

**Ni De Aqui, Ni De Alla: Examining Acts of Belonging in the Lancaster City Latinx
Community**

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Lancaster City's Latinx¹ residents have carved out spaces for self-determination and expression in the arts. I examined how the Latinx community views their inclusion (or exclusion) in the burgeoning arts and culture sector of Lancaster City. This study revealed that the Latinx community believes that there is little Latinx representation in the mainstream arts and culture sector in Lancaster City despite the high concentration of Latinx. The history of segregation and discrimination in Lancaster City have impacted how the Latinx community conducts acts of placemaking and belonging. This study is the first to document ways in which the Latinx community have attempted to create spaces for expression since their arrival in Lancaster City. The study confirms that the Latinx community has a rich arts and culture sector of its own despite periodict loss of critical cultural resources over time. Research conducted in the study sparked exciting conversations about what inclusion and placemaking in the Latinx community looks like, what the Latinx community wants/needs, and tangible ideas for moving forward.

¹ Latinx is a gender neutral term used in place of the traditional Latino or Latina. Latinx avoids the gender binary by using an 'x' instead of the gendered 'a' or 'o.' Usage of the term Latinx was a deliberate choice. Hispanic, a commonly used identifier and identifier used by the US Census, only includes countries who have been occupied by the Spanish. This usage excludes Brazil and some Caribbean countries. Latinx includes countries that are part of Latin America and the Caribbean without referencing the history of colonialism that can be offensive to individuals that identify as Latinx. Latinx is a more preferable term because it is more inclusive geographically and socially.

INTRODUCTION

Lancaster City is a third class city² (i.e. population below 250,000) located in the Southeastern part of Pennsylvania. Lancaster's downtown area boasts a lively arts scene and diverse community (The Pennsylvania Manual, 2016). Lancaster is usually associated with its rich Pennsylvania Dutch and Amish cultures; however, in recent years, Lancaster City has become more popular for its eateries, art galleries, and overall quirky character (Laneri, 2016, Loftus, 2016). Articles appearing in *Paste* magazine and *The New York Post* cite the farm-to-table food culture, vintage shops, and boutiques as part of what makes the city 'cool.'

Simultaneous to the increase in attention by travel and entertainment journalists, Lancaster City officials and the Lancaster City Alliance³ have recently revealed a ten-year economic plan that boasts of the city's revitalization and improvements in quality of life. The study, titled *Building on Strength*, cites an "upward trend" in Lancaster City's improvement with a focus on continuing aspects of a 1998 15-year strategic plan (Lancaster City Alliance, 2015). The study credits the increase in tourism to the creation of a downtown arts district.

While the *Building on Strength* study paints a relatively strong image of Lancaster City, data proves that the improvements peddled by tourism marketing do not reflect the entire

²Pennsylvania State's definition of city class based on population. The classification is outlined in *The Pennsylvania Manual* a guide to Pennsylvania state and local government.

³ The Lancaster City Alliance is a non-profit, non-governmental community-service organization with a focus on economic development and community engagement. It is the result of a merge between two pre-existing community organizations: The James Street Improvement District (JSID) and the Lancaster Alliance.

narrative of Lancaster City residents reality. Poverty in the city has increased from 27.6% in 2010 to 29% in 2015 with a .6% increase in the unemployment rate and disproportionately impacts Latinx and Black residents (US Census Bureau, 2015). This is important to acknowledge because as the city gains more attention for its arts and culture sector, officials should also examine *who* is represented and *how* they are involved in decision making or creating processes.

As a Latinx resident, I am specifically interested in how Latinx residents perceive representation of Latinx arts and culture within the city's regular offerings. Rather than looking at Lancaster's mainstream arts and culture offerings and situating Latinx involvement within, I have chosen to primarily document and cross-examine Latinx arts and culture offerings past and present as a way of contextualizing the current state of involvement and representation. I classified mainstream arts and culture offerings as those that are not culturally targeted or generic. I deliberately chose to interview primarily Latinx stakeholders because I wanted to provide a space to allow the community to share its story. Additionally I wanted to document, for the first time, a kind of chronology of arts and culture initiatives for the community. Additionally, I chose to look at what Latinx offerings already exist as a way of better understanding what the Latinx community has done to carve out spaces for arts and culture for themselves. I wanted to understand why these spaces were necessary and compare them to what is happening in the city in general.

Goals

This study examines how Lancaster City's Latinx⁴ residents have carved out spaces for

⁴ Latinx is a gender neutral term used in place of the traditional Latino or Latina. Latinx avoids the gender binary by using an 'x' instead of the genders 'a' or 'o.' Usage of the term Latinx was a deliberate choice. Hispanic, a commonly used identifier and identifier used by the US Census, only includes countries who have been occupied by the Spanish. This usage excludes Brazil and some Caribbean countries. Latinx includes countries that are part of

self-determination and expression in the arts. I examined how the Latinx community views their inclusion (or exclusion) in the burgeoning arts and culture sector of Lancaster City. Secondly, I examined how effective the city's cultural community has been at engaging this population in its arts and culture sector and better understand what an effective engagement with this demographic may look like.

Methodology

In order to understand the relationship between the Latinx population of Lancaster City and the arts and culture sector of the city, I began by creating a list of all organizations, programs, and influential individuals in the Latinx community that I have had contact with. I had access to this knowledge through my experience as a long-time resident of Lancaster and a Latina who has volunteered and worked in the arts and culture sector. I contacted Latinx leaders that I knew of and others that I was made aware of throughout my data gathering phase. I made a deliberate decision to include a majority of Latinx community leaders, artists and educators. I also chose to focus on individuals whose mission focuses heavily on community engagement, social justice, and the arts—visual, performance, theater, craft, etc. For each individual, I scheduled a one-hour one-on-one interview. I asked follow-up questions via email or in person as needed.

I also attended local arts and culture events, especially those that had a heavy focus on Latinx culture. These events included the San Juan Bautista Hispanic Festival and Fundraiser, Latin American Cultural Center's Hispanic Heritage Festival, Latin American Alliance Heritage Festival, First Thursday Latino, and Paloma Players productions. While attending I kept notes

Latin America and the Caribbean without referