deem the sociopolitical context of their school detrimental to the education of Latinos, [may be] apprehensive about advocating for Latinos on their own” (Colomer, 2014, p. 363). In these cases, Colomer (2014) suggests that Latinx teachers increase their social-spatial networks to find new connections to social justice organizations at the local, state, and national level that support equitable education for Latinx students.

A crucial understanding with regard to Flores’ (2017a) and Colomer’s (2014) research is how a cultural guardian subjectivity demonstrates how power relations are multiple, shifting, localized, vertical, and horizontal. Not only do Latinx teachers deploy “unsanctioned” and “off the books” strategies that signal resistance, they also negotiate workplace interactions (anti-Latinx colleagues; Colomer) and structural impediments like standardized testing (Flores) that limit their advocacy, shape their practice, and exert productive pressure toward an instrumental and rational subject position. More to this point, in Flores’ research some Latina teachers worked in schools designated as Program Improvement.78 In one such school, Flores explains how testing tensions changed the school context and teacher work expectations (i.e. spatialized relations and becomings). The school’s marquee was changed to “Pruebas en 3 días” ([Standardized] Tests in 3 days), teachers wrote and translated “testing letters” about the importance of health during testing week, educators implored students to try their best on “un examen

78 Program Improvement schools were in danger of (California) state takeover unless standardized scores improved.
importante,” and stakeholders generally reported a degree of fear associated with the tests.

Thus, even as Latina educators guard their students cultural roots, advance ethnic identity, and find purpose in “giving back,” they are simultaneously “regulated by the institutions and the schools in which they work” (Flores, 2017a, p. 95). Latina teachers are not immune to the productive forces of an “accountability” policy discourse, and the accompanying pedagogical requirements, that circulate through their institutions, battle for the soul of the teachers (Popkewitz, 1998), and incite teachers to use power, such as changing the linguistic landscape (i.e. school’s marquee and “testing letters”), on behalf of the testing regimes (Hara & Sherbine, 2018). In this way power works rather vertically through teachers, but also horizontally as teachers struggle to recognize and implement their guardianship with/in the productive power of standardized testing/accountability discourse. Further, regardless of their multiple forms of success with students, teacher “efficacy” was measured by their students’ performance on said tests. Teacher understanding (of themselves) as a cultural guardians is, then, qualified by their location within a specific set of social relations, in this case their own schools vis-a-vis the norms and outcomes of student “achievement” and neoliberal accountability discourse. The teachers in Colomer’s study faced similar tensions as they exercise power through social bonds and cultural capital to counter harmful school structures while still conforming to and reifying “the rules of the game.”

79 This battle of subjectivities of Latinx teachers is illuminated in two quotes. In one sense the teachers demonstrate their ability to use power, even in unequal relations to advocate for students. As Foucault (1982) states there is “no relationship of power is without the means of escape or possible flight” (p. 794). At the same time, the spaces
teacher subjects stand as an assemblage of myriad, dispersed, and localized power relations. The degree to which Latinx teachers’ recognize, negotiate, refuse, accept, even persist through, the power relations they are subjected to offer deep insights into how Latinx teachers are made in, and remaking, the South.80

In sum, although research suggests that many Latinx teachers, indeed, develop special skills, attitudes, and beliefs based on their own experiences that in turn work to benefit students and schools, it is crucial we don’t equate such practices to core, inherent, or transcendent attributes of the Latinx teacher.81 For then we fall into the trap of creating an *a priori* Latinx teacher that somehow stands apart from, and outside, the very contingent, unequal, racialized socio-spatial power relations that gives rise to such experiences and knowledges about the self. Hence, while there is a general belief, supported by the literature, that increasing the number of Latinx teachers and educators will lead to better, more just outcomes for schools and students, it is also necessary to question the explanatory and limiting mechanisms for such thinking as it often implicitly

teachers are embedded in show, “a subject’s ability to speak is ontologically bounded by the discourses through which his or her subjectivity is constructed” (Heller, 1996, p. 91).

80 One participant, Andrea a middle school Spanish teacher, sums it up nicely, “I love the fulfillment, I’m making a difference...This job has been very challenging, having to learn how to deal with middle school kids, it is difficult dealing with personalities and parents...how do you continue doing something you are passionate about but there are so many obstacles to continuing?” (Interview, April, 2018)

81 Tarver (2011) elucidates this point in reference to the confirmation hearings of justice Sonya Sotomayor. She writes, “the claim that [Sotomayor] ‘would hope’ that her own experiences—including an awareness of the particularity of those experiences in a specifically racialized and gendered political context, the artificiality and ambiguity of that context, and the dominant discourse’s explanatory inadequacy for it—might lead her to make better rulings than those of white men whose privileged perspectives have never been questioned is more than reasonable” (p. 813). In sum, it is not that being a Latina gives her a priori insights that are valuable to the Court, it is that becoming a Latinx *within* certain macro/micro power relations (for example, the U.S., New York, her neighborhood, her career, etc.) helps to produce such wisdom.
rests on essentialized practices, identities, and constructions of Latinx teachers. The
danger being that an permanent, stable Latinx teacher subject is used to close off
potentialities and different ways of becoming, reinforcing—even reinventing if
necessary—the power/knowledge processes that individuals are subject(ed) to in
maintenance of unequal relations. In short it is necessary to problematize, and point to the
remarkable injustice of such an assumption that Latinx (or any other teacher of color)
possess inherent qualities that transcend their social-spatial relations and that make them
solely responsible for disrupting educational systems of injustice. I turn to this
fundamental insight in problematizing role model discourse.

**Essentialization, The Static Subject, and Role Model Discourse**

A central argument I maintain throughout this review of literature is that there is a
tension between the demonstrated need and efficacy of Latinx teachers and the tendency
to collapse their becomings in flattened ways. Academic literature and popular
discourse—that often work with theoretical frames that hold a transcendent subject—
more often than not, create and reinforce a rather static understanding of an idealized,
even essentialized, Latinx teacher (Singh, 2018a,b, 2019) that misses the notion that the
“self becomes through spaces and processes that are fluid and shifting, relational and
local, and embedded and embodied” (Guyotte, Flint, & Latopolski, 2019, p. 2). While
individuals with similar cultures and ethnic backgrounds share engagement in like
activities and practices, it is incorrect to assign general traits of individuals as
categorically attributive, or *essential*, to ethnic group membership (Gutiérrez & Rogoff,
2003). This negates the rich variation and diversity within groups and treats culture as
incorrectly stagnant and unchanging. Latinx teachers are commonly essentialized, held as
a monolithic whole, by students, parents, other educators, and academic research to inherently “connect” with students of color, teach foreign language, and be immigrants who rose from low socio-economic class groupings (Griffin, 2018; Martinez, 2016). Perhaps these essentialized markers come together to produce the unquestioned assumption and accompanying subjectivity that Latinx teachers will automatically be the role models Latinx students need.

**Problematizing Role Model Discourse**

As I make clear in the section outlining rationales for increasing the number of Latinx teachers, a repeated, yet unrealized, intervention to improving education for Latinx is the presence of Latinx educator role models. The general rationale behind this suggestion is straightforward as Ocasio (2014) argues, “one of the most compelling arguments in favor of an increase in teachers of color is that these teachers act as role models for students” (p. 244). This filters down to the places and spaces of the South(east) as a key takeaway of Bohon, Macpherson, and Atiles’ (2005) qualitative research (interviews and focus groups) on educational barriers in Georgia posits Latinx role models as an area for improvement. Such ephemeral solutions leave aside more nuanced narratives about Latinx and Latinx teachers, and the relational spaces they emerge and engage with/in, especially in the contentious and restrictive atmosphere for Latinx in the South.

A post-structural frame that links processes of power/knowledge with the production of space and subjectivity which I foreshadow here, and outline in greater detail next chapter, helps us problematize how “reasonable” identities, like those of role model, are taken up as unquestioned idea(l)s even though in reality they are neither
“natural” nor “inherent.” Power/knowledge constructions legitimate regimes of truth (Foucault, 1980) and help to define “common-sense” ways of knowing and acting (yourself). The production of truth, thus, links to the way individuals and populations productively conduct their behaviors (i.e. govern themselves) and conduct the conduct of others (Foucault, 1991a, 2007c). This happens with/in, and is a product of interrelations and intra-actions, that is to say relational space, and as such “space is fundamental to any exercise of power” (Foucault, 1984, p. 254; Elden & Crampton, 2007; Foucault, 2007a, Gregory, Meusburger, & Suarsana, 2015; Huxley, 2007; Massey, 1998b; Murdoch, 2006). Put simply, power, knowledge, practice, and space are interwoven with one another (Murdoch, 2006, p. 48) to (re)constitute, (re)produce, and (re)disseminate understandings about, and of, certain self/ves. These relations of power and knowledge intersect with wider social and spatial institutions and discourses to create subject positions (Foucault 1977), such as that of role model.

Applying this theoretic lens helps us understand the effects of certain subject positions made available to Latinx K-12 teachers in the United States South. As circulating discourse and power relations construct Latinx to be (not potentially become)\(^{82}\) role models, institutional and interpersonal relationships coalesce around that positioning. These processes connect diffuse “institutional power and social control with individual decisions and everyday habits of body and mind” (Prasad, 2005, p. 248). For

\(^{82}\) It is important to note that I am not arguing that role models are bad, or even unnecessary. Instead, I believe it is essential for teachers to identify the discourses that construct their understandings of self, and ultimately question if those “taken-for-granted,” identities serve our (Latinx) students and communities. Thus, to be a role model is much different than to intentionally (and critically) become (perhaps by refusal) a role model.
example, this may include not only internalized pressures (i.e. self/disciplining) to be a role model, but also professional development behavior programs, official material outlining how to do so, and specialized recruitment efforts. Key is that such construction opens up certain possibilities and closes off others. Singh (2019) elucidates, “we must ask...who is lost, excluded, or disciplined when we do not resist these embodiments for something more inclusive, open, and critical of essentialist identity politics?” (p. 42). As such, it is this rather static, safe, and conservative notion of role model that places boundaries on more radical action by Latinx teachers that might transform power relations in the South in lieu of upholding the current neoliberal social order. I offer three problematizations of “role model” discourse and subject positions next:

1) What It Means to Be a Role Model?

The Latinx teacher as role model outlines a rather assimilationist, straightforward, and neoliberal construction of individualized success (Singh, 2018a). This notion is built on subtractive models of schooling that ask Latinx students to give up their cultural background in exchange for (unguaranteed) school achievement (Valenzuela, 1999). Such models have proven harmful for students of color and negate the cultural strength and capital students build (Locke, Tabron, & Venzant Chambers, 2017; Yosso, 2005, 2006). Role model teachers are constituted as exemplars, upheld as successful evidence that Latinx individuals will be rewarded within a fair, objective, merit-based education system.

Singh (2019) offers an interesting way to think through language of representation, by asking to whom and for what (ends) is Latinx teacher presence desirable.
Singh (2018a,b) argues male teachers of color, particularly Latinos, are discursively formed to be a corrective representation, a neoliberal multicultural embodiment of what deviant and unregulated students are not, but should aim to be. This notion is fundamentally rooted in deficit and racist ideas about students of color. He writes:

corrective representation is the discursive creation of the ideal male of color teacher subject. This discursive formation seeks to homogenize and propagate an essentialist notion of the male of color teacher, framing the cultural work done in the classroom as always in relation to the imagined deficits in the boys of color he is delegated to control and discipline. (Singh, 2018b, p. 291)

Importantly, such corrective representations intersect with rigid notions of Latino masculinity and sexuality to not only limit critical awareness and communal political actions, but also produce a specific Latino male subjectivity that “good” mentees internalize (Singh, 2018a). To this point, Popkewitz (1998) writes, “the insertion of the idea of a role model can be seen from a different point of view—that is, as the effect of power. It imposes a continuum of values” (p. 51). It is within these continuum of values, these emergent spatial organizations and relations of knowledge, that the idealized Latinx teachers is made subject (and/or resistant) to.

2) Why do We Need Role Models?

First, it is imperative to note that role models, or as Singh (2018b) argues corrective representations, are only needed for certain groups of people, usually Othered and racialized groups. Society creates, and deems, via regimes of truth, these groups to be both outside the norm and also lacking in some fundamental way (Sonu, 2020). In short, a population is created whose bodies become the object(s) of intervention (Foucault, 2007c). Popkewitz (1998) explains this further, “stress[ing] the ‘need’ for children of a role
model since their homes and communities are viewed as not providing support for adequate psychological development” (p. 51). As Singh (2018b) points out these ideas play into problematic assumptions that marginalized groups lack strong familial structures, and that male students of color, in particular, don’t do well in school simply because of the absence of “strong” role models (p. 293).

Second, role model discourse abstracts from the larger sociopolitical reasons for group marginalization, obscures structures of racial inequality, and asks individual teachers of color to solve societal failings. Moreover, teachers tasked with singularly fixing underlying issues of inequity are rarely trained or equipped with the skills to interrogate invisible systems of power/knowledge (Cherry-McDaniel, 2019; House-Niamke & Sato, 2019; Jackson & Knight-Manuel, 2019; Milner, 2008b; Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019) and develop critical sociopolitical empathy for their students (Rodriguez, Monreal, & Howard, 2018; Zembylas, 2012, 2013). In other words, role models as individual solutions are folded back into the systems they seek to disrupt, assuage investigation of the wider factors that perpetuate educational injustice, and foreclose spaces of transformative imagination to become otherwise (Kuntz, 2019, p. 146).

3) Essentializes All Latinx

As stated previously, there is an assumption that Latinx are a monolithic group whose experiences are a one-for-one match with their students. However, my experiences as a fourth-generation Chicano are both radically different from, but still an immanent intra-action with, that of my Latinx students that were raised in South Carolina (Monreal, 2019a). As a Latinx student of mine, one I felt a positive and impactful relationship with, often said, “no offense Mr. M. but you don’t exactly get some of the stuff I like, you like
that old school California stuff.” As our multiple relations meet with other multiple relations with/in space, “new relations are formed and new (spatial) identities come into being” (Murdoch, 2006, p. 22). Role model discourse collapses this multiplicity and ascribes the same needs, experiences, and backgrounds to all Latinx (educators). This washes away the insights and wisdom, the idiosyncratic funds of knowledge and practices, born out of particular, nuanced, and localized cultural experiences and power negotiations within racialized, gendered, and classed political contexts. A wealth of potentiality is lost while also reinforcing deleterious and pernicious ideas about Latinx teachers like their success is limited to certain students (Latinx), certain subjects (ESOL and Spanish), and certain narrow roles (i.e. teacher/paraprofessional rather than administrator). It also sustains a vicious cycle where Latinx teachers are recruited as role models which (re)produce a subjectivity in relation to a rather specific set of knowledges about Latinx that, then, their work upholds. In problematizing why, how, where, and for whom Latinx teachers are expected to be role models, we can better see through the effects of power that limit the transformative insights, skills, and expertise many of these teachers bring to the classroom.

**Conclusion: One Path Forward**

In this chapter I reviewed a broad body of literature on teachers of color, and specifically, research pertinent to the life and work experiences of Latinx educators vis-a-vis larger discussions of teacher representation. I sought to explore the present conditions and webs of power relations of Latinx teachers, and along with Chapter One, bring such insights into conversation with the spaces of El Sur Latinx. A central argument I maintain is that there rests a tension between the demonstrated need for, and efficacy of Latinx
teachers and the incidental proclivity to, then, assign essential qualities and attributes to all Latinx teachers. The outcome results in a rather static Latinx teacher subject that ignores the particularity of lived, emergent, even political, experiences, strengthens the boundaries of normative subject statuses (Ball, 2016), (re)creates the Latinx teacher as an object of/for intervention, limits radical becomings, and reinforces the status quo. In this way, ephemeral calls to increase teacher representation do little on their own to challenge and disrupt webs of existing racialized and unequal power relations. Thus, in addition to a general gap in our knowledge about Latinx teachers in El Sur Latinx, there is also the need to bring different theoretical frames that offer new(er) insights into how Latinx teachers might become differently. A post-structural lens of space and subjectivity, the focus of Chapter Three, offers significant opportunity for extending academic research.

I felt it imperative to focus on the knowledges constructed about Latinx teachers to reflectively problematize “the truths we might tell about ourselves...and the truths that we might tell others” (Ball, 2016, p. 1134). That is, what are the broader claims about Latinx teachers, their (subject) positionings in schools and community spaces, and how might post-structural theories problematize, complicate, and/or develop our knowledge about Latinx teachers? In understanding how the relationships of power/knowledge intersect with wider social and spatial institutions to create constraining subject positions (Foucault 1977), might we seek more transformative ones? For while this production of the neoliberal Latinx teaching subject is certainly constraining, deeper understanding of the productive force of power, knowledge, space and subjectivity allows for acts of refusal and agonism (Ball, 2016; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Foucault, 1982), truth-telling (Ball, 2016; Kuntz, 2019) and care of self (Besley, 2005; Foucault, 1997). For as
Foucault (1982) famously asserts that if relations are immanent then, “every power relationship implies, at least in potentia, a strategy of struggle” (p. 794). It is necessary to interrogate, even refuse, the structural and cultural forces that construct its current state as well as struggle toward more liberatory ends and subjectivities (Singh, 2018b). Only by critiquing so-called “rational,” “common-sense,” and “value-free” interventions and subject positions like role-models can we “open up the possibility of different ways of thinking, ‘seeing,’ and acting as we collectively struggle to make schooling a more just and equitable institution” (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 137). With an eye toward more multiplicitous and just ways of becoming, rather than being, Latinx teacher, I move to explain the theoretical frame of post-structural space and subjectivity, and the resulting relation to my methodological decisions.
CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMING AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Introduction

Figure 3.1. Participant photo, “God’s Eye” (Serena, participant photovoice interview, January, 2020).

As evidenced in Chapters One and Two a dynamic, and fluid, view of Latinx teachers and the people, places, spaces, and contexts of El Sur Latinx largely escapes current academic literature. While there are burgeoning, and separate, lines of research about the shifting demographics in the U.S South generally, as well as a lack of diverse teacher representation nationally, there remains a dearth of research on how these two phenomenon intersect. In short, there is a pressing need for greater investigation into how Latinx teachers are made in, and remaking, their spatialized relations in El Sur Latinx. Toward these ends, this chapter details the theoretical frame, post-structural understandings of subjectivity and relational space, and methodological approach,
qualitative social-spatial and narrative cartography, that underlies the examination of Latinx educators in El Sur Latinx.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. In order to entangle post-structural insights of subjectivity to relational space I first examine post-structural, specifically Foucauldian ideas of power, power/knowledge, governmentality, and subjectivity. Then I outline post-structuralist approaches to teacher subjectivity broadly, and Latinx subjectivity in South Carolina more specifically. Next, I outline my understanding of relational space, influenced heavily by Massey (1998a,b, 2009) and how space and subjectivity are mutually constitutive. I follow this theoretical discussion by linking it to my methodological approach and detailing my data collection methods and analysis procedures.

**Theoretical Influence**

*All these present struggles revolve around the question: Who are we? They are a refusal of these abstractions, of economic and ideological state violence, which ignore who we are individually, and also a refusal of a scientific or administrative inquisition which determines who one is.* (Foucault, 1982, p. 781)

“Who are we?” and “Who are we, where?” As I moved to South Carolina in 2015 to begin doctoral studies and teach middle school these questions emerged over and over again. Living, working, studying, and eventually researching in South Carolina led me to constantly reflect on how the subject positions and corresponding behaviors and identities available to Latinx teachers in the South(east) were similar and different from those in Western states like California where I grew up and began my teaching career. As I sought ways to engage the importance of where and what one is, I initially tied such notions to rather stable, even stereotypical, macro views of place (the South vs. the West). In short, I struggled to locate my self/ves not only in my daily life, but also in the binaries I drew
about people and places. Although this inclination to identify with participants, to (over)emphasize comparisons and contrasts with my own experiences (Johnson-Bailey, 2004; Pillow, 2003; Villenas, 1996), continued to be a tension as the research project developed—one I speak to when I outline reflexivity in greater depth later in this chapter—I found that a post-structural frame helped me problematize such clean boundaries and dichotomies. Understanding space was a product of our macro and micro relations, and as such subjectivity was contingent on different relations rather than an inherent, coherent core proved essential in bringing theory to my own reflexivity across all stages of the research project (Fine et al., 2003). In sum, this post-structural theoretical frame of space and subjectivity enabled me to push against the oversimplification, determinism, and rigidity that often mark essentialized and homogenized categorizations the peoples and spaces of El Sur Latinx toward the idea that El Sur Latinx is one of many Souths. Now, I turn to ideas of power, power/knowledge, and governmentality that are crucial to understanding post-structural subjectivity.

**Power**

Post-structural theorists understand power as diffuse, multiplicitous, and relational rather than a static object that certain groups, persons, or things possess unilaterally (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1990, 2007b; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Popkewitz, 1985, 1998; Prasad, 2005; Webb, 2009). Power acts upon the actions of others; it is a tool; it is a multiplicity of force relations applied, wielded, and negotiated with/in a set or cluster of relations. To this point, Foucault (1982) writes, “In itself the exercise of power...is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult” (p. 789). As such power is
embedded in, and circulates through, macro levels in governing systems (of order, appropriation, and in/exclusion) in addition to being (re)directed and (re)contested at microlevels of individual (self)governance and subjectivity (Popkewitz, 1991, p. 30). Thus, power can be nuanced and localized, even fluid, as people find ways to act/resist/conform within and against unequal relations of power. This is quite different than a dualistic struggle for power between those with and those without (i.e. oppressed/oppressor), and leads Foucault to reiterate that there is no single power to speak of, but instead myriad (relations of) powers (Foucault, 2007b, Heller, 1996). Perhaps most important, power is structured into social-spatial relations through its productive capabilities (Webb, 2009). To better understand the forces of power, Foucault makes clear we must pay attention to its positive, often invisible, techniques.

Foucault (1977, 1980, 1982, 1990, 2007b) argues that to understand the use and effects of power it is necessary to move away from that which prohibits, negates, and represses (juridical concepts of power like that of the sovereign over his subjects) and toward analysis of the microphysics of power, the ways in which continuous power is used in positive manners to produce atomized and individualized subjects (Gordon, 1991). The old notions of “you shall not” (Foucault, 2007b, p. 153) are not nearly as efficient as fashioning individuals which discipline, monitor, and govern themselves. Simply put, “it [power] doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse”

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84 More to this point, Foucault (1990) writes, “there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix—no duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body” (p. 94).
Therefore, power is diffuse and works positively through webs of social-spatial relationships to produce “everyday habits of body and mind” (Prasad, 2005, p. 248), outlining the boundaries of how one can know itself, how one can act, and how one can be(come) (Foucault, 1997, p. 318). Thus, the role of power in how Latinx teachers come to “know” themselves, how they take up, reject, and negotiate their subject positions, links directly to Latinx teacher subjectivities in El Sur Latinx. In order to better understand how power operates in such a productive fashion, Foucault offers additional conceptualizations, tools and techniques, three of which I outline next, power/knowledge, governmentality, and subjectivity. I outline how space intra-acts as a mechanism, technique, and effect of power relations later.

**Power/Knowledge**

The relationship between power and knowledge and the ability for certain statements, understandings, practices, and objects of knowledge to “become the truths that we live by” (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 42) is a central focus for Foucault (1980). Power, then, operates at both the macro and micro levels not only in producing, normalizing, and legitimizing truths, but also in using knowledge as a vehicle to use, define, and disseminate such truths. The important point being that truth is not exterior to power relations; “truth isn’t outside power, or lacking in power...truth is a thing of this world” (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). I leave aside the spatial implications of such ideas for now, but clearly power and knowledge are linked and constituted concurrently and relationally; that which produce each other, sustain each other. Knowledge, as a key technology of power, shapes how we see the world as well as the truths we tell about ourselves and the truths we tell of others (Ball, 2016; Ball & Olmedo, 2013). We become
subjects of (our own) knowledge, “we are hailed, incited to recognize ourselves” (Ball, 2016, p. 1131) in relation to certain truths. In other words, how Latinx teachers come to know themselves is not ontologically prior to such power/knowledge relations. To understand such normalized and locally specific ways of understanding self with/in the world, what Foucault (1980) calls regimes of truth, I next look to the functioning of discourse.

The power of discourse, and the relations of power/knowledge in which discourse moves, is an important feature of post-structural theory. Discourse constitutes more than speech, “it is the intersection of language and the construction of practice” (Popkewitz, 1991, p. 25). To elaborate further, discourse includes the normalized rules, standards, logics, and practices that govern certain relations and set the boundaries for “appropriate” actions. Thus, Latinx teachers become subject to certain knowledges about proper conduct—how they are expected to speak, behave, and even think a certain way with/in certain spaces. Systems of reasoning and knowledge, regimes of truth, become the loci for battles not just over knowledge, but the production of knowledge, and the corresponding conduction (a word/concept I return to when discussing the link to governmentality) of correct action and behavior within certain fields of discursive im/possibility. In this view, discourse about Latinx teachers intersects, and is negotiated within/across, multiplicitous strata (explained in detail in Chapters One and Two)—including that of problem (macro policy discourse in South Carolina), threat (President

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85 In this way post-structuralism generally, and Foucault (1980) specifically, divorces from structuralist notions of the world as ordered a certain way (i.e. Marxist) arguing, “The problem is not changing people’s consciousnesses—or what’s in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth (p. 133).
Trump), Spanish teachers and translators (microlevel school discourse), role models (macro and micro), cultural mediators (macro and micro), and/or “newly” arrived, foreign Other (“New Latinx South”) in addition to discourse about teacher and educators more broadly. Discourse is reinforced and contested through relational webs of interconnectivity as communities of participants compete to master, accept, reject, and/or internalize the accepted truths espoused. Hence, without careful interrogation of certain “common-sense” discourses, without “questioning the obviousness of it,” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 89) about (Latinx/teachers) we risk both becoming subject to certain types of knowledge, missing opportunities for refusal and resistance, and (re)producing the objectifying effects of deleterious discourses. In sum, discourse, a fundamental mechanism and effect of power/knowledge, performs an integral, and productive, part in supervising, assessing, and disciplining bodies, outlining “normal” conduct (i.e. what can be said and done), what counts for knowledge (about one’s self) in particular spaces. Indeed, self-knowledge and self-conduct becomes key sites of struggle (Ball, 2016; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Besley, 2005; Foucault, 1982, Hartmann, 2003) in relation to how people govern themselves and others, a crucial insight I turn to next.

**Governmentality**

Linking particular forms and uses of knowledge, the production of truth(s), “to how people govern (themselves and others),” (Foucault, 1991a, p. 79) is central to understanding not only how people conduct themselves, but also how they see and understand themselves, their subjectivities. Thus, Foucault (1991b, 2007c) uses “government” in both a wide and narrow sense to understand how both rationalities and techniques of power arrange people in relation to other relations; that is, how individuals
(self) manage certain actions, links, customs, and ways of thinking and being with/in normalized rules and standards (Gordon, 1991; Popkewitz, 1998). Studies of governmentality, then, analyze how individuals internalize truths, discipline themselves into certain ways of being/acting based on such truths, and “govern” themselves and others accordingly. As Huxley (2007) outlines, studies in governmentality include the “examination of practices and programmes aiming to shape, guide, and govern the behavior of others and self...including knowing and directing the qualities of a population [and] paying attention to the aims and aspirations...intertwined in attempts to steer forms of conduct” (p. 187). In this way, government is a lateral and hierarchical “activity or practice;” (Gordon, 1991, p. 3) its function is to “conduct the conduct” of individuals. I focus on this dimension of governmentality, the conduct of conduct and its link to subjectivity and space as a key understanding of my theoretical framing.86

In particular, conduct, as a word, demonstrates both object and action, the ways in which individual behavior is the focus of certain ways of normalized being, and the processes of intervention and management to create such being. “Conduct” refers to two things:

Conduct is the activity of conducting (conduire), of conduction (la conduction) if you would like, but it is equally the way in which one conducts oneself (se conduit), lets oneself be conducted (se laisse conduire), is conducted (est conduit), and finally, in which one behaves (se comporte) as an effect of a form of conduct

86 It can be argued that Foucault’s understanding of governmentality becomes increasingly, and necessarily, abstract as he ties it to the “problem” of subjectivity (Senellart, 2007, pp. 387-391). However, in first outlining the concept Foucault (1991b, 2007c) speaks of three meanings of governmentality. First as a technical instrument formed by institutions, mechanisms, and tactics for very specific, yet complex, exercises of power. Second, as a sort of pre-eminent type of power which deploys others such as sovereignty, discipline, knowledge, etc. Third, as the result of a gradual becoming and process of the administrative state.
(une conduite) as the action of conducting or of conduction. (Foucault, 2007c, p. 193)

Conduct(ion), then, works through myriad exercises and techniques of power—in surveillance and discipline (i.e. the Panopticon; Foucault, 1977), the production of subjectivities (Foucault, 1982), the creation and classifications of population (Foucault, 2007c), the organization of space (“the art of spatial distribution of individuals,” Foucault, 2007a, p. 146; Huxley, 2007)—and is reciprocally reinforced through “normalizing” knowledges and grids of intelligibility. Latinx teachers, then, become both an object of knowledge and conduction, and a relational site of intervention. For example, it is possible to think of the rationalities that underlie, even, define the “good” teacher as well as the productive activities, like professional development and learning, that ensure such conduct (of oneself). Power relations are dispersed through such knowledges and activities as teachers effectively work to govern each other and self.

Turning back to Flores’ (2019a) conception of neoliberal governmentality and Melamed’s (2006) complementary notion of neoliberal multiculturalism (see Chapter Two, p. 107) it becomes possible to see how the Latinx teacher subject is produced to conduct themselves in ways that align with certain interests. For instance, international teachers come to South Carolina under the auspices of “cultural exchange,” a code word that pays heed to apolitical and post-racial multiculturalism while also exploiting racialized bodies (Melamed, 2006). School institutions outline the boundaries of Latinx teacher behavior (e.g. teaching Spanish, performing/teaching “culture,” translating/interpreting) that match a superficial, “common sense logic” of multiculturalism (Leonardo, 2013, p. 4) wrapped in individual psychology, economic benefit, and ephemeral rhetoric of equality that purposefully obfuscates and divorces
race/culture from transformational change efforts (Au, 2016; Jay, 2003). Latinx teachers themselves become tasked to be(come) models for a type of multicultural global citizen, someone with “world-class knowledge,” “world-class skills,” and “global perspective” (Profile of South Carolina Graduate, see South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.-a) that use the language of “openness,” “diversity,” and “freedom” for economic gain and competitive advantage (Melamed, 2006). However, Foucault’s later writing saw opportunities for individuals to conduct themselves differently.

In thinking through how individuals might become themselves differently, how they might “resist, refuse, revolt against being conducted in a certain way” (Davidson, 2007, p.xxi), Foucault (1982, 2007c) plays with the notion of counter-conduct. With the introduction of counter-conduct, Foucault (2007c) references an active “struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others [and ourselves]” (p. 201) in hopes that we might take seriously the task of conducting our own conduct. Thus, counter-conduct is not merely the opposite or inverse of “conduct,” rather it is a productive intervention, a process of confrontation and agonism within power relations (Ball, 2016; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Foucault, 1982), including power relations to/with one’s self. As an example, Davidson (2007) calls to mind the ubiquitous exclamation of adults, often teachers, toward children, to “behave yourself!” Echoing a type of ambiguity that Foucault would likely endorse, such a phrase like “behave yourself” is both instruction and an “admonition that we can still learn to combat” (Davidson, 2007, p.xxxii). If, then, we are going to behave and conduct ourselves differently, if we are going to wrestle self-formation from the techniques of government and make ourselves intelligible in different terms, we must take seriously how we come to know ourselves and others. The task is to
see the self not as a coherent, static whole, but a changing point of contact, a site, between self and power relations (Ball, 2016). In this sense, and crucial to the framing of the research with Latinx teachers “the target is not to discover who we are but to refuse who we are,” and in turn “battle for and promote new forms of subjectivity” (Foucault, 1982, p. 785).

Before turning to a more detailed explanation of subjectivity, it is important to say a few words about how governmentality and space work together for this is imperative to my emphasis on relational space. Without expanding (yet) on the underlying assumptions of a relational space, it is enough at this moment to say that if space is the product and process of intra-relations, immanence, and multiplicity (Massey, 1998b; 2009), then it, too, shapes conduct and counter-conduct (of one’s self). The (re)constitution of space, the (re)arrangement of relations produces knowledges, practices, identities, discourses, and other technologies of (self) government. Spatial organizations, spatial distributions, and spatial practices produce and control, they create and surveil, they normalize and pathologize (Crampton, 2007; Foucault, 2007a; Gulson, 2006; Huxley, 2007; Rofel, 1992). The U.S. Census is but one obvious example in which the boundaries of groups, people, and populations are “made up” and constructed, and conduct and forms of subjectivity are “fostered through the positive, catalytic qualities of spaces, places, and environments” (Huxley, 2007, p. 195). Different spaces create different practices of conduct (Foucault, 2007a) and hence, “governmentality is indelibly spatial, both in terms of the spaces it seeks to create and in the causal logics that imbue such attempts with their rationalities [knowledges]” (Huxley, 2007, p. 199). In short, space matters, it is a tool, process, and outcome of power relations, and it shapes our subjectivities. Foucault (1980)
himself says, “everything is spatial, on the material as well as mental level” (p. 148). Although Foucault’s (1977, 1980, 1984, 1986, 2007a,d,e) engagement with space is fiercely contested (see Crampton & Elden, 2007), it is clear his thinking is imbued with spatial overtones and consequences that scholars are increasingly engaging. I will expand on this point later in this chapter, but now I link the government of the self and others to understandings of subjectivity.

**Subjectivity**

The primary focus of the research project is to investigate how Latinx teachers are both made in, and remaking, their specific contexts of South Carolina. In order to accomplish this, I turn to post-structuralist frameworks of subjectivity and space to understand how “the self is both constituting and constituted, motivated by agency yet produced by [spatialized] power relations” (Zembylas, 2005, p. 944). In particular, I am interested in how relationships of power (Foucault 1977, 1980, 1982, 2007b) and their intersections with wider social-spatial institutions create subject positions with accompanying sets of appropriate (self)conduct. This course of work pairs with the above concepts I outlined, power, power/knowledge, and governmentality, as subjectivity becomes a way to study how individuals continually internalize, negotiate, and reject this process of subjection, this conduction of their conduct. In this section, I describe post-structural, specifically Foucauldian, understandings of subjectivity broadly before putting such thinking into conversation with Latinx teacher subjectivity.

In explaining some of his later scholarship, Foucault (1982) states that he is most interested in how “a human being turns himself into a subject” (p. 778). For in problematizing the objectification and corresponding *a priori* coherence of the subject,
there remains an opportunity to destroy and reimagine the subject (Foucault, 1971), to loosen the connection between subjectification and subjection with the purpose of disrupting such relations (Blackman et al, 2008). The central questions in this process being who are we and who are we to become? Foucault (1982) explains how forms and techniques of power apply themselves to such questions:

Power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individual subjects. (p. 781)

Applying this idea that power creates, categorizes, and then “imposes a law of truth” to individuals, allows one to map the processes and technologies—knowledges, discourses, and conduction of conduct(s)—that produce such (self)knowable subjects. Important though is the fact that such subjectivities are constantly (re)negotiated as they are always in process and in relation to other power relations. To this point Foucault (1980) states, “The individual is an effect of power and an element of its articulation” (p. 96). Thus, the subject is a contested “site,” a multiplicitous becoming, an assemblage of different power/knowledge workings and competing conducts, that is constantly in the process of constitution through/with relations across time and space. As Ball and Olmedo (2013) remind us, the subject is continually (re)produced rather than oppressed, “it is animated rather than constrained” (p. 88). Hence, this study is an investigation into the fluid and shifting, relational and local, embedded and embodied becomings, relations, and processes that outline Latinx teachers in the U.S. South.

Applying this understanding of post-structural subjectivity along with the context of El Sur Latinx (Chapter One), narratives of teacher representation (Chapter Two), and my empirical research with Latinx teachers helps to dissolve and also lean into the
tensions between what teachers are made to be (conduct of conduct) versus what they struggle to become (counter-conduct). As academic literature, webs of spatial relations, schools, school districts, and communities construct Latinx teachers to be a certain way, for example language teachers (Colomer, 2010), role models (Singh, 2018b), and translators (Colomer, 2014, 2019), institutional and interpersonal relationships coalesce around that positioning. Power relations, and corresponding discourses of power, are productive, they “work” to open up possibilities for some, while closing off opportunities for others. Power acts through webs of social-spatial relationships, working to write/right the boundaries of how one can act, how one can be(come) in particular spaces and at particular moments.

Yet even as mechanisms of power shape the truths Latinx teachers tell about themselves and others there is the opportunity to confront and reconstitute—“[to]wrestle self-formation from techniques of government and to make [themselves] intelligible in different ways” (Ball, 2016, p. 1135). Individual teachers can do this by conducting themselves differently, thinking through what they (do not) want to become, and telling different, perhaps riskier, truths about themselves. That is, Latinx teachers might not just refuse against, but productively struggle for, new forms of becoming, a process of agonism and ultimately self-care (Ball, 2016; Besley, 2005; Foucault, 1982). The self/ves, then, is a location of strategic skirmishes of control, experimentation, and refusal because “the crucial point is that subjectivity is the point of contact between the self and power” (Ball, 2016, p. 1131).

All this to say that although individuals are governed, they also govern themselves and others, and, as such, can create, or at least intervene, towards different
relations of self, more just spaces of possibility. In fact, by insisting on this productive nature of power it is possible to see resistance to, or refusal to subject positions and assigned identities as its own exercise of power, a form of agency (Foucault, 1982; Heller, 1996). However, such exercises can be liberating and reinforcing, there is no guarantee that teachers will direct this power towards specific ends (Webb, 2009). Therefore, to open up spaces for more radical forms of subjectivity (Foucault, 1982, p. 785) and more intentional acts of resistance, there is the need to problematize accepted, yet uncritiqued “truths” (i.e. Latinx solely as role models and Spanish teachers) that “produce boundaries to organize thought, perception, feeling, and practice” (Popkewitz, 1991, p. 187). As Ball & Olmedo (2013) write, “one’s idea of what one is struggling against has a direct impact on what becomes in struggle” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 93). Hence, examining the processes, spaces, power relations, and relationships of truth (to oneself) that “make” Latinx teachers and educators is a driving task of this dissertation.

In the next subsection I outline how post-structural thinkers outline the teacher subject before turning to how such power/knowledge mechanisms intersect through the categories “Latinx” and “teacher” to constitute and assemble Latinx teacher subject positions. This focus on Latinx teacher subject position is instructive as it starts to map out the different, corresponding, and perhaps even competing political, social, and spatial forces that both act on teachers and that teachers act against.

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87 To this idea, Webb (2009) says, “Unfortunately, some teachers exercise power poorly. That is, teachers use their power to insulate themselves from constructive changes to avoid answering hard questions concerning student well-being. They simply close the classroom door (p. 16).
Teacher Subjectivity

![Mural in the entrance of a participant’s elementary school.](image)

Figure 3.2. Author personal photograph, “Teaching is woven into the tapestry of who we are. We need it...” Mural in the entrance of a participant’s elementary school.

What I expand in this section is what Ball and Olmedo (2013) term the teaching subject, “the teacher as a subject that has been constituted and that has constituted himself [“the tapestry of who we are,” Figure 3.2] through certain practices of power and games of truth in a particular epistemological context” (p. 87). In other words, the teacher subject is the embodied site of different power relations—university preparation (e.g. teacher education, education departments), macro and micro educational policy, neoliberal and instrumental discourse, processes of racialization, pedagogical norms, and community expectations—that struggle for the soul of the teacher (Popkewitz, 1998). The teacher subject is contingent and relational, it is the point of application and the vehicle for normalizing knowledges about the purposes and practices of education (Ball, 2016; Daniels & Varghese, 2019). As many scholars (Apple, 2013; Daniels & Varghese, 2019; Hara & Sherbine, 2018; Popkewitz, 1991, 1998; Webb, 2007, 2009) note, the teaching subject is increasingly tied to amorphous performances of “professionalism” that
reproduce neoliberal multicultural logic about color-blindness, apolitical practice, accountability, instrumentalism, surveillance, efficiency, and perpetual self-improvement (Au, 2016; Ball, 2003; Flores, 2019a; Melamed, 2006; Sleeter & Bernal, 2004) with gendered notions of self-sacrifice and vocation (see Figure 3.2). This results in a sort of teacher schizophrenia, a fractured terrain of knowledge, and an identity crisis, as educators are often tasked to be what they never intended to become (De Lissovoy, 2010; Hara & Sherbine, 2018; Parkison, 2008; Webb, 2007, 2009). Just as teachers persist through their initial teacher education coursework to find employment, negotiations of their subject positions, too, persist throughout their careers. Thus, I first introduce how knowledges of the teacher subject begin in teacher education programs and continue throughout one’s teaching lives. I close the section by investigating the intersection of the categories Latinx and teacher. This focus on Latinx teachers is instructive as it starts to map out the different, corresponding, and perhaps even competing political, social, and spatial forces that both act on teachers and that teachers act against.

**Teacher Education Programs and Initial Practitioner Experiences**

Perceptions of teachers become normed by the general public, part of the larger subject-making process that is both constitutive and constraining (Zembylas, 2005, p. 945). Therefore, to a certain extent, the role of initial teacher education is to both reinforce and to disrupt what it means to be(come) a teacher. For this reason, I touch upon teacher education’s role in laying the groundwork and building beginning teachers’ conceptions of “how to be,” “how to act,” and “how to understand” (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 178). As such, teacher education plays a large role in configuring what it means to be a “professional” and serves as a “mechanism for legitimating occupational
patterns of labor for new recruits” (Popkewitz, 1985, p. 91). Teacher education programs are tasked with the production of the quality teacher which often means preparing teachers for certification, policy demands, and employment (Mifsud, 2018). Seen this way, the good teacher, the professional educator, is more an effect of educational policy discourse than an independent teacher self.

As education policy frames (and produces) what counts as good teaching and professional knowledge, it is important to note the instrumental, neoliberal reasoning that lies at the core of much teacher education (Hara & Sherbine, 2018; Mifsud, 2018; Popkewitz, 1985, 1991). Such instrumental reasoning reduces teaching (and teachers) to a series of unchallenged scientific “truths” and assumptions that value meritocracy, technical skill, practical pedagogical efficiency, and methods expertise tied to increasing student performance on standardized assessments (Au, 2016). For example, Hara and Sherbine’s (2018) recent research with student teachers demonstrates how market-based reforms and neoliberal educational discourse is reproduced and normed by university instruction (teaching to certification tests, emphasis on securing employment) and supervising teachers (that encourage them to use standardized curricula, deliver scripted lessons, and comply with all school policy and practices). Similarly, Mifsud (2018) attends to the significance of school placement in initial teacher education for socialization, self-reflection, learning, emotional impact, and the growing sense of self as teacher. In her research with student teachers, Mifsud uses a Foucauldian lens to explore how the localized discourse, the rules and structures which produces words, policy, and texts, of the practicum site produce and shape the teacher subject. She finds students enter a discourse “steeped in outcomes and performance” (Mifsud, 2018, p. 179) which
constructs them as “inexperienced” due to their initial struggles with curricular knowledge, “discipline,” and content knowledge. The candidates, internalizing their self-perceived failure to embody a discourse of efficiency and effectiveness and blame higher education for their lack of preparation to the realities of classroom teaching. The crucial point in both examples is that such discourses of teacher pedagogy tied to neoliberal ideals of teacher “professionalism,” although rarely questioned, are constitutive, they construct a field from which the nascent teacher sees themselves, thinks about themselves, and acts in relation to that self (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 38). In asserting the technical and instrumental as the expert knowledge of professional teachers, discourse obscures the social relations that produce such norms. I turn next to explicate how similar knowledges and relations, persisting after initial teacher service, subject teachers to ways of being and seeing the self throughout their teaching careers.

**Power/Knowledge, Pedagogy, and the Continual (Re)Making of Teacher Subjects**

I rely heavily on the theoretical insights of scholar Thomas Popkewitz (1985, 1991, 1998, 2018) to detail what comes to count as official knowledge in teacher practice and pedagogy, and the resulting production of teacher subjectivity. Such knowledges form a grid of intelligibility that works to heavily influence teachers’ cognitions, conduct, and desires, producing spaces for the micro-pedagogue to negotiate (Webb, 2009). To this point, Popkewitz (1998) advances a central claim that “different pedagogical knowledges ‘make’ [construct and conduct] the teacher…knowledge of pedagogy is a constitutive, material element of the contemporary world” (p. 17). To back up this assertion one must interrogate 1) the underlying logics of pedagogical knowledge, 2) the degree to which knowledge shapes the everyday habits and subjectivities of teachers, and
3) how certain ideas are taken as unquestionable truths about teaching (or being a teacher). I briefly take each of these in turn, linking them back to teacher subjectivity.

Popkewitz (1991, 1998) adds insight into the historical network of relations that both underlies a contemporary grid of pedagogical knowledge as well as produces teacher practice as instrumental, technical, and objective. The logic that teaching practice can be distilled to scientific principles and movements is itself a reflection of a rational, objective, and individualist understanding of the world rather than a reflection of fundamental truths. Teachers are called to pass on this worldview, and the resultant disciplining of rational, individual, docile bodies through education has been a tool used since the 1900s to both define social deviance and, then, mold so-called social deviants into model citizens (Popkewitz, 1991). The institution, in this case schools, creates a new type of surveillance, a normalizing and productive supervision that transmits disciplinary norms over a “subtle, graduated carceral net” (Foucault, 1977, p. 297). Popkewitz (1991), then, connects this belief in a “scientific” approach to end social amelioration and the threat of delinquency (Foucault, 1977) to the development of a “scientific” set of professional knowledge about teaching. This professionalization includes the shift to instruction procedures, binary systems of reasoning, individual development, efficiency, and supervision (of docile bodies) that function to repeatedly remake the teacher subject.

This underlying, scientific discourse of teacher professionalism shapes the everyday habits and subjectivities of teachers. That is, teachers come to view themselves, and others, in terms of their mastery and practice of certain knowledges—frequently referred to as “best practices”—that mark “good” teaching. Such knowledge works to continually and productively “conduct the conduct” (Foucault, 2007c, p. 193) of teachers...
as “the recipes and practices of teaching place certain boundaries on what is acceptable, abnormal, and unreasonable in schooling” (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 83). Normalized behavior is produced in concrete pedagogical practices diffused through grids of relations that link teacher’s work, school administration, teacher education, and educational science (Popkewitz, 1991). In the end, teacher methods and other “technologies” do as much to constitute the educator as they do their students. The school is a site in which the teacher is recreated over and over through their negotiation, deployment, and internalization of macro discourse about teaching in relation to their microlevel interactions. The educator finds a professional identity and expertise in the pedagogical practices they embrace (or alternatively criticize/refuse) and this “rationality of performance works best when what we come to want for ourselves is what is wanted from us” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 89). Narrow conceptions of technical teaching enclose the teacher subject, and posit fewer and fewer modes of becoming (Hara & Sherbine, 2018). This is an important insight when we look more closely at the relatively narrow subject positions that Latinx teachers occupy.

Finally, certain ideas that are taken as unquestionable truths about teaching and being a teacher are a result of these systems of knowledge and relations of power rather than any type of universal, transcendent truth about teaching. The stories we tell about teaching, the “folk wisdom,” that holds “good” pedagogical practice centers doing and experiential knowledge is, but a result of power relations diffused into the everyday thought and desires of teachers. The fact that such knowledge goes unquestioned grounds its subject making ability and underscores the need “to question the obviousness of things” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 89). For the ongoing subjugation of teachers is furthered in how they take ownership over a knowledge that is simultaneous theirs and
not theirs. In total, the obviousness of “core” teacher qualities, practices, and knowledges that they are made subject to demonstrates the need to search for more open, flexible, nuanced, and engaged teacher subjectivities.

This is not to say that teachers have no freedom to act, to think, to refuse, or to conduct themselves differently. Educators often view efforts like standardized test scores, performance data, and professional development as attacks on their own situated and specialized knowledges. To reclaim their knowledge, the source of their teacher identity, teachers use power to assert ownership over the boundaries of professional practice and knowledge. For example, teachers create fabrications as forms of resistance and counter-conduct. Fabrications are performances created solely for the act of being seen. For instance, a teacher might create two sets of lesson plans, one for the administrator and another that they intend to follow when the “door is closed.” Other practices might include writing lesson objectives on the board only to ignore them or switching instructional styles when an administrator comes in (Webb, 2007). These efforts are examples of teacher agonism and agency in that they refuse and reconstitute certain knowledges about their teacher selves, but can also be problematic because they produce psychic strains and refract surveillance mechanisms back on their peers. To this point Webb (2005) argues such acts of independent resistance, “create conditions where teachers maintain fabrications for peers to surveil, thus producing additional agents of the external accountability system and not self-governing agents of shared expectations” (p. 289). What is important to take from this line of thinking is that teachers exercise and use power, contingently, often from moment to moment and space to space, in ways that both disrupt and reinforce their subjectivities. Intent and outcome are not always so clear,
however what is obvious is how such action is locally negotiated with/in shifting power relations that teachers remake and are made in.\textsuperscript{88}

Diving further into post-structural understandings of teacher subjectivity, “core” teacher practices and knowledge that constitute the “professional” teacher also set boundaries for emotional performance in the classroom. In agreement with Dillabough (1999), Zembylas (2005) finds teachers to believe that certain “negative” emotions such as frustration and anger are “unacceptable” if one is to be a rational educational professional. Teachers supervise, surveil, and conduct themselves to be and act “normal,” doing “proper” emotions in the constitution of a “proper” teaching self. Such “emotional” control intersects with racialized understandings of professionalism that are normed through systems of Whiteness (Daniels & Varghese, 2019). As I share in my findings and analysis, participants describe having to control their tone and language in ways White colleagues were not expected to. In this way social relations of power come together to produce a disciplining space, one in which “subjectivity is produced, negotiated, and reshaped through discursive practices (Zembylas, 2005, p. 938).

This idea of oneself, this notion of teacher subjectivity, however, is also locally contested. The teacher at the center of Zembylas’ study sought innovative teaching practices (against the wishes of her colleagues) to build exciting emotional connection

\textsuperscript{88}To quote Foucault (1984), “Nothing is fundamental. That is what is interesting in the analysis of society...There are only reciprocal relations, and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another” (p. 246). Thus, it is important to note that this production of the neoliberal teaching subject, while certainly constraining, also articulates an opportunity for resistance, or refusal of what one is shaped to be. To reference Foucault (1982) once more, “Every power relationship implies, at least in potentia, a strategy of struggle” (p. 794). Yet we cannot predict how one may resist and exercise such power.
with students to counter the performance of “unacceptable” emotions. In this way, the teacher sustained her efforts to survive as a teacher by doing the negative emotional labor of self-discipline in exchange for the gratifying emotional rewards of seeing students succeed. This resistant practice acts a different knowledge; it is knowledge of self-care vis-a-vis the technologies of self produced by “teacher professional” discourses (Besley, 2005). Thus, the teacher is an agentic actor insofar as she constitutes and is constituted within the discursive practices of teaching. Teachers then are agents, yet often incapable of achieving the kind of agency they desire (Webb, 2009). Teacher selves are bounded and constrained by their relationships to other social structures and human relations (Dillabough, 1999) as their immanence within such relations reveals the potential of different relations, different spaces of possibility to (re)negotiate the boundaries of teacher subjectivity. Next, I bring such understandings of teacher subjectivity into conversation with Latinx teachers.

**Latinx Teacher Subjectivity**

Thinking more of the intra-actions between Latinx and teacher subject positions, I first return to Flores’ (2017a) concept of cultural guardians I reference in Chapter Two. Cultural guardians explicitly reject the invisible practices and logic that normalize the subjectivities of White teachers and instead use their own, often ignored or marginalized, knowledges and experiences, “to powerfully shape relationships, practices, and beliefs about education” (Daniels & Varghese, 2019, p. 5). Cultural guardians do this by using their own forms of power, social bonds and cultural capital, to counter harmful school structures. More than “teachers,” cultural guardians appear to stretch their subject positions, reconstituting themselves as a pathway of/for resistance, providing a space to
protect both them and their student’s cultural identities, foster cultural capital, and serve as a guide of ethnic mobility (Flores, 2011, 2017a).

Yet even as cultural guardians seek expanded subject positions, they are also limited by their location within a specific set of sociocultural/political relations, specifically school and education policies. As such, teachers are not immune from the productive forces of neoliberal “accountability” policy discourses that also lead them to embrace the rationalities of the testing regime (Au, 2016). Regardless of their multiple forms of success, their “competence” as professionals is measured by how their students perform on standardized tests. Understanding the importance of such tests for not only their careers, but the careers of their students, they normalize the logic, practices, and knowledges of said tests in the hope that students and their families will do well and take them seriously (recall from Chapter Two, p. 120 that the teachers in Flores’ study wrote and translated “testing letters” about the importance of health during testing week). This means that even cultural guardians cannot stand apart from the knowledges that construct “good,” “effective” teachers.

Similarly, Singh’s (2018a,b, 2019) conceptualization of corrective representation points to the idea that Latinx, particularly Latino, teachers are desirable in so far as they embody and perform a certain type of “safe” neoliberal multiculturalism (Au, 2016; Flores, 2019a; Melamed, 2006). These qualities rest at the intersection of pedagogical practices that aim to raise achievement, instill “discipline,” highlight diversity through unspecific empowerment images, and model neoliberal economic success. Hence, the valorization of certain Latinx teachers serves as a form of subjection to accepted school place knowledges often couched in saviorism, meritocracy, conservative politics, and
neoliberal values. Latinx teachers’ demonstration of subjectivities that are “respectful and merit driven, entrepreneurial, and both heterosexual and patriarchal” (Singh, 2018a, p. 27) work to internalize knowledges of the self and model such “appropriate” conduct for their Latinx students. Teachers who refuse such neoliberal subjectivities, who locate pathologies in systems and structures rather than individual students, are branded the “cynical,” “radical,” and “political” ones, perhaps questioning their own place in certain school spaces (Griffin, 2018; Singh 2018a). Singh (2018b) argues what is needed are more fluid notions of Latinx teacher subjectivity, an embrace of Latinx teachers’ role as critical cultural workers.89 Thus, Latinx educators’ presence can both resist and reinscribe, often at the same time.

Importantly, Latinx teachers in the South do not stand outside or apart from broader discourse circulating about all Latinx in the South. Latinx teachers viscerally challenge the image, discourse, and spatial exclusion of Latinx throughout the South by/with their visibility and presence in the public sphere (Mendez & Nelson, 2016). Latinx teachers stand outside the “norm” of Latinx workers, a “norm” created by/with/in discursive regimes by/with/in grids of neoliberal intelligibility that work to contain the vast difference of Latinx and homogenize a multiplicity of Latinx as undocumented, unskilled, and unwanted Spanish speakers (Odem & Bowne, 2014). Alternatively, Latinx teachers can reinforce subject positions that link their exceptionality as “good

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89 As critical cultural workers, Singh (2018b) asserts the importance that Latinx teachers interrogate “the cultural politics of race [to] reveal the instability of race, as well as the importance to critically engage with power structures when functioning as cultural workers. For Latino male teachers this must mean a consciousness of the dominant discourses of corrective representation that seek to signify their presence in the classroom” (p. 303).
immigrants,” (Rodriguez, 2018), corrective representations, and acceptable role models (Monreal, 2019b; Singh, 2018a, b, 2019) to a neoliberal project that seeks to extract value out of their “diversity,” language skills, and bicultural experiences (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Flores, 2019a). In this way, Latinx teachers are deemed more “worthy” or “deserving” than others due to their education, immigration status, victimization, and/or individual merit (Nagel & Ehrkamp, 2016; Patel, 2015; Patler & Gonzales, 2015; Rodriguez, 2018; Yukich, 2013). Teachers, then, become both an object of (self) knowledge, a relational site of knowledge (re)production, and conductor and conducted.

As such, Nelson (2019a) explains that the grid of intelligibility and regimes of truth about Latinx teachers expands to create new subjectivities that at best turn Latinx teachers into commodities and at worst exclude their children, families, and communities from the very spaces—schools, certain classes, bilingual education, dual immersion, International Baccalaureate—they help build for White and middle-upper class families. Lost, then, is how Latinx educators despite their professional and class status might, too, be exploitable workers sought for their Spanish instruction, translating ability, and cultural skills in/for a new globalized and “diverse” Southern economy, but limited in engaging their professional knowledge, sharing previous experiences, obtaining leadership positions, and advocating for political change and social justice. This sets the stage for new relational power competitions over the boundaries of different racialized subject positions that work to (re)create El Sur (Latinx). This contestation of subjectivity is a political fight that does not stand outside other neoliberal processes that construct, conduct, and assemble the modern teacher professional. These entanglements, battles,
and constitutions for subjectivities are multiplicitous, contested, contradictory, dynamic, and importantly spatial, which I turn to next.

**Relational Space (and Teacher Subjectivity)**

*Space is one of the most obvious of things which is mobilised as a term in a thousand different contexts, but whose potential meanings are all too rarely explicated or expressed.* (Massey, 1998b, p. 27)

...  

*We often do not think about space— we use the word, in popular discourse or in academic, without being fully conscious of what we mean by it.* (Massey, 1998b, p. 31, emphasis original)

Human beings are spatial, as well as social and temporal beings. However, until recently, educational scholarship tends to privilege the latter two frames at the expense of spatial thinking. I contend Latinx teachers experiences and subjectivities in the South cannot be divorced from the spaces they create, traverse, and intra-act, and, as such, a theoretical frame of relational space opens novel insights ripe for exploring El Sur Latinx.

For teachers, like all humans, live space daily, from the most micro of relational intra-actions with individual students and coworkers to their local negotiations of macro educational policies such as curriculum and standardized tests. Further, teachers are made through their placement in, and contestation of, spatial relations, organizations, and practices. In short, nothing about teaching, or daily life, is aspatial (Soja, 1996, 2002, 2010).

Yet, much theorization of space presumes a closed, bounded, and fixed holism; space as “a dot on the map” (Baroutsis, Comber, & Woods, 2017, p. 2) or a container for action (Baroutsis, Comber, & Woods, 2017; Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996) rather than ever shifting sets of open, multiplicitous, and changing web of relations (Massey, 1998a,b, 2009; Rodriguez, 2013, 2017b). Thus, I heed Rodriguez’s (2013, 2017b) call for a
nuanced post-structuralist conceptualization of relational space that disrupts the dualisms of subjectivity of marginalized groups and “draws attention to alternative spaces that are not governed by normative, positivistic ontologies, and thus merges the historical, the social and the spatial” (p. 98). More specifically, and to be expanded in greater length below, I ground my understanding in Massey’s (1998b) theorization of space as the product of interrelations; space as the outcome of the “intricacies and complexities, the intertwining and the non-interlockings, of relations, from the unimaginable cosmic to the intimately tiny” (p. 37). Indeed, space is always a becoming, a process, a potential for different connections and relations. These insights are imperative to reimagining El Sur Latinx because up to this point much scholarship about Latinx in the U.S. highlights temporality (i.e., newness and suddenarity), and there remains a dearth of academic literature that posits the agency of these communities in (re)creating a multitude of space(s), the many Souths. In this section, I briefly outline the so-called spatial turn in educational scholarship, expand on Massey’s understanding of space, link space, governmentality, and subject-making, and close by explaining how such thinking influences my methodological choices.

**Spatial Turn**

The so-called “spatial turn” (Baroutsis, Comber, & Woods, 2017; Gulson & Symes, 2007; Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009; Larsen & Breech, 2014; Middleton, 2014; Robertson, 2010; Vavrus, 2016; Yoon, Gulson, & Lubienski, 2018), sees scholars “pulling together multiple and disparate (geography) literatures” (Pini, Gulson, Kraftl, & Duffy-Jones, 2017, p. 13) as a way to re-examine perplexing questions and open up new paths of inquiry (Ferrare & Apple, 2010). Fittingly, education researchers have become
more interested in the dynamic and productive impacts of spaces rather than looking at educational sites as stable “containers.” Part of this ontological shift is an understanding that space is socially constructed and produced. The production of social space, made famous by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991), is a general belief that space is “understood not only as a concrete, material object, but also as an ideological, socially constructed, and subjective one” (Larsen & Beech, 2014, p. 198). This represents a foundational shift away from positivist, technical, and mathematical notions of Euclidean space that hold space as a static vessel within action takes place (Gulson & Symes, 2007).

Questions of space and geography, such as urban/rural cleavage, segregation, and migration to name but a few, are not new to critical educational studies (Ferrare & Apple, 2010), however what defines the “spatial turn” is a vast expansion of what “counts” as spatial problems, newer directions of spatial theorization, and greater engagement to how spatial thinking can be brought to bear on phenomena normally conceived as temporal and/or social. Broadly speaking, what unites these spatial thinkers is a belief that space matters (Gulson & Symes, 2007), space is central to social science research and inquiry (Larsen & Breech, 2014; Robertson, 2010; Yoon, Gulson, & Lubienski, 2018), and new ontological and epistemological models are necessary that privilege the spatiality of life (Soja, 1996). Privileging spatial analysis provides new entry points and promising vistas for investigation (Robertson, 2010), but research that is theoretically weak with ephemeral spatial theoretical engagement risks spatial fetishism (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009; Pini et al., 2017).

To counter mere references of spatial vocabulary, in lieu of spatial analysis, researchers must ask and answer why use “space” in education? (Gulson & Symes,
Thus, if the spatial turn is to challenge, supplement, and expand temporal-social theoretic frames, Ferraro and Apple (2010) contend spatial analysis must one, cast new light on existing problematics within critical education projects and two, expose social relations that have been taken for granted, ignored, or taken for granted as common sense. The question being do spatial views of education serve as a catalyst to reveal and disrupt points of weakness in regimes of truth, create fruitful sites of transformation, and forward more just becomings? If so, spatial theories extend traditional notions of education research, create new methodological possibilities, and push the field. To these ends, I argue that applying a post-structural spatial lens to El Sur Latinx, both its lived geographic boundaries, and also the macro-micro relational entanglements that produce myriad other spaces, creates a threshold of “many Souths,” always in the process of becoming. As I explain in the next section, Massey’s (1998a,b, 2009) view of power-filled/created, relational space provides such an opportunity to develop and understand this multiplicitious potential and as such I argue “the space for space in education in long overdue” (Gulson and Symes, 2007, p. 107).

Massey’s Theorization of Relational Space

In order to engage potentiality, it is necessary to challenge the pernicious idea that Latinx are coming in/to a fixed, static place—the South—with an understanding that Latinx are relationally (re)creating and (re)negotiating a multitude of space(s), the many Souths. Thus, I employ a theorization of post-structural, relational space that holds space is emergent, a product and process, of cross-cutting interactions, intra-actions, and interrelations that come to “meet” each other (Massey, 1998a,b; Murdoch, 2006). We can think of such meetings (e.g., El Sur Latinx as a whole; teachers’ classrooms individually)
as creative action, shifting analysis from predetermined linearity to what it means, what happens, to space (Jones et al., 2016). This offers new insights into the shaping forces, the material and discursive relations, in which certain things, for example subjectivities and other relations (to oneself), become (im)possible. To outline such a relational approach to space, Massey (1998b, 2009) defines three basic propositions:

1. Space is the product of interrelations, from the global to the intimately minute. Space is produced through the establishment or refusal of relations. It holds, then, that if there is going to be a relation (or not), there needs to be more than one thing to do the relating.

2. Space is the sphere of possibility as there exists a simultaneous coexistence of more than one thing, a multiplicity of relations. It is the sphere in which distinct trajectories come together. Without space, no multiplicity, without multiplicity, no space. Multiplicity and space are co-constitutive.

3. Because space is the product of (multiplicitous) relations, it is always in the process of becoming. It is never finished, never closed. There are always relations still to be made, or unmade, or re-made.\(^90\)

Massey’s view of space is fundamentally anti-essentialist; space, and the relations that create it, are always co-constituting each other, hence subjectivities, too, shift and fluctuate. The existence of space as understood to involve a multiplicity of relations insists on difference, the existence of more than one narrative or viewpoint however entrenched, stabilized, or powerful one might (currently) be. Therefore, this conceptualization/understanding of space is never completely closed to difference; there is a genuine openness that allows escape “from the inexorability that so frequently

\(^{90}\) Although this summary comes from Massey (1998b, 2009), Murdoch (2006) offers a helpful overview of these propositions as well (pp. 20-21).
This theorization of space creates a crucial distinction in understanding Latinx in the South. Rather than “placing” the meeting point of different relations in a prearranged and foreordained historical sequence (“backward,” “catching up”), spatiality’s insistence on a multiplicity of relations—the many Souths—opens the potential of previous unimagined trajectories, different provocations, unheard stories, radical (refusals of) subjectivities, and more just ways of becoming (Massey, 1998a,b). Of course, spaces do have relations with other spaces, “elsewhere(s)” so to speak, but such relationships are productive themselves; they are not tautologies, redrawn pathways to preordained futures. Hence, such theorizations of relational space, not only transform our geographical imaginations (Dickens, 2017, p. 1286), but also add deeper understanding to previously ephemeral deployments of terms such as “spaces of possibility,” (Rodriguez, 2013) “in-between spaces and zones of instability,” (Sant, 2017) “liminal and interstitial spaces,” (Villenas & Moreno, 2001) “spaces of encounter,” (Parker, Oceguera, & Sánchez Jr, 2010) “spaces to speak,” (Shah, 2015) and “spaces of negotiation” (Milner, 2008a).

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91 Massey communicates her view of space is a clear break from Marxist conceptualizations that undergird space with temporal determinism. Massey (1998b) writes, “the frameworks of ‘Progress,’ of ‘Development,’ and of ‘Modernization’ and the succession of modes of production elaborated within Marxism all propose scenarios in which the general directions of history, including the future, are known” (p. 30).

92 These examples are but a thumbnail to a much larger picture, the constant use, but rare development, of spatial vocabulary in the social sciences. Outside of Rodriguez (2013), the other scholars deploy spatial language without thinking spatially. My point is not to critique their scholarship or question its insight; they are not scholars of space and their work is rightly influential. However, my larger point holds that these spatial references are rarely described in detail or examined for their spatial significance.
However, such potentiality can cut both ways, as space/ing is a mechanism of power that can be used towards particular ends (Foucault, 1980, pp. 148-149).

Keeping with post-structural thought we must heed the important role of power and space, for if space is relational, and power is wielded through relations, then space and power are inextricably intertwined, even co-constitutive (Massey, 1998a; 2009). Massey’s (2009) enduring and important insights into power and space can be further conceptualized through her notion of power-geometry. Massey (2009) uses the term to think through such a double-sided (power and space) relationship, explaining “not only is space utterly imbued and a product of relations of power, but power itself has a geography” (p. 18, emphasis mine). Murdoch (2006) brings further clarity to power-geometries, “relations are inevitably double-edged: they facilitate movement and access; equally they can entrench confinement and exclusion” (p. 23). Thus, it becomes important to analyze and think through how space is a product and vehicle of power; that is how spatial organization and spatial practices bring forth, and seemingly stabilize relations of power, “fixing” the potential of multiplicity. Space works to “place” and “locate” individuals within certain arrangements of power relations and networks, tracing the boundaries of exclusion/inclusion and strengthening or weakening, though never closing, their ability to exercise power with/in such spatialized relations (Murdoch, 2006). Knowledge of others and self, our subjectivities, are decentered in these “locations,” this relation, and it becomes easy to “naturalize,” or “normalize” where traditionally marginalized groups and individuals “belong” (Butler, 2018; Davidson,
People(s) are made up with/through/by/in space.

Schools are pertinent examples of how power-geometries work to maintain and (re)produce unequal relations of powers through a broadened understanding of space (McGregor, 2003, 2004). We can think of the spatial distribution of people and things in schools that create what McGregor (2004) calls “knowing locations.” Such locations, from the literal location of a teacher’s classroom or a school subject’s area to more discursive notions of where a particular subject, such as Spanish, fits vis-a-vis hierarchical constructions of “core” versus “elective” classes, arrange and order power relations. Such “locations” encourage or constrain particular ways of intra-action (McGregor, 2004), for example, certain teachers—because they are “elective” teachers—may be excluded from certain meetings where important decisions are made, certain classes may be eligible for particular resources (often tied to the importance of standardized tests), and certain subjects may be physically separated from the rest of school (for instance a “foreign language” hall or Spanish being taught in “portables”). All of these examples come from participants who felt they were not valued and continually isolated because they were “just” Spanish, Art, or ESOL teachers. Alternatively, participants implicitly shared that their very bodies are a site of knowledge locations when it was assumed they taught, or wanted to teach, Spanish or ESOL rather than say

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93 McKittrick (2006) and Butler (2018) argue that geography and Blackness are co-constitute. Although geographies, broadly construed, have often enabled exploitation, exploration, and conquest and have been used to mark where some bodies belong and do not belong, geography is also the site of radical imagination (McKittrick, 2006). As such Black females have consistently used geography imagining to advance a different way of knowing and being in the world, an onto-epistemological demand of transformation and survival.
Social Studies *because* they were Latinx. Here, we see how “knowing locations” in schools do not stand apart from other discursive relations that circulate in some places in the South that imbue Latinx more generally with static and racialized subjectivities. The important point being that spatial webs of power relations help to produce constrained subjects *and* sites of refusal, agonism, potential, and change for historically marginalized groups and individuals.\(^{94}\)

Thus, by focusing on the power relations that (re)create space *and* the spatial arrangements that (re)create power relations it is possible to investigate how individuals disrupt, maintain, (re)configure, and (re)produce a multiplicity of spaces including El Sur Latinx. It also opens up questions, crucial to my research, such as how we can (re)think, (re)imagine, and (re)do space to produce more just, more porous, subjectivities. It also allows me to think about how Latinx teachers, even within seemingly constraining material conditions, are simultaneously (re)making, and (re)made in, South Carolina. We can acknowledge the structuring power of space as well as the multiplicitous, and heterogenous, relations of space that impact the resourceful and resilient, contextually fluid and negotiated, ways marginalized communities use power to (re)create and remix the worlds they traverse, inhabit, and embody. Next, I bring together techniques of power

\(^{94}\) Although not related to teachers, or even education per se, Hyams’ (2003) research with Latina adolescents displays in stark detail “the messiness and indeterminacy of social relations and spaces of (re)production,” (p. 553) the intricate, overlapping, and not-one-or-the otherness that marks post-structural, relational understandings of space. The girls both embrace and shun their locales, simultaneously accepting the contours of their material reality while productively reveling in, and constituting, its uncertainty. For Latina girls in Los Angeles, their local space is neither singularly safe nor unsafe; they resist the dominant discourse, and the ensuing binary subject position as either gang-member or victim. Their knowledge of self is contingent, it escapes, eclipsing the dualisms and binaries of subjectivity.
that underlie post-structural understanding of subjectivity with this understanding of relational space.

**Space and Subjectivity: Spaces of Power/Knowledge, Governmentality, and Discipline**

*Space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power.* (Foucault, 1984, p. 252)

…

*Discipline is, above all, analysis of space; it is individualization through space, the placing of bodies in an individualized space that permits classification and combinations.* (Foucault, 2007a, p. 147)

Although Foucault (1980, 1984, 1986, 2007a,d,e) discusses, even conceptualizes, space(s) a variety of times over his extensive body of work, I am most interested in his thoughts connecting space with subject-making processes. In particular, how power works through knowledge practices that specify how particular spaces of relations (to oneself) should be organized and how particular spaces of relations (to oneself) constitute such knowledge practices. That is, how space is productive, not merely as a tool for supervision and surveillance, but also in fostering subjectivities, “through the positive, catalytic qualities of spaces, places, and environment” (Huxley, 2007, p. 195). For spaces, spatial practices, spatial knowledges, spatial organization, and spatial distributions positively steer, normalize, and conduct certain conducts; “space is integral to the formation, rather than the suppression of the modern [teacher] soul” (Huxley, 2007, p. 193). The major point being it is not about who decides such spatial arrangements, and with what intent, but rather how such practices create, and are a reflection of, knowledge, desire, and affect; what are their effects on subjectivity? (Jackson, 2013). The result being, as Murdoch (2006) claims, “there is no clear distinction between power,
knowledge, practice, and space” (p. 48). Space, then, becomes a battle for the conduction of conducts, the production of subjectivity, and adds additional nuance to Ball’s (2016) argument that subjectivity is a site of struggle that necessitates the creation of a space of creative agonism “to make oneself thinkable in a different way” (p. 1141).

Spatial distribution and (self) knowledge relies on an interlocking web of material and discursive relations. For example, consistent with what many participants shared, the architectural arrangement and organization of teacher/students/class/school subjects allow for people to know where and how to locate individuals in relation to others, and to correspondingly “be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual [including one’s self], to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits” (Foucault, 1977, p. 143). While Foucault (1977) famously writes of the architecture of the panoptic prison where prisoners live in a state of constant and permanent visibility, internalize their surveillance into self-disciplinary behavior, and become “the principal of his own subjection” (Foucault, 1977, p. 203), schools, too, institute programs, regiments, and individualized plans for each student, often individualizing pupils through/to spaces, placing bodies in individualized spaces, and then, creating systems of classification and combination (Foucault, 2007a). As Webb (2009) maintains school organization is spatially constituted—spaces form and shape particular knowledge and practices, and teachers and students are assigned, and subjected, to “knowing locations,”

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95 Foucault’s (2007a) discussion about the link between the spatial organization and architecture of the hospital and the making of new subject(ivity)s is a particularly illuminating look at space/subjectivity processes (see also, Crampton, 2012).
both discursively and through the egg-crate architecture of school classrooms. These knowing locations are circumscribed, rationalized, and imbued with race, class, and gender (Davidson, 2014; Gulson, 2006; Howard, 2018) as it “just is” that certain teachers, certain students, certain classes occur with/in certain spaces (e.g. Spanish teachers in a foreign language hall). The key throughout is that such disciplinary practices and (self) knowledges are not effective in their negative deployment, their control on the results of action, but rather on its development (Foucault, 2007a, p. 147). This, in short, allows for the uninterrupted monitoring of the normalized rules and standards that outline the boundaries of appropriate conduct—inclusive/exclusive speech, action, and be(coming) with/in certain spaces (i.e., Latinx teachers in schools). We can think, then, of our relations to not just other people and places, but also the standards, logics, and regimes of truth that govern space(s).

Systems of reasoning and knowledge become the loci for battles not just over space, but the production of space, indeed the production of subjectivities. Discourse is reinforced through relational webs of spatial interconnectivity as communities of participants (teachers and educators) compete to master, or reject, espoused truths. Power comes from the ability to deem knowledge useful, to put it to work in influencing, and outlining the territories over, other actions (Foucault, 1982; Heller, 1996). The rationality of teaching practices is found in the relations, that is the spaces, in which they are

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96 Even more than physical architecture, schools, like the Panopticon “serve as models, tests, and ongoing aims against which programmes of government are evaluated and adjusted...at the same time [they are] distillations of underlying logics of multiple and dispersed practices for the conducts of conducts” (Huxley, 2007, p. 194). Foucault (1984) makes a similar point in an interview about space and geography, “one sees...the development of reflection upon architecture as a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies” (p. 239, emphasis mine).
embedded. Linked clearly to power/knowledge, “it is not whether practices are rational, but inversely how rationality inscribes itself in [spatial] practices” (Jackson, 2013, p. 842). In this view, the most intimate or overlooked school practices like the curriculum, the schedule of classes, the reporting of grades, and class assignment (tracking) constitute a spatial act because they perform an integral part in supervising, assessing, and disciplining bodies, outlining what can be said and done, what counts as rational knowledge in a particular school space. This accounts for the production of subjectivity, the conduction of conduct, as who/what someone can be(come), or resist becoming, is constrained by the (racialized) knowledge-power-spaces one inhabits. These processes are highly contingent, perpetually processual, and locally negotiated.

In sum, Latinx teachers as subjects are “in a continual process of constructing and transforming their selves and their worlds through their interactions with others,” (Jackson, 2013, p. 839), and space plays a substantial role in fostering, managing, monitoring, and conducting this conduct (Huxley, 2007). Space is an essential tool of

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97 Jackson’s (2013) ethnographic study of a high student in a vocational track shows how one student’s “identity did not uniformly persist and unfold through continuous time; instead, her subjectivity dispersed and shifted as she was caught up in relations of power” (p. 844). For in homogeneously grouped vocational courses, the student was cast as a responsible student, an eager learner who asked multiple questions, a teacher’s helper, and a key source of knowledge for her peers. However, in her heterogeneously grouped class, the student was quiet, reserved, and less confident, ceding participation to those in “higher” tracks.

98 Davidson (2014) provides an example of how school spaces are products with/in racialized reactions of knowledge-power-space. Davidson’s (2014) ethnographic research examines the narratives of aspiration and expression of self-cultivation of working-class Latina and middle class white girls in Silicon Valley. Within the same regional locale, but in two unique spaces, conceptualizations of “risk” produce vastly different subject positions. For middle class White girls there is a post-feminist valorization of “risk,” as maverick, masculine, and essential to future success in the area. On the other hand, “risk” for Latina girls often meant “at risk,” and thus something that needed to be controlled via dress codes and other types of surveillance.
“governing,” and government is indelibly spatial because it creates, arranges, organizes, and distributes relations as well as the rationalities (truths) that underlie such relations (Huxley, 2007). Space, thus, churns out, links, and produces mechanisms of power such as subjectivity, discourse, power/knowledge. The subject is spatial as it comes to know itself in/through relation to other things (e.g. rational practices, knowing locations, additional relations, and other spaces). Importantly, this idea of spatialized relations and subjectivities severs the subject from the hegemony of temporality because who one is, is who one is and becomes within a certain set of power relations. The subject decentered and dispersed through their spatialized relations, rather than a coherent whole unflinchingly following a linear and temporal path of predetermination. As Jackson (2013) states, “subjectivity, then, is an ongoing construction, an activity, and a process that has spatial characteristics in its uneven dispersal…rather than along axes or intersections of stable identities” (p. 845).

The task then is to “locate” and sketch the stratified, shifting, and porous procedures, practices, and relations that constrain the multiplicity of space and produce the boundaries of normalized subjects. Such an imperative opens the methodological door to engage inquiry as cartographic work, mapping the processes, forces, and flows that lead to our relational subjectivities and governance (Kuntz, 2019). Importantly, mapping is not representational work, it doesn’t seek to trace, capture, or represent an ideal Latinx teacher subject, rather the idea is to engage the blurry lines of legitimate becomings, “to make the space where the known touches the unknown, and certainty fades to a belief” (Kuntz, 2019, p. 86) in different potentialities than what currently is. Hence, in this work I start from the embedded subject location(s) of Latinx teachers in South Carolina to map
the spatialized relations that create and normalize certain boundaries, and more specifically the ways these teachers perceive, interpret, and intra-act within social spaces to produce, reaffirm, reconstitute, refuse, and disrupt these bounded sites of their subjectivities (Guyotte, Flint, & Latopolski, 2019). For in mapping the shifting, contingent, and fluid subjectivities of Latinx teachers in South Carolina we find a multiplicity of centers, a variety of entry points, to challenge those practices that marginalize and exploit as well as to highlight the ingenuity and creativity of teachers’ own solutions to establish other spaces, other relations, other lines of flight to become otherwise, and to make possible the previously unthought. In sum, cartographic work is an inventive exercise, a drawing toward new understandings, new vistas, new entry points that might produce different ideas, relations, and complexities of not just this “New South,” El Sur Latinx, but the many South(s) that hold a multiplicity of trajectories that spatialized views highlight. As I move to explain the qualitative social-spatial methodology that enabled narrative cartographies of Latinx teachers subjectivity I also outline the importance of spatializing the research context.

**Methodological Approach**

As I outline in the conclusion of the previous section my theoretical frame of post-structural subjectivity and relational space entangles with my methodological approach. Thus, I employed a qualitative social-spatial methodology that aimed at engaging and examining the following research questions:

- 1) How are Latinx K-12 teachers/educators both made in and (re)making their contexts (in South Carolina)?
  - 1a) How do individual teachers/educators understand their experience as a Latinx K-12 teacher within their specific social, spatial, and historical power relations (in South Carolina)?
2) How is Latinx K-12 teacher/educator subjectivity constructed, maintained, legitimized, and resisted (in South Carolina)?

I used three primary methods (explained below)—semi-structured interviews, photovoice, and (eco)maps—to collect data, and after analysis I created narrative cartographies to demonstrate my findings. As Kuntz (2019) writes such a qualitative inquiry toward cartography examines our contemporary landscape and maps “our current state in the interest of discovering those blurry edges to our known existence—spaces of potential that would otherwise remain just beyond recognition” (p. 2). Further, as Guyotte, Flint, and Latopolski (2019) maintain, such cartographic practices align with critical and relational spatial theories that hold space is constantly under construction and, hence, our shifting, even zig-zagging spatial relations, create fluid, incoherent, and contingent subjectivities. In following the power-filled flows, circulations, and relations of Latinx teachers in South Carolina it was possible to see how their subjectivities, “simultaneously converge and diverge, how they affirm and contradict. Embracing the possibilities of ‘and,’ [in exploring] spatial situatedness and connections between experiences” (Guyotte, Flint, and Latopolski, p. 13). This inquiry was an entanglement, a project to intervene towards a more just what-is-to-become for Latinx teachers. Thus, narrative cartographies are always in process, they are a becoming that come together momentarily to create an important and emergent conversation (Hernández-Hernández, Sancho-Gil, & Domingo-Coscollola, 2018), about Latinx teachers being made in, and (re)making many Souths.
Spatializing the Research Context: El Sur Latinx as One of Many (“New”) Souths

I conducted this research across the spaces and places of South Carolina within a broad context I outlined as El Sur Latinx (see Chapter One). In line with my theoretic framing, I argue that applying a post-structural spatial lens to El Sur Latinx, both its lived geographic boundaries and also the macro-micro relational entanglements that produce myriad other spaces, a threshold of “many Souths” always in the process of becoming, emerges. I acknowledge the tension of naming a bounded literal place (the South/South Carolina) with an examination of unbounded relational spaces, but I maintain that this friction itself speaks to the multiplicity and possibilities of “many Souths.” Massey (1998b) locates these tensions as meeting points, as “the potential juxtaposition of different narratives, of the potential forging of new relations.” As such, a spatial inquiry provides a source for identifying, mapping, and challenging “the productions of new trajectories, new stories…new spaces, new identities, new relations, and differences” (Massey, 1998b, p. 38, emphasis original). In this way it is possible to acknowledge the structuring power of space as well as the multiplicitous, and heterogenous, relations of space that impact the resourceful and resilient, contextually fluid and negotiated, ways marginalized communities use power to recreate and remix the worlds they traverse, inhabit, and embody. Such a view resists a singular, static, and exceedingly temporal unfolding of Latinx in the South and moves towards the spatial processes that create, and are created from, power-filled spatial-temporal-social relations (Massey, 1998a).

Importantly, when approaching El Sur Latinx through an explicitly spatial lens, we can acknowledge and complicate “newness” in both its discursive deployment and its spatial implications. This is particularly significant as Flores (2019b) contends the
deployment of novelty, even strangeness, is not neutral: “The perpetual ‘newness’ of Latinxs to the U.S. is part of racializing Latinxs as perpetual outsiders” (par. 1). For not only is the Latinx presence in the U.S. South longer and much more complex than typically acknowledged (Weise, 2015), but also contemporary Latinx growth in the region is not simply a temporal phenomenon disconnected from larger spatial histories and intra-actions. This helps place factors fueling Latinx population growth, particularly the recruitment of cheap, racialized, and exploitable workers to the South, in conversation with past iterations of a/the “New South,” a discursive vehicle used since Reconstruction to highlight Southern “reinvention” and “progress” while minimizing White supremacy’s role in (re)ordering (a multiplicity of) unequal spatial power relations (DuBois, 1935; Guerrero, 2017; Mohl, 2005; Woodward, 1971).

Thus, Latinx educators in the U.S. South are also one of many “New” Souths, always already in immanent relation to each other that reproduce, maintain, and place unequal spatial relations of power even as they contain the potential for different ways of becoming. Seen through this historical-spatial lens, El Sur Latinx is “the newest manifestation of the ‘New South,’ a regime built on [the exercise of] white supremacy,

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99 In an effort to stymie the short-lived push for inclusive democracy during Reconstruction (DuBois 1935; Flanagan, 2003; Woodward 1971; Zinn, 2005), a new class of Southern capitalists took it upon themselves to proselytize a “New South,” one welcoming of Northern investment and “filled with the music of progress” (Woodward, 1971, p. 174). The “New South” as a term/concept announced a different South, a beautiful “El Dorado” brimming with opportunity and new life, that was open for business (Grady & Turpin, 1904, p. 96). In fact, from Reconstruction to present, Southern entrepreneurs have played up both Southern romanticism and modern images of racial and economic progress to (re)create spaces and to lure capital. However, in looking through the historical deployment of the “New South,” we see a fairly durable political economy supported by sociopolitical mechanisms that racializes exploitative employment schemes meant to serve industry, capital, and the maintenance of unequal power relations that support White supremacy.
the exploitation of racial differences, and increasingly, legal statuses” (Guerrero, 2017, p. 9). Relatively nascent Latinx arrivals must fit into, even replenish, relatively narrow economic niches (low-skilled and low-paying jobs), hinting at the spatial arrangement of certain subject positions that conceivably leave outside, or narrow, a middle/professional/intellectual class of Southern Latinx (i.e. teachers/educators). Latinx are woven into unequal spatial figurations and previously unrelated temporalities, “many (New) Souths” meet and Latinx subjectivities emerge as an assemblage of unequal economic “opportunities,” the (micro)politics/policies of immigration, their racialization as Othered threats, (illegal) criminals, and deviants (Chavez, 2008; Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017), and relational spaces of in/exclusion (Deeb-Sossa & Mendez, 2008; Guererro, 2017; Lacy, 2007; Mendez & Nelson, 2016; Sabia, 2010).

Lost, often, is how Latinx educators are left out of, and fit within, these assembled subjectivities. For even as Latinx educators traverse different sets of relations within their school spaces, they too might be exploitable workers sought for their perceived Spanish instruction, translating ability, and cultural skills in/for a new, globalized, and diverse Southern economy, but limited in their sharing of professional knowledge, striving of leadership opportunities, and expression of political advocacy. This sets the stage for new relational power competitions over the boundaries of different subject positions and the co-constitutive spatial arrangements that work to (re)create the many spaces of El Sur (Latinx).

100 The distinction between replenish and replace is an important one. More recent scholarship confirms the notion that Latinx (immigrants) in the U.S. South are filling key labor shortages, rather than replacing workers (Hamann, 2003; Johnson & Kasarda, 2009). However, this is a complicated, and contentious topic. For a fairly balanced overview of arguments for and against, see Mohl (2005) and Odem (2010).
This is the promise of Massey’s (1998a, b) conception of an open, anti-essentialist, emergent, and becoming space. Rather than “placing” the meeting point of different relations in a prearranged, foreordained, and singular historical sequence (“backward,” “catching up”), “space is the sphere of possibility as there exists a simultaneous co-existence of more than one thing, a multiplicity of relations. It is the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist” (Massey, 1998b, p. 28). In fact, it is complex and multiplicitous relations, those that both surprise and maintain, that construct spaces as much more than ephemeral understandings of physical (and regional) place. What is crucial to understand is how these complex power relations, often tied to social, political, and economic enactments of White supremacy, seek to contain the multiplicity of space creating new acts of subjective adherence, resistance, and political action that reveal potential cracks, entry points, and thresholds to different becomings (Foucault, 1982). A cartographic approach seeks to highlight, map, and sketch the boundaries of such “wounds or opportunities” (Foucault, 2017, p. 11).

Methods

Given this methodological approach and my larger conceptual framework it is fair to ask, “how can the inquirer...go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known about?” (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 106). Perhaps, more pointedly, Shah asks “how does one do this [post-structural] kind of research?” (personal communication, May, 2019). In short, how does one begin to unravel, and peer into, the insidious, fluid, and discontinuous workings of the countless institutions and institutionalized practices

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101 I credit Dr. Payal Shah for asking this question during my dissertation proposal defense to make sure my conceptual frame matched my methodological processes.
that govern our everyday lives (Prasad, 2005)? To answer this question, I privileged the productive possibilities of multiple methods. As a strategy to create “light and shadow, depth and complexity” (Tuck et al., 2008, p. 55), I integrated three main methods for collecting data, semi-structured interviews, photovoice, and (eco)maps. Although these three methods are rooted in narrative, I explain how each cultivated different types of narrations (Fine, et al., 2003). Following a post-structuralist emphasis, the multiple methods provided, and complicated, triangulation as data collection, “produced a quilt of stories and a cacophony of voices speaking to each other in dispute, dissonance, support, dialogue, contention, and/or contradiction” (Fine, et al., 2003, p. 188). To further increase the validity of the data, I took and examined field notes and analytic memos in addition to analyzing school district teacher websites, social media, and news releases/articles about participants. I also engaged in informal conversations and shared initial conclusions regarding my analysis with a small group of participants (member checks). In sum, the eventual construction of narrative cartographies built on the creative efforts of participants, in the form of their words, pictures, actions, and (eco)maps, to (re)arrange the relationships of their material-discursive in pursuit of a “a new possible” (Kuntz, 2019, p. 40).

In what follows I explain the rationale for these three methods before turning to an explanation of my procedures during the data collection/creation process. In the procedure subsection, I describe my process to produce a process (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003) and, when necessary, share the decisions I made to shift away from intended plans. For as Maxwell (2013) notes there is no “cookbook” for doing qualitative research (p. 87). I then highlight points of reflexivity across the research before detailing
my process of analysis and closing with how I constructed the cartographic narratives.

Therefore, what I outline below provides a detailed guide for my methodological decisions, demonstrates serious consideration and planning, and notes exit points accounting for the dynamism of qualitative research.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are a popular method for qualitative researchers to ask participants a set of predetermined questions while also allowing room for the researcher to follow up on interesting responses and ask further questions as needed. Such questioning is a way for researchers to collect data about participant *perceptions* and *beliefs* about a particular topic, phenomenon, event, and/or relationship (Maxwell, 2013; Glesne, 2016). While semi-structured interviews do not afford the observation of everyday (micro)relations in situ, they do provide a targeted discursive activity to examine how participants describe, understand, and have “made meaning” of their experiences with/in power relations, spatial practices, and subjectivities (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 3; Prasad, 2005).

Various researchers (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Lather, 2004, 2009; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; Rodriguez, 2016) problematize the use of interviews and the resultant privileging of “voice” in post-structural research. Some of these concerns center the (re)assertion of a coherent subject, the creation of binaries between the research and researched (perhaps “reinforcing the otherness of the Other;” Shah, 2011), the inattention to power differentials, the hazards of conflating voice and representation, and the speaking for marginalized groups. I explain how I personally wrestled with some of these tensions later in this chapter, but here I point to the insights of other researchers whose
work I leaned on throughout the project. For example, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) remind us that even as interview data is “partial, incomplete and always being re-told and remembered…[voices can] produce multiplicities and excesses of meaning and subjectivities.” In other words, I believe it is possible to seek difference and divergence rather than sameness and convergence across and within the words and stories participants detail. Individuals share and/or silence more than one narrative within a “single” telling. Thus, in their own narrative cartography of college student belongingness, Guyotte, Flint, and Latopolski (2019) explain that interviews provided the necessary data to attend to complex participant positions that fluidly “shifted, contradicted, complicated, questioned, and jolted” (p. 7). Similarly, Webb (2009) writes that semi-structured interviews proved to be “the single most effective data collection strategy used” in his post-structural, critical mapping of the panoptic power in schools and the (micro)politics of teacher subjectivity. One of the main reasons Webb believes the method was so fruitful centers around participation enthusiasm, a realization from participants that Webb (2009) “was trying to understand a very real problem in their lives” (p. 61). Participants came to believe that talking about such problems helped themselves understand power relations and marginalizing practices, “how they were positioned—and how they positioned themselves” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 4). I found a corresponding experience as my participants were excited to share and discuss issues that nobody had asked them about, but that they lived through each day.

**Photovoice**

Another method of data creation I incorporate is photovoice. Annang et al. (2016) describe photovoice as, “a qualitative method of inquiry that purports that a photograph
can provide the researcher with valuable insights into the cultural practices and lived experiences of individuals and communities” (p. 243). Latz (2017), echoing Wang and Burris (1997), describes three common aims of photovoice research: a) encourage participants to document elements of their lives within their own terms, b) raise levels of critical consciousness through critical dialogue, and c) to reach policy makers with project findings to catalyze change (p. 43). Photovoice has been used in community-based participatory Indigenous research (Castleden, Garvin, & Huu-ay-aht First Nation, 2008), forwarded as a tool for democratizing qualitative research (Mitchell, De Large, & Moletsane, 2017; Novak, 2010), implemented as a pedagogical tool for instruction (Farley, Brooks, & Pope, 2017), and as a way to “empower” student advocates (Goodhart et. al, 2006). Related to schools, youth, and teachers there is a growing body of research that uses photovoice as a tool to counter deficit-based views about communities while highlighting the strengths and agencies of individuals and communities (Adams, Brooks, & Greene, 2014; Del Vecchio, Toomey, & Tuck, 2017; Goessling, 2018). However, even as Graziano & Litton (2007) assert that photovoice is an ideal framework for understanding the lives of teachers in their communities, I believe previous photovoice research leaves an opening for more relational spatial inquiry. Thus, I use the medium of photos so teachers can reflect on, and articulate their present, lived, and collective socio-spatial relations as both teachers and Latinx within a specific context, South Carolina and El Sur Latinx. Further, the act of creating, sharing, and explaining the photos adds additional nuance, additional lenses, additional sets of narratives, to glimpse how teachers’ view of self in relation to other relations shifts, contradicts, and/or stabilizes.
(Eco)Mapping

Another method of data creation centers the production of (eco)maps as a way to engage conversations investigating the webs of relations a teacher has with other socio-spatial relations (McCormick, Stricklin, Rous, Kohner-Coogle, & Nowak, 2005; McCormick, Stricklin, Nowak, & Rous, 2008). I place the prefix eco in parentheses to show that what is most important is the creation of maps as a driver of dialogue. In (eco)mapping, participants draw and illustrate visual plots of the supportive, negative, mixed, or ambivalent relationships (Jacobs Johnson, Thomas, & Boller, 2017; McCormick, Stricklin, Nowak, & Rous, 2008). For example, a teacher may draw a jagged line between themselves and parents indicating an antagonist relationship, but a straight line between themselves and their principal indicating a more supportive relationship.

Previous research utilizing (eco)maps leave spatial dimensions, and spatial relations, of these social intra-actions un(der)explored. One such example of the underappreciated spatial potential of photovoice is Jacobs Johnson, Thomas, & Boller’s (2017) inquiry into understanding the complex arrangements and social networks of informal home-based childcare settings. Through the use of ecomaps with participants, the researchers find home-based childcare to be flexible and affordable, built within the strong and mutually beneficial social networks of family and friends. However, the researchers also discuss initial participant uneasiness about cleanliness, educational support material, and safety. Privileging social intra-actions, the researchers leave out how material-discursive relations, for example intra-action between family members, ideas of health and hygiene, and physical “stuff” creates space and corresponding
subjectivities. Not only did the researchers miss an opportunity to discuss the fluid negotiation of subjectivities as “safe caregivers,” they neglect the spatial dimensions of people’s social relations, the “stuff” and “matter” of inquiry (Childers, 2013), and thus the spatiality of the (eco)map itself. Further, as I explain in the analysis of data and the construction of the narrative cartographies, (eco)maps proved a jumping off point for a mapping of findings.

**Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection process started in August 2019 and lasted until January 2020. IRB approved pilot research to gauge interest, identify obstacles, and develop semi-structured interview protocol took place from March to April of 2018 with a total of three participants. After a brief participant recruitment period in August of 2019, data collection proceeded in four phases which I outline in Table 3.1, and describe in detail below.

**Table 3.1 Overview of Four Research Phases***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| One   | • Phone call follow-up after participant interest  
|       | • In-person meeting  
|       | • Explain research project in detail  
|       | • Schedule semi-structured interview |
| Two   | • Conduct semi-structured interview  
|       | • Explain photovoice  
|       | • Schedule next meeting/photovoice interview |
| Three | • Conduct photovoice interview  
|       | • Explain (eco)maps  
|       | • Schedule next meeting/(eco)map interview |
Four • Conduct (eco)map interview

* Although each individual teacher proceeded through the phases linearly, I ran all four phases at the same time. For example, one teacher may be on Phase One while I was wrapping up Phase Three with another. The major driver for this was adjusting to teacher schedules and moving at a pace that worked with their (busy) lives.

Throughout the four phases I took field notes about schools I visited, communities I intra-acted with, and participant communication outside interviews such as text messages, social media messages, and emails. Similarly, I created analytic memos to document emergent findings, identify links and contradictions, reflect on theory, and record issues and questions (Saldaña, 2015). I also continually checked and revisited school district teacher websites and social media for how they presented teacher-participants.

**Participant and Site Selection**

The fact that only ~1% of teachers in South Carolina identify as “Hispanic” (Boser, 2014; South Carolina Department of Education, 2016b, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2012) had implications for my sampling decisions. Specifically, faced with a relatively small population to draw upon, I used purposeful sampling to find information-rich cases (participants) for in depth study (Glesne, 2016). As Maxwell (2013) outlines, “This [purposeful sampling] is a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices” (p. 235). Maxwell’s conception is relevant to my research because I was interested in not only how Latinx teachers described their experiences, but also the epistemological insights they provided in communicating how they maintained and resisted, legitimized and rejected their subject positions. Moreover, given that my conceptual and methodological framing valued complexity and shifting
selves, I did not seek participants who “represented typical cases.” Rather, I purposefully sought a range of variation of backgrounds (Glesne, 2016), geographic locations (within South Carolina), and teaching/educator experiences. This meant I also made the decision to include a handful of participants that were not employed strictly as teachers but none-the-less were full-time staff or administrators in public schools and considered themselves to be educators. I did this not only because of the relatively small number of Latinx teachers in the state, but also as a way to seek difference and think through how a variety of individuals in different positions understood, took up, and/or rejected similar roles and expectations (e.g. translators and interpreters) in school spaces.

Hence, as I initially recruited participants there was not any exclusion criteria outside of individuals who self-identified as Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or Chicano/a/x, were employed as a teacher or employee in the K-12 public school system in the state of South Carolina, and felt comfortable talking about their experiences as educators and individuals. There was no additional preference to age, sex, gender, immigration status, race, and/or ethnicity. All participants were over the age of 18. After expressing interest in participating, I conducted an initial in-person meeting or phone call (Phase 1) to discuss the study in detail, gauge interest, determine the usefulness of their “case,” and if an appropriate “fit” obtain consent.

Participants were recruited in four ways. First, my experience as a middle school teacher in South Carolina for four school years (2015-2016 through 2018-2019), in addition to active leadership roles in a teacher advocacy group SCforED,\textsuperscript{102} and an

\textsuperscript{102} SCforEd is a grassroots teacher group similar to organizations in a number of states that emerged in 2018 as part of a larger RedforEd movement. SCforED grew through the
immigration advocacy group, South Carolina United with Immigrants, put me in direct contact with numerous teachers and educators that expressed interest in participating in the research. Such work proved invaluable to building trust and relationships with the larger Latinx community in South Carolina as well as individual educators. Second, I founded a small group called Latinx Educators of South Carolina focused on supporting educators and sharing information. The group, started in April of 2018, aims to be a participatory collective of individuals who identify as, or support, Latina/o/x educators in South Carolina. The main avenues for group communication are Twitter (@LatinxEDofSC) and email, and, as such, its social media presence and listserv allowed me to build relationships with potential participants. Third, limited snowball recruitment (Glesne, 2016, p. 51) was used when participants asked if friends or colleagues could be part of the study. Finally, to expand the search slightly I posted a call on social media, (Facebook and Twitter) for participants (Appendix A). Given the relatively small pool of participants to draw from, these recruitment strategies were appropriate and successful.

use of social media, particularly Facebook, to mobilize large numbers of classroom teachers to fight for educational policy in South Carolina. SCforED organized a teacher rally/walkout which led to more than 10,000 participants congregating at the state Capitol in Columbia, South Carolina in May, 2019 (Estes & Monreal, 2019).

103 In December 2016, several organizations and individuals from across South Carolina came together to form South Carolina United with Immigrant with the aim of preserving the rights of immigrant and refugee families. The group seeks to provide individuals, advocates, and organizations with resources, education and other tools to support this goal (South Carolina United with Immigrants, n.d.).

104 The idea and need for such a group stemmed from conversations with fellow educators during a statewide community meeting of South Carolina Latinx activists called Voces Comunitarias in 2017.

105 As of April 2020, between the Twitter account and listserv there were about 100 people following and sharing information.
In sum, many participants shared they felt I was invested in improving life for them as teachers generally, and for them as Latinx educators specifically. As a result of these strong relationships and my reputation in the state/community, recruitment was a quick process, and I had to limit the study to 25 participants (explained in Phase 1 description) even as more educators expressed interest. Participants came from all four major regions of the state including all major metropolitan areas save the Myrtle Beach area.\textsuperscript{106} I give a brief description of participants in Table 3.2, but abstain from further identification to protect the anonymity of individuals that come from a relatively small group. It is important to note that even as these relationships, commitments, and organizations aided the recruitment process, they also lead to uncomfortable and uneasy expectations, responsibilities, and questions about voice, data representation, and positionality which I outline, and engage later in this chapter.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Participant Profiles*}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
Pseudonym & Ethnic Background & Gender & Job Title & Location** \\
\hline
Andrea & Peru, 1st Generation*** & Female & Spanish, Middle School & Suburban \\
Maria & Venezuela, International Teacher**** & Female & Spanish, High School & Rural \\
Derek & Cuba, 1st Generation & Male & Spanish, High School & Suburban \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{106} Reese (2018) writes South Carolina is divided into four regions—Upstate, Midlands, Pee Dee and Lowcountry. The major metropolitan locals of each region are Greenville-Spartanburg (Upstate), Columbia (Midlands), Myrtle Beach (Pee Dee), and Charleston (Lowcountry).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</table>

* These represent participant profiles as described during their interviews. I have changed the job titles and/or location of a few participants to add another layer of anonymity across the group.
Any changes did not affect the overall descriptive totals (i.e. overall number of middle school teachers or Spanish teachers).

**The location of the school is based on my understanding of the surrounding area.

***I use the Pew Research Center (n.d.) definition of immigrant generation, “first-generation immigrants refer to the person who came to live in the United States from another country, not that person’s native-born offspring. “Second generation” refers to a U.S. native with at least one first-generation parent. And “third generation” refers to a U.S. native whose parents are also U.S. natives” (para. 7).

****International teacher status noted to denote they are in the United States through some type of work visa.

*****One parent is White

******One parent is Black, and these participants identify as Afro-Latina

**Phase One**

Phase one consisted of two steps. The first step was a follow-up to a) expressed interest from a prospective participant or b) an invitation from me to participate in the research. Generally, I scheduled a short five to ten-minute phone call with a prospective participant to share more about the research project and gauge interest. Although I had these initial phone calls with over 30 individuals, a few educators shared they were either too busy or were unsure if they had permission from their schools or principals to participate in research. As a result of the phone calls, there was mutual interest with 25 educators to continue participation.

For step two, I scheduled an in-person meeting with participants to learn more about each other, build trust and rapport, and conduct a project “orientation.” I met with 21 of the 25 participants,107 typically at their school or a local coffee shop. The meetings lasted from fifteen minutes to two hours and largely consisted of informal conversation regarding teaching in South Carolina, my motivation for the dissertation project, and personal background information like family and previous places lived. Near the end of

107 Due to scheduling conflicts and/or personal preference four of the participants wished to have another phone call rather than in person meeting. In that case I sent them project materials via email.
the chat, I shared, and then sent via email, a brief PowerPoint and recruitment letter that served as the “orientation” (Appendices B, C) and outlined the next three phrases, the semi-structured interview, photovoice, and (eco)map. I told them that if they agreed to participate they could decide after each phase if they wished to continue and that their participation was completely voluntary. We then scheduled another time to conduct the semi-structured interview and I obtained consent (Appendix B). After each meeting I immediately took written field notes and then typed them into a master data document.

My original plan was to use this initial meeting to help set up geographically aligned small groups that would meet to share their photovoice and (eco)maps (Phases Three and Four). While the participants expressed interest in meeting other Latinx teachers, they also admitted that it would be difficult to find time to coordinate such a future meeting. They were much more willing to move forward individually, and as I wanted to take advantage of participant excitement to schedule their semi-structured interviews, I decided to forgo the group meetings. I believe this was the best decision to move forward as the initial conversations provided a growing body of field notes and other critical cartographic research (Guyotte, Flint, & Latopolski, 2019; Webb, 2009) evidences the sufficiency of individual data generation.

**Phase Two**

I completed semi-structured interviews with 24 of the 25 participants from August, 2019 until December, 2019.\(^\text{108}\) The interviews lasted from approximately 30 minutes to 150 minutes and took place in a variety of locations, normally the educator’s

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\(^{108}\) Due to schedule conflicts and personal preference, one participant decided to participate only in the photovoice portion after an initial meeting.
classroom, office, home, or a nearby coffee shop. Three interviews were conducted via phone call. The interview protocol (Appendix D) focused on five aspects:

- 1) General background questions
- 2) Questions about teacher experience
- 3) Questions about their social-spatial identities
- 4) Questions regarding teaching and social-spatial identity
- 5) Socio-spatial relations
  - friends and family, school, community, state, region

The general tenor of most interviews was casual and conversational. I attribute this to at least three factors. First, by the time of the semi-structured interview we had previously met face-to-face and talked on the phone. Second, and relatedly, the teachers were happy, even eager, to talk more about a part of their life (their experiences as a Latinx teacher) that they had much to share, but were not commonly asked about. This was the case, even as educators shared particularly hard parts about their (teaching) lives in South Carolina. As Jenny, a middle school Spanish teacher, said during an interview, “but I’ll stop going on and on now, I’m venting, but I vent to people that know me.”

Third, my own positionality as a self-identified Chicano, served as a connection where the participants and I could compare/contrast our experiences in and out of schools. For example, Dave and I shared matching memories about picking tomatoes and working in agricultural fields. Similarly, Amara and I traded different stories about our time living in Los Angeles. Other participants who had only lived/taught in South Carolina asked about Latinx teachers and communities in other states. As such, I enjoyed the interview process writing in one field note:

“In a weird way, I feel at home...She [participant] uses [the word] Chicano a few times and it was a relief to hear that, she said, “she was raised straight-up Chicana” and I smiled. Even the Spanish she uses is closer to the “Spanglish” slang I am familiar with. She jokes that she had to look up the “X” in Latinx, and we joked she had to question her “wokeness.” (August, 2019)
Related to the above quote, I was surprised by the levels of translanguaging that took place during many interviews. I recorded such an instance in an additional field note with another participant:

Almost immediately I picked up that she feels comfortable speaking Spanish with me from the start. She starts by saying, in Spanish, “that she needs un cafecito\textsuperscript{109} of course, really bad.” Like her phone call, she has high energy, continues to mix Spanish and English, and is eager to talk. (August, 2019)

Given my own language background (English “fluency,” conversational Spanish) and reticence to make linguistic conjectures about participants, I assumed that all interviews would proceed in English. However, as some participants used Spanish intermittently, usually for certain phrases, words, and sayings, but occasionally as a whole response, I made the decision to explain my own linguistic repertoire as necessary. In short, I encouraged participants to respond how they felt comfortable, and that if I didn’t understand something, I would ask. Interestingly, participants that shared my Mexican ethnic background were more likely (though not the only ones) to move back and forth between Spanish and English. During transcription, I left the responses in their own words and as explained in Chapter One, if I quoted participants in the text I include my own English translations in a footnote.

Thinking more about these instances, exchanges, and conversations with Jenny, Dave, Amara, and Bri, and many similar moments across the research, I often found myself comparing my experiences, understandings, even language, with my participants. Although there is nothing “wrong” with acknowledging my own positionality in this regard, I also recognized how easy it was to use a type of self-reflexivity that sought to

\textsuperscript{109} “A coffee.”

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situate myself near my participants. Pillow (2003) cautions that such reflexivity falls “into seeking similarities between the researcher and the subject,” and follows a “desire to be close our subjects, to write ourselves as close to our participants, and to affirm oneness” (p. 182). Thus, following Pillow’s (2003) lead I worked to both acknowledge the knowledges, subjectivities, and experiences I brought to the research, and the reasonings for engaging in the research, with a reflexivity of discomfort that challenged and critiqued my own interpretations, representations, and claims, an ongoing process I explain in greater depth shortly.

All interviews were audio recorded with participant permission. I listened to the audio recordings and manually transcribed each of them. In keeping with my analytic approach, I included emergent thoughts, links, and “zigzags” with other data/participants, and connections to theories and concepts in brackets along with the transcription. I then copied the transcriptions, and any accompanying field notes and memos to a master data document.

At the end of the interview, I went back over the initial PowerPoint specifically highlighting information related to Phase Three (photovoice) such as examples, basic ethics, abstaining from taking identifiable pictures of youth/students, ensuring photographer safety, and photographing other adults only if they have the permission to do so (Latz, 2017; Mitchell, De Lange, & Molestane, 2017).110 If participants expressed interest in completing the photovoice phase, we then scheduled another time to meet about their photos.

110 For an extended discussion of photovoice ethics see Latz (2017), Chapter 5.
Phase Three

For the photovoice phase participants were advised to take between six to eight pictures in response to the following prompt, *what images best communicate/capture your experiences and relationships as a Latinx teacher in South Carolina?* Participants were also advised that they could select previously captured photos if they felt these better addressed the prompt. Given the ubiquity and ever-increasing capabilities of cell phone photography (Latz, 2017), all photographs were initially digital, sent to me via text message or email, and printed in preparation for the next meeting.

In total, 12 teachers participated in this phase of the research, sending more than 70 pictures. Of the 12 participants, I conducted interviews about their photos with 10 of them. Two teachers sent photos but then could not make time to discuss them further. Of these 10 people interviewed, seven were conducted in person (once again at their school, home, or coffee shop), and three were conducted over the phone due to conflicting schedules. It should also be of note that two interviews included a pair of teachers, meaning one other teacher was present when they explained the photos. This intra-action proved to be interesting as the teachers would affirm similar (relations) and/or points of differences (in relations). The interviews were conducted from August 2019 to January 2020 and lasted from approximately 30 minutes to 120 minutes. In order to provide a protocol for the interviews, I started each interview by going over a

SHOWeD prompt (Annang Ingram et al., 2016). Specifically, I encouraged participants to discuss a)What they *See*? b)What is *Happening*? c)How do these photos relate to *Our*

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111 One teacher even created a Google slideshow with pictures and a short description.
112 I included these pictures in the master data document for record keeping purposes, but decided against using them in my data analysis.
lives as teachers and Latinx? d) Why were the photos selected and Why do these experiences and relations exist in South Carolina? e) What can we Do with our experiences? Participants rarely followed the protocol, rather they went through each of their photos one by one explaining why they chose the picture as I interjected with clarifying questions and/or follow-up questions. Such a rejection or renegotiation of the protocol pointed me to revisit, and expand, my rationale for using the method.

To reiterate, the initial purpose of the photovoice was to create an opening for more relational spatial inquiry; the rationale being the medium of photos allowed participants to reflect on, and articulate their present, lived, and collective socio-spatial relations as both teachers and Latinx within their specific contexts of South Carolina. However, it became clear to me that participants used the photographs and the dialogue not only to weave another set of narratives into the research (Fine et al, 2003), but as Shah (2011) outlined in her own photovoice research, “to tell me stories on their own terms” (p. 102). Of course, this did not erase or equalize the power relations inherent in the research process, but it provided a reflective shift, an opening into negotiating another layer of control, voice, and representation. Thus, the act of creating, sharing, and explaining the photos added a dynamic narrative lens to view the multiplicitous spatial, layered, and pervasive relations and practices that teachers were embedded with/in, including the changing researcher-researched relationship. The photovoice process revealed that researcher-researched relations were not outside of, but rather immanently intertwined with, the gaps, thresholds, and sites of possibility and/or refusal I set out to map. In sum, the photovoice process itself provided an example of how teachers’ view of
self was not a uniform unfolding through continuous time; instead their subjectivity shifted as they navigate different and dispersed relations (of power; Jackson, 2013).

All photovoice interviews were audio recorded with participant permission. I listened to the audio recordings and manually transcribed each of them. In keeping with my analytic approach, and similar to the semi-structured interviews, I included emergent thoughts, links, and “zigzags” with other data/participants, and connections to theories and concepts in brackets along with the transcription. I then copied the transcriptions, photos, and any accompanying field notes and memos to a master data document. At the end of the interview, I went over a new Power Point presentation on (eco)mapping (Appendix E). If participants expressed interest in completing the (eco)map phase, we then scheduled another time to meet about their photos.

**Phase Four**

Five participants completed an (eco)map in response to the prompt, *What/who supports and challenges you as a Latinx teacher in South Carolina?*, from October 2019 to December 2019. Similar to the renegotiations within the photovoice process, even as participants took up the (eco)map method in much different ways than I anticipated, it still produced rich discussion and data. In the PowerPoint presentation on (eco)mapping I shared a number of educational mapping methods that might help participants entangle their photos (Phase Three) with their maps (Phase Four; Annamma, 2016; Linville; 2017; Tuck et al., 2008). My aim was to show how the two methods (photovoice and ecomaps) could be used together as a tool to create nuanced visual data, evoke discussion about socio-spatial relationality, and produce a material-discursive intra-action through the map itself. The photos would serve the (eco)map and the (eco)map would serve the photos as
participants would use, glue, cut, manipulate, arrange and draw (on) their photos in relationship with their maps. Additionally, I would be present as the teachers made these maps and talked through their constructions.

However, four of the five participants expressed a desire to complete the (eco)map on their own time and, then, meet to discuss its meaning. Learning from the photovoice process, I decided against an interview protocol instead conducting open-ended interviews about the maps after they were completed. Three of the participants were interviewed individually about their maps and the interviews lasted from 25 to 50 minutes. The two other participants and I met together to discuss their maps and that meeting lasted over two hours. While none of the five teachers ended up including photos on their maps, they did produce substantial visual diagrams of their supportive, negative, mixed, and ambivalent relationships that, in turn, allowed for extensive dialogue, another set of (different) narratives, about the myriad relations that make certain subjectivities (im)possible. There was even an instance when the absence of visual markers proved to generate important data. For example, Susana shared it would be helpful to create another set of lines to show “relationships that do not exist, but should.” To get an idea of the (eco)maps I share each below:

Figure 3.3. Participant (eco)map (Victoria, December, 2019).
Figure 3.4. Participant (eco)map (Andrea, October, 2019).

Figure 3.5. Participant (eco)map (Susana, November, 2019).

Figure 3.6. Participant (eco)map (Maria, October, 2019).
Even though all five of the participants “placed” themselves as the center or beginning of the (eco)maps, the open-ended interviews made apparent that their subjectivities were decentered through, dispersed among, and contingent upon their different spatialized relations. Hence, the (eco)maps engaged the multiplicitous intra-actions that constituted the teachers’ shifting subjectivities, rather than serving as a means to represent fixed identities. The (eco)maps served to outline the relations that work to create, maintain, and resist the boundaries of how one can act and be known (to itself).

It is worth explaining why only five of my 25 (20%) participants completed an (eco)map. I attribute this to two overall factors, all which can be remedied in future research. First, I was under my own time constraints for completing data collection and as the previous three phrases produced large amounts of transcripts, and each phase took considerable time to schedule, prepare for, and complete, I made the decision to stop collection in January 2020. Second, educators were/are extremely busy and by the time Phase Four approached they had given a substantial amount of time to the research project. Thus, although more educators were agreeable to participate in (eco)mapping if we met after January 2020, I thoroughly believed the more than 600 pages of transcribed data (explained in the analysis section) was enough. My recommendation for future
research would be to a) allow more time for the entire project and/or b) center (eco)map as the lead method in a research study.

As with the other interviews, all (eco)map interviews were audio recorded with participant permission. I listened to the audio recordings and manually transcribed each of them. In keeping with my analytic approach, I included emergent thoughts, links, and “zigzags” with other data/participants, and connections to theories and concepts in brackets along with the transcription. I then copied the transcriptions, (eco)maps, and any accompanying field notes and memos to a master data document. At the end of phase four the master data document stood at just over 600 pages. In sum, the four phases, informal meeting, semi-structured interview, photovoice, and (eco)map, provided a considerable, suitable, and rich collection of data to engage a nuanced analysis of space and Latinx teacher subjectivity in South Carolina.

**Reflexivity**

In explaining my choice of theoretical framing, my rationale for particular methods, and my decision-making in the data collection procedure, I have tried to braid into the text how my own subjective experiences and my relationship with participants impacted the entirety of the research project. In this section, I seek to expand, and make more explicit, my processes of, and struggles for reflexivity; how I “worked the hyphen” between Self-Other, researcher-participant (Fine et al., 2003, p. 168). Such work and reflection was admittingly “messy,” perhaps even more so because relationships with participants and the eventual invitations into their intimate spaces (of classrooms, selves, and experiences) often developed from a sense of shared experience as teacher, Latinx, and/or advocate. Yet, simply gaining “insider” status does not, on its own, minimize
power differentials and the risks of (mis)representation. An example from my first semi-structured interview brought such a concern clearly into focus.

I vividly remember sitting in a participant’s classroom as we talked about the upcoming school year. I was simultaneously trying to take notes, set up my recording devices, and give the participant my full attention as we engaged in casual conversation before recording the “official interview.” The participant explained that she barely had a summer because she was forced to take online certification classes, that she felt stressed about the school year, and that she didn’t feel supported by school staff and colleagues. She hoped that with this research, “I [as the researcher] would be their [Latinx teachers] voice,” and that the dissertation would “tell their [Latinx teachers] story and make change for us” (field notes, August, 2019). Far from being a lone instance, a number of other participants expressed similar sentiments. Although I thanked them for their trust and eagerness, I also felt uneasy with such conversations. I thought deeply about my representation of their wor(l)ds and stories. What were their expectations? How were the narratives to be used? Whose interests where going to be served? (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). “Who is speaking to/for/with whom, for what reasons and with what resources?” (Lather, 2004, p. 212). How was I going to construct and produce knowledge about my participants especially as I outlined at that beginning that this research was part of my biography as a teacher/Chicano/researcher? In approaching these questions I found Pillow’s (2003) articulation of a reflexivity of discomfort to be most useful in challenging my own self-reflexive inclination to find “myself” in, and similar to, my participants. Rather, I sought to take seriously the tensions between being held accountable to people’s struggle for self-representation—including my own—“while at the same time
acknowledging the political need to represent and find meaning” (Pillow, 2003, p. 192). Put another way, following Fine et al.’s (2003) argument that inquiry is not just about producing knowledge, but also reforming “common sense,” I worked to connect the voices and stories of participants back to the sets of historic, structural, and spatial relations in which they were situated (p. 199).

Moving toward the analysis and representation of data I hold that even though Latinx educators’ in the South—their words, stories, and narratives—are largely absent in the academic literature, it is not enough to simply collect, compile, and present them (Johnson-Bailey, 2004). I believe that it is possible to acknowledge that even as participants share their truths and experiences those narratives are not above “critical examination and debate...[as] the intent and spirit of poststructuralist thinking [is to] examine the political construction of definitions and categories of meaning” (Johnson-Bailey, 2004, p. 127). Yet, it was not easy to sit with the messiness and uncomfortableness of (mis)representation as I moved from “this is what you said” and “this is what I meant” (Rodriguez, personal communication). As such, I found a cartographic approach most helpful in making room for both narrative and interpretation, meaning in mapping the blurry boundaries of spaces and subjectivities I tried to locate a multiplicity of entry points and thresholds in the assemblage of participant meaning-making, researcher meaning-making, theory insertion, and the entanglement across all the above.

Analysis

Following data collection/generation there were four data sources generated with participants and a fifth I compiled on my own. Thus, the data analyzed for this
dissertation includes 606 pages of material: 1) semi-structured interview transcripts (n = 362); 113 2) photos and photovoice interview transcripts (n = 108); 3) (eco)maps and (eco)map interview transcripts (n = 52); 4) field notes and analytic memos (n = 53); and 5) school district teacher websites, social media, and news releases/articles about participants (n = 31). The latter set of data served as one form of triangulation, in addition to the multiple and differing sets of narratives produced from multiple methods, because school district teacher websites (and related material) provided another lens into how either the teachers described themselves and/or how others (administration, colleagues) described them.

A first round of data analysis began as I listened to audio recordings of interviews and manually transcribed each one into a master word processing document. Manual transcription, although tedious and time-consuming, was essential to familiarizing myself and engaging deeply with the large amount of data. As I transcribed the interview data I typed emergent thoughts, links, and “zigzags” to other data/participants, and connections to theories and concepts in brackets directly within the transcription. This allowed me to use theory (post-structural subjectivity and relational space) to think with the data (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. vi). Thus, in lieu of more traditional coding I sought to root analysis in relation to theory and turn the transcription into an assemblage of key phrases, bolded quotes, theoretical connections, and beginning analysis that I could return to and build upon (for an example see Appendix F). I then wrote an additional set of analytic memos that started to develop some of my emergent ideas, identify tensions, outline interesting patterns, and signal important differences.

113 N = number of pages analyzed
In a second round of data analysis, I printed out the master document assembled from the first round of data analysis and read and reread the data and emergent analysis. Upon this set of readings, I continued to “map connections [and divergences] to other interviews, [thought] across time, place, and space... and [marked] points of interest” (Guyotte, Flint, & Latopolski, 2019, p. 7). Specifically, I used pen and pencil to take additional notes (often in the margins), underline, highlight, and (re)flag key data excerpts, and dis/connect participant words with each other and theory (for an example see Appendix G). I then wrote an additional set of analytic memos that sought to organize driving ideas in overarching findings. What emerged during this process of memoing were broad themes in response to each research question. I then moved to create the cartographies for each question by returning to the large transcription document and matching key phrases, bolded quotes, and theoretical connections to the identified themes. I organized and expanded these key phrases, bolded quotes, and theoretical connections into subsections to evidence the broad themes.

Although Latinx teachers in South Carolina are perpetually in motion, in transition, and in relation (to other relations), the cartographies seek to sketch the spatialized and nonlinear boundaries of Latinx teacher subjectivity in South Carolina. As a final step I sought a way to visually map these connecting, divergent, and zig-zagging relations that emerged from the research and point to potential cracks, entry points, and thresholds to different becomings (Foucault, 1982). To create such a map I entangled participant words with my larger theoretical frame and the broad themes I identified. Although I do not detail a step by step guide to the production of these maps, I do believe they are a creative exercise to re-present the data and add an additional layer to
cartographic research. I explain these visual maps in greater length as a way of concluding Chapters Four, Five, and Six

It is imperative, once again, to note that such analysis and the corresponding narrative cartographies, does not wish to discover or represent the ideal Latinx teacher; to find the inner essence of my participants. As such, I eschewed the notion of collapsing nuance and complexity into an initial set of codes. Instead, I broadly situated my analysis within the Deleuzoguattarian call to “make a map, not a tracing” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12). A tracing aims to reproduce, while a map seeks experimentation, openness, and multiple points of entry and exit. The goal of a tracing is to describe a de facto state, to maintain balance in the intersubjective relations, or to explore an unconscious that is already there from the start” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12). While a tracing repeats and “comes back to the same” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12), a map is rhizomatic; it seeks connection and growth. The map is malleable and constantly in modification. With that said, I share my maps, the narrative cartographies rooted in the relations of Latinx teachers in the many spaces of El Sur Latinx.
CHAPTER 4

“IT’S, IT’S VERY COMPLICATED. IT MAKES FOR A VERY HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT”: MAPPING THE BLURRY AND MULTIPLICIOUS BOUNDARIES OF SPATIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION FOR LATINX TEACHERS LIVING, NEGOTIATING, AND CREATING “HOSTILE” SPACE(S) IN EL SUR LATINX

Introduction

In this chapter I present findings that primarily, although not exclusively, engage my first research question:

- How are Latinx K-12 teachers/educators both made in, and (re)making, their contexts (in South Carolina)?
  - a) How do individual teachers/educators understand their experience as a Latinx K-12 teacher within their specific social, spatial, and historical power relations (in South Carolina)?

To do this I present a narrative cartography that uses participant words, pictures, and (eco)maps to outline the connecting, divergent, and zig-zagging spatial relations Latinx teachers in South Carolina traverse. I share the ways my participants, Latinx K-12 teachers in South Carolina, perceive, interpret, and intra-act with their shifting spatialized relations, mapping the boundaries that create and normalize certain practices and behaviors of inclusion and exclusion with/in certain spaces. In sketching how Latinx teachers make, and are made in, these spaces, it is possible to highlight, or at least (un/re)blur, the underlying relations, knowledges, and discourses that simultaneously
limit and reveal the potentiality for different relations. As space is the product of
multiplicitous interaction (Massey, 1998b, 2009), it is always in the process of becoming
and as such Latinx teachers play a vital role in its (re)constitution. Thus, by focusing on
the (power) relationships that (re)create space and the spatial arrangements that (re)create
power relationships it is possible to investigate how individuals disrupt, maintain,
(re)configure, and (re)produce a multiplicity of spaces with/in El Sur Latinx. Then,
moving to, and in concert with Chapter Five such relations serve to produce, reaffirm,
reconstitute, refuse, and disrupt bounded sites of Latinx subjectivities (Guyotte, Flint, &
Latopolski, 2019).

In following the (spatial) narrative cartography of Latinx teachers I map out three
broad relations to what many participants often described as “hostile spaces.” Once again,
these themes emerged after two rounds of data analysis where during “round one” I
transcribed all the interview data and typed developing thoughts, links, and “zigzags” to
other data/participants, and connections to theories in brackets directly within the
transcription document (Appendix F); and where during “round two” I read and reread
the master transcription document continuing to take notes, underline, highlight, and
(re)flag key data excerpts, and dis/connect participant words with each other and theory
(Appendix G). I then wrote a set of analytic memos that sought to organize driving ideas
into what became three broad themes for research question one. This chapter is organized
by exploring these three broad themes in turn. The first theme outlines how participants
describe living and working with/in spatialized relations that were exclusionary and
hostile. The second theme describes how teachers and educators negotiated hostile
spaces, recreated spaces for themselves and their students, and worked to forge different
relations. This demonstrates that even within spaces that educators named as hostile there exists a simultaneous co-existence of more than one thing, a multiplicity of relations and distinct trajectories that are open and filled with potential (Massey, 1998b). The third theme maps out a set of relations when teachers refused normative spatial practices and purposely sought to (re)create hostile spaces. In such instances, the teachers saw hostile space as a strategy to refuse and disrupt unjust relations, insisting on the potential of different provocations, counter-conduct(ion)s, and uncharted trajectories. Under each theme rests subsections that evidence the spatialized relations in greater depth. I lead each subsection with a quote or picture from a participant that I then unpack by dis/connecting other key data excerpts, theories, and my own analysis. I close the chapter with a visual to illustrate the overlapping, intra-active, and reciprocal sets of relations and spaces that Latinx in South Carolina co-constitutively make and are made in.

Before moving to the three themes I want to clarify a few decisions I made about the organization and representation of findings. At first glance, categorizing the findings under three broad relations might appear to buttress a container notion of space, but in fact, I insist on the opposite. In mapping lines between participants and their spatialized relations I show the porous and dynamic nature of such relations as individuals navigate exclusion and inclusion, refusal and acceptance, and pragmatism, intentionality, and inadvertence—sometimes at the same time. This evidences Massey’s (1998a, b) notion of relational space that holds spaces contain a simultaneous co-existence of more than one thing, a multiplicity of relations. Spaces were only contingently separable and typically intertwined as participants inhabited and created multiple locations within (a) set(s) of power relations at the same time. Thus, I also include examples of disjuncture and zig-
zagging to highlight that space as multiplicity insists on difference—the existence of more than one narrative, trajectory, and viewpoint however entrenched, stabilized, or powerful one might (appear to) be. Therefore, hostile spaces are neither inherently nor always so; spaces are never completely closed as there is a genuine openness for difference that my participants demonstrated.

Similarly, I use the word “hostile” cautiously because although participants themselves shared generalized feelings of macro (state, national) and micro (schools, classrooms) antagonism toward both Latinx and teachers, they also expressed many instances of support and inclusion. That is, Latinx teachers and educators traversed through many spaces, some that felt hostile, some that did not, and some that were filled with ambivalence, contradiction, and/or ambiguity. To be clearer, as participants explicitly named school spaces as hostile, I noticed and interpreted contradictory, concurrent, and contingent relations of inclusion and exclusion. Thus, and in sum, I employ hostile as a way to center participant words and to think through, sometimes even foil, the shifting, un/predictable, overlapping, and not-so-one-or-the-other relational spaces Latinx teachers work and live. For even within spaces that educators named as hostile there existed a multiplicity of relations and a simultaneous co-existence of more than one thing. As such even hostile spaces were “sphere[s] of possibility… in which distinct trajectories coexist” (Massey, 1998b, p. 28). As a final note before moving into the participant narratives, I discuss subjectivity when it is necessary to do so, but reserve an extended conversation about the co-constructive process of spaces and subjectivities for Chapter Five.
Theme One: Living and Working With/in Spatialized Relations That Are Exclusionary and Hostile

I have a kind of in between, more antagonistic relationship with the coworkers too and...So I find it very challenging to deal with them sometimes I mean...I am the only Spanish teacher, Hispanic teacher in the school I should say, and I don’t have a good environment. It is very hostile at times and there is a lot of tension going on, and I don’t get invited to participate in a lot of things so I’m always the last person to find out, um, when things need to happen...

It makes it a very hostile environment to work, you feel like there’s no support there at all....like I said, some of my coworkers made me feel like that too, non-supportive, because I feel like I could be included in some more things to make me feel like maybe we are a team but it doesn’t happen. So, I’m usually by myself. I don’t get invited to do any gatherings in the morning or picture time or nothing. I’m always the one missing and everything because I think they make me feel like I’m not, I’m not even there. (Ecomap interview, Andrea, October, 2019).

I sat across from Andrea at her kitchen table and listened to her explain her (eco)map (Figure 4.1). In between sips of water, Andrea detailed a number of reasons why she drew a green jagged line on the paper between her and her coworkers to indicate “a kind of in-between, more antagonistic relationship.” Andrea, a middle school Spanish teacher, expressed feelings of hurt and isolation. She did not feel part of the team, an equal member of her school’s world language department, and recounted half a dozen instances when the other teachers left her out of events, communications, and decisions. Feeling clearly and consistently excluded, “usually by herself,” Andrea described her workplace relations as tense and hostile.

Aside from feeling excluded from/by her colleagues’ interactions, Andrea expanded on a number of other reasons why her workplace was a “hostile” space and not a “good environment.” On top of unsupportive relationships with her co-workers, she noted physical separation, as her classroom made her “alone in the corner,” constantly having to “prove” herself as a teacher to district officials and parents, additional work demands like being pulled out to translate or tutoring students during planning times, and
teaching a marginalized subject, Spanish. Further adding to the strain of her school relations, Andrea shared a number of stories involving her own child who was bullied by other students and made the target of racist attacks at her school, a clear example of anti-Latinx discourse in school spaces. As a result, she had to take unpaid leave to take him to therapy and counseling appointments. Reflecting specifically on her son, but also teaching at her school in general she remarked, “I felt like a failure because I was trying to make a difference [with teaching] but no matter how hard you try to make a difference people are going to try and find ways to make you feel less” (Photovoice interview, August, 2019). Although Andrea consistently said she found purpose and fulfilment in trying to “make a difference,” she also struggled with a self-knowledge, a productive effect of her exclusion, that questioned her effectiveness within the specific relations of her school, and a normative discourse about teaching in general, and as a result wondered how long she could continue being an educator.

![Figure 4.1. Andrea (eco)map (October, 2019).](image)

Andrea explained how students would chant “Trump” or “Build a Wall” when her son walked by. More hurtful though she stated, “The kids here are so cruel sometimes...they had him [her son] convinced that he was adopted because I was too dark to be his mom...he said, “all of my friends said I am too white to be your kid.”” (Photovoice interview, August, 2019). A few other participants shared their children were the target of explicit racism at school. For example, another participant shared that her child's teacher asked why she brought peanut butter instead of beans for lunch.
While Andrea shared clear instances of exclusion, her school space was neither inherently nor invariably “hostile.” The previous school year she had another Spanish teacher, Maria, who she was close to, would eat lunch with, and share teaching ideas with. That colleague was an international teacher, and the two bonded over a shared immigration experience from South America. Relatedly, Andrea drew a black line on her ecomap between her and her students, explaining:

My other strong support system will be my students because I have really good relationships with them and although my work environment might not be very supportive, they are very supportive when they come to me and tell me thank you Sra. [teacher last name] and even previous students who I had last year and they tell me they have learned so much and it gives me an encouragement to keep doing it aside of anyone else not seeing it. They’re [students] the ones, they’re seeing what I’m doing with them and they acknowledge that so that’s important to me. (Ecomap interview, Andrea, October, 2019)

Even in “hostile” spaces, those that “might not be very supportive,” other teachers and students provided different intra-relations, different spaces, that proved “very supportive” to Andrea. This shows that space is not a flat surface; there is always a multiplicity and thus the potential for change, sometimes from one moment to the next. Within spatial relations that are generally exclusionary, there are also overlapping and intertwined relations, fuzzy boundaries that complicate the binary. The challenge becomes to (re)form, (re)fuse, (re)organize, and (re)invent relations that help to create more opportunities for open spaces, “spaces of possibility,” (Rodriguez, 2013) rather than the reproduction of marginalizing spaces that make teachers like Andrea question their self (knowledge). Moving forward, as I outline how participants, much like Andrea, described living and working with/in spatialized relations that were explicitly prohibitive, racialized, and exploitative, it is still possible to look for what Foucault (2017) calls
“wounds or opportunities,” (p.11) cracks in the pavement, time-spaces of ambiguity, and “locations” in our landscape that might be otherwise (Kuntz, 2019).

“When Maria Left, I Lost Everyone”: When School Spaces Feel the Most Exclusionary

When Maria [another Latina teacher] left, I lost everyone. I am the only one. I am all by myself, alone, in the corner. They [other teachers] don’t talk to me or listen to my ideas. It is just so hard to stay motivated in this profession. It feels like I am invisible. Sometimes I think I want to go back to Peru. (Ecomap interview, Andrea, October, 2019)

This picture to me spoke mountains, that's how I felt, and I still do sometimes as a teacher. I feel, like, invisible, like I am there but no one else sees me. So, to me when I saw this, I can see myself there, but other people just see me there as an object, that my opinions don’t matter, my concerns don’t matter. (Photovoice interview, Andrea, October, 2019)

The largest school district in South Carolina, Greenville County, boasts a vision statement that reads, “Students inspired, supported, and prepared for their next opportunities in life, education, and employment” (Greenville County School District, n.d.). Lexington One, the school district in South Carolina where I worked as a middle school social studies for four years, cites their mission “is to cultivate a caring community where ALL learners are extraordinary communicators, collaborators, creators and critical thinkers” (Lexington County School District One, n.d., emphasis original).

My participants overwhelmingly agreed with the intent of these words and frequently reiterated their efforts to care for, and support, “ALL” their students. As Andrés, a middle school Spanish teacher in a rural part of the state, explained while showing me a picture of him with his students, “That’s very important for me, to create a safe environment and build a respectful relationship with them [students]” (Photovoice interview, December, 2019). Yet while participants described their own efforts to build spaces of safety and respect for their own students, many participants felt their efforts were not reciprocated,
especially by other adults and coworkers.

While many participants described numerous racist and exclusionary incidents outside the physical walls of their schools (echoing the anti-Latinx discourse I detail in Chapter One), such negative discourse drifted in/to school intra-actions and (re)produced taxing school spaces. Outside school spaces, participants described racial profiling and being “asked for my green card” by police (Andrea, pilot interview, March, 2018), the denial of, or increased barriers to, public services like the DMV (Rosa, photovoice interview, October, 2019), and racist insults and language like being asked to stop speaking Spanish or to “go back to Mexico.” Even as such looks, words, and actions “still sting” (Kathy, interview, December, 2019), participants also communicated the importance of loving bonds with immediate family, trusted friends, and community members, in supporting each other through these incidents. While most agreed this was a by-product of living in the South, their relationships outside school still made South Carolina “home.” However, teachers shared they did not expect such problems to occur with adults and coworkers “inside” schools. After sharing a number of experiences like being “mistaken” for a custodian and being asked for identification (when no other staff member was) to pick up her work computer, Serena, a middle school art teacher, said, “I thought being educated, a professional, it wouldn’t be like that” (Initial meeting, September, 2019). Similarly, after being called “little Spanish teacher by coworkers” (even though she teaches Social Studies and doesn’t speak Spanish) amongst many other

115 While most participants thought the “South” (however they defined it) was a more racist place than other locations and regions, a number of teachers recounted racist incidents growing up, or visiting family, in places like California, Pennsylvania, and Michigan.
racist comments and situations, Belinda went to her administration and “they responded in a kind of nonchalant way, like, what do you want me to do about this?” (Interview, November, 2019). Belinda, who identifies as Afro-Latina, continued talking about another incident, one in which a student was speaking in her class about “lynching black people,” but Belinda “got in trouble” because she yelled at the student to “get the hell out of my room.” She complained, “And I just think that, that is so insane that I can be very quickly reprimanded telling a student what they’re saying is wrong and offensive, but [then] no one has been reprimanded when a coworker has offended me [and I went to the administration about it].” Thus, at school many teachers lacked such supportive relationships and were forced to travel their spaces alone, “invisible, like I am there, but no one else sees me” (Andrea, ecomap interview, October, 2019). The key being teacher micro intra-actions and relations at their schools, paired with larger anti-Latinx discourse circulating at macro levels, produced spaces with/in schools that felt more hostile and exclusionary than other spaces (sets of relations). Maria sums this point up as she explained, “Panama [where she taught previously] was harder outside school. I cried and cried. But in school, not too bad. Here [in the United States], being in school is worse, even though I feel I have never been mistreated outside school” (Photovoice interview, August, 2019).

Teachers attributed these relations generally to the increased demands, stress, and devaluation of a teaching career in general, but specifically to the intersection of such processes with their subject position as a Latinx teacher. For example, Kathy noted the possibility of taking early retirement because of the expectations to “teach to the test, which is true. True, true, true, true. Though, people don’t like to hear that, but oh gosh
[there is] so much pressure to have the kids perform well on the end of the year test” (Interview, December, 2019). The strict and, in the view of many teachers, irrelevant and non-rigorous standards limited autonomy and was seen as an assault on their expert knowledge (Webb, 2009). International teachers, in particular, bemoaned a lack of respect for teachers and their work in the United States, a stark contrast to their countries of origin where educators were widely admired as highly-educated professionals. While teachers believed many of these issues were, unfortunately, national problems, they felt them magnified in South Carolina because of minimal (financial) support at the state and district levels in addition to the absence of union protections. As Pilar, an elementary school teacher, summed it up, “there is like a state-wide culture of contempt for teachers…I love my job, I just like hate the system… The best teachers leave because they just can’t do it [deal with contempt] anymore” (Interview, October, 2019).

Participants shared that their own coworkers furthered these relations of disrespect and questioned their expertise because they were Latinx. Andrea made this clear in an exchange during her (eco)map interview:

Tim: And you talked about that before [different relationships as a teacher], but you really do think it has to do with you being Latina or Hispanic that they treat you like that?

Andrea: Oh ya! absolutely...you can see it from the moment they meet you like they have this expression of disappointment sometimes and you, you are going to have to work hard to prove yourself to those people. So, I find it very challenging, um, to deal with them sometimes, I mean it’s not all of them, but in the district the majority of them are like that, a big, big vast majority and coworkers. (Ecomap interview, October, 2019)

Victoria, a high school Spanish teacher stated similar beliefs in explaining how White colleagues “don’t like her.” This was most apparent to her in everyday interactions including coworkers’ refusal to listen to her ideas and plans. She gave the following
example during our (eco)map interview, “I come over and it’s good morning, good morning, no answer. And then in the meetings it’s like, I ask questions...and they say, ‘uh hum...yes...uh...no,’ but they don’t, they don’t, I don’t know...they don’t care” (Victoria, ecomap interview, December, 2020). Thus, Victoria drew a jagged-line in her (eco)map indicating a poor relationship between her and her “USA co-workers” (see Figure 4.2).

![Victoria (eco)map (December, 2019).](image)

Victoria went on to say that teachers in her building from other countries like “Puerto Rico (sic), Panama, and Valenzuela” are “very nice,” and the only coworkers she really considers friends. Thus, similar to Flores’ (2017a) findings about the importance of coethnic relationships for Latinx teachers, my participants relied on other Latinx teachers to navigate certain exclusionary spaces. Latinx teachers expressed a hyper importance of Latinx colleagues given imbalanced teacher demographics and the loss of such relationships, especially in the absence of a large Latinx student community, had drastic effects on how teachers understood their spatial relations. This is evidenced when Andrea said, “I lost everyone” when her Latinx colleague, Maria, left for another school. As Andrea felt her school space became more hostile after her friend Maria left, Maria found
welcoming relationships at her new school, illustrating a black (eco)map line with teacher friends that speak Spanish and listen to her ideas.

While it might appear straightforward that the mere presence of Latinx colleagues would buffer against hostile spaces, such a claim essentializes Latinx (relations) and misses additional nuance that emerged during the research. For example, one teacher, Sonia, recounted how a Latinx administrator conducted a formal observation three days before her scheduled C-section. The administrator did not care Sonia was nearly nine months pregnant and told her, “well honey, everyone can get pregnant, like this is not an issue” (Interview, September, 2019). The administrator proceeded to write her up for having a Puerto Rican flag in the classroom, submitted a “bad evaluation,” and then asked Sonia not to return the next year (after getting back from unpaid maternity leave) because “she wasn’t good enough.” Sonia felt ashamed about her time at the school, was concerned the evaluation would label her a “trouble-maker [because of the flag], and questioned how this could have happened because she was a “good teacher.” She attributed the whole situation to “being pregnant and a Latina.” Sonia continued to explain how the entire situation was “even more devastating because...porque es, even though no estas mi sangre, no es como no ella Puertorriqueña, es Latina y entonces como nosotros todos somos hermanos, I thought.” 116 Sonia was hired by another district and explained that her new principal, a White man, was more supportive of teachers and their family commitments. Happy with her new teaching assignment, but still visibly upset, she shared in a resigned voice, “I guess it was meant to be.”

116 Sonia felt most comfortable translanguaging during our interview. To translate into English, Sonia was devastated because “even though the administrator was not her blood (Puertorriqueña), she was Latina and thus family, she thought.”
Although Sonia’s case of intra-Latinx hostility was not the norm, it does illustrate the multiple and intersecting power relations that operate with/in, and are co-constitutive of, space. Similar to Sonia, however, many teachers expressed how the overlapping power relations, for example hierarchical with administration, vertical with colleagues, and dispersed and capillary with teacher accountability and observation, that created hostile spaces a/effectuated self-knowledge and produced (the rationality) of certain teaching practices. To this point, Lisette explained that in response to “racist” parents, students, and administrators that “tried many times to intimate [her]” and accuse her of losing grades and papers, she had to keep assignment logs complete with kids taking pictures of handing in each piece of class/homework (Pilot interview, March, 2018). Thus, in parallel to “negative” prohibitions (Foucault, 1980, 1990, 2007c) of (spatial) exclusion, power relations worked to positively a/effect (conduct) Lisette’s behavior and (re)configure her teaching practices. Participants struggled with/in these relations to produce, defend, and negotiate their self-conception as “good” teachers and this relentless (self)questioning of their effectiveness led to transfers, resignations, and searches for new positions. To this end, another teacher, Jenny, upon seeing my water bottle with a “Ya Basta”\textsuperscript{117} decal in protest to ICE deportation policies, threw up her hands and said, “you’re right, Tim, ya basta, I can’t take it anymore. I’m done. This is my last year teaching.” While I explain near the conclusion of the chapter how some teachers purposefully created their own spaces of hostility, I move next to other ways teachers felt forced to “prove their self/ves” in the face of feeling devalued.

\textsuperscript{117} A way to say “stop” or “enough.”
“Here It Doesn’t Work Like That Way”: What, When, and Where Knowledge Counts

Figure 4.3. Participant created meme (Maria, photovoice interview, August, 2019).

It was surprisingly overcast for an August day, and the cloud cover tricked me into suggesting we sit outside. Yet, it was still a late summer day in South Carolina and the lack of sunshine did little to offset the sweltering and sticky weather. As I wiped sweat off my face, Andrea and Maria shared their photovoice pictures, often interjecting brief commentary and dialogue after the other spoke. Reflecting on her previous school, the one where she worked with Andrea, Maria explained her selection of the above meme (Figure 4.3) as Andrea finished her thoughts and sentences:

Maria: So, yep at meetings when we were, like, in department meetings, I was just providing ideas and sharing things, like I felt like, like she [Andrea] said, like we thought what we would say wouldn’t matter. They [other teachers/coworkers] were like okay, we’re just…

Andrea: Not doing that.

Maria: Ya, we [other teachers/coworkers] are never going to do that…

Andrea: [So the other teachers/coworkers say] Let’s do this instead…
Maria: So here [in the United States] I held back and for me it was frustrating…So there was a point that I just stopped saying, like having an opinion, like my opinion doesn’t matter. [Other teachers/coworkers would say] “She is the one that doesn’t know…”

Andrea: What she is talking about…like you have no idea [what you are doing]…

Maria: They [coworkers] would say, “Here [in the United States] it doesn’t work like that way.” So, I felt like that, like my experience didn’t count because I was Hispanic. And the only way, the, the good way to do this is the way, the way American teachers think that is the way. That is how I felt. I am so sorry to say that. That’s how I felt. (Photovoice interview, August, 2019)

Despite Maria’s decade long experience teaching in Panama and Valenzuela when she started teaching in the United States she was made to feel that her professional teaching knowledge didn’t matter; that “she is the one that doesn’t know,” because “here [in the United States] it doesn’t work like that way.” My emphasis on “here” highlights how spatial relations of power dictate what, where, and when certain knowledge counts. For while Maria and Andrea valued each other’s teaching and experiential knowledge, what Foucault (1980) might call “naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy,” (p. 82) within their micro relations, their colleagues appeared to use Maria’s situated subject position as a newly arrived international teacher to devalue her educational insight. Thus, in one physical place, the school, Maria’s subjectivity, and attendant conduct, was contingent on the multiple spatial relations she traversed. With Andrea, Maria could be a trusted friend and collaborator, while with her colleagues she was inexperienced and (self) silenced.

Andrea and Maria were not the only ones to describe a general dampening, or willful ignorance, of their (teaching) knowledges. Many participants communicated that their insights were commonly dismissed by colleagues and attempts to share materials
and lessons were met with ambivalence. Conversely, participants described narrow and racialized moments when their knowledge was called upon. Regardless of one’s subject-matter expertise or positioning as an “international” teacher (or not), participants shared the assumption they were Spanish teachers, translators, or had specialized insight into, and connection with, Latinx students. For example, Susana, an elementary special education teacher stated that other teachers “expected that culturally I would understand certain things, like why does so-and-so behave a certain way, eat certain things, um you know? and I’m like, ‘I don’t know, it’s not an Hispanic thing’” (Interview, August, 2019). Similarly, Alonso, an elementary school administrator recounted a conversation about being assigned to a school with a high Latinx population, “they were like ‘you will do well there; they’ll love you; they’ll like you immediately’” (Interview, October, 2019). This tokenism speaks to racialized processes that give racial meaning to Latinx teachers as being only good for Latinx students.

Such examples also express the blurry boundaries of inclusion and exclusion for Latinx teachers that had material impacts for teachers. For instance, another teacher Bri shared a story when her school district would not allow a transfer to her “dream job” closer to her house because “No me dejaran ir porque they said that they needed me here [in a school with high numbers of Latinx students]. That’s what someone higher in the district told me, they need me here because I’m Hispanic” (Interview, October, 2019). In Bri’s case, inclusion as a certain type of Latinx subject (namely the belief that she was better suited to teach at a majority Latinx school) increased hostility in her workplace because she was excluded from another job she wanted; her inclusion was another form

\[118\] “They wouldn’t let me leave because...”
of subjection. As the district sought to collapse and limit Bri’s potential to create different (spatial) relations, she navigated the tension of her reasoning for becoming a teacher (“to work in predominantly Hispanic schools”) with that of wishing to take on a new position that would allow her to be closer to her own children. Given predetermined knowledge about what Latinx teachers are called to do (“teach their own”), there appeared to be no discussion of how to reconcile, let alone question or refuse, both aims, and create new spaces of possibility toward expanded subjectivities. Citing the close ties and relations with/in her larger school community Bri said:

I was like an emotional mess. It’s a disaster...I always put my students first even though at some point I could have just said, okay, I’m going to work less, so I know I have to be here for them. I have to be here for the parents. I have to make sure that they are doing fine. Who’s going to love them like I love them? (Interview, October, 2019)

Thus, there was no single source of power that sought to oppress Bri, but rather a spatialized set of power relations that were “more or less adjusted to the situation. That is, power relations [were] specific and local to subjects who [were] in mutual relation” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 59). Bri’s resolution to conflicting, overlapping, and contradictory relations (with her district, her school community, her own self-knowledge) of inclusion/exclusion, and the corresponding attempts to control her subjectivity, was to move on from full-time teaching and “take a break from education” (personal communication). Bri, along with Susana and Alonso, point to the tensions of wanting to help their Latinx communities vis-a-vis narrow perceptions of how Latinx teachers were made to be within restrictive and hostile spaces that limited their ability to become (and help) differently.
As districts and schools spaces worked to close off the possibilities and imaginations for Latinx teachers and educators to become something not yet, participants described feeling that despite their qualifications, experiences, and demonstrated success, they were not taken seriously and confined to certain roles and spaces in contrast with their own desires. Jenny, a middle school Spanish teacher, that made the “ya basta” comment I mentioned previously summed up this suspicion:

I feel like being a small Latina will always, that I think will hinder me from getting an administrative job because I’m like, oh I’m a Latina, I speak both languages, I have an admin degree.119 I’m very qualified, but yeah no one will take me serious...I have gotten the necessary education above and beyond to try to prove myself, but they never took me serious. (Interview, September, 2019)

Despite Jenny’s reinscription of neoliberal subject positions—credentialed, individually motivated, and constantly (im)proving (see Ball, 2003)—she felt limited in engaging her professional knowledge and obtaining a leadership position because she was Latina.

Thus, the sets of relations that constitute, organize, and perpetuate Southern school (micro)spaces can use, include, and even exploit, certain knowledges and experiences (i.e. language, prior employment, cultural relationships, education) under the banner of a neoliberal, multicultural “New Global South” while simultaneously using the same knowledge to create bounded subject positions meant to exclude their bodies from certain spaces (other schools, leadership positions, etc.).

It is crucial to point out that, thus far, I have outlined the fuzzy etches of hostile spatial relations mainly between adults. This is an important distinction for at least three reasons. One, teachers were much more willing to excuse and correct, via instruction,

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119 Jenny is referencing an administration degree which is master’s degree that allows for one to be a school principal, vice principal, etc.
inaccurate assumptions from students. They considered it part of their jobs to remedy through their teaching and classroom interactions the racist discourse and knowledge that came from students, but were frustrated when it came from adults “who should know better.” Second, teachers shared creative ways to (re)purpose, and turn on its head, such knowledge positions to (re)negotiate and (re)create spaces in service of their students, often students of color. Third, such hostile relations, and subject knowledges, were often structured within “non-human” material discursive practices and locations. Next, I turn to point three and return to one and two later in this chapter.

“I Have Been Eating Lunch by Myself During the Last 20 Years”: Material-Discursive Production of Space and Knowledge

> Well I’m happy with my job. I do what I’m supposed to be doing. I like to connect with my kids. I have a good rapport with them. Um sometimes I feel isolated. Just here [points to trailer] and I have been eating lunch by myself during the last 20 years. First of all because the school has different schedules. So if I would like to go on it [lunch] with the office people there’s only like eight chairs that are already sitting there so I can’t, I won’t sit with them and share and sometimes my schedule doesn’t allow me to even go and sit down with my peers. (Rosa, Photovoice interview, October, 2019)

> It was just past seven, still dark outside, and eerily quiet as I walked past a chain link fence walling off a budding construction project, pressed a button outside the school building, and waited to be let inside. After the door buzzed open, I walked the shiny floors of a clean school building, found the office, and asked where I could find Rosa’s classroom. The women at the front desk pointed outside the school and toward the construction. I looked closer and saw two trailers/portable buildings, “she’s just over there.” I walked outside the school and waited near the door of the portable for Rosa to meet me. As I waited, children and parents started to stream into the school building I had just left. I saw them, but they didn’t see me. It was like I was totally apart from the rest of the school.
In this subsection, I outline material-discursive spatial arrangements, physical locations, courses taught, job descriptions, schedules, and curriculum/pedagogy, that created knowledge about Latinx teachers, located them physically and relationally outside the “norm,” and worked to (re)place hostile spaces. For example, Rosa, an elementary Spanish teacher, taught in a classroom that stood aside and separate from the rest of the school. More than a symbolic image, the isolation of the classroom worked in tandem with her distinct schedule and subject matter to create spatialized practices and routines (“eating lunch by myself for 20 years”) that (re)produced certain subjectivities (non-“core” teachers). Rosa’s case was far from a peculiar instance as other participants shared similar spaces. For example, Andrea explained her classroom was “alone in the corner” and another participant, an administrator, remarked that most ESOL rooms are typically a “ little closet.” Victoria explained her physical location at a previous school:

Well, I was the only Spanish teacher and it was kind of weird because they sent me to the basement. So, I was the only teacher in the basement with the PE teacher. I was the only person there, so I never saw the others...So I was alone in my cave. But the principal is happy with me and supposedly the kids love me. But I didn’t feel the same...because I don’t know what they think about me, but they were never interested to talk to me and things like that. The ones that always get close to me were the ones to clean the school. (Interview, October, 2019)

As the quote illustrates, physical separation, “alone in my cave,” led to minimal interaction with colleagues, produced relational isolation, and facilitated distinct ways of knowing (the self). Victoria questioned her success as a teacher because the lack of regular communication with her colleagues caused her to wonder how people (including students) really felt about her. Thus, the “the art of spatial distribution of individuals,” (Foucault, 2007a, p. 146; Huxley, 2007), from the physical location of a teacher’s classroom to more discursive notions of where a particular subject, such as Spanish, “fit”
with/in school schedules, (re)produced certain types of knowing “locations.” Such knowing locations, including the self, were “imbued and a product of power relations” (Massey, 2009, p. 18) that maintained unequal geographies of power.

Another way such “locations” inscribed ways of knowing and acting onto Latinx bodies and into spatialized relations was via constructions of “core” versus “elective” classes (and teachers). The relative marginalization of certain subjects outside the “core curriculum” had a number of productive effects that worked to create a bounded hierarchy of subject positions between different teachers (“core” vs “elective”). As many participants taught “elective” courses, teachers struggled to prove the worth of their subjects, to protect their time, and to access rewards and resources. Spanish teachers expressed a constant, racialized refrain of “it’s just Spanish” as Victoria explained that in her previous role as an elementary Spanish teacher colleagues thought her job “was just to entertain the kids” (Interview, October, 2019). Derek, a high school teacher, shared, “you know if you’re in a language department, you know, you’re pegged... ‘Oh you teach Spanish. Oh well I guess you couldn’t teach anything else’” (Interview, November, 2019). Andrea similarly stated, “I have parents say it is just Spanish and I don’t plan on my son working in a McDonald’s kitchen, therefore I am not concerned if they are failing the class” (Pilot interview, March, 2018). Participants expressed how a number of practices reinforced such thinking as foreign language teachers were ineligible for some schools’ teacher of the year awards, were left out of important faculty communication, or assigned to separate schools on a half-time basis, literally creating the category “.5” of a teacher. Andrés also remarked his classes were often larger than most because Spanish
wasn’t part of the “tested curriculum” and hence, not worth the “investment” of resources.

The idea that some subjects (both individuals and classes) were situated “outside” the “tested” or “core” curriculum had other impacts. Bri, an art teacher, explained “art wasn’t really valued in her district,” and she had to run a “study-hall type class where I babysit the kids while the teachers are at a meeting, so I have to babysit them for like 50 minutes, and they read a book or they can do homework” (Interview, October, 2019, emphasis mine). Andrea was frustrated that her planning time was recently taken away so she could tutor kids that were behind or missing work in their “core” classes. Bri and Andrea also believed that they were more often pulled out of their classes to translate because it wasn’t as big of a deal for them to miss instruction like other (read “core,” non-Latinx) teachers. Similar to the idea that “core” teachers were more valued by schools, participants shared ESOL class was viewed as “homework help” or a “place to take tests.” Frustrated by this, Melissa, a former ESOL teacher and current administrator used to tell other teachers, “I have a full lesson. This is not study hall” (Interview, October, 2019).

In sum, the key is how the distribution and organization of place, knowledge, and people produced distinct relations, spaces, that outlined the exclusion/inclusion of Latinx teachers and strengthened or weakened, though never closed, their ability to exercise power with/in these sets of relations, these hostile spaces (Murdoch, 2006). For the distribution of subjects in space(s) allowed for other individuals to know where and how to locate individuals in relation to themselves, mapping the geographies of space onto their self/subjectivities (Foucault, 2007a; Webb & Gulson, 2013). Not only was this an
example of negative power, something that prohibits, but also a spatial technique of power productive of differentiated teaching subjects that must monitor themselves (to live, act, and avoid certain [curricular, physical, discursive] spaces; Mendez & Nelson, 2016) and prove their status, their deservingness, and their belonging(s) (Foucault, 2007b, Huxley, 2007). Power was productive as policy “circulates through the practices of people in their everyday lives...and makes visible how the subject is constructed through social relations and cultural practices” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, pp. 49-50).

Even more than physical architecture that separated Latinx teachers, especially Spanish teachers, the organization of school spaces acted as a diagram, a power technology (Foucault, 1977), that served as a model and recurring test, to continuously evaluate and adjust, “the aspiration that reality can be made to conform to the truth of such schemes” (Huxley, 2007, p. 194, emphasis mine). It is the underlying knowledges that undergird and perpetuate the spatial relations (of power) that intra-act with certain racialized discourses and the (embedded) bodies of human subjects to write the boundaries of certain subjectivities and knowing locations. Hence, spatialized knowledge created racialized, but normalized, knowledge that a) Latinx are Spanish teachers and b) Spanish teachers are outside the norm (in contrast to “real,” “core” subjects/teachers). Institutional and educational policies coalesce around such knowledge, the prime example being international teachers being hired overwhelmingly, and exclusively, for foreign language classes despite their extensive pedagogical and professional expertise and experience.
“Porque Se Aprovecha”: I Feel Like We are Being Taken Advantage Of

If you need an interpreter send an email with the child and why you need an interpreter and then I can get the right person…“no I’ll just try her again,” and I say again it goes back to “porque se aprovecha.” I feel like we are being taken advantage of. (Sandra, interview, October, 2019)

…

[It] makes me defensive and hard to trust. Always thinking and questioning what they (other teachers) might do. I have been burned before. They will take advantage of my work. (Andrea, photovoice interview, October, 2019)

Sandra and Andrea were both visibly upset when they shared their frustrations about coworkers who looked to benefit on their behalf. In the case of Sandra, a school receptionist and community outreach support, she expressed irritation at colleagues who “expected she was free all the time” or called her to interpret because “it was easier for them” (Interview, October, 2019). For Sandra, it was a lack of respect and notification (which to her meant preparation) rather than the act of interpreting itself (she considered it a part of her job, although one she wasn’t explicitly hired or paid to do) that caused workplace hostility. Andrea was more concerned with the notion that although colleagues often dismissed or ignored her ideas, they were not afraid to take credit when her insights proved valuable. Together, Sandra and Andrea expressed an idea that Latinx teacher and educator labor was exploited to aid coworkers, save money, or skirt regulation.

Victoria shared a similar, yet perhaps more explicit story of mistreatment.

Victoria described her first job, as an ESOL teacher’s aide, in education in the United States in the following way:

So, I started working pregnant and as ESOL teacher aide in Greenville, South Carolina...But look at this, I was not a teacher like [with an] official certificate so they didn’t pay me...but they gave me the whole class to myself because it, the other, certified teacher had so many Latino kids, so they gave me half of her class. And so, I was working as a full-time teacher but my salary was like ten dollars an

120 “Because she takes advantage.”
hour maybe...Also it’s not fair that because I’m Latina and I was not only being the ESOL teacher, they always call me to interrupt during my classes, for me to go downstairs for meetings [to translate]. And I was, I kind of started to get frustrated because I was pregnant having to go up and down and up and down…This is you know kinda shocking cause Costa Rica is different, is a Latino country. We respect laws. (Interview, October, 2019)

The last line in Victoria’s quotation is telling, “we [in Costa Rica] respect laws.” Thus, Victoria implied that such working conditions, a driving sets of relations producing hostile spaces, would be illegal in her native country, and that she clearly believed the school was not fair in her employment. Not only was she tasked with things she was not qualified, hired, or paid to do, but also the Latinx students she worked with were denied appropriate services. While this impromptu response is consistent with much scholarship about education in El Sur Latinx (Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr., 2015), there appeared to be little formal mechanisms in place to remedy the situation.

However, it wasn’t just patently exploitative labor that made Latinx teachers feel they were being taken advantage of. In their (eco)map interview(s) Andrea and Maria explained how they were called to present their work on certain district programs at professional development, conferences, and workshops. Although both Andrea and Maria were both struggling to keep up with their own workloads, they believed the district wanted to “show them off,” to use them as a “spokesperson,” to create buy-in for nascent, and controversial, pedagogical changes and instructional practices. While Andrea and Maria were proud of their teaching, they “felt like a clown in there [during the presentations] because [their foreign language director] did the talking.” When I asked why the district treated them in such a way, Andrea, Maria, and I had the following conversation during their (eco)map interview:
Andrea: I think it’s because they know we are the minority.

Maria: We can’t say no...

Andrea: They know we’re going to say yes, that we can’t say no.

Tim: So, this isn’t an accident...?

Maria: I am not in the position to say no. (She laughs)...Whatever they tell us to do we have to...

Andrea: I mean that is exactly what is happening here.

Maria: And then they sign us up...

When Maria rationed that she was “not in the position to say no,” she is referencing her status as an international teacher on a work visa. Her fear was that it could be revoked if she did not acquiesce to certain expectations or demands. In a similar way, Andrea was still in the process of completing her alternative teacher certification and needed to pass through multiple years of a formal induction process. She too did not want to jeopardize her future as an educator. Hence, even during moments of seeming inclusion (“leading” workshops) Andrea and Maria felt they had no real choice because of their subject positions as international and induction teachers, in addition to their minoritized status as Latinx. Yet although such deleterious relations made Andrea think “other people just see me as an object,” she reiterated across all phases of the research project that she continued to be a teacher to make a difference, to impact students, and work toward positive change in her state and community. In the next section, I outline how teachers negotiated hostile spaces and worked to forge difference. This demonstrates that even within spaces that educators named as hostile there exists a simultaneous co-existence of more than one thing, a multiplicity of relations and distinct trajectories that are open and filled with potential (Massey, 1998b).
Theme Two: Negotiating Hostile Spaces and Recreating Different Spaces for
Themselves and Their Students

One of the things that I think is important is even though you have all those social
influences and you have all the, the pressures and the stress of, I think, whether it’s the
public, whether it’s the politicians, whether it’s the media, any of those types of things, I
need to focus on what I can control. I can’t control what’s going on, you know, in so
many places, and I can barely control what happens here. Um, but I think it’s important
for you to do, for you to listen and be aware of, but focus on how it impacts where you’re
at and what I can do about that here. Okay. I can hear all these types of things, but this is
how we do it here. That meets the needs of our kids, that meets the needs of our
community. (Dave, interview, October, 2019)

This theme maps the multiple, complex, and contradictory moves and strategies
Latinx teachers communicated in response to, and in the process of recreating, the spaces
they traveled. Similar to Dave’s quote, all participants expressed a desire to “meet the
needs of [their] kids and the needs of [their] community.” Such a focus on their students
often provided the motivation and purpose to navigate, disrupt, or simply survive the
multiple and conflicting demands, expectations, and discourses that set the boundaries of
their teaching lives. As evidenced in the two pictures below (Figures 4.4, 4.5), most
participants consistently referenced memories of student success and stories of
meaningful relations that made their jobs worthwhile and (sometimes just barely)
outweighed the more negative and conflicting aspects of working in education.

Figure 4.4. Participant photo (Andrea, photovoice interview, August, 2019).
Students were all at once teachers’ source of hope, motivation, and purpose, and a gauge of self-knowledge in terms of (self)efficacy. However, participants varied widely in their understanding, and their responsibility and ability to accept and/or change, the things they “could control” (Dave, interview, October, 2019). Most described efforts to (re)make, negotiate, and improve such hostile spaces that rested on normalized discourses of student achievement and multicultural diversity. They referenced their ability, and obligation, to (re)educate students about Latinx communities, countries, and culture, change student perceptions about Latinx and immigrants, and counter discriminatory language. Thus, many took pride in sharing their culture like when Rosa brought in folklorico dresses and celebrated Costa Rican Independence Day (Figure 4.6).
Others acknowledged systemic miseducation for marginalized youth and relied on their own experiences, insistence to see kids differently, and ability to create connections to build a (critical) hope in education. Still others, took a political approach that explicitly challenged, even refused, things they “could control” to reimagine spatial relations and subjectivities. In sum, such strategies were contingent, in-between, and overlapping, speaking to the multiplicitous, and yet stubbornly reproductive, processes of immanent intra-relations. Interventions were often a pragmatic balancing act that acknowledged, and sometimes reified, boundaries and constraints of normalized conduct, in addition to potential creative uses of power to improve the spaces Latinx teachers travel. I expand on these examples of teachers negotiating hostile spaces and recreating different spaces in the following subsections.

“So Yeah, I Feel That I Have Changed a lot of People’s Minds, and I Like Talking About It”: The (Counter) Conduct of Cultural Ambassadorship

Because sometimes students think about immigrants and I don’t know, they have a stigma or a different opinion that is not the right one...but then as I said, “well, if you feel that way, why you didn’t research about it?” And they said, “no, I never felt the need of research. I just, I just know what they say about being an immigrant, it means you smuggle drugs.” And once a student told me, “like, I know that being an immigrant is being a rapist.” “Why would you say that?” They say, “yeah, because everybody that comes from another place, they come here and rape people.” “What? who, who told you that?” “I heard that from the president” “So what? Today I’m going to change your mind because that is not true. I mean, ask me what you want, there are some people that are bad people, and I’m not going to tell you that is false. Some people are bad, but let’s talk about numbers. Let’s research about it. Let’s Google how many immigrants are rapists and you will find out that they’re not a lot, not all of us, you know, a very small percentage of people, and there are bad people here, bad people outside and there are bad people who are immigrants. But it’s not, the majority aren’t all.” And after that, uh, we talk a little bit more, he asked me a bunch of questions and after that he told me, “well, Ms. [Teacher Name], thank you, because I agree with you now. It was just something that I heard, and I started repeating when I shouldn’t.”

So, yeah, I feel that I have changed a lot of people’s minds, and I like talking about it. They say like, “no, I don’t want to talk about that with you because I don’t want you to feel bad” and I said, “no, for sure. I’m not gonna feel bad. Uh, I just want you to understand what, what it’s like being a Hispanic here and what, what is my culture
outside of here. How it is like?" So, I feel like having teachers from another country it’s going to change a lot of people’s minds for the best. (Jasmine, interview, December, 2019)

…

So, my question for him [an adult in the community] was, because he had mentioned like, one of the ways for, um a [racial] shift to happen in society is for conversations to take place and for people to be willing to ask questions and people being willing to answer them. I said, I get that idea. I said, but like I’m the only person in my whole building no matter where I go, who’s mixed [Afro-Latina], who’s mixed how I’m mixed, and I said, at some point I get tired of answering the same questions, right?...So like, I feel like a lot of the times, like I’m a unicorn and I get asked some things. I’m like, you know, there is Google, you could Google that. But then there’s also things like for my students where I don’t mind being that ambassador to kids, but like adults I don’t really have the same amount of patience. (Amara, photovoice interview, December, 2019)

I quote interviews with Jasmine, a high school Spanish teacher from Venezuela, and Amara, a high school math teacher and self-identified Afro-Latina originally born on the West Coast of the U.S., at length to present a detailed idea about how Latinx teachers navigate and confront the negative discourse, and knowledge, about Latinx that often circulates the state of South Carolina and its school spaces. Jasmine and Amara respond in a number of ways and use a spattering of strategies to educate students steeped in miseducation about Latinx communities and cultures. First and foremost, teachers were willing to teach students about their cultural background. Such education about Latinx cultures in itself was viewed as important work by my participants, and something that they found most impactful about their work. Hence, generally, they were willing to forgive student hostility, ignorance, and racism because “they are repeating what mommy or daddy said” (Belinda, photovoice interview, December, 2019) or “that’s what students are exposed to through family, biases, and other things” (Derek, interview, August, 2019). This belief—that students were receptive and malleable—was in opposition to adults and coworkers who refused to do the work and learning necessary to change their behaviors toward and knowledge about Latinx. As Amara said, “at some point I get tired
of answering the same questions, right?...there’s also things like for my students where I don’t mind being that ambassador to kids, but like adults I don’t really have the same amount of patience.”

Even in explaining moments that were profoundly hurtful, Latinx teachers reiterated that calm and measured instruction could “change a lot of minds for the best.” Jasmine’s story (at the start of the subsection) about using research to counter vitriolic rhetoric against immigrants is evidence for this thinking, and Sonia shared another example. Sonia detailed a classroom incident in which a small group of White students tried to make fun of her class, behavior that crescendoed into one boy yelling loudly at her, “ohh ya I forgot you’re not American enough.” Sonia stated that the moment “marked me and it was one that will mark me forever...because I was, okay I get it I am Puerto Rican, but I moved here when I was in the 8th grade so for me both of the flags are my flags and I’m an American citizen ever since I was born” (Interview, September, 2019). Despite the pain of the incident, Sonia had a conversation with the group, told them their actions had to stop, and explained how their words were disrespectful. She then described how one boy had a change of heart, apologized, and “comes here [to classroom] to say ‘hi’ to me every day.” Sonia summed up the entire event in this way, “So I guess they just need to be educated.”

In sum, participants viewed such instruction as the work of a cultural ambassador, a descriptor some teachers specifically used, and most implicitly embraced, to describe

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121 For example, Rosa said, “So as an ambassador of my country I like to share with them [students] that in the September the 15th it was our [Costa Rican] independence” (Photovoice interview, October, 2019). Relatedly, Melissa, had to show how she was an ambassador of her country [Colombia] as she sought approval from her government to stay in the United States.
their day to day lives. Such a subject position entailed expectations outlined by schools, districts, and general teaching discourse (i.e. “right” ways of teaching conduct) that were both internalized by participants to further ephemeral, neoliberal notions of multiculturalism/diversity (Flores, 2019a; Melamed, 2006; see Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 148, 183) and used as a way to disrupt truths and produce new knowledge (counter-conduct).

To elaborate further, schools and districts called attention to teachers’ ethnic backgrounds as a positive, often highlighting their, or their family’s, country of origin, writing articles or blog posts about them, inviting them to share cultural practices at events (for example Rosa’s Latin dance club performed at a district-wide convocation in front of thousands of employees, Figure 4.7), and asking them to serve on “diversity” committees.

For example, a press release for one participant’s teacher of the year award stated, “she is a proud Latina American of Mexican heritage...She is fluent in Spanish and can easily relate to our student population.” Another participant participated in a district blog series about Hispanic Heritage Month and wrote, “I am glad that our district is supporting diversity. I hope our students will learn about and appreciate all cultures.” Through such
public discourse, schools and districts presented an ethos that, in the words of Kathy, “proudly celebrates diversity,” without engaging, challenging, or changing underlying systems and structures that produced (educational) injustice. In their own ways, and in different spaces, teachers replicated and disrupted such conduct.

In thinking through Jasmine’s, Amara’s, and Sonia’s words, and institutional positionings of multiculturalism, this cultural ambassadorship rested on normative assumptions about respectability, teaching, and racism. First, the teachers were expected to (self)control their emotions and present themselves as neutral, professional, and calm (Zembylas, 2005). Jasmine assured students she “wouldn’t feel bad,” and Sonia had a measured conversation with the boys. Derek explained this idea as “taking the higher road,” and stated, “you can’t get highly offended by remarks, you just kinda play it off and keep going, but you do want to make a difference and that is the cool part.” Second, the teacher’s strategies to repair knowledge about Latinx intersected with discourse about “proper” and “technical” teaching/teachers (Ball, 2003; Popkewitz, 1991). Students were expected to “do research” and find “evidence” that immigrants were not “rapists” and “murderers.” Thus, answers could be presented as “objective” and “scientific,” downplaying the political nature of both teaching and the content itself and reinforcing neoliberal standardization processes that work “to control what counts as race matter[s]” (Au, 2016, p. 43). The notion that teachers should, or could, be apolitical when engaging in instruction about “culture” and “diversity” was often communicated to me by participants. Susana tried to leave politics out of the classroom so as not to “ruffle any feathers,” and Belinda commented that her administration asked her to stop showing a news show, CNN10, because it was too political. Teachers’ sense of when they could “be
political” shifted from space to space and sometimes moment to moment, but largely laid outside such instances of cultural “instruction.” For instance, within the microspaces of our interviews, trusted teacher friend circles, movements like SCforED, and/or their “own” classrooms, teachers did bring up “political” topics like President Trump, the importance of teacher advocacy, and the uneven, racialized distribution of resources in their schools. I discuss such instances at greater length later in this chapter and the next. Finally, there is an implicit understanding, perhaps hope, that individual education, rather than systemic change and transformation, will remedy racism. This extends a persistent regime of truth that racism is the result of individual deficiency rather than institutional norms and structures (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Kendall, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Mirandé, 2014; Omi & Winant, 2015). It, then, becomes the implicit job of teachers of color to educate racism out of “misinformed” individuals.

Taken as a whole, certain strategies of cultural ambassadorship fell with/in a grid of “acceptable” knowledge and practice, often non-political, neoliberal governmentalities of multiculturalism (Flores, 2019a; Melamed, 2006) and cosmetic diversity that “too

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122 I did not mention President Trump by name in any interview question, however, many participants used him as a reference point when answering, “are things getting better or worse for Latinx in South Carolina?” For example, Rosa shared, “you know with our, no I’m sorry with their President [Trump], with their president, this president it has been the worst that we had in segregation” (Photovoice interview, October, 2019). Similarly, Jenny said, “So the Latinos right now don’t have it good. A lot of them like my mom...the day that Trump won she cried; she was so upset. She called me, and she said I can’t believe it. My mom never, she never cries for anything...It’s not a party thing, it’s a personal thing. The next day she was looking for jobs in Colombia. She was going to leave, and I probably would have gone behind her. But I was like I'm not going to let a person stop me, and my life is here, and I can’t just drop everything and go for a person but that's how Trump got elected. And that was just thinking about 2016 and some kids around town like that I knew and some at [high school name] they didn't come for didn't come for fear” (Interview, September, 2019).
easily stood in for substantive change, with a focus on feel-good differences like food, language, and dress, not on systemic disadvantages associated with employment, education, or housing” (Benjamin, 2019, pp. 19-20). Normalized, and acceptable, behavior (and knowledge) was produced in concrete pedagogical practices diffused through grids of relations that linked teachers’ efforts to other disparate and capillary spaces of power/knowledge like (immigration) policy discourse, ideas of global citizenship, community-school relations, school administration, teacher education, and educational science (Popkewitz, 1991). Thus, cultural ambassadorship consisted precisely in a fundamental dependency on discourses “we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our very agency” (Butler, 1997, qtd. in Murdoch, 2006, p. 49).123 Yet, although agency was produced with/in a web of material-discursive relations, as different meetings of previously un/related relations (i.e. Latinx teachers) connect, there lies the potential for reconfiguring and reconstituting new(er) sets of discourses, new(er) ways of becoming that challenge and disrupt the conduction of (teacher) conduct. I turn toward participant examples of such potentiality next.

To show how teachers contingently reproduced and also reconfigured space, I turn first to Kathy. Kathy was a teacher who wrote a district blog proclaiming excitement about her district’s “pro-diversity” efforts. At the same time, she shared that she puts “race front and center, we talk about race all the time.” Kathy even described instances when she called parents to conference about students’ racist language and actions. Thus,

123 Speaking to this immanence of such agency Davidson (2007) writes, “Foucault…insisted that resistance is not in a position of exteriority with respect to power, and the points of resistance do not answer to a set of principles heterogenous to relations of power” (p. xx).
Kathy created spaces of discomfort, calling out and talking about racial issues, while also reinforcing the idea that racism was an individual issue that can be addressed with diversity language and parent discussion rather than structural change. Similarly, Rosa, the participant who spoke to her job as cultural ambassador most effusively, was clear in her intentions to fundamentally change South Carolina, a state she said was racist and “created for White people.” She described her teaching in this way:

I will open their minds and I’m creating an environment in here [classroom] that they feel that they are safe, that I’m a different person, that I’m not from here, and that there is more things to show them than just Spanish, and, and I’m telling you if they can from me if they can learn how to respect another culture. I’m done. I’m good. At least I said I teach [them] something. (Photovoice interview, October, 2019)

This quote is instructive because while there is certainly reference to “diversity” language, there are also currents to explicit space-making (“creating an environment”), productive multiplicity (“I’m a different person”), and curricular and pedagogical autonomy (“more than just Spanish”). In fact, it appeared that to Rosa it was more important to teach cultural understanding and respect than academic content. This is evidenced in her closing statement, “At least I said I teach [them] something.” Thus, although teachers communicated frustration with overbearing curricular mandates, they commonly took liberty with curriculum and standards to teach what they felt crucial. In explaining his own belief that he is more than a “Spanish” teacher, Andrés outlined how he uses his (“higher quality”) university training from Colombia to stress “aptitudes sociales...social skills like tolerance, respect, and shared humanity.” Andrés also communicated that such instruction was necessary because the United States is behind “even third world countries in education in many ways” (Interview, October, 2019). Similarly, Rosa, Jasmine, and Victoria shared the importance of critiquing the
ethnocentrism of students in the United States. Jasmine stated, “Well, it’s very important [to challenge students] because some people are super self-centered in the United States, and they don’t think that there is much more outside here, you know?” Along the same lines, Rosa shared that students are shocked to see “a video of how beautiful Costa Rica is compared to these plain lands [of central South Carolina].” Starting to address more political topics Victoria recounted how she challenges the idea of United States militarism by telling students Costa Rica doesn’t have an army, “students are shocked, and they can’t believe we don’t have an army and I explain it is possible to survive without an army.” However, it wasn’t just Spanish teachers who went “off script,” to reconfigure the learning, knowledges, and spaces of their classrooms.

Despite being a math teacher, Amara placed cultural and political instruction in conversation with the formal curriculum. Amara read the book *Hidden Figures* to her class, and used it as a way to connect math to important conversations about representation, gender, Jim Crow, and the lasting effects of institutionalized racism. Further, she placed her (history of) political activism into the spaces of her classroom, stretching a multiplicity of space-time relations, and creating productive intra-actions. In her photovoice interview, she shared a picture of her at the South Carolina State House for the large May 1st SCforEd teacher rally. Amara explained how important it was to show her students she was there and how it connected to her childhood organizing against racial injustice in Los Angeles:

I was showing the students that I can be a model in that they need to engage in democratic participation and engagement and fighting for positive change and for whatever that might look like from decade to decade. That [rally] very much felt like something I would have done at home [in California]. And it felt really good to let my students know, you know why I was doing it. So, it was really good to be able to talk to my kids about that. Especially some of my seniors were taking
government, or they could just take an econ so we could talk about, you know, a little bit deeper of what was going on. (Photovoice interview, December, 2019)

In speaking about her political activism, Amara used power to lead classroom instruction in order to show her students the importance of “democratic participation and engagement and fighting for positive change.” Further, using herself as an example, she demonstrated that “historically marginalized groups can, and do reconfigure space;” (Rodriguez, 2017b, p. 82) that it is possible to productively intercede in unjust power relations. As Amara emphasized the importance of teaching these lessons to seniors, she saw her job as more than getting students ready for college and career. She sought to instill youth with the idea that this was important work to take up as they leave high school, that young people played a critical role in remaking and recreating space.

Additionally, at many points in both our informal conversations and our research interviews, Amara explained how “shocked she was about the rally” and “how in her 20 years living here [in the South] she could have never imagined teachers to be doing this.” Thus, even as I earlier referenced Amara’s frustration with adults who were unwilling to inform themselves on matters of race and equity, here, she held that in tension wishing to show students that other teachers were politically active. This tension also demonstrated that Amara and her colleagues wander, make, and negotiate many spaces, many Souths.

Similar to Amara, Belinda, a self-identified Afro-Latina high school Social Studies teacher, sought to expand the curriculum to engage issues of critical thinking and social justice. Expounding on her administration’s efforts to limit CNN10 in the classroom for being too political she stated:

So, I like to play it [CNN10 news show], but I have had several parents call and be upset because “that’s like CNN…” And then they’ve [parents] requested to speak to the administration, and administration then talks to me like, “well, maybe
you should watch it first, and if there’s something that you think is controversial, don’t play it that day.” And I’m like, “no, I’m gonna play it anyways because they should be exposed to controversy. And differing opinions”...[she continued] When, when sometimes my students will blurt out things that are kind of offensive and I’ll address it right there in front of the class and I’ll just be like, “Hey, let’s talk about this.” And I’ve been, I myself, has been called into administration and told, “don’t talk about these things, ‘Stick to the map.’”’ And I’m like, “wait what? When, when a kid says something offensive, I can’t address it?” (Interview, November, 2019)

Belinda’s stark refusal, her “No” to demands that she avoid political matters in the classroom is an example of counter-conduct (Foucault, 2007c). Rejecting instructions to “stick to the map,” a curricular and pedagogical “map” that wished to produce certain spaces of teacher conduct, her actions were rather a productive intervention, a process of confrontation and agonism within power relations (Ball, 2016; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Foucault, 1982), that interrupted, and reconfigured, space. Thus, Belinda, like other teachers, quite literally made different maps, a practice of counter-cartographies (Varga, Agosto, & Maguregui, forthcoming) that refused the normalized boundaries of teaching practice and redrew new and different spaces of (self)possibility in El Sur Latinx. Such efforts were made in the context of swirling discourses that sought to purpose teacher efforts to conform to apolitical multiculturalism, technical notions of teaching, and community demands. In the next subsection, I continue with Belinda’s words to show how participants (re)negotiated and (re)created such hostile spaces in service of their students, often students of color, as teachers expressed a belief in their ability to “see kids differently.”
“He’s So Smart. He’s Definitely Gifted, but He Hasn’t Been Identified as Gifted Because No One Thinks That Because He’s Hispanic”: Latinx Teachers’ Belief That They See Kids Differently.

When I first met Belinda for a few moments before I gave a guest lecture on teacher activism to her graduate class, she wanted to schedule a time and place for an interview immediately. She was quick to point out she “had a lot to say about her treatment at her school.” In our interviews she rarely strayed from, and consistently reiterated, a firm belief that teaching was social justice work. Her willingness to advocate and fight for students that others had given up on was evident in her efforts to push back against the attempted expulsion of a Latinx immigrant student at her school. I quote her retelling at length:

I could see him [this particular student] change in a negative way because he had been picked on so much and made fun of so much. And it’s kinda like you’ve come here to America and you want to be this great student and you’re working hard and you’re smart. And I can see that as your teacher. But your [other] students can’t see that. The other teachers can’t see that. And they pick on you and they make fun of you. And this, this is at a point where this kid started acting up and getting in fights and his grades dropped…And I was like, “Yeah, he’s acting that way because y’all are making him act that way because you never even gave him a chance.”...

And then [student name] got into a fight after he [another student] said something about “Trump’s going to get rid of your mom anyway.” And that kid [Latinx student] attacked him in my class and held him up against the wall by his throat. It was horrible. So scary. And, um, they were going to expel him [Latinx student]. And so, I went to the main office and I was like, I begged them. Like it was all, I was almost in tears. I was like, this kid, [student name] is so sweet. He works so hard. He’s so smart. He’s definitely gifted, but he hasn’t been identified as gifted because no one thinks that because he’s Hispanic and he, he was defending himself by this kid who constantly picks on him, who constantly comes back to my classroom after he should’ve been expelled [for other racist incidents] and had y’all done y’all’s job of expelling this [racist] kid, then we wouldn’t have ever had this fight in my classroom to begin with. So, if you’re going to expel [Latinx student] then you need to expel this other kid…And, and they [school] didn’t
expel him. And they also didn’t expel the other kid who should have been expelled. (Interview, November, 2019).

In sharing this story Belinda acknowledged her suburban, majority-White high school as a space that was not only hostile for her, but also her students of color. Such spaces were created not only in recurring moments of racist rhetoric, but additionally through the invisible networks of power that produced some students as “gifted,” (or “smart” or “documented,” or “English-speakers”) and placed others (“Hispanics”) outside these normalized constructions (Popkewitz, 1998). More than top-down exploitation, these terms, these spaces of power/knowledge, conduct the “scaffolding [and placement of bodies] in which they are deployed” (Popkewitz, 1998, p. 124; Foucault, 2007c). As Popkewitz (1998) outlines, these practices of tracking “normalize [certain] children by placing them into a set of distinction and differentiations the function to divide children into spaces” (p. 6). Belinda communicated she understood the multiple intra-actions of overt racism and covert educational policy, individual action and institutional reproduction, that contributed to the “systemic miseducation” (Rodriguez, 2018, p. 7; Bohon, Macpherson, & Atiles, 2005; del Castillo-González, 2011; Portes & Salas, 2010, 2015) of/about Latinx in South Carolina schools. Hence, I interpret Belinda’s statement that “students can’t see that. The other teachers can’t see that” as meaning “students can’t see [systemic miseducation]. The other teachers can’t [or won’t] see [systemic miseducation].”

In contrast, Belinda read both her student, and her school spaces, differently, with potential and possibility, “He works so hard. He’s so smart. He’s definitely gifted, but he hasn’t been identified as gifted because no one thinks that because he’s Hispanic.” To counter the boundary making processes that worked to exclude people like her, and her
student, Belinda recognized that (they) belonged in such spaces, even as spatial relations worked to push him/them out. Further, in advocating for the student’s place in school (ultimately disrupting his expulsion), Belinda intervened toward, entangled with, and ultimately produced a reimagined space that included her Latinx student. As such, Belinda’s counter-conduct went “beyond the purely negative act of disobedience” (Davidson, 2007, p. xxi), and toward an explicit (re)creation of spatial relations.

Other educators, like Belinda, reiterated a belief that they saw students of color generally, but Latinx students specifically, differently from their White colleagues. Whereas other teachers supposed Latinx students “don’t know what’s going on and let them slip through the cracks assuming they’re not going to become anything,” (Belinda, interview, November, 2019) my participants suspected they held different notions of Latinx becoming. Similar to Belinda’s concern with the productive nature of tracking, Bri cited the notion of “taking care of our own,” (Interview, October, 2019) in fighting for Latinx students to get into gifted and talented programs and prestigious middle schools. Based on her own schooling, and subsequent employment, in the district, Bri noted that most teachers did not push for these opportunities for Latinx students. Alonso, too, explained the pernicious tendency to place Latinx students in lower tracks by using his son as an example. When Alonso first moved to South Carolina his son was put in the “basic track,” even though he was in a gifted and talented program in Florida. Alonso said, “I really had to advocate for him as an educator, and I’ve always told my friends that if you need anything I will help you out... because they [schools] won’t think twice,

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124 Bri worked in a so-called “choice” district where students could be nominated for and apply to selective public middle school programs.
they think Hispanic, their English is limited, and you know, low-track” (Interview, October, 2019). Pilar, who was raised in South Carolina and is now an elementary school teacher, added not much has changed since her childhood, as it was “very deficit-minded [about Latinx] where I grew up.” Thus, she believed it was important, yet still not the norm, for teachers to see the strengths of Latinx students. Pilar articulated this point in our interview:

I feel like with my Hispanic families it’s a sense of trust, it’s a sense of trust, you know whatever you do. It is a good feeling because these kids are very important and special and unique and need to be seen in a non-deficit, in a growth, as cheesy that saying has become, they need to be seen in a growth-mindset. (Interview, October, 2019)

As a complementary example that pairs with Pilar’s words, Amara outlined not only the ability to see kids differently, but also how that vision directly influenced her teaching. During our photovoice interview, she explained a series of interventions she took with a student to set up the particular moment where she is giving him a hug at graduation (Figure 4.8):

Figure 4.8. Participant photo (Amara, photovoice interview, December, 2019).
I did not teach him [this student] in middle school, but everyone knew this kid’s name in middle school, because he was that kid. They [other teachers] are like, “Oh, just be glad you don’t have so-and-so in your class.”... And then I got to teach him his junior year and his senior year and I got to really, really work with him and probably a couple of other students, but um, on, on like helping them pass. And it was never like, “Oh, I’ll just change his grade or whatever.” I made them work for it. And, um, there’s a lot of times teachers would be like, “Oh, well, you know, if they get this, they get this, and that’s it.” Um, but for me with, when I see kids who...have learned that school’s not for them, that they’re not cut out for school, they’re not smart enough, they’re not this enough or whatever and just a kid who has had that been their whole K-12 existence I’m like, I’m going to work with that kid. You can try this 5, 20 times, I don’t care how many times, like you’re going to put in the work. Like I will make sure you walk across that stage and it was really a big deal for me to stand at the end of the spot after the kids take their pictures, like their professional pictures, for me to stand there and be able to, you know, love on some kids. (Photovoice interview, December, 2019)

As with Belinda, Amara did not see her student as outside the system that produced him. Amara realized that her efforts had to counter the exclusionary and hostile spaces that have created a young person that internalized the notion that, “school’s not for them, that they’re not cut out for school, they’re not smart enough, they’re not this enough or whatever.” Amara’s intra-vention towards a different space of potential was in contrast to other teachers who saw a set of relations already closed and predetermined, a path of fixed linearity (i.e. “that’s it”). Hence, while Amara, and the other teachers saw hope in education, it was not a whimsical or mythical hope, it was a critical hope (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) that took into account, and saw the need to radically change, the toxic and hostile structures and systems, the sets of relations, in which they worked while also providing rigorous academic preparation (Boutte, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Yet, Latinx teachers, even those who worked tirelessly on behalf of the most marginalized students and recited numerous vignettes highlighting student assets, were not independent from techniques of power that furthered deleterious discourse about Latinx. To this point, Bri who worked to get Latinx students into higher tracks and
programs, internalized and furthered normalized ideas of assimilative conduct, respectability, acquiescence, and achievement, as she positioned herself as, and expected students to conform to ideas about, “the good immigrant.” She shared:

Like when people, when people are surprised that I’m Mexican, I’m almost like, I’m really excited because I give Mexicans a good name. I know it sounds stupid, but I tell the students in their little 5th grade goodbye speech, people already think of us in a certain way, you know. You can’t let them think like this. You have to be the example especially with the whole Trump thing. You know, like you have to be the best Mexican you can be, you have to be well-behaved and respectful...You need to make us look good. (Interview, October, 2019)

Belinda, too, used similar language as she saw her student starting to feel the effects of racist bullying prior to the in-class fighting incident. She explained how she pulled her Latinx student aside and told him, “I was like, dude, you know that they see you as this Mexican, illegal whatever, and I don’t know why you’re letting them be right. Like you need to continue doing what you were doing [working hard, studying, “behaving,” etc.].”

I bring these examples into the conversation to highlight the strength of anti-Latinx discourse across multiple scales in South Carolina, the productive power of normalizing discourses about schooling, Latinx, and immigrants, and to emphasize that Latinx teachers are not outside these discursive processes. Although participants often questioned, rejected, and disrupted racialized discourse about Latinx, their lives, their actions, their selves were fluid, in flux, complex, and non-essential. Participants shifted from one set of overlapping relation(s) to the next, from one set of multiplicitous space(s) to the other, reinforcing, blurring, and extending boundaries of be(come)ing. Yet, in sum, participants (and I) believed their presence produced different spaces— different perspectives and narratives—that were badly needed in their school communities.
To this point, Alonso, the elementary school administrator assigned to a Latinx school tried to use his placement to tie a belief in the potential of Latinx students with the need for institutional transformation. Even though Alonso believed he was tokenized, at least rhetorically, in his work assignment, he reasoned that if the district was to subject him to certain knowledge about Latinx administrators then he could turn this subject position on its head and hold the district accountable to allocating resources to his school. Alonso explained his thinking, “if they are going to put me wherever to put out [their] fires, I’m going to speak the truth even if people don’t like it.” There was no question in Alonso’s mind that the district could do more for Latinx students and communities; “they could be more genuine and bring more support because there are schools with much more support around here. It could be more of a priority, but it’s not really so they just go with the minimum.” He continued to state that his work was so important because, “it’s easy, it’s really easy to, to not provide equity, to really just go through the motions and really not provide the best as you can.”

Similarly, Melissa, a former ESOL/Spanish teacher and current high school administrator, repeated the importance of transforming school structures and systems (spatial relations) to support asset-based approaches toward students. In a school that counts a high number of undocumented Latinx youth, Melissa has fought tirelessly, describing herself “as a warrior,” to create specialized support positions, implement a high-quality ESOL program, change teacher’s attitudes and instructional approaches, and help students get legal aid (Interview, October, 2019). Because of improved institutional resources that support the “very hard work of my students,” Melissa counted many successes such as ESOL graduates becoming ESOL teachers, massive college
scholarships for undocumented youth, and high-paying vocational jobs for recent graduates. Yet, even as Melissa, like Alonso, worked to create different spaces of possibility, potential, and openness for her Latinx students, she acknowledged the difficulty and precarity of such work in a state that creates hostile spaces for Latinx with restrictive and draconian immigration policies. She referenced a state law that prohibits undocumented youth from attending public universities in the state as one example:

The biggest challenge is our kids being undocumented...That’s the biggest roadblock...the policies that we can’t control... If we didn’t have that policy [university prohibition] and our kids could go to college it would change [snaps fingers] and most of our Hispanic kids would go to college (Interview, October, 2019).

Hence, Melissa’s belief in students was also rooted in the material realities, relations, and spaces her students traversed. She modeled a critical hope in education working to change structures and systems and to equip students to negotiate the restrictive contexts they faced. In the next subsection I further share how Latinx teachers relied on their experiences and (self)knowledges to help students work through the many spaces they traversed.

“When it Comes to Something You’ve Never Experienced...Like They, I Don’t Think That There’s Sensitivity from Them”: How Latinx Teachers Draw on Their Own Experiences to Connect with Students

I really believe in like; you can’t be what you can’t see. And I think that representation matters. And I also think, I don’t think that White teachers are failures. That’s not what I’m trying to say at all. But I do think they lack sensitivity when it comes to immigration, and when it comes to something you’ve never experienced, like maybe they’ve never experienced someone calling them a racial slur, maybe they’ve never experienced having to move with your family in the middle of the night. Like they, I don’t think that there’s sensitivity from them. (Belinda, interview, November, 2019)
Figure 4.9. Participant photo (Belinda, photovoice interview, December, 2019).

This section outlines how Latinx teachers drew upon their own experiences—from their home (countries) and families, from their immigrant backgrounds, from their childhood, and from their navigation of racialized and restrictive spaces of El Sur Latinx—to build different spaces centering relationships of love and cariño\textsuperscript{125} for their students. Teachers used their own backgrounds as an entry point to connect student lives to their own, rooting connections in shared, or analogous, experiences and understandings. In the process, these relationships mutually and co-constructively remade and reconfigured spaces and subjectivities, rewriting the boundaries towards more just and loving ways to be(come). As a student wrote to Belinda in the above picture (Figure 4.9), “you taught me how to love myself, you showed me how to build my confidence, and most important you made (emphasis mine) me who I am today. And I love you for that.” Different relations and spaces to (self and) each other laid at the heart of success for all students, but particularly students of color. Even as, once again, teachers sometimes relayed experiences rooted in rather normative, meritocratic, and uncritical

\textsuperscript{125} Literally translated as “care,” it is a term to describe deep, intimate, and personal affection. See Valenzuela (1999) and Sosa-Provencio (2019) as examples of linking conceptualizations of cariño to critical, and life-giving, education.
multicultural discourse, this tension itself produced a crack to wrestle with their
conduct(ion) and “open spaces in which it is possible to be otherwise” (Ball, 2016, p.
1135). To see such relations in action, I start by recounting my interview with Amara:

About thirty minutes into our interview a bell rang, and Amara asked if I wanted
to do “duty” with her. She said I could ask the rest of my questions as she
watched students in the courtyard during the lunch period. Needing to finish the
interview, and also missing day-to-day interaction with youth, I agreed. Joining a
cacophony of student bodies and voices, we merged into the fray, walked down a
set of stairs, and scuttled out the doors into bright sunshine. Before I could ask my
next question a student came up to Amara and greeted her with a hug. The next
twenty minutes largely proceeded in a similar manner. I would ask a question and
Amara would stop her response because another student (usually of color) came
to say hi, check in, or ask a question. When a student didn’t initiate
communication, Amara would meet their eyes, smile, and voice an endearing
“hey baby,” or “what’s up, you weren’t going to say anything to me?” A few
times she had to ask students to move or stay away from certain areas. Each time
the students did so without complaint or anger. At one point, a student behind us
uttered, (rather loudly), “what the fuck?” Amara turned around and gently replied
with “baby.” The student replied, “my bad, my bad I shouldn’t do that.” The
student appeared truly ashamed and remorseful, like he let her down. She seemed
to know each student by name and watching her interactions was truly a joy.
When I got in my car at the end of the interview, I just sat there and smiled.
(Field notes, and interview, October, 2019)

In sum, I marveled at Amara’s relationship with her students; they appeared to
genuinely love her, and she them. It was a beautiful thing to see. Such interactions I
witnessed substantiated her approach to building relationships with students by focusing
on the little things and “the stuff that can seem really, really silly.” For example, in our
photovoice interview she explained why she selected a picture of her hair in a “big poof
ball.” She remembered how her father worked really hard with her “to take care of my,
and love my hair, and not want to straighten it.” She wanted her students to have a similar
approach and found her hair to be “one of those things where I may not talk about it out
loud, but like being that role model for a girl, you know, in the hallway or in class to see
me with it [my hair].” Her hair was also a signal to her public presence as Afro-Latina,
something she felt important to address in order to disrupt essentializing views on Latinx in the South. She explained, “Usually at some point it [Afro-Latinidad] comes up and the biggest thing for kids in South Carolina is when you say you’re mixed, they just assume black and white and that's the only possible mixing that could ever take place.”

She went on to describe another way she used hair to build relationships:

> I keep a bag of hair products at school, not just for me in case I have a rough morning, but I’ve had I want to say two different girls on at least two different occasions where they’ll come to school and they’ll have their hood on and they want to put their head down and I’ll just come up real quiet…I’ll just whisper, “you know what? I have a bag full of your products. Would you like to use them?” And they’re like, “yeah.” And I’m like, “cool.” And they’ll just head out. No one knows anything. They come back, you know their hoods off and their heads up and they’re like actually doing work. And I’m like, why in the world did it take me 20 years to figure this out? (Photovoice interview, December, 2019)

Belinda, too, felt that small acts, like taking “selfies,” and learning about students’ lives, was a way of showing students, “I value them and treat them with respect.” She explained that such efforts, paired with her proud visibility as Afro-Latina, inspired students of color, and those who may not usually feel welcomed in school to, “participate in my class and do the things that I ask them [to do].” Belinda recounted what a student told her at the end of the school year (evidenced in the letter, Figure 4.10):

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126 Many participants shared that students, and sometimes adults, believed all Hispanics to be Mexican (and often illegal). As many teachers recounted, such a vision often aligned to the disparaging, racist rhetoric of President Trump. As Amara said, “So the perception of what it is to be Latino here is still very like a certain vision and then you add to it the Trump rhetoric and it’s kind of like just stuck there” (Interview, October, 2019). As such, Susana recalled an incident where she was addressed in a parent note as, “the real tall Mexican teacher” (Photovoice interview, October, 2019) even though she shares Puerto Rican and Italian ethnicities. Two other participants, one born in Peru and one born in Valenzuela, shared they have been asked, by students, where in Mexico their respective countries are located. When the teachers (kindly) pushed back against such claims, respondents said their students would not (perhaps could not) believe them.
She’s [student] like I helped her love herself because she had never seen anyone who looks like me in front of the classroom, who was so confident and so happy and so encouraging. She wrote me this long letter about how I made her feel like she’s okay cause she always wished she was White instead of mixed. (Photovoice, December, 2019)

While Belinda emphasized her relationships with students of color, especially students who identified as “mixed,” her treatment of all students made her a popular teacher throughout her majority White school. She chose a picture (Figure 4.11) of her receiving a teacher of the month award, which was voted on by the student body. Not only did she win the month that focused on “respect,” but she stated, “the students vote for me every time, and I got it [the award] numerous times and they had to give me a limit.”
Interestingly, and in line with previous discussion about strained coworker relations, Belinda had never even been nominated for a teacher of the year award chosen by faculty and staff. Still, Belinda believed she consistently won the award from students “cause I really respect the students, like no matter what color they are. And I think that they know that.” Belinda, however, did not shy away from difficult conversations and said part of this respect was “calling them [students] out when there is like discrimination or racism or like sexism or anything like that in my class and kind of educate them about it instead of sweeping it under the rug.” I discuss Belinda’s approach to addressing, and recreating, racist school spaces in greater detail in the last section of the chapter.

Teachers also cited experiences of racialization and discrimination during their schooling as guideposts in their efforts to build better relationships with their students and their families. These participants shared they would have benefited from more loving relationships as students. For example, Derek described being sent home from school for not speaking English in addition to constant placement in remedial classes even though he was a self-described “math whiz.” Connecting these experiences to his teaching Derek stated, “you know, you know you see the racism and you see the prejudicial reactions and you don’t want them [students] to go through that no matter what it is, whether it’s a gender issue, whether it’s something you know with color or race or, or whether it’s dealing with cognitive abilities.” Emphasizing the significance such relationships have on his own teaching career, Derek shared, “I have a love affair with my students. I just love what I do. I love teaching kids. And that came from going through the experiences that I did and went through, you know, as an Hispanic, you know” (Interview, September, 2019). Relatedly, Sandra, who now works as a school receptionist and community
outreach support, said she “hated growing up Mexican” because she was repeatedly bullied for looking or dressing differently. In addition to adverse peer interactions at school she felt no adults understood her either, “So it was not really a positive thing to think about yourself in the education system... So, I didn’t feel that encouragement at all at school” (Interview, October, 2019). She saw the same patterns repeating themselves as her daughter started school, and thus took an opportunity to work in the education system to build different relationships. Sandra described her current job as to welcome (Latinx) families, interact with parents, and “just get to know them;” in essence to create different, more welcoming spaces. She continued:

I help them however I can, to find a doctor, or a clinic or whatever… and now they [Latinx families] come frequently just to ask questions and maybe I don’t have the answer at the time but I can direct, but the fact that they are coming in, that’s a great [thing].…they are seeing me as the communicator. (Interview, October, 2019)

Sandra said her approach was in contrast to her coworkers who “are quick to judge them [Latinx families], like quickly condemning them for such acts, [but] I’m more on the other side, like I was there too…” Sonia, too, spoke to the need to extend such relationships, such spaces, beyond the classroom and to parents:

Like for example, for [school] schedule pick up...I emailed one of the APs and I was like just to let you know I want to be at the front office to translate for these parents. So, I came, and I helped, and I translated. Every time they need me I do it because I want to do it. (Interview, September, 2019)

Although participants found purpose and positivity in developing relationships with students and communities that reflected, or were, their own, they acknowledged the additional workload of such labor. Sonia reflected, “Yes, sometimes it’s a demand and they’re [school officials] like we need you to come right now, but I mean it is something
I, I want to do, *es como mi,*\textsuperscript{127} I want to do it.” Yet others questioned if their (above and beyond) efforts (a part of what Flores, 2017a referred to as cultural guardianship, see Chapter Two, p. 118) were sustainable and wondered why they were asked to do double the work districts and other teachers wouldn’t. Even Sandra, a tireless community activist and recent city councilwoman elect in addition to her full-time education job, commented that she felt she had “two jobs”:

So, I have to deal with the White population and then the Hispanic population to kinda double up myself and who I am. This is what I do. How can I help you? You know in that sense...It’s a lot of work...I just constantly feel like I am double working myself. Like I have to prove myself...So it’s like double work, no pay. But you have to do it anyway, because you know that that’s how I’m going to connect with these people. (Interview, October, 2019)

Sandra’s line of proving herself is instructive because she points to the idea that Latinx educators were expected to *conduct* themselves differently in different spaces and with different groups. As Sandra went on to explain, the Hispanic population sometimes assumes “that I am not well spoken enough in Spanish.” Thus, there is a sort of psychic exhaustion from constantly being asked to perform, conform, separate, self/ves in myriad, often overlapping, spaces. Such knowledge of “appropriate behavior” is an example of multiplicitous power(s), both intra and inter group, productively acting on/creating Latinx educators in South Carolina.

Still, participants described other ways they relied on their own, or their family’s, histories to build connections with students. Kim, a high school business teacher, used her grandfather’s immigrant story from Cuba as a way to build trust and solidarity with her students. She explained:

\textsuperscript{127} “It’s like me.”
My school was 99.9% African-American… and so to get through to the kids and get them to give me a chance… identifying as a Cuban instead of as a White Hispanic benefited me tremendously. It first of all opened up the door to having the conversation. I let them assume [I’m White] a little bit for a half a day or a day or so and then I bring up that I am Hispanic and they seem to find some common ground… especially given what my family went through when they first came to the country and discrimination against Hispanics in general and especially with the migration and immigration laws. It’s helped me… I don’t wanna say I use it, but I use it. (Interview, October, 2019).

Of note, many participants, although not all, also described better relationships with faculty and staff of color than their White colleagues for similar reasons. Relatedly, educators like Melissa and Andrés shared their own upbringing in violent neighborhoods in Colombia to show kids they understand, or at least could empathize with, the difficulties of their life. In explaining her relationship to her mostly undocumented students Melissa said, “these are like my peeps. I get them.” Perhaps, more comically, Victoria described her ability to shrug off students who act tough or try to intimidate her, “They [students] know I grew up in a rough area in Costa Rica and when they come with attitude, I’m like ‘what’s up with your face when you turn eyes to me?’ So, they laugh at it” (Interview, October, 2019).

Teachers also built relationships by drawing upon a “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) approach to link their experiences with pedagogical instruction. For instance, Amara credited her dad’s imaginative approach to math with her ability to explain concepts in many ways:

My dad, he would pick me up and we would go to the park and we would do math problems on the slide and I would be a math “magician” and I would write out equations in the sand and he would purposely get the problems wrong every so often so I would have to teach him. And so, the magic of it was once we were done with the problem, I’d make it disappear and dude it was sand, and I was on a slide, so I thought I was super slick. (Interview, September, 2019)
Connectedly, Sonia, pointed to her own challenges learning English as a teaching tool when teaching Spanish. Remembering the feeling of neither understanding, nor being understood she said, “I can relate to them [her students] because when I came to this country I was twelve years old. Although I knew the English language, my ear was not accustomed to it” (Interview, September, 2019). Thus, she approached her instruction with patience and compassion. Bri explained she felt comfortable weaving in “silly jokes, dichos, and consejos” with her predominantly Latinx students. As an example, Bri recounted one such dicho, “there’s a saying...no te comes la torta antes de recreo which means don’t go make a baby, so the parents get that joke, and the girls get the joke, and we all laugh.” Such pedagogical moments did not rest solely on the Spanish language however as Dave, a middle school administrator, detailed a particularly impactful moment with a student:

And so, whether or not I spoke Spanish or not, I remember talking to this kid, and I mean, he was, he was having a really rough time. Um, but I was able to, and he spoke English, but his parents did not. Um, but I was able to make a connection with them because I said, I asked him, I said, what did he eat for dinner last night? I said, no, tell me who was at home with you? Oh, you know, what games do you play? You know, what’d y’all have for dinner? He didn’t want to say… And I said, you know, when I was growing up, my mom made tortillas [he made the Spanish ll sound] and beans. He perked up. He said, “did you guys have rice too?” And uh, and so that connection, that ability to be able to connect with somebody that maybe looks like you is, is huge. (Interview, October, 2019).

Occasionally, teachers used their own (immigrant) experiences to forward “good immigrant” discourse couched in normative, individualistic, and meritocratic logic (Nagel & Ehrkamp, 2016; Patel, 2015; Patler & Gonzales, 2015; Rodriguez, 2018; Yukich, 2013), however in such instances participants often qualified their words with

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128 Little sayings and pieces of advice (see Chicana pedagogies of home; Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 624)
structural critiques of the United States. Kim, while using her grandfather’s story to connect with her Black students, also wanted to show students “an American success story.” She said her family’s story, “helps me drive home the importance of overcoming obstacles and of working hard if you don’t like the position you are in then you gotta be the one to change it.” Jenny placed her own father’s story in the middle of individual success and structural impediments:

My dad [born and educated in Colombia] was poor, but he cared about his education, and he tried and he, he wanted to be a doctor, but because of money he wasn’t able to, so he became a physical therapist. And a lot of people tell me, “Jenny most people don’t think like your dad. People think education sucks, I’m just going to go to work. College is nothing I can afford.” So, the cycle keeps going, and I tried to break, I’ve tried to break it, I try to make do pep talks with them. I try to show them the world. Nothing. (Interview, September, 2019)

Somewhat similarly, Andrés balanced “wanting students to value everything [they] have, all the opportunities here [in the United States],” with what he called absolutely “shocking” schooling and living conditions in his rural district. He continued:

I have serious situations here [at his school], you know a student that comes here without food and is starving is not going to learn in the same way that these students that came with McDonald's breakfast or Chick-Fil-A breakfast… you see what I’m saying? (Interview, October, 2019)

In fact, many teachers either international, and/or immigrants, relied on stories of meritocracy in their home countries (where higher education was more accessible), while decrying endemic poverty and inequitable education in the United States. As Andrés mentioned a number of times, the real United States “is not what we see in the movies.” Thus, participants found themselves at the intersection of opportunity and injustice, a tension that revealed how important their role was in making different spaces centering relationships of love and cariño. As such, I close with a long quotation from Jasmine,
herself an international teacher from Valenzuela who outlined the myriad (relational) needs (and spaces) of South Carolina youth:

I can tell when my students are having a bad day. I just look at their faces and I just sit down just for a second and ask them is everything okay. “Are you okay? What happened?” I just pay attention to the little details and I just can help people just sitting down a few seconds, paying attention to them, so I teach them some Spanish, I help them by listening to them, giving the best advice I can give them… [she continued]

I can pick students up when they are having a bad day, when they need somebody’s help. And not everybody picks up on that you know? And I know some people don’t have the, don’t have a person that they can go to and talk about their problems or talk about their day. It’s not, it doesn’t have to be a problem. It can be just talk about the day, you know, because they tell me a lot that…they don’t have nobody to talk to, or they just need one minute to talk… But they don’t have like that person to talk about that. So… I just sit down and make sure that everybody’s good. Um, I sit down, and I say, “hey, are you okay? You know, that you, you have me if you need to talk to somebody.” And they tell me, Ms. [teacher name] can you stay for a few minutes after school? And I’ll say, “yeah, for sure…” It’s just they feel comfortable in my room and they feel that they can trust [me] I guess (Interview, December, 2019).

I want to be clear here that Jasmine, in addition to other teachers in this section, do not draw upon an innate, inherent, or timeless Latindad that is a one-for-one correspondence with their students. Such a view ignores the nuance and diversity of Latinx teachers and students, creates a static Latinx teacher subject, and actually limits the potentialities of Latinx teachers’ subjectivities. Rather, in agreement with Daniels and Varghese (2019), I contend minoritized teachers draw upon experiential knowledges, “not as foundational experiences or stable contexts,” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 64) but rather as a path (of power) to recreate spaces toward relational supports. These relationships work to challenge normalized (spaces of) knowledge of/about Latinx to produce or facilitate divergent ways of becoming that disrupt, even refuse, the (not so) benign and neutral practices that reinscribe, perpetuate, and center Whiteness in education.
Relatedly, the ways in which these teachers used their past experiences to inform their pedagogies and their investments in their students’ futures is more than a temporal overlay; it is demonstrative of how relational space privileges the co-existence, the productive possibility of different narratives. Put another way, Massey (2001) writes:

one result of spatializing time [bringing in/creating meeting points of multiplicitious histories/experiences of teachers] is thus also to propose a genuine multiplicity of trajectories…[which] can be significant in challenging those analysis which read the world [or the ‘New’ Latinx South] as a singular (and therefore inevitable) history. (p. 259)

In this way, solely positioning the differences of Latinx teachers in South Carolina along a temporal axis as “new,” or “backward,” or “developing” implies Latinx “are just ahead or behind in the same story,” hence neglecting the “real import and full measure” (Massey, 1998b, p. 35, emphasis mine, 2001), of the spatial differences, the many Souths, Latinx teachers are themselves constantly, if not pragmatically, creating. Not only does this, again, add to, or better reclaim the, complexity of Latinx in the U.S. South, it also points to how teachers (can) take advantage of the cracks and ruptures inherent in spatialized meetings and negotiations to trade those seemingly intractable relations of marginalization and limited subject positions toward spaces of love and cariño.

**Theme Three: Latinx Teachers Intentionally Creating Hostile Spaces**

Finally, I map a pair of educators/instances where participants intentionally refused normative spatial practices and experimented with the potentiality of hostility. In these cases, participants welcomed, even facilitated, (their own) transgression, focusing a practice of agonism to create spaces of confrontation with (the exercises of powers) “that make oneself [and their students/of color] thinkable in a different way” (Ball, 2016, p. 1141; Foucault, 1982). The teachers saw the provocation of spaces of agonism/hostility
as a strategy to refuse and disrupt unjust relations, a path toward producing, or at least problematizing, a set of truths about who/what a teacher should be/do. These actions are in line with Foucault’s (1997) assertion to “escape as much as possible from the type of relations that society proposes for us and try to create in the empty space where we are new relational possibilities” (p. 160, emphasis mine). In this way, teachers either forced new, and different, relations of inclusion or were content with maintaining their exclusion, in turn complicating simple constructs and boundaries of in/exclusion. I start first with Sandra’s recollection of an initial meeting with a new coworker.

“I Have Taken This as an Opportunity to Make it Awkward”

Figure 4.12. Participant photo, “I love tacos” (Sandra, interview, October, 2019).

My first week of school when I started, I had a teacher of mine and she came up to me and said, “Yo quiero Taco Bell...you know, tacos.” She laughed, she caught me off guard. I had papers, I was putting mail in teachers’ mailboxes, and I was like [shocked]. I literally smiled the whole time and she said that’s the only thing she knows how to say in Spanish, and I was like “okay that’s great, that’s some
Spanish, um,” but yeah, and after that she left. I didn’t see her again. So, I was like for that moment I was like, okay, Sandra, just take in, you know why this is coming and you know why this is happening

…and the thing about it is, is, she spoke it so freely in front of the whole office which makes it seem that is almost acceptable. So, when that happened I was like immediately how do you respond to that? When that happened, I was just like shocked. After she left, I just kinda shook my head. I was like really; she doesn’t even think it’s wrong...

So last week I was at Walmart getting some stuff and they had this lanyard…this is the new one that I wear at school. Look what it says, “I love tacos” [We both laugh]. Look I found it and said it is perfect. So I wear this to school now and the lady that prompted the incident looked at me and she hasn’t said anything about tacos, but what I did was I have taken this as an opportunity to make it awkward, I felt that I was objectified by tacos and that was like, she used that object and that is how she saw me...she didn’t see this person that is running for [city]council, and she didn’t see this person advocating for the community all walks of life. She didn’t see that. She only associated me with tacos, because that is exactly what she said...“Yo quiero Taco Bell”

...So, I am making a statement with this [lanyard]. (Interview, October, 2019)

Sandra felt her new colleague saw her as an object (of knowledge), writing stereotyped discourse (“tacos”) about Latinx onto Sandra’s body. Among the many things that bothered Sandra about the incident was how the teacher “spoke it so freely in front of the whole office.” More specifically, this process of objectification (turning a person into a thing), not only dehumanized Sandra, but also made it easier for others to lack empathy for other Latinx “objects” (Chavez, 2008, p. 6) as such behavior “seemed almost acceptable.” Moreover, the objectification of Sandra divided Sandra inside herself (“didn’t see this person that is running for [city] council and she didn’t see this person advocating for the community all walks of life”) and from others (Latinx/non-Latinx) (Foucault, 1982, p. 778). Left to act within/against/for the sets of relations that (re)produce such objectifying knowledge, Sandra “stood alone in her staff room, saw something ‘cracked,’ something that to [her] colleagues [was] no more than the steady
drone of the mundane and the normal, and found it intolerable. How did [she] respond?” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 85). Sandra re(per)formed the discourse about herself in a material fashion (lanyard), seeking “awkwardness,” rather than complacency. Sandra opened a space for becoming differently, reconfiguring, and blurring the boundaries between different subject’s relations to peace and perturbation, comfort and consternation, humor and hostility. In the next example, Belinda, too, troubled silence toward the potentiality of different spaces for both teachers and students.

“I Try and Turn It Around and Say Like, ‘Yeah, There’s Not Many of Us [Teachers of Color] Here, So You Need to Listen to What I’m Saying.’”

Figure 4.13. Participant photo, “Why be racist, sexist, or transphobic when you could just be quiet?” (Belinda, photovoice interview, December, 2019).

*I really wanted to be a teacher so that I could try and squash all this beef and educate these kids in the right way. But then when I became a teacher, I was like, wait, I can’t actually say what I want to say. But uh, but I do it, I do it anyways, but I do it in a way that is not offensive and that’s not pushy on the kid, but in a way so that I can provoke their thinking instead of pushing my opinion on them...And then when I think about them [school] firing me, I’m like, bring it on. Like I’m really not scared at all, and I really think that I could bounce back on my feet if they did fire me, if I got fired for like saying something about like racism at school, like I feel like I would become famous. Like I’m like, please do it. Like I’m not afraid at all. I will sue this whole school...[for example] I begged you [administration] not to put this racist kid in my class. And y’all did. So, I think at that point, they’re kind of scared when it comes to, there’s only three minorities
or four minorities as faculty or teachers. Um, and it, and they allow so much like racism at the school, and I think they are a little scared that we could, and for lack of better words, that we could quote pull the race card at any time because so much kind of messed up stuff that goes on...And I try and look at it as a strength instead of like, “Oh, I’m from this oppressed group that is a minority that doesn’t have much say at school.” I try and turn it around and say like, “yeah, there’s not many of us [teachers of color] here, so you need to listen to what I’m saying.”

In the quotation, Belinda asserted her constraints, “uh, I can’t [as a teacher] say what I want to say,” while also refusing her containment, “but I do it, I do it anyways.” Acknowledging the risks of telling [different] truths, she also invited the possibilities of being fired as it would hold the school accountable for its complicitness in producing another type of hostile space, one composed of sets of racist relations. Belinda explained how she found a way to exercise power by turning her subject position on its head, transforming her subjectivity into a vehicle of power to integrate more just, more critical, conduct “into the disparate fields of possibilities brought to bear upon [the seemingly] permanent structures [of schooling]” (Foucault, 1982, p. 788). Importantly, though, Belinda’s agonism of the teaching self, her insistence toward a different practice of the teaching subject (in one school space), is “not one of transcending any core identity; rather, the ‘transformation’ is explosion, excessiveness, incoherence, a refusal of containment” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 64). As Belinda offered a specific example, the explanation of the opening picture, it is possible to see how Belinda’s use of power, her struggle toward producing hostile space, impacted the actions of (student) actions:

[Let me give you another example]. One of the girls [in the picture] is wearing a shirt that says like, why be racist or something when you can just be quiet or something like that? And I put that picture on there because she had been

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129 Intersecting the act of such “risky” truth-telling with gender, Davidson (1997) states, “Foucault was well aware that the creative counter-conduct of women was often the target of the harshest criticism against them” (p. xxviii).
outspoken about the lack of Black leadership at the school and administration and just how Black students are treated. And she constantly is like voicing this and nothing ever gets done. And then she like auditioned to do the [school] coffee house, which is like a poetry reading or singing thing that we do [at school], and she didn’t make it. And like her poem was just about like her struggle with the racism she experiences and they [school administration] didn’t let her do it. And so, then she was like, “why?” And it became this big fight. So eventually they let her do it. And there was a lot of like, negative backlash. Like the administrators were just kind of like, “why would you do this?” Why would you say this about our school? And she was like, “this is how I feel.” Um, so now she feels like none of the administration likes her and they always, they [administration] like say, “you take the race thing too far” or something like that. So, she started wearing that shirt, and she was like, you know what, if they don’t want me to speak like I’m still going to express myself, but I’m gonna wear that shirt. And she said like, some of her teachers are like, you really shouldn’t wear that shirt, you’re just trying to start a problem and then she would wear it in my class and I was like, “good, good for you, like, I think that we should use our voices and like, people can disagree with us, but that doesn’t mean we still can't use our voices.” So, then she asked me to take a picture with it and I was like, “sure, I’ll take a picture with it. [Belinda continued...]

I think that teachers don’t want to do that [be outspoken about (racial) injustice] because they’re comfortable and because they’re privileged and if they’re not comfortable and their not privileged those are the teachers who are going to say something because we’re ready to disrupt, disrupt the status quo, and teachers who are comfortable and, not, you know, struggling, they don’t want to disrupt the status quo that may benefit from, but me...me I’m not going to let it go. Because at some point someone needs to hold them [school] accountable and teach them. (Photovoice Interview, December, 2019).

Belinda’s struggle to disrupt the status quo and to remake her school spaces indeed solicited a space of hostility with her staff and colleagues, but also invited a different space, a space of potential, for her students of color. Such a space worked against narrow possibilities of normalized relations and struggled against not only the procedures implemented for conducting the self, but conducting the conduct of others (Foucault, 2007c). Hence, it is important to note that the status quo of teaching, and its spatial relations are as exclusionary as they are productive. What I mean by this is that the status quo normalizes certain teacher and student conduct and relations between the
two, behavior that is “comfortable,” or “appropriate.” Thus, much like Foucault’s (1990) repressive hypothesis regarding sexuality, teachers are not barred from addressing topics of race or racism (with students) as much as they are managed to talk about it a certain (apolitical, neoliberal multicultural; Au, 2016; Melamed, 2006) way, a problem-free approach that steers free of “conflict.” Belinda and her student took their conduct “too far;” their refusal to “let it go” was a refusal of the (ir)rationality of appropriate conduct, the “rituals of truth” (Foucault, 1977, p. 194) that governed the conduct of their relations, their spaces. In sum, Sandra and Belinda shrugged off simple binaries of inclusion and exclusion seeking to create spaces of hostility and agonism that challenged the boundaries of who Latinx teachers and educators might be(come) where. Such struggle is more than a mere desire of inclusion, it is an intervention into the spaces, power relations, regimes of truth, and conduct that set the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion.

While Sandra and Belinda (and other participants who described similar situations) felt their actions were necessary power(ful) interventions toward reconfiguring and remaking their work relations and spaces, they undertook such agonism alone. They were forced to create and face the effects of discomfort in isolation. Though the participants sought to tell a different truth, their refusal carried material risk. While Ball & Olmedo (2013) reasoned a counter to this risk was offered “in relations with others who share [or create] the same discomforts...others [who] might be available within everyday social relations, union meetings or on social media sites,” (p. 94) Latinx teachers in South Carolina did not have such recourse. Teachers struggled to find sympathetic colleagues, lacked the support of a substantial statewide organization of Latinx (teachers), and had nary a teacher union to turn to. Outside the love and support of
family members (“located” outside school spaces), participants carried the burden of refusal without backing. In fact, many participants expressed eagerness to talk with me because they craved the space to share the struggle with somebody, anybody. Thus, while I agree with Ball (2016) that, “subjectivity is now a key site of political struggle–not a sufficient site perhaps, but a necessary one,” (p. 1131) I push toward thinking through the spatial undertones, and relations, of such sites, and relations (to oneself) in the next two chapters.

For now, I will share a picture from Andrea’s photovoice (Figure 4.14) and Susana’s (eco)map (Figure 4.15). Both participants visualized what many mentioned; they were excited for, and felt supported by, the possibilities of the teacher activist organization SCforED. While the organization did not focus the needs of Latinx specifically, or teachers of color generally, there appeared a hope from participants that other teachers were at least willing to agitate for something; perhaps in refusing the plight of teachers broadly, their colleagues might see the purpose, and reality of discomfort and hostility Latinx teachers experienced, negotiated, and created on a daily basis.

Figure 4.14. Participant photo (Andrea, photovoice interview, August, 2019).
Conclusion

Massey (1998b) writes, “space is the product of intricacies and complexities, the intertwinnings and the non-interlockings, of relations, from the unimaginably cosmic to the intimately tiny...space is always in the process of being made; it is [always already] unfinished” (p. 37). Thus, in this chapter I used participant words, pictures, and (eco)maps to outline the connecting, divergent, and zig-zagging spatial relations Latinx teachers in South Carolina traverse, refuse, entangle, and strengthen. In following the (spatial) narrative cartography of Latinx teachers I mapped out three broad, and interlocking, relations—(1) traditional exclusion/isolation, (2) negotiation and recreation, and (3) intentional agonism—to what many participants often described as hostile spaces. As a result, and in agreement with Massey’s (1998b, 2009) three propositions about space, it is the product of interaction, hence multiplicitous, and always open to potential, I showed how Latinx teachers are simultaneously made in, and remaking, spaces across the context of El Sur Latinx. To give an overview of this (always in motion) process, I sketch the overlapping, intra-active, and reciprocal sets of relations (and spaces) that Latinx in South Carolina co-constitutively create and are created in.
Figure 4.16. “Map” of Latinx teacher relations in South Carolina

The “map” (Figure 4.16) is, of course, just a glimpse into the relations of Latinx teachers in South Carolina, but, nevertheless, it shows the multiplicitous and interdependent flows and forces that operate/d with, upon, and in resistance to participants. Such relations are not free from structured and unequal exercises of power, therefore the differently shaped and configured two way arrows represent such differential power relationships. Importantly, the length and shape of individual arrows are not meant to correspond to any particular relation(s) as such are fluid and contingent. For example, Bri emphasized her close connection with Latinx families in her community, while Andrea explained students’ parents compared the necessity of Spanish to “working at McDonalds.” Similarly, while some teachers concentrated the productive power effects of physical layout and architecture (Victoria, “alone in my cave,” and Rosa,
teaching in portable), other teachers spoke to the heavy demands of standardized tests (Kathy) and normalized discourse of teaching (Belinda, “stick to the map”). Further the different relations are intentionally ambiguous. True, many participants described isolation and hostility in relations with co-worker, but not uniformly. Andrea and Marie’s different relation(s) with each other, contrary to the rest of their colleagues are such an example. Additionally, discourse/knowledge about Latinx tended to be deleterious, negative, and racialized, but participants also worked to challenge, resist, even antagonize such normalized thinking. Finally, the map contains arrows on the outer edges showing that relations also intra-act with each other in an immanent (discursive) system. Thus, the spaces Latinx teachers make and are made in, the many spaces of El Sur Latinx, are never closed off, there is always potential of relations which are to be made, un-made, and refused. In sketching how Latinx teachers make, and are made in, these spaces, it is possible to highlight, or at least (un/re)blur, the underlying relations, knowledges, and discourses that simultaneously limit and reveal the potentiality for different relations.
CHAPTER 5

“WARRIORS, WORK MULES, AND WILDFLOWERS”: HOW LATINX TEACHERS USE, INTERNALIZE, REFUSE, AND ARE HAILED BY THE KNOWLEDGES, DISCOURSES, AND TRUTHS THEY ARE SUBJECTED TO

Introduction

And in what ways is our experience of ourselves formed or transformed by the fact that somewhere in our society there are discourses considered to be true, which circulate and are imposed as true, based on ourselves as subjects? What mark, which is to say as well, what wound or what opening, what constraint or what liberation is produced on the subject by acknowledgment of the fact that there is a truth to be told about him, a truth to be sought, or a truth told, a truth imposed? When in a culture there is a true discourse about the subject, what is the subject’s experience of himself and what is the subject’s relationship to himself in view of the fact of this existence of a true discourse about him? (Foucault, 2017, p. 11)

In this chapter I present findings that primarily, although not exclusively, engage my second research question:

- How is Latinx K-12 teacher/educator subjectivity constructed, maintained, legitimized, and resisted (in South Carolina)?

To do this I present a narrative cartography that uses participant words, pictures, and (eco)maps to outline the connecting, divergent, and zig-zagging “truths” told by, about, even with, Latinx teachers in South Carolina. I share the way my participants, Latinx K-12 educators in South Carolina, affirmed, rejected, disrupted, and co-produced their “self-image, [their] sense of self and others, and [the] possibilities of existence” (De Lauretis, 1986, p. 5). In sketching the “struggles revolving around the question, ‘Who are we’?”
(Foucault, 1982, p. 781), in mapping the discourses Latinx teachers (refused to) take, make, or question about themselves, there lies “wounds and openings…constraints and liberations” (opening epigraph; Foucault, 2017, p. 11) to become differently. More than fighting for a “politics of preconstituted identities,” tracing the cartographies of power through which identities were constituted problematizes the underlying spatialized power relations that detrimentally and reproductively exercise power on such identified subjects (Massey, 1998b, p. 41). Hence, outlining how K-12 teacher subjectivity is constructed, maintained, legitimized, and resisted (in South Carolina), it is possible to (re)fuse, (re)negotiate, (re)make, and (re)imagine different and multiplicitous sets of relations (to our/selves) in El Sur Latinx. Thus, this chapter works in concert with Chapter Four to more closely (re/un)blur the subject positions of Latinx teachers that emerge through, and are embedded with/in, certain topologies, topographies, and regimes of truth (i.e., particular [hostile] spaces, rationalities, and discourses circulating through South Carolina).

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I center a longer vignette from an elementary teacher, Pilar, that serves to highlight the contingent, fluid, and relationally dispersed processes of Latinx teacher subjectivity and to introduce the reader to a number of subject positions that will be discussed throughout the chapter. Next, I map the following subject positions that Latinx teachers (co)constructed, (co)maintained, (co)legitimized, and (co)resisted in the many spaces they traversed: a) professional, b) international teacher, c) Spanish teacher, speaker, and translator/interpreter, d) soldier, warrior, and maestra, e) role model, f) cultural ambassador, and g) flor silvestre (wildflower) and unicorn. Under each theme rests evidence that explores the boundaries
of each subject position in greater depth. I also lead each theme with a quote or picture from a participant that I unpack by dis/connecting other key data excerpts, theories, and my own analysis. Once again, these broad themes emerged after two rounds of data analysis where during “round one” I transcribed all the interview data and typed developing thoughts, links, and “zigzags” to other data/participants, and connections to theories in brackets directly within the transcription document (Appendix F); and where during “round two” I read and reread the master transcription document continuing to take notes, underline, highlight, and (re)flag key data excerpts, and dis/connect participant words with each other and theory (Appendix G). I then wrote a set of analytic memos that sought to organize driving ideas into what became the themes corresponding to research question two. I close the chapter with a visual to illustrate the overlapping, productive, multiplicitous, and variant subjectivities of Latinx teachers in South Carolina specifically, but also how such subject making/resisting processes can be mapped in different “locations.”

“I Took It Off My Resumé”: Constantly Shifting Self/ves

I really wanted to work at [district name] because even though they haven’t raised teacher pay, like, it’s home for me, and it’s a good district...and as soon as they found out, because my boyfriend’s dad tried to get me hired there [at district], and as soon as they [district] found out I was like Hispanic and could speak Spanish and like was a soon to be Winthrop [University] grad they had me interview, they wanted me in a contract, but not in positions that I wanted. And I was very excited at first because it was great, I can secure a job, I cannot freaking worry about it...I started going on interviews in September and October [of my senior year in college], I was very much ahead of the game and they were like, “we have this Spanish teacher position” and I was like, “um” or “we have an ESOL position,” and I was like, “that’s not my qualification” or [district would say] “we have this new Spanish immersion program that we are doing” and I’m like “really? Cool, but I would like to be a Spanish teacher where I could teach reading and math, but also teach Spanish at certain designated times of the day or at most integrate it.” But they were like “maybe, but in the meantime you’re going to be a Spanish teacher at a high school.” and I was like, “F you I’m done.”

Finally, I was like I have not signed any preliminary contracts, I’m just going to see what is out there. And so, for, at a hiring fair [at another district] I literally took
Spanish/bilingual off my resumé. But then at the [hiring fair] I was like yep just trying to sell myself the best I could and they were like, “what makes you unique?” and I was like, “Jesus Christ I wasn’t prepared for this question” so of course I go to the whole Spanish thing because I am nervous and I am almost fresh out of college and I want a job. So, I go to the Spanish thing and like the lady literally stops me in the middle of the interview, stops me in the middle of the interview. “I think I have heard enough, please come with me”...they wanted me to sign a contract, an open-ended contract. I was like, “you don’t want to hear anything else. Are you sure?”...It was a good feeling but at the same time I was terrified because I was like, “can I please sign a contract guaranteeing I will be an elementary teacher?” and they were like, “we will give you an open-ended elementary contract.” I was like still scary, but okay. Basically it was, it was almost impossible to get an elementary job and not a Spanish or middle school ESOL teacher job...Even after I signed my open-ended contract in January, maybe early February, I didn’t get a nailed down job, where I was working, and I was like I know I have a job, I know they will put me somewhere but I know they will try to put me as a Spanish teacher. I was terrified...I was literally like regretting saying anything. I was like you took it [bilingual] off your resume, you should have stuck to it. I was terrified so I even called the district [about my placement], and asked them, “what should I do?”...And even the district lady was like, “you could always take a Spanish position.”

So here [in South Carolina] it’s more like, you [as Latinx teacher] are a dime a dozen, and all the districts want you to be their glorified translator. That’s how I would describe [district] trying to hire me, as a glorified translator. (Interview, September, 2019)

In this vignette, Pilar struggled to reconcile how she thought of herself, her desires and wishes, versus what other people, namely school district officials, knew to be true about Latinx teachers. Pilar visioned herself to be an elementary teacher, something and someone she had trained and prepared to become, while multiple district hiring staff members subjected her to the knowledge that Latinx teachers are Spanish teachers and/or translators/interpreters. Pilar enacted a number of strategies to defend a different subject position, first appealing to her “qualifications” to teach certain subjects, and then fashioning a hybrid teaching subject that offered to “teach reading and math, but also teach Spanish at certain designated times of the day or at most integrate it.” After the district again denied her attempts at becoming a different self, she finally refused what she was expected to be (a Spanish teacher) by saying “F you I’m done.”
Tasked with finding a job, and knowing what other people knew about her, Pilar decided another act of agonism, another conducti(o)n(g) of the self, by taking bilingualism off her resume. Yet, a moment into the district recruiting fair she felt compelled to make herself a desirable, “unique” candidate within a competitive (hiring) “marketplace” (Attick, 2017; Grey & Shudack, 2018); she shifted herself and “of course [went] to the whole Spanish thing.” The “of course” preface Pilar muttered is informative because she acknowledged the self she was expected to be, a self produced at the intersection of desirability (within the “marketplace”) and knowledge about Latinx teachers (Spanish or ESOL teachers). Pilar also felt a moment of pleasure with this decision ("it was a good feeling [to get offered a contract]") before “the terror” of a disjunctive subject position (“Spanish teacher” and/or “glorified translator”) set in.

Fearing a placement irreconcilable with her notion of self she called the district only to hear once again, “you could always take a Spanish position.” In sum, Pilar’s knowledge (about herself) was (trans)formed in relation to others (knowledge) and changed how she, as a subject, participated in the (local) world (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

The story concluded when the district, eventually, facilitated Pilar’s placement in an elementary school classroom. She found herself at a majority Latinx school where she invited (at times and in spaces) her subject position as a Spanish speaker:

but now that I am here [at the school] I am very open. I am very able to talk about the advantages that I bring and the things that I am good at and things like that. And the beliefs that I hold as true….The majority of people here are White teachers, but it is just an accepted thing to be very welcoming and open and accepting because they have mostly Hispanic kids...I do feel very safe inside my classroom because I get in here and I have a bunch of little people who look like me or who talk like me or who have the same background as me, they are just great…it’s just such a comforting thing...
Here [at school], I feel like every teacher in this school is going to have somebody who doesn’t speak English in their classroom which is different. It is very comforting, but I feel like they, like I have the email to prove there are extra demands on me. Where they send out the first grade ESOL schedule, the ones that get pulled every day, the ones that know little to no English, it was like [Pilar’s last name, Pilar’s last name, Pilar’s last name, Pilar’s last name, Pilar’s last name, Pilar’s last name, other teacher name, Pilar’s last name, other teacher name, Pilar’s last name, other teacher name]. I was like I didn’t realize I was the one you throw all the [Latinx] newcomers with...

So again, it’s like that work mule thing. Like I feel like even though I am a first-year teacher and I’m still figuring out my pedagogy and...they are still piling anything they can on me because it’s like here is your use, here is your use. This is what we have you for. (Interview, September, 2019)

It is apparent that Pilar’s subjectivity was locally negotiated and shifted contingent to the (micro) contexts, the sets of relations, the spaces she found herself. In her current job, “inside” her school and classroom, her bilingualism was an “advantage,” and she reveled, and found “comfort,” in being herself with “a bunch of little people who look like me or who talk like me or who have the same background as me.” Thus, Pilar’s sense of self was less that of “glorified translator,” and more of an elementary teacher who happened to translate. However, Pilar was never outside, transcendent, or exterior to the power relations that made her a knowable subject (Foucault, 1990), as her “advantages” and things “she is good at” positioned her as the teacher “you throw all the [Latinx] newcomers with” thus bringing, once again, “that work mule thing.” As such, this knowledge about Pilar still produced particular behavior and conduct, not by prohibition or exclusion, but rather by inciting aptitudes, pleasures, and placing individuals where they might be most “useful” (Foucault, 1980, 2007b, p. 159). With this contingently contested, relationally dispersed, and positively produced process of Latinx teacher subjectivity in hand, I map a number of subject positions that emerged through my intra-actions with participants, starting first with that of “professional.”
Latinx Teacher Subjectivities in South Carolina

“But Hey, I Want to Be Treated Like a Professional”: Latinx Teachers as Professionals and “Good” Teachers

In this subsection I outline how Latinx teachers come to see themselves, and act accordingly, as “professionals.” For, to be a teacher “professional” meant to be subjected to certain types of knowledge about how such professionals should conduct themselves (and others). As many scholars (Apple, 2013; Daniels & Varhesse, 2019; Popkewitz, 1998; Webb, 2007, 2009) note, the teaching subject is increasingly tied to amorphous, yet productive, performances (Ball, 2003) of “professionalism,” that reproduce neoliberal logic (Au, 2007, 2016) through “good” teacher behaviors such as positive interaction, respectability, and collegiality (see Serena’s photo, Figure 5.1), emotional control, (Zembylas, 2005), continual (self) improvement (i.e. lifelong/professional learning; Ball, 2003), mastery of scientific and instrumental pedagogy (Mifsud, 2018; Popkewitz, 1991), measured efficiency (Ball, 2016; Ball & Olmedo, 2013), and apolitical practice (Hara & Sherbine, 2018). As schools and districts had a variety of methods for teachers to internalize, and become subject to, discourses about “good teaching” and
“professionalism” (standardized tests, performance reviews, professional developments, peer observations), participants often, but not always, furthered such knowledge. For professionalism was not only taken up contingently, but also repurposed in hopes of subjective reversal, or at least, disruption.

Even as professional and good teaching discourse influenced participant subjectivities, it is crucial to understand that such discourse was highly racialized. Amara speaks to the contingent and fluid, yet racialized, nature of a professional subjectivity in her explanation of tone policing:

...specifically, in my experience in education where tone is a really big thing because we’re very much like a customer service kind of industry. And so, we’re like “the customers always right” and because we are trained to be polite to people all the time, um, even to rude parents when we ourselves don’t speak to each other in that, like, super superficial voice. Um, people can get offended, but like when I’ve seen it, when White women talk that way in meetings, it’s really not that big of a deal but when women of color do it, it’s a whole, a whole different ball game. And there’s a lot of like, tone policing when it comes to that so um, I know I’m not the only one cause we’ve talked about it, girlfriends from work about like having to be very mindful of being super professional...Um, so yeah, it is really helpful to have other teacher friends [of color] who we encourage one another of not necessarily like, so this is what you should say in the meeting, or this is how you go about it, but just to support each other outside of, of the actual building from time to time is really good. (Amara, participant photovoice interview, December, 2019)

In the above quote, Amara spoke to what it means to act as, and be, a “professional” in certain (school) spaces. To be, and know oneself as, a professional meant to conduct oneself in a particular way. As such, Amara “trains” herself to speak a certain way, to be “polite” and “superficial” within general and normalized teacher practices that “often invisibilized, centered, and normalized Whiteness and the subjectivities of White teachers” (Daniels & Varghese, 2019, p. 5). However, the boundaries of Amara’s behavior and subjectivity shifted as she traversed different sets of
relations. While Amara felt she must (self) police her tone “all the time” with school parents and White colleagues, she also states the importance of speaking honestly with teacher friends of color “outside the building.” Thus, how Amara viewed herself and her interactions as a “professional,” were not “fundamental phenomena,” but a result of reciprocal relations that shaped appropriate ways of acting oneself (Foucault, 1984, p. 247). Finally, it was striking to see the convergence of neoliberal discourse (“customer”) with the (self) disciplining (“very mindful”) of professional conduct even as multiple examples from Chapter Four (p. 245) assert Amara rejected and refused the idea that teaching was apolitical work. Thus, Amara’s subjectivity, even as a “professional,” escaped clear definition, it was as dynamic as it was reproductive. Amara’s subjectivity stood as an assemblage to the various relations, spaces, and knowledges she simultaneously rejected and was subjected to.

Another major component of a professional subjectivity was the drive to constantly (re)work the teacher self, to constantly be improving. As Ball (2003) writes, “[teachers have] become ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent” (p. 220). To this point, Sandra explained that she was always learning, taking the time to “grow in her professionalism,” (Interview, October, 2019) and Manny stated that one of the things he likes most about the United States is the amount of professional development, the ability “to grow professionally all the time” (Interview, October, 2019). Jenny, a middle school Spanish teacher, most explicitly tied together the expectation that her (in)efficacy as a (good) teacher was tied to (failed) efforts of teacher (self) development:
I don’t think I’ve had a really proud moment yet. I’m young and I’m hard on myself and there are days like even now, that I don’t feel like I’m a good teacher...I bought books, Tim, like I have books on my Kindle on classroom management. I have watched TED Talks. I have talked to my former principal. I mean everybody, educators, Twitter. Yeah, I mean there are days when I can’t crack the code. What, what is the code to being a successful teacher and why are some teachers, you know, sixty years old and still teaching? I mean I haven’t interviewed people, but I question myself what is their success…? (Interview, September, 2019)

As Jenny’s case illustrates, the mastery of truths about teaching (i.e. instrumental, scientific, “a code to crack”) was linked to the truth of the individual teacher (herself; Foucault, 1982, p. 783). If only Jenny were to read the “right” book, or find the “right” interview, she would become the “good” teacher. Thus, discourses about professional effort and good teaching conducted the conduct of Jenny.

Latinx teachers in my study proved to be vehicles of power for these truths about the teacher professional. For example, Rosa shared the following picture (Figure 5.2) of her leading professional development. The opportunity to teach other teachers was a source of pride for her:

Figure 5.2. Participant photo (Rosa, photovoice interview, October, 2019).
And um another one [picture] here that I feel very happy with the things that I have been doing um is the professional development for world language teachers. Last year it was at [high school name], and I was called to be presenting. So, I was presenting here and she’s a foreign language teacher, she’s our art teacher, and she was a math teacher in the district. So, I was sharing them how to integrate arts in their curriculum. So it was, it was, it was very nice, I share some activities that they are not used to. So, we were doing center stations and how to go incorporating music, incorporating movement so that students don’t have to be just sitting there. (Photovoice interview, October, 2019).

Rosa took delight in, and felt “very happy” about, sharing her teaching methods with peers. As evidenced in Chapter Four it was rare that Spanish teachers were explicitly valued by schools and districts, hence Rosa reveled in the chance to detail her wisdom and knowledge about teaching. Paradoxically, however, after Rosa explained her picture (Figure 5.2) she expressed disdain about other forced professional learning:

> We have to be in Math PD (professional development) and ELA PD every Monday. Why do I have to be in Math and the ELA PD while I should be with my other coworkers, special area teachers, doing something? Of course, I’ll stay there because it’s mandatory and I’m telling you this... but excuse me I was seeing the same things I was taught 20 years ago in Costa Rica…So, what they make me feel is stupid because *I am a professional.* (emphasis mine)

Thus, Rosa also used her subject position as a “professional” to refute her conduction, to claim pride in her teacher preparation and education in Costa Rica, and to think differently about herself. In this instance (as opposed to the example of her leading a PD), Rosa’s (self)knowledge as a professional served as a source of resistance. Thus, Rosa was and wasn’t a “professional;” at different times and in different spaces she produced, negotiated, and disrupted the truths she was subjected to, simultaneously legitimizing and undermining her ability to become someone different.

Susana, too, found her subjectivity as a professional to be a potential avenue for departure, and a site of struggle for greater autonomy against micro-management and a general devaluation of her expertise. In her (eco)map (Figure 5.3), Susana drew two lines...
between herself and her school district, one of “stressful, but required” and another of “weak, negative connection.”

Susana explained her decision to do so because her current director lacked fundamental knowledge about special education laws, and also monitored, via computer data, the amount of time teachers spent using an online curriculum. In sum, Susana felt such surveillance did not correspond to the autonomy and trust professionals ought to have. Thus, Susana was investigating leaving the classroom for doctoral programs.

Interestingly, although still in line with self-knowledge as a professional, a lack of supervision, too, was perceived as a sign of disrespect and devaluing of their teaching knowledge. Rosa explained that when district or school administrators conduct “learning walks” to observe teachers “they don’t care enough” to visit her classroom (outside the school building, p. 227) or other foreign language classes generally (outside the “core” curriculum, p. 230). In total, and similar to Rosa and Susana, Andrés found his (self) image as a professional to be incongruous with the multiple sets of material-discursive relations he found himself (unrecognizable) in:
But hey I want to be treated like a professional...Here we have had some professional development every Friday and it is the same activities, wasted time, wasted time Tim. Come on now. I mean, I’m a professional, give me a “professional” (emphasis on this word) development, don’t give me that cause that’s what, don’t waste my time. (Interview, October, 2019)

Strikingly, Andrés, an international teacher from Colombia, was generally shocked by the (lack of) professional status of teachers in the United States as compared to his prestigious and respected position in his home country. Andrés also showed how his experience of teaching with/in (sets of relations in) South Carolina came to stand in for understandings of the United States education system generally. In this way, the localized spaces of South Carolina worked to homogenize his (and to a degree Rosa’s as well) knowledge about teachers/teaching across the United States. I turn more to the complexity of “international teacher” subject positions next.

“No US Passport. No Education Degree. Meet Your Child’s New SC Teacher”:

**Latinx Teachers as International Teachers**

Teaching might not be their first career choice. South Carolina might not be their home state. English might not be their first language.

They are the future of South Carolina’s teacher workforce.

Facing large teacher shortages and dwindling numbers of aspiring teachers graduating from S.C. colleges, the state’s school districts are looking elsewhere for teachers (Self & Delaney, 2018, par. 1, 2, 3).

In a recent newspaper series about teacher shortages in South Carolina, one article featured the headline, No US passport. No education degree. Meet your child’s new SC teacher and led with the three paragraphs in the epigraph. The headline, and ensuing text, is misleading because it lumped together highly-qualified “international teachers” with so-called career changers in alternative certification programs while playing on/to anti-Latinx/anti-immigrant nativism to racialize and sensationalize the former’s presence. For
the newspaper insinuated that these teachers lack documentation and are poorly educated, veering disappointingly close to a Latino Threat narrative (Chavez, 2008) forwarded by national figures (President Trump) and local South Carolina policy/politicians (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017). The truth is “international teachers,” while lacking United States passports, have U.S. Visas, (multiple) university degrees (often in education), and previous teaching experience (South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.-b; U.S. Department of State, n.d.). In fact, participants who were either current or former international teachers (n = 7), expressed a belief they were better prepared, via rigorous university preparation and years of service (many considered themselves veterans), for teaching in general (although maybe not in the United States) than many of their United States colleagues. Yet their structured subject position as an “international teacher,” one participants embraced ubiquitously, had effects not only on their relations (with self and) with others, but also intersected with broad discourse about Latinx as foreign Other (Chavez, 2008; Flores, 2019b; Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017) to create knowledge about all Latinx teachers in South Carolina.

As a reminder, international educators are technically part of cultural exchange programs that come to the United States to teach for three to five years on a J-1 visa. After their J-1 visa expires, international teachers are required to go back to their country of origin for two years unless they can find a district or other employer to sponsor another type of visa, usually an H-1B. However, as multiple participants told me school, districts typically did not advocate for H-1B visas due to the high costs, unpredictability (it is a lottery system), and repercussions from broker firms (companies that facilitate international teachers desire a circulating pool of candidates). As Melissa, a former
international teacher stated bluntly, “each teacher is a contract [both for districts and broker companies]” (interview, October, 2019). The South Carolina Department of Education facilitates the recruitment of “international teachers,” through these private companies, and the teachers are increasingly used to fill long-term vacancies as they are substantially cheaper and (can) have little recourse for unsatisfactory working conditions and assignments (Bowers, 2017).

International teachers were made into recognizable and distinct subjects (for themselves and others) by the policies that created their positions. Importantly, then, international teachers’ self-knowledge of their precarious position was structured into the terms of their employment, and buttressed in conflicting ways by their peers and colleagues. Despite pride in their qualifications, their ability to come to the United States, and their success with students, international teachers understood their presence, and their ability to teach, was defined and tied to their immigration status, their visas. Maria, an international teacher from Valenzuela, reiterated this point, “We’re disposable. My first year, I wouldn’t yell at the kids because I thought they would send me home because of my visa. It is not because I wouldn’t, but because I was afraid” (Photovoice interview, August, 2019). Maria went on to explain she was instructed by her program lead/advisor (often another international teacher hired by the private facilitating company to support other teachers) that she couldn’t participate in any teacher protests or actions because the district doesn’t like such “politics.” Thus, program leads, and advisors played a role in facilitating heterogeneous, and capillary power relations that maintained appropriate action, and reinforced vulnerability, under the auspice of “support.” As such, recruiting and brokering programs worked contemporaneously with district interests and larger
discourse about teaching to create implicit systems of surveillance that connected appropriate conduct with worker vulnerability. Tellingly, Maria remarked that her second year teaching in the United States was “so much easier” because she knew “how things worked and I could organize myself so much better (Photovoice interview, August, 2019, emphasis mine). This positive rather than repressive organization of the self, in response to knowledge of appropriate teacher conduct, was a key component of subject formation.

However, pointing to the contradictory and complex processes of subject formation, such advisors, and other (Latinx and) international teachers, were too, important points of solidarity and aid to each other. For example, Andrés, who served as an area advisor, explained how he helped international teachers get driver’s licenses, secure appropriate documentation, and mentor new arrivals on U.S. (school) expectations. This was evidenced during our interview as a fellow international teacher at his school came to ask him the proper way to start and end an email. He reminded her to use the school email “y no el correo electrónico personal.” It held true, then that participants embraced their subjectivities as international teachers while also reinforcing its structured limitations. In the words of educational theorist, Stephan Ball (2003), “We learn to talk about ourselves and the relationships, purposes and motivations in these new ways” (p. 218).

Additional state and district policies created knowledge about international teachers that in turn creped to all Latinx teachers and facilitated unequal, and racialized, intra-actions. Case in point, are South Carolina Department of Education and district policies that teachers holding international certificates remain on annual contracts, rather

130 “Not personal email (address).”
than continual contracts, and that regardless of teaching experience, such teachers are assigned to induction (i.e. beginning teacher) programs (Charleston County School District, 2012). Thus, being treated as “first-year” or “beginning” teachers by districts and schools, even though needing at least three years of experience to qualify for the J-1 visa, reinforced what many participants described as the implicit questioning of their qualifications and expertise. Recall Maria’s words (Chapter Four, p. 222):

> Like, in department meetings, I was just providing ideas and sharing things, like I felt like, like what we would say wouldn’t matter. They [other teachers] were like okay, we’re just...“Ya, we are never going to do that”... So here [in the United States] I held back and for me it was frustrating... So there was a point that I just stopped saying, like having an opinion, like my opinion doesn’t matter. [Coworkers would say] “She is the one that doesn’t know…” (Photovoice interview, August, 2019)

Further, international teachers were hired only for certain subjects, typically Spanish and ESOL, reifying such notions that Latinx teachers are inherently Spanish teachers and speakers. Such racialized subjectivities extended to coworker relations as Sonia recounted in retelling one event:

> I’ll tell you something. I emailed something about a copier code and then the secretary said, “oh well we can’t do anything about that, the district has to…” And I’m like, “wait, what? I have been here for a year. I believe that I am in, I’m in [the district database],” and the secretary is like “I’m sorry I thought you were the only, the other, Spanish teacher.” I’m like really, so do you just label us “like is this just like oh ‘mira ella y tu, they are the same, son iguales?’ pero I guess a lot of people see us [Latinx teachers] like that.” (Interview, September, 2019)

As such, it was common for participants to express the idea that all Latinx teachers were commonly seen as international, Spanish and/or ESOL teachers. Further, given the relative precarious and exploitative subject position of international teachers (and often by extension all Latinx teachers) as racialized neoliberal objects of “multicultural,”

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131 “Look, her and you, they are the same, but I guess a lot of people see us that way.”
language instruction (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Flores, 2019a), Latinx struggled, often in relative isolation, toward subject positions in excess of Spanish teachers, translators, and interpreters.

“I Am not Just a Spanish Teacher”: Latinx Teachers as Spanish Teacher, Spanish Speakers, and Spanish Interpreters/Translators

I am a Spanish teacher, but you know what, I love the underdog position. I would move from that underdog position, and I would win people over. I would spend time with the Math people, spend time with English people, and they got to realize that I am not just a Spanish teacher, but I am also a historian, that I am an economics major, that I have my own company. And all of the sudden, I am putting worth into who I am a person. And starting to help bridge that connection between you know minority and non-minority individuals (Derek, interview, November, 2019).

In the above quotation, Derek wrestled with what it means to be(come) a Spanish teacher, simultaneously accepting, refusing, and complicating (t)his subject position. First, he appeared to affirm the idea that Spanish teachers, especially Latinx, are viewed distinctly from, typically inferior (“underdog”) to, their colleagues. It is logical to surmise this inferiority was an effect of the spatial politics that encircle, enclose, and intern Spanish teachers into certain knowing “locations,” collapsing the diversity and expertise of Latinx teachers into such locations and disqualifying them from certain participation and action. Thus, he felt compelled to prove, to hail, to recognize himself (Ball, 2016, p. 1131) in relation to neoliberal discourse (“I am an economics major, that I have my own company”) that creates hierarchies of subjective (both as a “person” and a foreign language “class subject”) value based on perceived economic utility. He was quite clear in this regard as he stated, “I am putting worth into who I am a person.” While it was distressing that Derek literally did not feel “worthy” as a Spanish teacher alone, and compelled himself to conform to neoliberal notions of value, he also refused a limiting and rather homogenous subjectivity as “just a Spanish teacher.” He also sensed that in
complicating what it meant to be a Spanish teacher that he might transform himself into a bridge, a connection between “minority and non-minority individual.” Key to note, Derek’s sense of self (as Latinx, as Spanish teacher, as underdog, as bridge) was not ontologically prior to the sets of power/knowledge relations he traveled; he shifted himself (intentionally or not) because of, or perhaps, in spite of them. Thus, across this section I point to how Latinx teachers internalized, refuted, and/or muddled knowledge that racialized them as, collapsed them to, and assigned them “value” for being Spanish speakers, translators, and interpreters.

A number of participants who taught Spanish, following a similar rationale as Derek, explained their impact, or teaching ability, was not confined to the Spanish language. For example, Jasmine and Victoria believed their position as Spanish teachers allowed them to critique the ethnocentrism of students in the United States and share different ways of seeing the world. I also call back Rosa’s desire to “open minds” and create an environment where students learn to respect other cultures. Specifically, Rosa believed “that there is more things to show them [students] than just Spanish.” Similarly, Andrés outlined he was “not just a Spanish teacher,” but a skilled educator able to teach “aptitudes sociales...social skills like tolerance, respect, and shared humanity.” He explained that these skills were going to be true markers of success in a world where students can “Google anything.” In these words, Andrés occupied a conflicted subject position as he affirmed his belief that he was an expert teacher at the expense of his subject manner. Yet more than anything, Andrés sought an expansive subjectivity beyond that of teaching Spanish in the hopes that he might find a way to stay in the United States past his employment as an international teacher. In fact, on many occasions he reiterated
he wished “to raise his daughter here,” and appealed to his success as a soccer coach and adjunct instructor at an HBCU. Across these cases, there was the general idea that in “closing the door and teaching,” (Pilar, interview, September, 2019) participants could truly demonstrate their teaching abilities in a protected, (i.e. their “own”) space. Such an act was agentic in so far as teachers refused and reconstituted certain knowledges about their teacher selves, but potentially problematic as they occurred in isolation, thus erasing a visible agonism that might publicly question the discipling norms of teaching and adding nuance to the idea that the classroom (space) is one of relative refuge (Webb, 2007, 2015).

Throughout my research across South Carolina, Latinx teachers shared they were automatically assumed to be Spanish/ESOL teachers and presumed able to serve as translators and interpreters. Thus, the process of assigning inherent racial qualities and subject positions, Latinidad, to the Spanish language (Davis & Moore, 2014; García, 2009; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Saldaña, 2013), continued in school spaces across South Carolina. Latinx teachers struggled through a double bind that accompanied the later expectation. Colomer (2019) describes such a double bind as a Latinx teacher’s commitment to their Latinx community while being employed in a culturally subtractive context that simultaneously expects but does not acknowledge these efforts. Sandra explained:

I think to a certain degree, they’re [Hispanic teachers] undervalued and there is a lot of pressure put on them. So, from what I know since I started my new job, my co-worker who is Hispanic has been so relieved that she is not getting all the calls, just to handle...“a qué hora es la cita de la conferencia?” that I could easily answer. So, she has felt a tremendous relief like almost a stress reliever. But look how many years she has been there [without help]...I get told a lot, “you can do

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132 “What time is the conference/appointment?”
“I can do it, however, it’s not my part of my job, you’re already by-passing the way that you’re supposed to be handling [interpreting]. You’re going straight to me because it is easier for you.”

(Interview, October, 2019)

Similarly, Andrea shared how she was tasked with extra work, often to cover the obligations of her school and other teachers:

I have to take more work home that I don’t get paid for because the time I used to plan and develop my lessons is taken away to do other things...This is constantly happening like I said, I’m being pulled from different directions so I can translate for parents when they’re [school] required by the state to hire someone outside of school. I’m constantly having to help the [White] ESOL teacher who doesn’t want to confront the parents to have those meetings for her because she doesn’t want to listen to the parents screaming at her. (Ecomap interview, October, 2019)

In the two examples, there was a weaving of neoliberal and racialized discourse that constitutently created spaces in need of Spanish speaking Latinx teachers and certain kinds of Latinx teaching subjects who could fill that need. There was the expectation that Latinx teachers take up this work (“you can do it, right?”) as part of who they were (as teachers). As Smithers & Eaton (2019) contend, Latinx teacher subjectivity was homogenized to fit with institutional definitions and demands; their labor turned into an object of consumption.

Correspondingly, there was little room for Latinx teachers to escape the racializing markers of language, and the concurrent boundaries of a translator/interpreter subjectivity, say because they did not consider themselves fluent Spanish speakers. Participants that were monolingual English speakers expressed they were viewed (sometimes by themselves) as not Latinx “enough.” For example, Dave expressed a sense of disappointment from both his own coworkers and Latinx families when they found out he was not bilingual. Relatedly, Susana explained that district officials were confused by, and reluctant to arrange, her requests for interpreters for official meetings like...
Individualized Educational Program (IEP) evaluations. Both Dave and Susana wished they had the ability to fill interpreter/translating needs, but had accepted that was not a part of their teacher selves.

Thus, the production of such subjectivities as translator and interpreter rested not on exclusion or threat, but rather on the production of obligation, even desire. This sense of obligation came for school officials and the Hispanic community as Sandra’s commentary on “double-work” in Chapter Four (p. 262) suggests. Participants consistently stated they took up the extra work “to help the Hispanic community” or because they remembered their own family struggles. As Sonia reflected, “Yes, sometimes it’s [translating/interpreting] a demand and they’re like we need you to come right now, but I mean it is something I, I want to do, es como mi, I want to do it.” Bri shared that her Spanish speaking ability was a point of connection with colleagues, “I am also in a school with a lot of Hispanics, so the teachers love me.” Yet a few moments later, Bri changed course, acknowledged all the extra work, and stated, “So it’s like I feel underappreciated, which is another reason why I’m going [to leave full-time teaching] too.”

Thus, there was a tension that many Latinx teachers lived, a joy in helping their communities, but also a sneaking suspicion that they were treated as “glorified translators” and “work mules” (Pilar’s comments from the opening vignette). Hence, teachers’ subjectivities as Spanish teachers, translators, and interpreters were a result of a variety of heterogeneous spatialized relations—underfunded, impromptu responses to the educational needs of Latinx, intragroup expectations, racialized linguistic markers,

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133 “It’s like me.”
colleague wishes, and school demands—acting upon the thoughts, beliefs, and bodies of
Latinx teachers. Latinx teachers, then, were forced to constantly negotiate the multiple,
local, and geographically specific powers (Foucault, 1980, 1990, 2007b; Webb, 2009)
that paradoxically tied their “worth” to their ability to speak Spanish while also
devaluing, and limiting, their subject positions to Spanish teachers, interpreters, and
translators. I now turn to instances when participants turned particular a type of subject
position back on its head, zig-zagging toward spaces of opportunities to become “more
dangerous” as “warriors, soldiers, and Maestras.”

“I’m Also More Dangerous, I’m Outside the Box”: Latinx Teachers as Soldiers,
Warriors, and Maestras

![Participant photo, “Just as soldiers...”](Serena, photovoice interview, January, 2020)

*Just as soldiers feel proud to serve their country, I feel proud to be a Hispanic educator serving my community and inspiring young people through art.* (Serena, photovoice interview, January, 2020)

In this section, I outline three examples of teachers who used their subject
positions as Latinx educators to “serve,” (like “soldiers;” Serena’s picture, Figure 5.4) or
fight for their community, specifically their Latinx community. In this way, Latinx
disrupted and challenged the second half of Colomer’s (2019) double bind by
reformatting and reimagining their own subjectivities to reconfigure and reimagine their
culturally subtractive (hostile) spaces. These educators found, or forced, cracks in the power relations that acted upon them and their students, and turned such relations toward something different. Understanding to an extent “that subjectivity is the point of contact between self and power,” (Ball, 2016, p. 1131) these educators rewrote the boundaries of their situated subject positions so they could put power relations to work for them (and their students). I start first with Melissa, a former ESOL teacher who forged “her own path” to become “a warrior” for her students.

“I Just Made My Own Path in This School. I Am a Warrior”: Inventing Her Own Position

Melissa’s journey as an educator in the United States began as an international teacher in North Carolina. After her initial placement, she was able to remain in the United States through marriage, but took a few years away from education. During that time, she worked as a court interpreter, but found the job dehumanizing, “Because you cannot have emotions. You cannot cry. You just interpret and you’re nobody. You’re invisible when you’re an interpreter. You don’t exist, really” (Interview, October, 2019). Thus, when she returned to education Melissa wanted the opposite. She did not want to be “invisible” and emotionless, she wanted to become a passionate advocate for students. After securing a job as an ESOL teacher in South Carolina Melissa explained how she made that happen:

I got the job for ESOL and then they [district] sent me to [high school name] cause they send you to wherever they need you. So, I was sent to [high school name] and everybody’s like, “Oh my God, bless your heart.” Like everybody was so negative and then I came here, and I was like, “what are people talking about, I love this school, I love the kids.”...but before I got here there was no value on the ESOL program, many teachers didn’t know what an accommodation was. It was so much that I told my principal, I said “at the next faculty meeting, I need to address the faculty.” So, I told them [faculty], “I’m the new ESL teacher. I just
want to explain to you what ESOL means. I told them it’s a full class. We don’t do study hall. So do not send your kids to me, cause we’re learning English in that class. It’s a full class. We need to get evaluated every year. Um, if you want, and you need the kids to have some support after school I am more than happy to help Monday, Tuesdays, Thursdays, but during my class don’t send kids [to simply get them out of your class].” And that was it. It took like a few months for me to finally realize that that’s what they’re used to…

And so, then I also got myself involved with the school. I attended all the faculty meetings. I created a Latin dance club. So, we’re doing, dancing *bachata, merengue, salsa* in our room every other week, and I had like 40 kids in my room, we push the desks and we started dancing. So, I think just, I just made my own path in this school…

I was doing all the things, and I was like I have kids coming here in the morning asking me this and also in the community and things, and I just can’t be, I just can’t be teaching three classes and also doing this. And at the time I have already decided to become an administrator because of that, because it’s still, we needed to advocate for them [ESOL students] even more. So, I had a conversation with my administrator, and he said maybe we can create a job. So, I was like all right, but I thought he was like [not really serious]...I was like “okay, calm down, go back to class.” But no, he was serious. So, he talked to the superintendent, and I had to write down all the things I do, used to do, and we included a lot of administrative stuff. And then he, she, approved for me to be an administrator in charge of the ESOL department. Okay, so, I oversee like the teachers, I oversee that they have everything they need, like resources and materials, and the teachers are in compliance with accommodations. If there’s a teacher who is not attending the training, and I get on them you know…

I’m a warrior. This [school] is my family. So, I think it was a little more, um, for me, like I guess as me, what I am, I do my 100% and, and I care about the kids. And I knew we needed a good service, an ESOL service at the school. And if I could make that cultural change, I was there for the challenge. And it didn’t take long. I mean, the teachers caught up very quickly that I’m very serious about it and that and that I was advocating for those kids. And it has grown. So, we now have five teachers, four full time, one that comes one, for one block...and we are pushing for more classroom teacher training. (Interview, October, 2019)

Melissa’s multiple acts of refusal started as she rejected deficit notions of her school, one with a high proportion of ESOL, mostly Latinx, students. Next, she refused the localized spatial knowledge that treated ESOL as an unimportant class, and a place teachers could just “send [Latinx] kids.” Relatedly, Melissa disrupted subject knowledge
about her as an ESOL teacher challenging her colleagues to see her as a teacher of a “full
class.” Eventually, Melissa’s tireless work led to the creation of a specialized
administrative position in which she has control over resources, hiring, and program
development. Describing herself as a “warrior,” Melissa constantly confronted power
relations to make herself knowable in a different way, inventing new subjectivities,
warrior and ESOL administrator. In sum, Melissa refused the boundaries of an ESOL
teacher, avoiding fixity in pursuit of a continuous responsibility to practice herself
differently (Ball, 2016, p. 1141), while also holding on to the opportunities (to serve
Latinx students) that came with previous prescription. Thus, the starting point of her
struggle was, and continues to be, her subjectivity.

Melissa’s shifting subjectivity did not evolve linearly, rather it was a constant
(re)in(tra)vention, a continual challenging of the spatial relations between her and
coworkers, her and students, her and policies, her and resources. However, even in her
current role, a seemingly better position to facilitate and to use and to forge (new) paths
of power relations, she has to contend with state (immigration) policy that limits the
material realities, relations, and spaces her students traverse. For one example, recall
from Chapter Four that Melissa contends with a state law that prohibits undocumented
youth from attending public universities in the state. Thus, she had to continue to adapt,
to find different ways to change structures and systems and to equip students and teachers
to negotiate the restrictive contexts they face. Next, I turn to Alonso’s shift to become
“dangerous.”
I Mean I’m Overqualified and Man...I’m Also More Dangerous, I’m Outside the Box

Alonso, a teacher and administrator with over 25 years of experience, believed he was passed over for higher positions and assigned his current role as vice principal in a heavily Latinx school in large part because he is Latino. He pointed to the tensions of wanting to help his Latinx communities vis-a-vis narrow perceptions of how Latinx educators are seen to be successful for only Latinx students:

If someone would say, “Al you’re a good educator at [current school]...I would say, “I’m a good educator anywhere, and I think I have proven that.” I questioned at first if they put me here because of that [being Latino], and if they will leave me here forever. Whatever. It’s not a bad thing, but you know what I am saying. (Interview, October, 2019)

Alonso continued to explain his situation before settling on how his (over) qualifications were a strength, something that made him “dangerous”:

And I told them, “to be honest with you, I don’t think I’m ever going to get a good deal.” They are like, “what do you mean?” I said, “Well I think I’m gonna have to be superhuman. I’ll have to be eons much better. I’m not tall. I don’t play golf. I don’t have blonde hair and blue eyes. I have an accent.”...but, but if you put me next to you know, there’s no other administrator that has worked like...and you know I have worked... So, you know...you know politically they look me over about five times more than the next guy, and you and I could talk a lot about that but it’s true. I mean I’m overqualified and man you could, but I’m also more dangerous, I’m outside the box.

Thus, although somewhat upset that he wasn’t in a higher position like a principal, Alonso thought the knowledge he was subjected to (i.e. good administrator at Latinx school) ultimately afforded him a degree of leverage to oversee programs, to do things “outside the box,” and to hold the district accountable for supporting his school. He explained:

I get to be a steward of the ESOL programs and special education...and ESOL we have a large, growing community of refugees coming, so a lot of numbers, it really runs the whole thing from American, Hispanic-American kids, to kids just arriving yesterday...mostly Central American. Um so I’m helping with that and
I’m finding a new love again for understanding the rights of special education students and what that means...It’s easy, it’s really easy to, to not provide equity, to really just go through the motions and really not provide the best as you can. Another reason I was asked to come here is because there’s so many programs that in the past they just haven’t been able to orchestrate everything, they work against each other... and they need someone to bring them together.

In sum, Alonso worked to turn his subject position on its head, tying a belief in the potential of Latinx students with the need for institutional transformation. Not only did he use his position(ing) to challenge the district to “be more genuine and bring more support [to his school] because there are schools with much more support around here,” he also used his connections in the Latinx community to “bring really, bring, the community into the school to help the kids, to help the parents, to help whatever.” Yet, despite Alonso’s work in the school, his self-knowledge as an educator is recreated again and again through his negotiation, deployment, and internalization of discourse about his effectiveness (for whom) as an administrator. Finally, I look to Bri’s move from art teacher to “Maestra.”

*I’ve Been Seeing Them for Years. I Know Their Brothers or Sisters, Their Parents...I’m Like the Maestra*¹³⁴

Even though “art wasn’t really valued in her district,” (Interview, October, 2019) Bri used her position as an art teacher to advocate for her students, many of them Latinx, and embraced her role as community Maestra. Bri explained that while many teachers, “don’t know what’s going on and let them [Latinx students] slip through the cracks...[we have to] take care of our own.” One way she did this was by using student art as a tool to open doors for students. Bri encouraged students to enter into art shows, and she

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¹³⁴ An endearing word for teacher.
positioned student’s budding portfolios (they were elementary students) as evidence in applications for gifted and talented programs and prestigious middle schools.

In addition, she talked about how her advocacy for students was interwoven with her close relationships with Latinx families in her community, “these are my babies. I see them grow. I’ve been seeing them for years. I know their brothers or sisters, their parents...I’m like the Maestra.” As Bri believed her family was one of the first Mexican families to move to urban Charleston in the 1980s she commented her connection to the Latinx community was built on similar experiences and cultural understandings. For this reason, former students often came back to check in with their Maestra:

It’s just, it’s great when they [former students and/or students’ siblings] come in and like I can make silly jokes with like, their high school kids and I’ll tell the girls silly stuff like “you better not have a boyfriend,” and, and I tell them in Spanish, and I’m like, “make sure there’s no no no te comes la torta antes de recreo…” which means don’t go make a baby, so the parents get that joke, and the girls get the joke, and we all laugh... I mean I couldn’t say that to another [non-Latinx] family. (Interview, October, 2019)

Thus, Bri drew upon her community’s cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005, 2006), and the “communication, practices and learning that occur in the home and community (Chicana pedagogies of home; Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 624) to be the Maestra long after formalized classroom instruction was over. Yet, even as Bri fashioned a multi-facilitated teacher subjectivity beyond the boundaries of an (under-valued) art teacher, her subject position as Maestra proved new constraints to navigate. After 14 years of putting students and families first, she was looking to move on from her (multiple) position(s) as the school district reappropriated her Maestra subject position, rejecting a transfer to a “dream job” closer to her house because “No me dejan ir porque” they said that they

135 “They wouldn’t let me leave because...”
needed me here [in a school with high numbers of Latinx students]. That’s what someone higher in the district told me, they need me here because I’m Hispanic.” She continued:

All these years I’ve been... I didn’t want to leave because of my students, and I couldn’t leave financially either, you know, because...but now I can. And I always put my students first even though at some point I could have just said, okay, I’m going to work less, because I know I have to be here for them. I have to be here for the parents. I have to make sure that they are doing fine. Who’s going to love them like I love them? Who’s going to help my girls out with School of the Arts and my boys in the gifted and talented program? But I know I have to put my family first now because I’ve done a lot. (Interview, October, 2019)

Indeed, Bri’s case is particularly insightful in mapping the contested, conflicted, and contingent subjectivities Latinx teachers meander. Bri’s sense of self is less a coherent and essential core, and more a shifting product of multiplicitous and heterogenous power relations. Although Bri found purpose and passion in being the Maestra, she was still subject to the knowledge different relations (Bri⇌Latinx community, Bri⇌students, Bri⇌district, Bri⇌district⇌Latinx community) assigned to it/her. Thus, even as Bri, and Melissia, and Alonso (and Belinda, Amara, and Sandra in Chapter Four) found a variety of ways to use their own subject positions (as art teacher, ESOL teacher, administrator for Latinx) to loosen the grips between subjectification and subjection, and create new paths of power relations for their Latinx communities, the process is always already on-going and tenuous. Their self/ves, then, were a location of strategic skirmishes between relations and spaces (in/with El Sur Latinx) that seek (self)control, (self)experimentation, and (self)refusal; “the individual is an effect of power and an element of its articulation” (Foucault, 1980, p. 96). I also saw this uneasy, yet productive, negotiation of Latinx teacher subjectivity in how participants maintained, legitimized, and resisted role model discourse. I discuss this next.
“The Idea of Making Sure Like if No One Else Knows, You Know, You Belong in the Room”: Latinx Teachers as “Role Model”

A school district shared the following press release about one of my participants as she was honored for her school’s Teacher of the Year award:

Here are a few of the many reasons that [teacher name] was chosen for this award:

Her creativity, intelligence, and commitment to her students and her school are what earned her the title of [school name] Teacher of the Year.

As a proud Latina American of Mexican heritage, [teacher name] is a role model (emphasis mine) for all of our students. She is fluent in Spanish and can easily relate to our student population. Ms. [teacher name] is a proud product of [school district name] attending [lists school names].

She is an experienced teacher whose classroom runs like a well-oiled machine. Students understand her expectations and are eager to rise to the challenges she sets before them.

Former students of [teacher name] have gone on to be accepted into [lists school names] being identified as Gifted and Talented, and winning awards in [lists different organizations].

When asked her thoughts about teaching at [school name], [teacher name] had this to say, “I truly have the career of my dreams; when I look at my students, I see a blank canvas. I see unlimited possibilities for them to become a true masterpiece: a happy and productive member of our society.”

In the preceding text the school district explicitly named the teacher as a role model in addition to outlining the knowledge behind such a subject position(ing). The teacher was creative, intelligent, and committed to her students, a proud Latina who could “easily” relate to the student population (many Latinx). She ran her class like a “well-oiled machine,” set expectations her students meet, helped them (students) garner academic success, and saw them as future “productive members of society.” While none

136 I have slightly edited the text to preserve participant anonymity.
of the descriptors are inherently ill-becoming of the teacher, there is a thread of implicit discourse that needs attention. The knowledge communicated about this teacher sets forward the notion that she is a paragon of a rather assimilationist, straightforward, and neoliberal construction of individualized success (Singh, 2018a). The teacher, as role model, is constituted as an exemplar, upheld as successful evidence that Latinx individuals will be rewarded within a fair, objective, merit-based education system. This notion is built on subtractive models of schooling that ask Latinx students to give up their cultural background in exchange for (unguaranteed) school achievement (Valenzuela, 1999). As such, it is this rather static, safe, and conservative notion of role model that places boundaries on more radical action by Latinx teachers (to transform power relations in the South) while upholding the current neoliberal and racialized social order.

Additionally, one must also question if previous teachers of the year were fashioned to be role models or was my participant discursively formed to be what Singh (2018a,b) described as a corrective representation, a neoliberal multicultural embodiment of what (deviant and unregulated) students are not, but should aim to be. This notion is fundamentally rooted in deficit and racist ideas about students of color. Seen this way, Popkewitz (1998) writes, “the insertion of the idea of a role model can be seen from a different point of view—that is, as the effect of power. It imposes a continuum of values” (p. 51). It was within these continuum of values, these emergent spatial organizations and relations of knowledge, that Latinx teachers as role models were made subject to and negotiated resistance, compliance, ambivalence—or often a combination of all three.

My participants appeared to understand the conflicting nature of being a “role model,” as many communicated their desire to be one as they also pushed back against
simplistic ideas of assimilation and normative success. For example, the aforementioned Teacher of the Year both wanted to “show students there was more for them,” while also considering herself more of a “rule-breaker” than role model. In sum, most Latinx teachers in the study viewed their public visibility as teachers important to counter the striking optic of teachers of color severely underrepresented in professional ranks (teaching), but over-represented in non-professional jobs (custodians, lunch staff, etc.). Indeed, they seemed to acknowledge the tension that normative role models were individual solutions to systemic injustices that, while important to students, might also be folded back into the systems they sought to disrupt and transform.

In stating her desire to be a role model, Serena, a middle school art teacher, internalized an optimistic, encouraging, rather acritical conception of the subject position. As “a first-generation college graduate and one of the first Hispanic teachers in my community,” Serena hoped her position would help students “gain confidence, inspiration, and ambition.” In answer to the question, “How do you think your different identity markers influence your job as a teacher/educator?” she stated:

I am proud of my identity [as Hispanic]...as a teacher, I serve as a role model and an inspiration to young adolescents who may feel lost and not have an identity established yet. I can relate to young people that have been through things that I have been through and set a positive example to help them achieve success (Interview, October, 2019).

Serena both acknowledged structural inequity and racism (“been through what I have been through”), while also hoping that she could help others Latinx achieve success by her “positive example.” Similarly, Melissa spoke to the idea that individual Latinx role models might help counter school and community spaces of hostility:

I think it’s good for the kids who have someone like us [referencing my position as a former teacher in South Carolina] around, that they can see me, like they love
to come into ESOL, not just because of me, but because everybody in that room looks like them, it’s the same space. It’s a safe space. So, I think they need us as role models. When my girls, they never maybe thought about being a teacher, and I tell them my story. I said, “I didn’t have money, but I went to school. I buy my own stuff; I buy my own car. I have a husband but [he] doesn’t have to give me anything.” (Interview, October, 2019, emphasis mine)

Thus, Melissa modeled herself a testament to the power of education to change life trajectories. She did this in a rather interesting way, tying together the importance of creating safe spaces with an interweaving of her own immigrant experience, and feminist undercurrents of empowerment and independence. Yet, even as she centered herself as a positive example, Melissa still was “a warrior” for structural change (previous subsection), in her school, community, and state. In this way Melissa’s “role modeling” was complex, contradictory, and contingent as Melissa showcased herself as an example of a bicultural and bilingual Southern Latina, a gender-centric cultural guardian (Flores, 2017a), and a more critical disruptor.

Amara shared a corresponding perspective in naming the potentials and pitfalls of showcasing herself as an exemplar of, and role model to, the possibilities of education. She wanted students to see the significance of both formal and informal learning networks, while critically pushing against a system that seeks to exclude people of color. She explained her uneasiness with normative role modeling the following way:

And for me, like even though my dad’s not big on formal education, he’s still really big on being educated, and my mom always taught us that formal education was a way for, you know, no matter what generation you were, for kids of immigrants to, she never ever used a word like assimilate, but she definitely pushed the idea of making sure like if no one else knows, you know, you belong in the room (Photovoice interview, December, 2019)

Amara wanted students to push back against assimilationist, meritocratic, and neoliberal constructions of individualized success, yet still help students access the opportunities a
formal education allows. While she didn’t use this terminology, I found it clear that Amara countered the regime of truth that students of color were outside the norm and also lacking in some fundamental way. Therefore, recall from Chapter Four that Amara infused critical discussion into Math class, did “little things” like wear her hair in a “big poof ball” and keep hair supplies, and invested in relations with her students to make sure they felt like they “belong[ed] in the room.” In a more explicit example, I point to Belinda’s efforts, also detailed in Chapter Four, to stop her student from being expelled, and in the process fight for her student’s physical presence in school spaces. More than anything, most participants hoped that their visibility as teachers showed students they “belong[ed]” in educational spaces as teachers and students, not just in non-professional jobs (custodians, lunch staff, etc.). Dave and Belinda reiterated this point, respectively:

You know, I think that it is so important for the people that are standing in front of you to represent and to look like you, and the fact that, “Hey, I can grow up to be that” I can be successful...I can be, you know, gosh, I can make a difference. Um, and so I think that that is, that’s huge. That’s a huge benefit for our schools, um, for our children to be able to see minorities [as teachers]. (Dave, interview, October, 2019)

We need, um, a diversified faculty for our students to grow, especially for our White students. The White students need to see that Black people can be leaders. They need to see that Latino people can be leaders and they need to see that Black and Latino people have similarities to them. And if we don’t expose White students to the similarities of their Black and Brown coworkers, Black and Brown teachers and their Black and Brown peers, then they, there will never be any like racial cohesion ever for us in the South. (Belinda, interview, November, 2019)

While the last two subsections focused primarily on how Latinx teachers negotiated understanding of self, their subjectivities, in regard to their relationships with Latinx (and other communities of color), I now move toward Belinda’s point, how Latinx teachers saw themselves in relation(s) to their White students (and colleagues).
“The Reason I Am a Cultural Ambassador Is Because...South Carolina Is a Racist State”: Latinx Teachers as Cultural Ambassador

The reason that I said that I am a cultural ambassador is because...South Carolina is a racist state no matter who...it is just too closed; the mind is just close-minded. (Rosa, Photovoice interview, October, 2019)

Whereas some Latinx teachers took on the subjectivities of “warrior” or “Maestra,” and negotiated their self/ves as role models for their Latinx students, teachers were hailed to be a type of cultural representative for their school communities as a whole. Rather than cultural guardians (Flores, 2017a), Latinx teachers, in other spaces, in other sets of relations (sometimes in the same “place”), were commonly tasked with a different subject position, one of cultural ambassadorship. Among the tasks of cultural ambassadors, outlined in depth in Chapter Four, teachers served on “diversity” committees, organized cultural events, celebrations, and festivals, infused their curriculum with cultural content, refuted assumptions, and countered negative discourse about Latinx. The ubiquity of such practices in the day-to-day lives, and the self-knowledge, of Latinx teachers was a constant refrain throughout my research. As a striking case, Melissa shared that in a waiver request to extend her stay in the United States she wrote to the government of Colombia, “I should stay [in the United States] because you know I have been an ambassador of my country and doing this and this and that” (Interview, October, 2019). Such a subject position entailed expectations outlined by schools, districts, policy, and general teaching discourse (i.e. “right” ways of teaching conduct) that were both internalized by participants to further ephemeral, neoliberal notions of multiculturalism/diversity (conduct) and used by participants as a way to disrupt truths and produce new knowledge (counter-conduct). Thus, to examine how teachers contingently reproduced and also reconfigured knowledge about themselves and
other Latinx through a cultural ambassador subjectivity, I outline how teachers were hailed to be, internalized ideas about, and also (critically) used the opportunity of, cultural ambassadors. Given the detailed practices of cultural ambassadorship in Chapter Four in negotiating and recreating space, this subsection is relatively brief and focuses on how culturally ambassadorship subjectivities specifically.

Latinx teachers were called to be cultural ambassadors by schools, districts, even policies, when such cultural knowledge and practices (of the self) were part of district initiatives, curriculum expectations, and normative teaching pedagogies. For example, Kathy served on a committee tasked with highlighting the district’s “diversity,” Dave was part of a leadership team devoted to hiring more male teachers of color in his district, and Rosa’s Latin Dance group performed at district public events (Figure 4.7). Such initiatives focused inclusion rather than systemic change and fell with/in a grid of “acceptable” knowledge and practice, often non-political, neoliberal governmentalities of multiculturalism (Au, 2016; Flores, 2019a; Melamed, 2006) and cosmetic diversity. Still, participants expressed pride and significance in finally starting to “have a seat at the table,” as Rosa explained, “we got...to show our culture to everybody else. So, we were very proud of that” (Photovoice interview, October, 2019).

137 Although some participants saw opportunities for cultural performance as a step in the right direction, others bemoaned that Latinx (educators) were excluded from networks that made important decisions. Many believed that South Carolina still ran on a “good-ole boy system” (Pilar, interview, October, 2019) where jobs, promotions, and other opportunities coincided with connections to an entrenched White “circle of influence” (Alonso, interview, October, 2019). Alonso stated, “I have found things to be very backward and there still is the little old boy system…I think it is a patronage thing” (Interview, October, 2019). Explained another way, Susana was among a number of teachers who spoke of the need to increase Latinx representation at the “big table,” meaning having a voice and votes at both the state level and also in local school boards.
Latinx teachers were also called to be cultural ambassadors when cultural knowledge and practices intersected with curriculum mandates, state educational policies, and normative teaching expectations. For instance, Spanish, Social Studies, and ELA teachers mentioned there were school and district expectations that “culture” (however ambiguously and ephemerally defined) be integrated into the curriculum. Such appeals to multicultural curriculum were often in reference to Profile of the South Carolina Graduate that listed all students should be equipped with skills like “global perspectives,” “multiple languages,” “work ethic,” “creativity and innovation,” and “self-direction” (South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.).

The Profile includes no mentions of equity, social justice, or critical pedagogy, and clearly positions cultural knowledge as an object and commodity within neoliberal discourse that promotes individual and global “competitiveness.” Thus, teachers compelled themselves to take the lead in instructing students about important holidays and integrating events like Hispanic Heritage Month into the curriculum.

While Latinx teachers internalized and legitimized a normative and prescriptive cultural ambassador subjectivity, participants, too, used such a subject position to enact critical resistance, struggle towards more systemic change, and explore reconfigurations of this self. I recall Amara’s insistence to center important conversations about representation, gender, Jim Crow, and the lasting effects of institutionalized racism in her

To this point she explained, “South Carolina is always a little behind…we barely have women at the big tables right now let alone Hispanics” (Interview, August, 2019)

138 The Profile was developed by a coalition of education and business leaders (more of the latter) organized as “TransformSC” under the South Carolina Council of Competitiveness (South Carolina Council on Competitiveness, 2015; South Carolina Department of Education, n.d.)
Math class in addition to refusing cultural ambassadorship with adults (Chapter Four, p. 239). Correspondingly, I think back to Belinda’s refusal to censor “controversial” content (of herself) even as her administration told her to “stick to the map:”

And I have gotten into arguments with parents that say, I can’t play it [CNN10 news show]. And then they’ve requested to speak to the administration, and administration then talks to me like, “well, maybe you should watch it first, and if there’s something that you think is controversial, don’t play it that day.” And I’m like, “no, I’m gonna play it anyways because they should be exposed to controversy. And differing opinions”...[she continued] When, when sometimes my students will blurt out things that are kind of offensive and I’ll address it right there in front of the class and I’ll just be like, “Hey, let’s talk about this.” (Interview, November, 2019)

Similarly, Sandra’s affirmation toward awkwardness with a coworker rather than the ritual of respectability (p. 271), Pilar’s refusal to be a Spanish teacher (p. 283), and Kathy’s conferencing with parents about racist incidents (p. 245) pointed to potential of becoming different kinds of cultural ambassadors. In this way teachers embraced certain opportunities of this subject position while still holding in tension that they were expected to do double the work while doubling themselves, “ain’t no White people have to be cultural ambassadors, right?” (Amara, photovoice interview, December, 2019).

Thus, teachers also used the space of cultural ambassadors to reject certain notions of their being, map different boundaries of becoming, and enact flexible counter-cartographies of the self that refused apolitical multiculturalism, technical notions of teaching, and institutional demands. Latinx teachers contingently reproduced and also reconfigured knowledge about themselves and other Latinx through a cultural

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As I quoted in Chapter Four (p. 238), Amara stated, “I’m like, you know, there is Google, you could Google that. But then there’s also things like for my students where I don’t mind being that ambassador to kids, but like adults I don’t really have the same amount of patience.”
ambassador subjectivity. Yet regardless of their acceptance, negotiation, and/or refusal of cultural ambassadorship, such a positioning spoke to the persistent Othering and racialization of Latinx teachers. Hence, moving to the last theme, I describe how Latinx saw themselves as always already outside the normalized teacher in South Carolina.

**Explaining (and Internalizing) Racialized Difference: Latinx Teachers as “Flores Silvestres y Unicorns”**:\(^{140}\)

![Wildflowers and unicorns]

Figure 5.5. Participant photo, “Como una flor silvestre…” (Andrea, photovoice interview, August, 2019).

Well this one [photo] right here it is a phrase that I use as a life motto. Um, and I like apply it in my daily life. It pretty much translates to “like a wildflower you should allow yourself to grow in places that people never thought you would.” Um to me it’s a motto because there have always been challenges that I’ve had to overcome through all my life and now through my new career of teaching and now having that experience, um, you know you go there with certain expectations. Sometimes people may not have high expectations for you to succeed. So, my, my motto is like I am going to work hard to prove to myself and others that I can, I can be better, I can be somebody that maybe is different, but I can make beautiful thing...

And so, because of being Hispanic you are always looked at as someone who is not going to make a difference, that you are just here for the ride. So, for me when I meet people and the way that they communicate, their body language already tells me if they look at me different. So, in that area I try to challenge myself every day not just to prove them, but to prove myself that I am just like everyone else and I can truly make bigger things happen. So that’s a life motto, I keep it on my cell [phone] all the time, and you know I also consider myself a wallflower because I am very outspoken so, um, it is very rare that you will find someone

\(^{140}\) “Wildflowers and unicorns”
with, maybe that is strong personalities in the Latina community because we are sometimes limited to say things, to share things because of the fear that there might be, but I refuse to be one of those. I am more, like, outspoken and I take on challenges and I just keep reminding myself that yah I am different but I’m also beautiful. (Andrea, photovoice interview, August, 2019).

In this section, I describe how Latinx teachers in South Carolina explained feeling outside the racial norm, and correspondingly how they negotiated this ascribed and internalized difference in their racialized subjectivities as Latinx teachers. For beyond physical markers, Chapters Four and Five have provided extensive examples of how racialized difference was written onto the bodies of Latinx teachers through, for example, presumptive Spanish language fluency, translation and interpretation capability, international teacher status, racist discourse in/out of school spaces, assignment to certain schools/spaces, and cultural (performance) expectations. Thus, the racialization of Latinx teachers, and the extension of racial meanings to their relation, practices, and groups, was a result of the interplay of socio-spatial structures and intra-actions and everyday (teaching) life (Omi & Winant, 2015, p. 111). Such processes were always in flux, adaptable, and productive; they created shifting boundaries of self-knowledge, its refusal, its acceptance, its contradiction as Andrea so beautifully described in sharing her photo. Most significant, though, was participants’ expressed belief that despite their expertise, qualification, knowledge, work, and relationships with students, “Sometimes people may not have high expectations for you to succeed...that because of being Hispanic you are always looked at as someone who is not going to make a difference, that you are just here for the ride.” Thus, there was an underlying feeling that Latinx teachers were constructed as inferior, less than, atypical, and somehow trespassing teacher and school spaces (“here just for the ride”). Andrea’s internalized tension of such a feeling and its relation to self-
knowledge and subject formation was telling; she all at once accepted it (“so I work hard to prove to myself and others”), rejected it (“I refuse to be one of those [who is limited and fearful], and used it to push her forward (“I can truly make bigger things happen”). In sum, I contend that Andrea’s life motto, “like a wildflower you should allow yourself to grow in places that people never thought you would” is a telling analogy for how Latinx teachers understand themselves in South Carolina.

As Andrea’s opening quotation attests, participants felt compelled to prove themselves as (competent, “difference making”) teachers over and over again. Such self-knowledge not only intersected with the productive normalized expectations of teaching in general, but also with a belief that Latinx in the South were not normally teachers. That is, the racialization of Latinx in Southern spaces which assigned certain jobs (largely agricultural, service, and manufacturing), traits (monolingual Spanish, “uneducated), and expectations (“criminality,” “illegality”) onto their bodies contrasted with the racialization (i.e. Whiteness) of teachers and schools spaces. (Castagno, 2014; Daniels & Varghese, 2019; Howard, 2018; Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Urrieta Jr., 2010; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). As Serena said during her interview, “people are always surprised when I tell them I am a teacher because of the lack of Hispanic teachers in my area” (October, 2019, emphasis mine). Given the flattened and collapsed subject positions of both Latinx and teachers, participants struggled to reconcile themselves as Latinx and as a teacher. For example, Susana shared a photo (Figure 5.6) in which she represented her split selves.

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141 I cover the racialization of Latinx in the U.S. South, and corresponding literature, at length in Chapter Two.
In explaining her decision to place her teacher I.D. and teaching position (special education) apart from her driver’s license and Boricua/Puerto Rican illustration Susana stated, “I can’t be both...I feel like in South Carolina to be Latina, a woman of color, and to be a teacher are, like, mutually exclusive” (Photovoice interview, October, 2019).

Similarly, Pilar repeatedly used the word “atypical” to describe herself (as a teacher):

So being Hispanic [in South Carolina] though obviously (participant emphasis) comes with those like cultural expectations and societal norms that are okay for you and not okay for you [to do certain things]. It is very hard to be like, atypical in that society when you are already atypical to a very White-loving society.

There’s always going to be that atypical, but it’s very hard to already have something that stands out in a very predominantly conservative White society like being Hispanic or speaking Spanish and then being atypical in that own regard. So, it’s hard not to stand out [as a teacher], but to be singled-out it’s very hard for you know when people are like “raise your hand if anyone is able to do this?” I’m not even raising my hand. Like taking it [speaking Spanish] off my resume...I literally wish I would have taken it off my resume earlier. (Interview, October, 2019, emphasis mine)

Consistent with her explanation of taking bilingualism off her resumé from earlier in the chapter, Pilar wrestled with the effects of (self/knowledge about) Latinx atypicalness. Rather than opening opportunities, she believed a Latinx bilingual subjectivity constricted and constructed her employment prospects. Thus, although she eventually
found purpose and comfort in her Latinx bilingualism with her Latinx students, her job
hunt evidenced being a Spanish speaker was inconsistent with becoming a general
education instructor, as such positions were normed for monolingual, White typically
female individuals.

Amara detailed the additional intersection of being Afro-Latina in places (South
Carolina/South) and spaces (school, student and coworker relations) that have historically
racialized individuals through a Black/White binary. Recall from Chapter Four, Amara
felt it important to emphasize her Afro-Latinidad in order to disrupt essentializing views
of Latinx in the South, “because the biggest thing for kids in South Carolina is when you
say you’re mixed, they just assume Black and White and that’s the only possible mixing
that could ever take place.” However, at the same time she described herself as a unicorn
due to the fact few teachers shared her background. She equated being an Afro-Latina
teacher in South Carolina to being a unicorn:

but like I’m the only person in my whole building no matter where I go, who’s
mixed, who’s mixed how I’m mixed, and I said, at some point I get tired of
answering the same questions, right? Like everyone assumes I’m Puerto Rican
because of, like, a particular way they think, you know, Hispanic people should
look. And, um, and then a lot of times, unless my sister opens her mouth, no one
believes she’s Mexican because she’s so white...So like, I feel like a lot of the
times, like I’m a unicorn...

Um, and I think that’s a really big part of me being able to like keep going [in
teaching] is having friends who don’t, like I said, they don’t have to get my
personal experience because I think I am very much a unicorn when it comes to
backgrounds, um, and ethnicities and all that fun stuff, but that definitely, I need
to be around other women of color, it’s just like I see you and even if we are
people and people not necessarily alike I know you are facing similar stuff.
(Photovoice interview, December, 2019)

Amara explained that both her and her sister shattered popular perceptions of how

“Well Hispanic people look,” what fellow participant Susana referenced as a “[Southern]
schematic for thinking about Hispanics” (Interview, August, 2019). Acknowledging the
physic exhaustion of occupying such a subject position (“get tired of answering the same questions,” also recall her lack of “patience” for “cultural ambassadorship” with adults [Chapter Four, p. 238]), Amara found support from other teachers/women of color. Thus, even as Amara reasoned that other teachers of color may not be racialized exactly like herself; they were still Othered, outside the White norm of a teaching subjectivity.

In fact, in lieu of supportive co-ethnic teachers (Flores, 2017a), most participants found that Black teachers were more sympathetic and supportive than their White colleagues. As Serena told me, a Black colleague pulled her aside and whispered in her ear, “we need more of you here, us minorities have to support each other” (Initial meeting, August, 2019). Likewise, Andrea, Maria, and Victoria shared that their Black teachers were the only ones that made a point of checking in with them, saying hello, and sharing interest in the lives outside school. This is unsurprising given the general isolation from and hostile relations with White colleagues I outline in Chapter Four.

Thus, I found little evidence that matched López-Sanders (2011) assertion that middle class Latinx in South Carolina are incorporating into the White “mainstream.” Rather, Latinx in South Carolina, at least in their jobs and spaces as educators thought themselves outside such a mainstream White teacher construct and their Latinx subjectivity was a much more iterative, contingent, and relational process than such essentializing and taken-for granted assumptions. To this point, Andrea compared a screenshot of a news article about a U.S. citizen being detained by the Border Patrol to her life as a racialized teacher, “it seems like you regress instead of progress, and it makes me angry...it is racism, it is racial profiling and it is something I deal with on a daily basis. And so, it makes me mad” (Photovoice interview, August, 2019).
Conclusion

In the opening epigraph of this chapter Foucault (2017) asks, “What mark, which is to say as well, what wound or what opening, what constraint or what liberation is produced on the subject by acknowledgment of the fact that there is a truth to be told about him, a truth to be sought, or a truth told, a truth imposed?” (p. 11). Thus, in this chapter I presented a narrative cartography using participant words, pictures, and (eco)maps to outline the connecting, divergent, and zig-zagging “truths” told by, about, even with, Latinx teachers in South Carolina. I shared the way my participants, Latinx K-12 educators in South Carolina, affirmed, rejected, disrupted, and co-produced their “self-image, [their] sense of self and others, and [the] possibilities of existence” (De Lauretis, 1986, p. 5) in relation to these “marks,” these truths, knowledges, and discourses they were subject(ed) to. For in sketching how K-12 Latinx teacher subjectivity was constructed, maintained, legitimized, and resisted (in South Carolina), it is possible to (re)fuse, (re)negotiate, (re)make, and (re)imagine different, more just, more expansive and multiplicitous sets of relations (to our/selves) in the many spaces of El Sur Latinx. Hence, this chapter worked in concert with Chapter Four to more closely (re/un)blur the (bounded) subject positions, the “wounds or openings,” of Latinx teachers that emerged through, and were embedded with/in, certain topologies, topographies, and regimes of truth (i.e. particular [hostile] spaces, rationalities, and discourses) circulating through South Carolina. I present the following diagram visual to illustrate the overlapping, productive, multiplicitous, and variant subjectivities of Latinx teachers in South Carolina.
Figure 5.7. “Map” of (some) Latinx teacher subject positions in South Carolina

The “map” (Figure 5.7) provides just a glimpse, an entry point or threshold (among many), into the contested, relationally dispersed, and positively produced subject positions that emerged through my intra-actions with participants. To indicate, and pose potential cracks—“wounds and openings…constraints and liberations” (Foucault, 2017, p. 11)—with/in, the connection(s) between subjectification and subjection, how teachers contingently reproduced and also reconfigured knowledge about themselves, I use a variety of two-way arrows. Importantly, the length and shape of individual arrows are not meant to correspond to any particular connection (relation of self) as they are fluid, contingent, and locally negotiated.
The blue arrows show that these connections are neither free from nor external to, but rather co-constitutive of knowledge/power discourse about Latinx (teachers) used, internalized, refused and/or hailed by/within different sets of relations. For example, Bri’s subjectivity, and (self) knowledge, as Maestra was hailed, internalized, and used differently as she moved between different sets of relations and spaces (her and district, her and Latinx community, Latinx community and district). Similarly, a cultural ambassador subjectivity was used by district and schools to legitimize normative and prescriptive notions of neoliberal multiculturalism, while participants like Amara and Belinda also found it a source of critical resistance and reconfiguration with their students. Moreover, circulating discourse about, and subject positions available to, Latinx teachers did not sustain their effectiveness via prohibition, but rather by inciting aptitudes, pleasures, and placing individuals where they might be most “useful” (Foucault, 1980, 2007b, p. 159). For instance, the call to be a translator and interpreter rested not on exclusion or threat, but rather on the production of obligation for schools, districts, and the Latinx community and a desire to help.

The map also contains arrows on the outer edges showing that multiplicitious relations and subject positions continuously intra-act with each other in an immanent (discursive) system to build and blur the boundaries of Latinx subjectivity in South Carolina. In this way, the “map” is always in flux as different intra-actions—subjectivities, discourses, spaces/locations, relations—come together, break apart, and negotiate meeting points to continuously (re)create Latinx teachers in ways that often felt rather bounded, racialized, and intractable.
Finally, although this map “centers” South Carolina it presents a possible tool to similarly sketch the boundaries, to glimpse the wounds and opportunities, and to posit potential entry points/thresholds of the subjectivities, the relations, the spaces of (Latinx) teachers in different locations, regions, or places. In sum, there is no “core,” “timeless,” or “inherent” Latinx Southern teacher to discover or unearth, but rather continuous processes of remaking the self/ves with/in the multiplicitous sets of relations that con-constitute each other. Hence, to make “subjectivity... a key site of political struggle (Ball, 2016, p. 1131),” is to make our relations, our spaces, the sites of political struggle.
CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Similar to the opening chapter, I start the concluding chapter by returning to the story of cousins Serena and Sandra who have lived their entire lives in a small South Carolina town. During our interview, Sandra shared a story during her recent campaign for city council:

So, I was canvassing, you know knocking on doors, over by the lake, like, in the mostly White part of town. At one house, an older couple opened the door, and they were friendly, ya know we were chatting and stuff. So, they told me they chose to retire here from up North, and I was like, “it’s so great to have you here.” I told them some of my plans, especially about parks, and transportation and just making the community better. Then they asked me about Hispanics, and I was like, “well I will represent them like everybody else, ya know, that is part of this community.” So then they were like, “why don’t you all go back to where you are from?” I was so upset, I was like, “I’m from here. This is my community. I have been working to make this better for everyone for years.” I was like you are the ones not from, who are not from here. (Interview, October, 2019)

Despite a handful of negative incidents like the one above, Sandra’s community overwhelmingly voted her into city council office in November, 2019. As one of the first Latinx elected officials in South Carolina’s history, local newspapers included quotes from town leaders calling the accomplishment “historic,” “exciting,” “unifying,” and the “sign of big change.” Usually an “informal” event, the swearing-in ceremony had to be moved to a bigger venue, the local performing arts venue, to accommodate a large crowd,

142 I do not include the newspaper citations as a way to prevent explicit reference to the participant.
mostly Sandra’s students, family, and church members, who wanted to witness, and support, Sandra’s installation as a city council member.

While not serving her town as a city council member, Sandra’s cousin Serena was remaking her community, quite literally, in her role as the area’s first Latinx art teacher. For example, she shared the following two pictures (Figures 6.1, 6.2) showing her students painting a community park mural.

![Figure 6.1. Participant photo (Serena, Photovoice interview, January, 2020).](image1)

![Figure 6.2. Participant photo (Serena, Photovoice interview, January, 2020).](image2)
In reference to the pictures, Serena explained that she chose the photographs because they communicated the importance of improving your community, something she did through teaching art at her school, creating public projects, hosting art workshops, and showing young people how they can collaborate to have impact. Serena also selected a picture (Figure 6.3) that spoke to the interaction and intertwining of cultures, a process she believed was happening in South Carolina as “people are [slowly] becoming more welcoming of others.”

![Figure 6.3. Participant photo (Serena, Photovoice interview, January, 2020).](image)

She explained that after a lesson on the Navajo art of weaving rugs and blankets a “talented” seventh grader created the above weaving. She said, “I chose this image because it reminds me of the colors and patterns most commonly seen in Mexican textiles. This artwork is an example of how cultures are similar and can influence one another” (Photovoice interview, January, 2020). The analogy was clear, Serena wove
herself, her Mexican culture, into the spaces of her school, her classroom, her community. In sum, Serena and Sandra have braided themselves not just into the places of South Carolina, but have worked to recreate the many spaces of El Sur Latinx.

Thus, I start this final chapter with two striking examples of how Latinx educators are both made in, and remaking, El Sur Latinx. Sandra’s vignette complicates understandings of migration and belonging, blurring the binary between newcomers and Southern residents. Rather than the usual story, often repeated in academic literature, that paints Latinx as a suddenly arriving group, one that is a monolith of minimally schooled, newly arrived, low wage earners, it was the White retirees as nascent outsiders. Sandra and Serena’s family were the established residents in this tale even as the retired couple recycled negative and racialized discourse, common in many parts of the South, about Latinx trespassing, and illegally accessing, (White) space (Guerrero, 2017; Weise, 2015). As such, even as Sandra and Serena worked tirelessly to create their community, transform their schools, and serve their students, they continued to be subjected to knowledge that writes them as perpetually outside of, forever illegally visiting or just arriving to, Southern spaces.

Hence, as I have shown in this dissertation, it is vital to reject notions that Latinx teachers are coming into a static, timeless South, but rather (re)creating and (re)negotiating a dynamic and emergent set of multiplicitous relations, the many spaces of El Sur Latinx, that already contain the potential for something different. The many

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143 Guerrero (2017) outlines a number of similar incidents where (White) newcomers to Arkansas complained that established Latinx residents were “taking over” and “changing” public spaces like parks (p. 165). Guerrero named this process of policing community (spatial) borders by who belonged (White) and who didn’t (Latinx) as acts of spatial (il)legality.
spaces of El Sur Latinx are more than a container for a singular story of temporality, a march toward predestined being; instead the spaces and subjectivities of El Sur Latinx are the product, the becoming, of countless relations, intra-actions, and meeting points (Massey 1998a, b). To counter the propensity to linearity, the attractiveness of temporal determinism, and the allure of predictable sequence, I have used an explicitly spatial approach to complicate, and challenge, the constellation of relations producing Latinx teachers and educators in El Sur Latinx. Rather than “placing” the meeting point of different relations (i.e. Latinx teachers/students in “Southern” classrooms) in a predetermined historical sequence (“backward,” “catching up”), spatiality’s insistence on a multiplicity of relations opened the potential of previous unimagined trajectories, different provocations, unheard stories, radical (refusals of) subjectivities, and more just ways of becoming Latinx teachers (Massey, 1998a,b).

Moreover, I focused Latinx teachers, in their particularly visible and public role in El Sur Latinx, as simultaneous products of, and interventions in/against, spatial entanglements and processes that often reproduce limiting, racialized, and marginalized subject positions for Latinx. Therefore, this dissertation has been an extended meditation on the “temporal coexistence of distinct narratives,” (Massey, 1998a, p. 14) the tensions, possibilities, and challenges inherent in the acceptance and agonism (often both; Ball, 2016; Foucault, 1982) of interweaving and interlocking webs of relations that produce (and conduct the conduct of; Foucault, 2007c) Latinx teachers through/with/in space. This attention to nuance, this examination into the relations of power that underlie and reveal the different possibilities of spatial orderings and arrangements of Latinx teachers
in El Sur Latinx is a significant contribution, one I review, and outline the implications of, in this last chapter.

The organization of this final chapter is as follows. First, I briefly review arguments and insights from the previous chapters before presenting a visual “map” that brings together findings from Chapters Four and Five to outline how Latinx teachers are made in, and remaking, El Sur Latinx. Then, I sketch a series of implications, for Latinx scholarship (in the South), for research on/with Latinx teachers and teacher representation, for teachers, schools and districts in El Sur Latinx, and for theory and method that result from this dissertation. Next, I discuss limitations and potential for future research and end with concluding thoughts.

**Review and Summary of Findings**

As I stated in Chapter One, my motivation for this investigation into Latinx teachers in the South stemmed from my own experiences trying to make sense of what it meant to be(come) a Chicano teacher in the spaces and places of urban California, where I began my middle school teaching career, as opposed to the spaces and places of South Carolina, where I ended my middle school teaching career. Lacking a nuanced personal engagement with Latinx in the South, it was easy for me to initially conceptualize, and even regurgitate, an understanding of Latinx in the South, advanced through the burgeoning academic literature, as a solely temporal, novel, and sudden phenomenon. Yet, as I met more people like Serena and Sandra, and entangled myself with the Latinx community of South Carolina, I saw a much more diverse and emergent picture come into focus. The narrative of Latinx in the South as a uniform tale of newly arrived (and undocumented), minimally schooled, low wage earners, was but one of many narratives
weaving through and together EL Sur Latinx. Rather than viewing South Carolina as on page one waiting to catch up with its classmates in a previously written story about Latinx settlement and growth, I found a “a contested, fluid, dynamic space” (Delerme & Passidomo, 2017, para. 2), sets of power-filled relations that produced both provocations of potential and different ways of entrenching inequity. In sum, I came to see Latinx as more than a “new” and fleeting development, but rather as the people, places, spaces, stories, and intra-actions of South Carolina itself.

Thus, after giving an overview of the text and research project, the remainder of Chapter One provided a contextual overview of Latinx in both the U.S. South and South Carolina. Such a contextual overview was important in introducing the intersecting yet dispersed relations and discourses that work to produce the categories and norms that define Latinx teachers in El Sur Latinx. Moreover, and elucidated in my theoretical framing (Chapter Three), when bringing a post-structural spatial lens to this broader context it becomes clear that Latinx in the U.S. South are but one of many Souths. Therefore, rather than thinking about Latinx teachers coming into a static place, the South, it is important to see Latinx as relationally (re)creating and (re)negotiating a multiplicity of racialized Southern spaces that outline the boundaries of who they might be(come), their subject positions.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed a broad body of literature on teachers of color that has, thus far, largely failed to interrogate these regional and spatial dynamics of Latinx teachers living and working in the U.S. South. A central argument I maintained throughout Chapter Two was that there rests a tension between the demonstrated need for, and efficacy of, Latinx teachers and the proclivity to, then, assign essential qualities
and attributes to all Latinx teachers. Unfortunately, as much scholarship leaves this
tension un(der)examined, there results a rather static Latinx teacher subject that
strengthens the bound(arie)s of neoliberal subjectivity (Ball, 2016; Kuntz, 2019),
(re)creates the Latinx teacher as an object of/for intervention, limits radical becomings,
and reinforces the status quo while also ignoring the particularities and possibilities of
contingency (Singh, 2018a,b, 2019).

My rearticulation of Latinx in the U.S. South (Chapter One) along with the need
to problematize narratives of teacher representation (Chapter Two) presented the
imperative for a theoretical frame and methodological approach that centered nuance,
contingency, and contradiction. As such, Chapter Three outlined my use of post-
structural, specifically Foucauldian, ideas of subjectivity, in conjunction with relational
views of space to detail how space and subjectivity are mutually constitutive.
Importantly, this “placed” a decentralized and dispersed Latinx teacher within their
spatialized relations rather than as a coherent whole unflinchingly following a linear and
temporal path of predetermination. The task, then, became to interrogate normative
Latinx teacher subject positions (emergent with/in/through certain spaces), and the self-
configurations/knowledges that followed (Singh, 2018a,b). This opened the
methodological door to engage inquiry as cartographic work, mapping and “locating” the
stratified and shifting processes, practices, and relations that produced the boundaries of
(Latinx teacher) subjectivities in the many spaces of El Sur Latinx.

In Chapter Four, I presented findings and analysis that mapped out three broad
relations to what many participants often described as hostile school spaces. First, I
outlined how participants described living and working with/in spatialized relations that
were exclusionary and hostile. That is, hostile space as relations that were explicitly prohibitive, racialized, and/or exploitative. Second, I sketched the blurry boundaries of normalized relations that resulted from efforts to (re)make, negotiate, and improve such hostile spaces for themselves as teachers, but often for their students. Such interventions were a pragmatic balancing act that acknowledged, and sometimes reified, constraints as well as the creative uses of power to better the spaces Latinx teachers traveled. In such spaces, Latinx teachers simultaneously and contradictorily navigated practices of exclusion and inclusion. Third, I mapped a set of instances when teachers refused normative spatial practices and purposely sought to create hostile spaces. In such instances, the teachers saw hostile space as a strategy to refuse and disrupt unjust relations, insisting on the potential of different provocations, counter-conduct(ion)s, and uncharted trajectories. In sum, in Chapter Four I argued that Latinx teachers, even though naming their spaces as hostile, expressed concurrent in/exclusion, detailing multiplicity rather than dichotomy. The spaces Latinx teachers make and are made in, the many spaces of El Sur Latinx, are never closed off, there is always potential of relations which are to be made, un-made, and refused.

Chapter Five worked in concert with Chapter Four to more closely (re/un)blur the (bounded) subject positions of Latinx teachers that emerged through, and were embedded with/in, certain topologies, topographies, and regimes of truth (i.e. particular [hostile] spaces, rationalities, and discourses circulating through South Carolina). I presented findings and analysis that mapped out the contested, relationally dispersed, and positively produced subject positions that emerged through my intra-actions with participants. Although I outlined a number of subject positions, such as “professional,” “international
teacher,” “Maestra,” “cultural ambassador,” “role model,” and “unicorn” that Latinx teachers (co)constructed, (co)maintained, (co)legitimized, and (co)resisted, most important was how such subjectivities were fluid, contingent, and locally negotiated. Latinx teacher subjectivities were neither free from nor external to, but rather co-constitutive of knowledge/power discourses about Latinx (teachers) that were used, internalized, refused and/or hailed by/within different sets of relations. I argued that Latinx teachers reproduced and also reconfigured knowledge about themselves, thus posing potential cracks (“wounds or opportunities;” Foucault, 2017, p. 11) in the connection(s) between their subjectification and subjection. Data and analysis showed that there was no “core,” “timeless,” or “inherent” Latinx Southern teacher to discover or unearth. Instead Latinx teacher subjectivity is a continuous processes of remaking the self/ves with/in multiplicitous, unequal, racialized and power-filled spaces. In sum, I contend that Andrea’s (a participant) life motto, “like a wildflower you should allow yourself to grow in places that people never thought you would”144 is a telling analogy for how Latinx teachers understand themselves, and might understand themselves differently, in El Sur Latinx.

Finally, I present a visual “map” that brings together findings and analysis from Chapters Four and Five to outline how Latinx teachers are made in, and remaking, El Sur Latinx. This map combines the overlapping, intra-active, and reciprocal sets of relations and spaces that Latinx in South Carolina create and are created in (Chapter Four; “outer” ring) with the various subject positions that emerged from participant interviews,

144 Andrea also used the expression in Spanish, “Como las flores silvestres, debes permitirte crecer en todos los lugares donde la gente pensó que nunca lo harías.”
photovoice, and (eco)maps (Chapter Five; “inner” ring). The map shows how spaces were co-constitutive of the subjectivities Latinx teachers used, internationalized, refused, and were hailed by. The map demonstrates the multiplicitous and interdependent flows and forces that operate/d with, upon, and in resistance to participants. Such relations were not free from structured and unequal exercises of power, therefore the differently shaped and configured two-way arrows represent such differential power relationships.

Importantly, the length and shape of individual arrows are not meant to correspond to any particular relation(s) as such are fluid, contingent, and locally negotiated. Similarly, although I distinguish an “inner ring” (subjectivities) and an “outer ring” (spatial relations), I do so for visual clarity, rather than any insinuation of hierarchy. The “rings” could easily be switched or even arranged in a different manner; what is important are the intra-actions, the meeting points, the co-creations of space and subjectivity.

Figure 6.4. A “map” of how Latinx teachers are made in, and remaking, El Sur Latinx.
The key understanding is that particular spaces (relations/to oneself) produce certain subjectivities and, in turn, certain subjectivities produce particular spaces (relations/to oneself). For spaces, spatial practices, spatial knowledges, spatial organizations, and spatial distributions positively steer, normalize, and conduct certain conducts; they “govern, in this sense, to structure the possible field of actions of others” (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). At the same time, as space is the product of multiple interrelations (Massey, 1998a,b, 2009), there lies relationships of power, “a whole field of responses [agonisms, refusals, resistances], reactions, results, and possible inventions [that] may open up” (Foucault, 1982, p. 789). Thus, in mapping the shifting, contingent, and fluid subjectivities and spaces of Latinx teachers in South Carolina I found a multiplicity of centers, a variety of entry points, to challenge those practices that marginalize and exploit as well as highlighting the ingenuity and creativity of teachers’ own solutions to establish other spaces, other relations, other lines of flight to become differently, and to make possible the previously unthought. Such provocations to difference—acts of refusal and agonism, ingenuity, and creative reimaginings—are material interventions that work to disrupt the production of truth (about Latinx teachers) more than change individual people’s consciousnesses (Foucault, 1980, p. 133).

**Implications**

**Implications: El Sur Latinx**

As stated above, I advance, and argue for, a rearticulation of Latinx in the U.S. South that extends beyond, and entangles with, a hegemonic frame of “newness.” I contend that a continual positioning of Latinx as perpetual newcomers, sudden arrivals, and novel inhabitants furthers a racial project constructing Latinx as (forever) a foreign
Other while also masking certain Latinx contributions, like their role as educators, to the (re)making of the U.S. South as a whole. Therefore, I propose the term El Sur Latinx to engage not only the consequences of rapid population shifts, but also the potential of the many spaces Latinx in the South (re)make and are made in.

This study, and the concept El Sur Latinx, challenges ephemeral discussion about “a diverse Latino population” (Odem & Browne, 2014, p. 51) to examine a “sizable [and growing] middle and upper-middle class component [like teachers and educators]” (Rodriguez, 2012, p. 34) that empirical research has largely failed to critically investigate and explore its underlying complexities. To this end, I found that the class position, broadly professional and/or middle class, of Latinx teachers in South Carolina did little to shield them from racialized subjectivities, exclusionary relations, and deleterious discourse. In fact, some teachers explained the places and spaces of their schools were more hostile than their relations “outside.” As Serena succinctly explained in Chapter Four (p. 216), “I thought being educated, a professional, it wouldn’t be like that.”

Moreover, certain knowledges about, and subject positions assigned to, Latinx teachers productively hailed exploitative working conditions and expectations, what some participants described as “double working myself…it’s like double work, no pay” (Sandra, Chapter Four, p. 262). An additional entanglement to this picture incorporates the subject position of international teachers who occupy a liminal legal and class status, which offers few protections against marginalizing relations and also functions to write a sense of inferiority, if not illegality, to all Latinx teachers (see newspaper headline, Chapter Five, p. 290).
It is important to note that within my conceptualization of, and argument for, El Sur Latinx it is still possible, and necessary, to engage temporality—new(er) relations, firsts (Serena and Sandra), and the real numerical explosion of Latinx. Yet, I explicitly focused spatial production, difference, and relations as a way to hold “newness” in tension, making space for a multiplicity of narratives, trajectories, histories, and, crucially, futures. Such relationally spatial frames are significant for studies about El Sur Latinx because they center the potentialities of an open system, rather than the “claustrophobia [and injustices] of the closed system” (Massey, 1998b, p. 38); spatial analysis locates entry points and thresholds towards relations that are actually “new,” meeting points of possibility rather than prescription, and intra-actions beyond inequity. As Massey (1998b) argues:

> It [space] *is* the sphere of the potential juxtaposition of different narratives, of the potential forging of new relations, spatiality is also a source of the production of new trajectories, new stories. It is a source of the productions of new spaces, new identities, new relations, and differences. (p. 38, emphasis original)

**Latinx Education in El Sur Latinx**

Stacy, Hamann, and Murillo Jr. (2015) ask researchers and practitioners to expand the conversation (about “new Latinx communities”) to generate new ideas and create emergent spaces of inquiry. Specifically, they ask us to think of “possible dialogic ‘next turns.’ Which voices have been included? Excluded? Who still needs to respond?” (p. 345). As there has been a serious, and striking, dearth of research that focuses Latinx teachers in El Sur Latinx (Colomer, 2014, 2018), this research presents both a call, and path, to critically listen to, learn from, and problematize productions of, Latinx teachers in the U.S. South. Critical research must challenge normalizing discourse and knowledge about who/what Latinx teachers are hailed to be, *where*. While I echo a general belief,
supported by the literature, that increasing the number of Latinx teachers in the South will lead to better, more just outcomes for schools and students, it is necessary to continually question the explanatory and limiting mechanisms for such thinking that often implicitly rests on essentialized practices, identities, and constructions of Latinx teachers. The danger being that a permanent, stable Latinx teacher subject is used (as a vehicle of power) to close off potentialities and different ways of becoming, reinforcing (even reinventing if necessary) the power/knowledge processes that individuals are subject(ed) to in maintenance of unequal relations. In short, it is necessary to problematize the assumption that Latinx (or any other teacher of color) possesses inherent qualities that transcend their unjust social-spatial relations and that make them solely responsible for disrupting (educational) systems of injustice. I posit it is (past) time for scholarship to investigate the opportunities and challenges, the promises and pitfalls of Latinx teachers in the U.S. South that are positioned to take on, negotiate, and refuse spaces and subjectivities that continually marginalize students and communities of color broadly, and Latinx specifically.

Additionally, and similar to scholarship on Latinx in the South generally, this study holds that researchers must disrupt overarching frames of temporality that uphold the idea that Latinx in Southern school spaces are new, sudden, fleeting, or strange. For too long “newness” has been used as an excuse for school and district apathy so that they can continue to cover their unwillingness to devote resources, energy, and space to Latinx under the veil of perpetual surprise and shock (Stacy, Hamann, & Murillo Jr., 2015). Simply, it is inexcusable that Southern schools persist in meeting increased numbers of Latinx students with an improvised and ad-hoc educational response (Beck & Allexsaht-

Yet, research about Latinx education in the U.S. South unintentionally reifies a narrow perspective on newness by focusing largely on English Language Learning, immigrant students, and institutional improvisation (Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo Jr., 2015) through overwhelmingly temporal frameworks. Thus, academic research, much like this study, must expand the scope of investigation to include the multiplicitous ways Latinx have, are, and will continue to (re)make, and be made in, the educational landscape(s) of the U.S. South.

**Implications: Latinx Teachers and Teacher Representation**

While I outlined the implications of this study for nuancing study of Latinx in the South, it is of equal importance to add the complexities of Southern (micro)spaces to the literature about Latinx teachers. Although there is a growing body of academic literature about Latinx educators, such work has typically focused on the experiences of Mexican-American/Chicanx educators in traditional Latinx areas like California, the Western United States, and Texas (Arce, 2004; Bybee, 2015; Clark & Flores, 2001; Flores, 2011, 2015, 2017a; Galindo, 1996; Griffin, 2018; Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Ocasio, 2014; Ochoa 2007; Rios, 2008; Turner et al., 2017; Urrieta, Jr., 2007, 2010). As a result, our understanding of the experiences, identities, and, in my case, subject positions (and on-going re/subjugation; Foucault, 1980, p. 97) of Latinx educators has, too often, been constrained to large urban areas with established, or at least more recognized, histories of Latinx (mostly Mexican) communities (Arce, 2004; Bybee, 2015; Flores, 2011, 2017a;
As such, this research holds significant implications for thinking about who/what/where/for whom Latinx educators are desired to be, hailed into being, and tasked with becoming.

As current literature concentrates a significant but narrow geographic picture of Latinx teachers there is the propensity to minimize multiplicity while collapsing and essentializing the rich social-spatial spectrum of Latinx educators. In short, scholarship works to create and reinforce a rather static understanding of an “ideal” Latinx teacher (Singh 2018b, p. 291), one presented as a homogenized representation of inherent cultural traits (Singh, 2018a,b, 2019). Such a discursive creation ignores the notion that the “self becomes through spaces and processes that are fluid and shifting, relational and local, and embedded and embodied” (Guyotte, Flint, & Latopolski, 2019, p. 2). For example, while Flores’ (2017a) speaks to the importance of Latina teachers as cultural guardians for Latinx youth in California, Latinx teachers in South Carolina were produced to be cultural ambassadors. Such ambassadorship rested within institutional discourse, a positioning of palatable multiculturalism for White colleagues and students and appropriate conduct for Latinx students that normed respectability practices, meritocracy, individual racism, and apolitical instruction. Thus, cultural ambassadorship fell with/in a grid of “acceptable” knowledge and practice, different than that of Flores’ (2017a) teachers, that sought to (re)produce and legitimate neoliberal governmentalities of multiculturalism and cosmetic diversity that “too easily stand in for substantive change, with a focus on feel-good differences like food, language, and dress, not on systemic disadvantages associated with employment, education, or housing” (Benjamin, 2019, pp. 19-20; Flores, 2019a; Melamed, 2006). While some Latinx teachers
in South Carolina found ways to refuse, reconfigure, and repurpose a normative and prescriptive cultural ambassador subject position to enact critical resistance for themselves and students, they did so within a much different set of relations, spaces, than Flores (2017a) described.

This study also speaks to the need to critically examine the multiplicitous sets of relations across and within regional scales. The teachers in my study carried with them, and forged, a range of geographies that (re)shaped their subject positions. To be more specific, Latinx teachers’ subjectivities were a result of extensive yet specific, and fluid, entanglements of (micro and macro, spatial and temporal, productive and restrictive) material-discursive relations. Sure, my participants lived in a place, South Carolina, that normalized deleterious, racist, and restrictive discourse about/against Latinx at the state level/scale (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017), but participants also traversed and co-constructed a myriad of (micro)spaces, (schools, colleagues, students, administration, subject material, pedagogy, curriculum, architecture, Latinx community, etc.; see Chapter Four, Figure 4.16 and this chapter, Figure 6.4) that reinforced, complicated, contradicted, and/or resisted this negative discourse. In this regard, it is telling that many participants communicated that micro intra-actions and relations with colleagues, administrators, and curriculum/subject matter produced spaces with/in schools that felt more hostile and exclusionary than other spaces (sets of relations) “outside” of school. Thinking about the productive capabilities, rather than “negative” prohibitions (Foucault, 1980, 1990, 2007c) of such spatial exclusion, for example, introduces new sets of spatial questions like, “What are the effects of particular spatial relations on self-knowledge (of Latinx teachers)?,” “What are the effects of the construction of certain expectations (for Latinx teachers)?”
teachers)?,” and “What are the particular values placed (on Latinx teachers) that are produced by the (spatial) practices of colleagues, administrations, parents, students, classes, etc.?” (Jackson, 2013).

Thus, while it is imperative that scholars pay greater attention to Latinx teachers in the South, it is just as vital to critically examine the impact of different, intersecting, overlapping, contradictory, and multiplicitous sets of relations, spaces, that Latinx teachers make and are made in. This study suggests, then, that scholarship on teacher representation generally would benefit from (relational/post-structural) spatial approaches, frames, inquiries, and theorizations. Moreover, a major implication of this research holds that the enduring problem of teacher representation in our nation’s schools should be recast as an explicitly spatial problem. What are the spatial organizations, arrangements, distributions, and relations that (do not) facilitate “spaces of possibility” (Rodriguez, 2013) for Latinx teachers? Or as Jackson asks (2013), “What might happen if educational reformers focused on creating becoming-spaces for power relations to produce new possibilities [for Latinx teachers]?” (p. 845).

This relative lack of academic attention to the (social)spatial complexities of/across Latinx teacher worlds has material consequences as recent policy and scholarly interest in remedying the teacher representation gap folds back on metanarrative and decontextualized, ephemeral solutions. The tendency (through research, policy, practice, district hiring/teaching assignments, role model discourse, etc.) to continually create a coherent Latinx teacher subject traveling permanent, static spaces works to tie efforts aimed at recruitment and retention to such a singular construction. The risk holds that approaching teacher diversity and representation in this way “assumes a stable subject
[and space] whose practices are intrinsic to those stable identities, and practices [and spaces] that are without contradiction and can be fixed with a single solution (e.g., girls are not good at math, so let’s provide more vocational education for them)” (Jackson, 2013, p. 846, emphasis mine). Hence, the promise of relational/post-structural spatial thinking applied to teachers representation is that it challenges simplistic ideas and policy equations that hold “if we do this (have Spanish language teacher recruitment ads), we get this (career Latinx teachers),” while allowing researchers and policy makers to “shift the focus from one stable source of social problems to illuminate how they are embedded within spatial, layered, and pervasive relations and practices” (Jackson, 2013, p. 846).

Explicitly spatial conceptual and methodological frames, then, help researchers understand how relationality is (un)made and “sheds light on how people perceive, experience, and co-construct the [power-filled] places [and spaces] where education policies unfold” (Yoon, Gulson, & Lubienski, 2018, p. 4). In this way, “solutions” to increase teacher representation might move toward challenging and disrupting the underlying and spatialized webs of existing unequal power/knowledge relations that reproduce the problem as simply adding more Latinx teachers or giving them a “fair chance” might not actually change the underlying truth regimes which simultaneously hail Latinx presence, but preclude their potential.

**Implications: School, District, State Level (Policy)**

Soria Colomer (2019), who is one of the few academic researchers to write about Latinx teachers in the U.S. South, describes the work of such educators as that of a double bind. Colomer (2014, 2019) explains this double bind as a Latinx teacher’s commitment to their Latinx community through translation/interpretation, advocacy,
support, and social capital, while also being employed in a culturally subtractive context that simultaneously expects, but does not acknowledge, these efforts. This double bind also speaks to a tension I reference repeatedly throughout this study that while there is a need for more Latinx educators, the mere act of employing more Latinx teachers, within multiplicitous and heterogenous spaces/relations that perpetuate and value certain kinds of (White) conduct, may not be enough to enact transformative change. To this point, Colomer (2019) argues that “(re)imagining double binds call for inclusive schooling communities where Latinx teachers are not silenced...they cannot be expected to act as change agents on their own” (p. 278). While I agree with her overarching concern, this study carries implications for not only how Latinx teachers in South Carolina are silenced, but also how they are produced to speak, to desire, to act, to be a certain way; “how a human being turns himself into a [Latinx teacher] subject” (Foucault, 1982, p. 778). That is, how myriad webs of power(knowledge) circulating with/in/through school and district relations outline neoliberal and racialized boundaries of normative Latinx teacher subject positions and the self-knowledge and action that follows. Thus, rather than, and in addition to, silence, this study interrogates the processes by which Latinx teachers internalized, used, negotiated, and refused what they were hailed to be: a numerical proportion, a neoliberal representative and object of “diversity,” (e.g. cultural ambassador, international teacher; see also Singh, 2018a; Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Flores, 2019a); translator/interpreter (Spanish/ESOL teacher, elective teacher; see also Colomer, 2010, 2014; Griffin, 2018; Neil, 2018), racialized token (“Good for them,” “Wildflower;” see also Flores, 2011), and role model (“Maestra;” see also Singh, 2018b). Below, I
sketch some recommendations toward more expansive subject positions for Latinx teachers in South Carolina.

At the state level, South Carolina policy must be (re)examined with an eye toward changing/challenging normative expectations, knowledges, and discourses about Latinx teachers. To begin, the state can critically evaluate its use and construction of international teachers. International teachers should be valued as highly trained and experienced educators, rather than low(er) cost Spanish/ESOL teachers, interpreters, and translators. Practically, this means such hires should not be placed on contracts similar to first year teachers, restricted to teaching certain classes, and be properly compensated for additional workload. For example, if international teachers were hired to, or could negotiate toward, teaching Science, general education, music, or Social Studies in addition to Spanish classes there might be less a propensity to collapse all Latinx teachers as Spanish teachers. Further, if South Carolina placed international teachers on contracts like veteran teachers such policy might intersect with school/district/other micro spaces to facilitate different relations and knowledge constructions about international (and Latinx) teachers. In this way, Maria might take on more of a political role (at the SCforED rally for example) without fear of reprisal (p. 292), and Maria’s colleagues

145 Self and Dulaney (2018) report that at the start of the 2017 school year nearly a quarter of South Carolina’s approximately 500 international teachers came from a Latin American or Spanish speaking country. The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA; 2019) found the number of international teachers working in SC public schools rose to 1,018 in 2018-2019. Thus, if one assumes a similar distribution of international teachers from Latin American or Spanish speaking countries among new hires, the number of Latinx international teachers in South Carolina is growing quickly. However, I contend, as international, or former international, teachers occupy such a large and visible percentage of Latinx teachers in the state (at least 20%), international teacher becomes a category of knowledge for/toward all Latinx teachers.
might value her previous tenure and experiences from another country rather than telling her, “She is the one that doesn’t know” (p. 223). Such an expanded view of international teachers would also compel the state of South Carolina to provide more resources to the training, recruitment, and development of teacher positions (like Spanish and ESOL) that the state has leaned (rather exploitatively) on international teachers to fill (and maintain current spatial relations). One possible solution would be to open up professional licensure to DACA recipients who cannot currently receive a teaching credential in South Carolina.

Districts and schools play a tremendous role in structuring power relations that reinforce, but could alter, the production of an essentialized Latinx teacher subject closed off from multiplicitous, even transformative, becomings. Districts and schools should carefully think through the racialized and neoliberal demands and expectations they place upon Latinx teachers. As overt examples, I reference Alonso’s assignment to a Latinx school because he “would be good for them,” (p. 88) the block of Bri’s transfer to her “dream job” because her school “needed her [for Latinx students and families],” (p. 224) and multiple districts’ instances that Pilar teach Spanish (p. 280). Similarly, there were covert expectations that Latinx teachers act as bridges, role models, Maestras, and communicators (interpreters/translators) while sharing cultural, but not political, knowledge with colleagues and students in the form of celebrations, committees, and curriculum. While many participants found this work fulfilling and important, it prescribed certain conduct and knowledge of the self that often hailed Latinx teachers to be objects of diversity and vehicles of power toward a particular model of neoliberal multiculturalism/global citizenry. However, as I repeat consistently in this study, being a
person of color, or Latinx, does not ascribe an individual with innate correspondence to, cultural competencies for, or a critical outlook in service of, teaching for social and spatial justice (Popielarz & Monreal, 2019). Hence, all teachers, including Latinx, should have initial and continuing education that disrupts (and incorporates such criticality into “cultural” pedagogy/performance), rather than reinforces, discourses of truth centering White supremacy, colorblindness and individual understandings of racism, apolitical instruction, and assimilationist logic about respectability, bootstrapping, and meritocracy (House-Niamke & Sato, 2019; Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019). It holds, then, that teachers should be supported by leadership and administration, rather than admonished (like Belinda), when they call out, refuse, and disrupt racist school practices, relations, and spaces.

Schools and districts, too, must think deeply about how the spatial organization of their buildings, relationships, courses, schedules, and awards (to name but a few) create and discipline racialized “knowing locations.” In other words, how is it that individuals (Latinx teachers) become subjected to certain racialized knowledge (stabilized by institutional forces) in their assignment, production, or consumption of certain space(s) in a certain school, in a certain location of that school, or in teaching certain subjects in that school (Pitcher & Shahjahan, 2017)? Schools should not only interrogate the effects of (self)knowledge with explicit spatial segregation (location of classrooms; e.g. “feel alone in cave” (Victoria), “eat lunch by themselves for 20 years” (Rosa), or teach “in a closet” (Melissa)), but also the consequences for (self) knowledge when certain educators are called out of their classes to interpret, made ineligible for teacher of the year awards, labeled as “core/non-core” teachers, or assigned to schedules or positions different than
“regular” teachers. The key throughout is that such spatial practices and (self) knowledges/subjectivities, are not their effects in their negative deployment, their control on the results of its action, but rather on its development (Foucault, 2007a, p. 147)—how certain teachers naive knowledges and experiences are discredited, refused, ignored, or even called upon called upon.

**Implications: Individual Teachers**

![Figure 6.5. Participant photo, “Creativity takes courage” (Serena, photovoice interview, January, 2020).](image)

It was truly an honor to spend months traveling South Carolina interviewing, communicating with, listening to, and learning from Latinx educators. Although my approach was a critical one, it was amazing and humbling to consistently see the care, love, and resilience of so many educators that persisted through really tough situations and unequal systems to try and make a difference for all students. I say that because despite (or perhaps in spite of) the myriad (often invisible) webs of power relations that worked to produce their being, Latinx teachers in South Carolina found creative ways to use power toward (refusing) different configurations of their (and their students’) becoming. This study, in a small way, speaks to the agency and impact of Latinx teachers in South Carolina. Thus, even as I map implications of this research for individual
teachers toward multiplications and more just spaces of becoming, I also agree with Jackson (2013) when she states:

instead of offering external solutions to change the power relations [in South Carolina schools], I argue that those very solutions are [the creative actions] already embedded within and embodied by [Latinx teacher] practices…to understand how multiple strategies of change are already occurring, researchers can look to people’s practices to locate how their practices might be oppositional challenges, moments of conformity, or struggles to resist. The point is to figure out how to create more fluid, open conditions—or becoming-spaces—within which people can transform themselves. (pp. 845-846)

Through this research, I mapped the tensions inherent in Latinx teachers’ “oppositional challenges, moments of conformity, and struggles to resist [themselves],” and I offer insights into how such teachers can continue to (reflectivity, critically, and perhaps collectively) “attempt to wrest [their] self-formation from techniques of government” (Ball, 2016, p. 1135) and towards (becoming) something different for themselves and their students.

First, Latinx teachers must find ways to constantly interrogate the particular forms and uses of knowledge, the production of truth(s) (with/in their microspaces), about (Latinx) teachers that are used “to govern (themselves and others)” (Foucault, 1991a, p. 79). For the governing of self and others is most effective when “what we come to want for ourselves is what is wanted from us;” (Ball & Olmedo, 2013, p. 89) when teachers’ ways of thinking, desiring, and acting link with/in and co-constitute normalized rules and standards (Gordon, 1991; Popkewitz, 1998). In this sense, there is a reciprocal relationship in that becoming-spaces beget struggles for new subjectivities, and the struggle for new subjectivities beget the production of becoming spaces. I find the following quote from Singh’s (2018a) own post-structural questioning of Latinx teacher representation useful toward these ends:
this research calls on us to critically examine why [and where] our (Latinx) presence in schools is so desirable? We must ask what [spatial] discourses make our performances as Latin[x] educators [non]legible, and who [what and where] is lost excluded[/included], or disciplined when we do not resist these [normative] embodiments. (p. 42)

Such a reflection is particularly useful because recall from Foucault (2007b), echoed just above by Ball and Olmedo (2013), that power is applied most efficiently and insidiously when what is desired of each individual (say cultural ambassadorship, role modeling, translating/interpreting) is that which they come to desire of themselves; power is atomized, and continually exercised when/as it acts in accordance with individual aptitudes, desires, and senses of obligation. This does not mean that Latinx teachers must perpetually reject all the sources of their teach(er)ing pleasures, but rather that they are “ready,” and “on guard,” to assert the right to be(come) different when and where they see fit (Foucault, 1982). The case of role modeling is a worthwhile example. It is not that a role model subjectivity is inherently good or bad, necessary or unnecessary. Instead, I believe it is essential for teachers to engage the discourses that construct their understandings of self, and ultimately question if those “taken-for-granted,” identities serve our (Latinx) students and communities. Thus, to be a role model is much different than to intentionally and critically become (perhaps by refusal) a role model. Hence, developing what Webb (2009) calls a politics of subjectivity enables teachers to continually (re)identify the extent they are “[self]aware, cognizant, and conscious of the structures that mediate their micropolitical activity and the extent to which they are able to change them” (p. 48).

Further, such critical (self) reflection allows for Latinx teachers to see both the “wounds and openings…constraints and liberations” (Foucault, 2017, p. 11) of their subject positions so they might reappropriate knowledges about themselves, turning them
on their head so they “might be(come) dangerous” (Alonso, p. 304), “or be(come) a warrior” (Melissa, p. 301), or “threaten to pull the race card” (Belinda, p. 271). Such self-interrogation avoids fixity (of one’s self/ves) in pursuit of a continuous responsibility to practice, even care for themselves differently (Ball, 2016, p. 1141), holding on to the opportunities (to serve Latinx students) that come with their otherwise limiting prescriptions. Thus, an entry point of struggle, a site of agonism, refusal, and resistance is always already their subjectivity (Ball, 2016).

Another implication of this research, then, points to the hazards of defining (but also the potential of resisting) a core or coherent Latinx teacher subject that rests on discoverable, teachable, or objective traits and best practices. For as Webb (2009) writes, the arts of teaching, “are not the means by which one unearths his or her authenticity. Foucault’s notion of the [teacher] subjective is more malleable, more creative and aesthetic” (p. 128). Yet as Serena’s photo (Figure 6.5) attests, “creativity [of the self] takes courage;” it is not easy to perpetually interrogate, refuse, and reconstitute the Latinx teacher self/ves especially when such work, such conduct, is counter to their conduct(ion). Further, as outlined in Chapter Five, Latinx teachers are made “to feel lonely, isolated, and unaware of each other” (Webb, 2009, p. 136). Therefore, Latinx teachers in the South must find ways to “seek and connect,” (Webb, 2009, p. 136) to find lines of flight toward creatively refusing, remaking, and caring for themselves together. This is collective political work, a coordination of individual teacher movidas146 (of the self), a collaborative movement of meeting points toward creative resistance. I have previously envisioned such creativity as coordinated acts of rasquachismo (Monreal

146 “Moves.”
creative acts of resistance “that try to work with what is available, [in commitment] to creating something beautiful collectively, [acknowledging] that teachers and students are forever a work in progress” (Morales, Aviña, & Delgado Bernal, 2016, p. 72, emphasis mine). Whatever the strategy, a major implication of this work is that individual Latinx teachers should forge sets of relations, meeting points, with other (Latinx and sympathetic) teachers that seek to support creative difference. Such spaces are ready to be made, and as evidenced throughout this dissertation Latinx teachers, are, indeed space-makers.

**Implications: Theory and Method**

Daniels and Varghese (2019) argue that teacher education is increasingly marginalizing the relevance of teacher subjectivity in lieu of a search for a core set of behaviors, best practices, and attributes that define a “good teacher.” They further contend, as does Popkewitz (1998), that the scientific and objective construction of such a teacher is not natural, but an effect of power/knowledge discourses; discourses that underscore and entrench, “the position of Whiteness as an unquestioned and unexamined norm” (Daniels and Varghese, 2019, p. 5). As such, post-structural research the centers the power-laden, overlapping, fluid, and contingent processes that make teachers (know themselves) is imperative to disrupting subjectivities rooted in Whiteness and advancing the insurrection of subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 1980), different ways of becoming embedded in the experiences and knowledges of teachers of color. This study clarifies and extends this argument by offering a methodological path and introducing/interweaving a spatial dimension to challenge these harmful, and marginalizing, effects of the search for, and definition of, a-priori teacher subject rooted
in Whiteness. The insertion of an explicitly spatial frame to the problematization of teacher subjectivity is crucial in understanding how sets of relations and subjectivities are co-constitutive (Foucault, 1984, 2007a; Huxley 2007; Mills, 2007).

Correspondingly, the implications of this research suggest that the enduring problem of teacher representation in our nation’s schools would benefit by being additionally understood as an explicitly relationally spatial problem. For it is not only significant to think about the “the art of spatial distribution of individuals” (Foucault, 2007a, p. 146; Huxley, 2007) numerically and geographically, but also relationally; that is, as shifting sets of open yet unequally structured, multiplicitous, and changing web of relations that teachers traverse moment to moment (Massey, 1998a,b; Rodriguez, 2017b). A more spatial approach explores the spatial-temporal, micro-macro relations of power, the agents and agencies, which carry multiplicitous potentialities for this spatial moment to be(come) something different (Massey, 1998a,b, 2009). Such a framing makes it possible to see how the Latinx teacher subject is produced through, and refuses, spatially specific sets of relations that limit, complicate, and/or radically love/care for/support their becomings. This matters in thinking through recruitment and retention as well as acknowledging and highlighting the resourceful and resilient, contextually fluid and negotiated, ways Latinx teachers, and other teachers of color, creatively use power to recreate and remix the worlds they traverse, inhabit, and embody.

This study also advances methodological approaches in educational studies that use cartographic practices that align with critical and relational spatial theory. As Kuntz (2019) writes such a qualitative inquiry toward cartography examines our contemporary landscape and maps “our current state in the interest of discovering those blurry edges to
our known existence—spaces of potential that would otherwise remain just beyond recognition” (p. 2). Thus, my qualitative social-spatial methodology provides one path through the use of interviews, photovoice, and (eco)maps that researchers might use, adapt, and build upon that allows for the creation/collection and analysis of data on how people produce, affirm, reconstitute, refuse, and disrupt the social spatial relations that mark the boundaries of their subjectivities. My study, in line with Webb (2009) and Guyotte, Flint, and Latopolski (2019), affirms that participant interviews provide the necessary data to attend to complex and spatial participant positions that fluidly “shift, contradict, complicate, question, and jolt” (Guyotte, Flint, & Latopolski, 2019, p. 7). Further, the introduction of (eco)mapping into critical educational literature allows a way to engage conversations investigating the webs of relations a teacher (or other individual/entity) has with both larger socio-spatial systems in addition to the micro negotiations of power relations. Yet, as (eco)mapping was a relatively small portion of the data collection/creation process, one that admittedly came near the end of participant participation, there lies an opportunity to explore deeper methodological insights with this method in future research.

**Limitations and Future Research**

Ultimately, the purpose of this study was to gain insight into the nuances and complexities of Latinx K-12 educators working and living in South Carolina. I used qualitative social-spatial methodology to create a spatial narrative cartography, a mapping that (re/un)blurred the prescribed subject positions of Latinx teachers that arise through, and are embedded with/in, certain topologies, topographies, and regimes of truth (i.e. particular [hostile] spaces, rationalities, and discourses circulating through South
Carolina). The findings in this study emerged after analysis and interpretation of interviews, photos, and (eco)maps collected from a geographically (South Carolina) and numerically (n=25) bounded set of participants.

Given this structure, the study reflects the expressed thoughts, words, opinions, and experiences of a particular set of individuals and has several limitations and avenues for future research. First, as the inquiry is but a snapshot of Latinx teacher subjectivity within a highly contextualized, and rather geographically small, arena I cannot make extreme claims about all Latinx teachers in South Carolina specifically or the U.S. South generally. In agreement with Webb (2009) I seek generalization not across decontextualized settings, but to a set of ideas about processes with/in school relations and toward theoretical understandings of the co-constitutiveness of spaces and subjectivities. As Conchas (University of California, Irvine School of Education, 2019) reiterates, such research seeks “to really expand on certain theoretical propositions, how does qualitative [research] speak with and to theories... that [help us] make sense of the lived realities of people we study.” However, while I do neither portend, nor desire to make sweeping generalizations about Latinx teachers in the U.S. South, given the dearth of research in this area, this study does strive to initiate an important, and needed, conversation about Latinx teachers in the South. Comparative research with other geographic locations, regions, and (micro)locations is important work in driving this conversation forward and documenting the space-making of Latinx teachers in the South.

Second, although 20 of my 25 participants (roughly in line with the gender proportion of Latinx teachers in South Carolina, see Chapter Two) identified as female, the present study did not examine the intersecting nature of gender on the subjectivities of
Latinx teachers in South Carolina. Future work would be strengthened in explicitly speaking to the role of gender in such spaces because the field of education has, and continues to be, a gendered profession (Apple, 2013; Greene, 1997; McIntosh, 2013; Quantz, 1985; Vavrus, 2009; Willis, 2007).

Third, although I lived, worked (as a middle school teacher), and researched in South Carolina schools for nearly five years (and speak to the necessity of decentering some aspects of temporality for spatial engagement), the present study occurred over a relatively brief amount of time (August, 2019 - January, 2020). I believe the understanding I present here can be furthered nuanced by longer and deeper engagement into the observation of spatial processes. Thus, a next step for research would be ethnographic engagement with Latinx teachers to complicate and clarify participant words with participant practices and entanglements.

Finally, although I originally intended for this research study to be more participatory in nature, time and logistical constraints largely prevented such efforts. As I speak to the necessity of Latinx teacher connection, collaboration, and creativity in the implication section, (future) participatory research would be beneficial to those ends. Despite the limitations, and possibilities, outlined above, this study presents a crucial intervention into academic literature that has thus far limited entanglement with Latinx teachers in the U.S. South and, thus, it lays a foundation for future research.

**Final Thoughts**

*So, it [discrimination and racism] happened to me outside of school, it happened to me in school, it’s going to happen to me in the community, you know? It’s going to happen to me. I think this is what I wanted to be working for, where this next generation behind me, which is my daughter’s, you know, she doesn’t have to experience that, she doesn’t have to hear someone say, “I like your tacos,” just because she looks Hispanic...or because she is Hispanic. I want her to be asked,*
“hey, what are you planning to study in the future? What’s your career? Oh, you love ballet. Great. What is your favorite position?” You know stuff like that...Not the whole um, “I love your tacos,” and “do you know Spanish?” “How do you say this in Spanish?” (Sandra, interview, October, 2019)

This study examined the multiplicitous, nuanced, creative, and even contradictory ways that Latinx K-12 teachers in South Carolina are both made in and remaking El Sur Latinx. Much like Sandra’s quotation, the pain of racialized rhetoric and deleterious discourse toward Latinx circulating throughout many places in the South seeped into, and sometimes felt more prevalent within, the school spaces teachers traversed. Even when teachers were not explicitly excluded from school spaces, the terms of their inclusion rested on essentialized, and exploitative, construction about Latinx which counted as another form of subjection. The key, then, is to not simply advocate for more “inclusive” relationships for Latinx teachers, but rather to interrogate, challenge, and disrupt the localized functioning of power(knowledge) that underlies, invites, and produces the terms of such inclusion. Yet, despite these marginalizing social spatial processes, many participants found ways to use power to refuse or reappropriate such limited subject positions to forge different, more just becomings for themselves and their students, often students of color. Latinx teachers demanded different relations, forged myriad meeting points, and traveled toward transformative trajectories; in short, they worked to create different spaces in the present that would serve the future they longed for, a future in which Sandra’s daughter would be/could be/should be a ballerina and a Spanish speaker. Yet, in forcing this future, Latinx teachers are also spatially (re)organizing, (re)making, and (re)creating the present. Latinx teachers are not building a New South; they are building El Sur Latinx—their South, our South, a shared and multiplicitous South.
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APPENDIX A

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS FOR PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Figure A.1. Facebook post for participant recruitment.
Figure A.2. Personal Twitter post for participant recruitment.

Figure A.3. Latinx Educators of S.C. Twitter post for participant recruitment.
APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a research study. This research, to be conducted by Timothy Monreal (henceforth me/I), doctoral candidate in Foundations of Education at the University of South Carolina is designed to explore the experiences of K-12 Hispanic/Latina/o/x (henceforth Latinx) teachers/educators in South Carolina. Specifically, I aim to explore the experiences and identity/subject formation of Latinx educators in South Carolina. The research aims to collect and analyze thick descriptions of the Latinx educators in South Carolina through three methods that I explain below, interview, photovoice, and ecomapping. Participants may choose to engage with one, two, or all three of these methods. This project is for my doctoral dissertation. Participation in this study will require between two-five hours of engagement with the potential for more if you desire to aid in the analysis, representation, and publication of findings. First, I will schedule an interview with you that covers general background questions, questions about your teacher experience, and questions about your social(spatial) identities and relations.

After the interview, I will ask you to take photos in response to the following question: *What images best communicate your experiences and relationships as a Latinx educator in South Carolina?* You will be given time (~one month) to select between 6-8 pictures that I will print and prepare for further discussion with you. I will discuss photo ethics with you and I ask that you not take photos of other people against their permission. Identifiable photographs of students/minors are prohibited. Additionally, please refrain from sharing specific student/family names in our interviews/discussions. After you have selected the photos, I will try to arrange a group meeting with other participants in the geographic area. This may involve relatively short travel to an agreed upon location. However, in lieu of group meetings (because of logistics or time), group video calls or individual discussions about the photos can also be used.

After discussing the photos with you, for a final step, I will encourage you to create an ecomap. In an ecomap you visually draw relationships with other humans and material (McCormick, Stricklin, Nowak, & Rous, 2008). This method allows for you to also use the photos to map or diagram the supportive, negative, mixed, or ambivalent relationships embedded within your experiences. For example, you might draw a jagged line between you and parents indicating an antagonist relationship, but a straight line between you and your principal indicating a more supportive relationship. Examples of different (eco)map ideas will be presented to you to guide its creation.
This research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at U.S.C. (Pro00091191). I know of no risk or discomfort associated with this research. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may discontinue participation at any time. I will keep the information strictly confidential. I will conduct the interviews, record them, and securely store them on an external hard drive. I will do the same for the ecomaps and the photos. I will be using the data I collect in publications, but you will be given an opportunity to review the section of reports in which a quote or reference appears. I will also use a pseudonym (if desired) for references in any written report. In order to ensure accuracy, I would like to audiotape interviews. The audiotape and material will be kept for 3 years in my personal locked office space for use in this research and for educational purposes.

If you have any questions concerning this research study please contact me, Timothy Monreal at 716-361-6333 or tmonreal@email.sc.edu. You may also contact my Dissertation Advisor Dr. Kara Brown at 803-777-0629 or brownk25@mailbox.sc.edu. You may also contact the University of South Carolina’s Office of Research Compliance 803-777-7095 if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject.

I have read this consent form, and I agree to participate in this research study. I am at least 18 years old.

Printed Name of Participant _____________________________________________

Age ________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

(PHOTOVOICE) ORIENTATION POWERPOINT

Figure C.1. Photovoice Orientation Powerpoint Slide 1

Larger Project

Giving my own experience(s) teaching in the state, I am interested in studying the experiences and identities of Hispanic/Latino/a/x public school educators in South Carolina.

The research question driving my study is:

- How are Latina/o/x teachers both made in and (re)making their contexts (in South Carolina)?

Figure C.2. Photovoice Orientation Powerpoint Slide 2
Photovoice:
A type of participatory action research in which people use photographs to picture their environment and experiences to express their thoughts and generate conversation about them.

- Create and discuss photographs to picture their environment and experiences
- To express their thoughts and as a means of catalyzing personal and community change.
- Using cameras, participants document the reality of their lives.

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Figure C.3. Photovoice Orientation Powerpoint Slide 3

Prompt

What images best communicate your experiences and relationships as a Latina/o/x teacher in South Carolina?

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Figure C.4. Photovoice Orientation Powerpoint Slide 4

Images

Select 6-10 images and email/text them to me

mcrowell@email.sc.edu
716-381-6333

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Figure C.5. Photovoice Orientation Powerpoint Slide 5
**Taking Photos**
- The prompt is meant to be open
- Participants can use their cell phone camera
- Abstain from taking identifiable pictures of youth/students.
- Only photograph other adults if you have the permission to do so

**Selecting Photos**
- The photos do not need to be professional quality. What is most important will be the eventual conversations they prompt.
- Participants may also select previous photos they have taken or things like memes and screenshots.

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**Photovoice Next Steps After Sending Photos**

- I will print all photos and return them to you during a meeting/interview to discuss photos
- As part of the meeting/interview you will have an opportunity to visually map the photos (more on that later).
- Eventually, if desired, they may be a public exhibition component.

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Figure C.6. Photovoice Orientation Powerpoint Slide 6

Figure C.7. Photovoice Orientation Powerpoint Slide 7
I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me and do this interview. Your participation is voluntary and you may ask to stop this conversation/interview at any time. I will be recording this interview so that I can accurately capture your words. I will use the audio recording to type up accurate notes about our conversation. Your remarks are confidential and you will be given (or may select) a pseudonym to protect your privacy. I will use the audio recording to type up accurate notes about our conversation. Do you have any other questions regarding this study before we begin?

General background questions
- Can you tell me a little about yourself?
  - Where are you from originally (country, state, town)?
  - When and why did you come to South Carolina (and more specific location)?
  - Are you married? If so, where is your partner from?
  - Do you have children?
  - What is your educational background?

Questions about teaching experience
- How long have you been a teacher/educator?
  - Where do you currently work and where have you worked prior?
- What grades/subjects do you teach?
- Why did you become a teacher/educator? Have your reasons for teaching changed over time? How? Why?
- How has teaching changed over time?
  - How has your teaching changed over time?
- What are some of the biggest disconnects between what you want to do and what you are asked to do (as a teacher/educator)?
- Of the various things you do as a teacher/educator what do you feel are the most important? Why?
- How would you describe your experience(s) at your current place of work?
  - Compared with other jobs/schools
- What are some of the things you enjoy most about your current job and why?
- What are some of the things you enjoy least about your current job and why?
- What things would make teaching/education better for you?
• Do you believe that being a teacher/educator in the SE, South Carolina is different from teaching in other places –why or why not?
  o More specifically, where you teach…
• How satisfied are you with teaching/education as a career?
• What is something you are most proud of as a teacher/educator?
• __________ needs to change for teachers/educators...

Questions about social-spatial identities
• What race and/or ethnic group do you identify as in the United States? Why?
  o What other identity markers do you claim?
  o What identity markers are ascribed to you?
• How would you describe being {participant preference________} in the SE/South Carolina?
  o Can you share a couple of stories or anecdotes that speak to this?
• How do you think living in South Carolina has impacted your own sense of (racial) identity?
• Is living in South Carolina and/or your particular community different than other areas?
• How has the South’s relationship to Hispanics/{participant preference________} changed over time?
  o Are things getting better or worse?
    ▪ Can you share a couple of stories or anecdotes that speak to this?

Questions regarding teaching and social-spatial identity
• How do you think your different identity markers (as named) influence your job as a teacher/educator?
• How do you think Hispanic teachers/educators are treated on the job?
  o Compared to white, black, other racial/ethnic groups
• Do you have any added demands (either internal or external) as a Hispanic teacher/educator?
• Did you attend school in the U.S? How would you describe being as both a teacher/student?
  o If your children are in school how has being {participant preference________} impacted their experience?
• Do you believe that being a Hispanic/{participant preference________} teacher in the SE, South Carolina is different from teaching in other places –why or why not?
  • Follow up with particular experiences they wish to share
  • Is this different even within South Carolina?
• Do students, teachers, administrators, parents or others bring up your {participant preference________} identity? How?
• What are the opportunities and challenges of being Hispanic{participant preference________} and a teacher/educator in South Carolina?
Questions about socio-spatial relations

- Can you tell me about your relationships with parents in your school?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with the larger community your school is situated within?
- Can you tell me about relationships with other Hispanics in your school/community?
- What type of neighborhood do you live in?
  - What do you think of your neighborhood and who lives there?
- What is your school and communities view of Hispanics?
- How are Hispanics treated by
  - Schools?
  - Communities?
  - Government?
    - Local, state, national

In closing what does the word “Hispanic/Latino” mean to you?
- What does Hispanic/Latino teacher mean?
- What does Hispanic/Latino teacher in South Carolina mean?

Anything else?
APPENDIX E

(ECO)MAP POWERPOINT

Figure E.1. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 1

Larger Project

Giving my own experience(s) teaching in the state, I am interested in studying the experiences and identities of Hispanic/Latino/a/x public school educators in South Carolina.

The research question driving my study is:

• How are Latina/o/x teachers both made in and (re)making their contexts (in South Carolina)?

Figure E.2. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 2

(ECO)Mapping:

A type of participatory action research in which people create "maps" to investigate the webs of relations a teacher (or other individual/entity) has with larger socio-spatial systems.

(McCormick, Stricklin, Rous, Kohner-Goole, & Nowak, 2005; McCormick, Stricklin, Nowak & Rous, 2005)

• Different mapping methods to help visualize their (more than human) relations

Figure E.3. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 3
Step 1 - Put yourself somewhere on the map

- It can be a picture or simply your name

Figure E.4. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 4

What/s who supports and challenges you as a Latinx teacher in South Carolina?

Figure E.5. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 5

Some guides (although you can do as you wish and explain during next meeting)

- Draw and illustrate visual joibs of the supportive, negative, mixed, or ambivalent relationships

- Teacher may use a jagged line to show a protagonist relationship

- A thick straight line indicates a more supportive relationship

- A dotted line may show a conflicted or ambivalent relationship

Figure E.6. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 6
Figure E.7. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 7

Figure E.8. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 8

Some ideas:

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Showed examples from:

Annamma, 2016; Linville, 2017; McCormick, Stricklin, Rous, Kohnr-Coole, & Nowak, 2005; McCormick, Stricklin, Nowak & Rous, 2008; Tuck et al., 2008

Figure E.9. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 9
Next Steps

Photo time window: ______

- 1) You can continue to take more photos (especially as year starts)
- 2) We will meet one more time to discuss maps/photos
- 3) Individuals interviews if possible

Figure E.10. (Eco)Map Orientation Powerpoint Slide 10
APPENDIX F

SAMPLE OF DATA ANALYSIS

Belinda Photovoice Interview: December 2019

BZ: 10:59 Ya

TM10:59 Like, I don't know. I'm just trying to kind of play with, and I'm trying to just really kind of figure out like how, how certain teachers feel that they can be, you know, like more politically active and why other teachers kind of feel like that can't be a part of that.

BZ11:16 And, um, I will send you those pictures tomorrow sometime during work cause they're on my wall at work [PHYSICALLY MARKER OF CREATED SPACE!]. Um, but yeah, that is a good question. I would like to know the answer too. I, I know I sent you one more I think it's a card a student made for me and it has, thank you ms [name] or something on the front and it has a picture of they drew all the continents and they drew a Venezuelan flag. I sent that one because a student made me that they took the time to draw a Venezuelan flag because I constantly talk about my Venezuelan heritage and I just think like, actually a White student made me that, I think, I can't remember, but you know, I'll have to look at that picture when I get home, but a white student made me [RECREATING SPACE] me that and it, it just is that they're listening, these kids, like even if they don't participate, they're listening and they heard me talk about Valenzuelan heritage and my Venezuela's pride and they took note of that. And I think that that's important for white kids, Brown kids or whoever in my class and know that I'm proud of my heritage and they can be proud in their heritage too. But honestly, back to your question, I think that teachers don't want to do that because they're comfortable and because they're privileged and if they're not comfortable and their not privileged those are the teachers who are going to say something because we're ready to disrupt, disrupt the status quo, and teachers who are comfortable and, not, you know, struggling, they don't want to disrupt the status quo that may benefit from, that's pretty much the easy answer [SHE TAKES A WHAT DO WE HAVE TO LOSE APPROACH...Refusing, remaking the self?...Think through subjectivity, governmentality, and Counter-conduct...Can she, is she also recreate an uncomfortable space?]. But yeah, obviously within your research, you'll probably find some more answers to that.
APPENDIX G

SAMPLE OF DATA ANALYSIS

Belinda Photovoice Interview: December 2019

Figure G.1. Photo of sample data analysis.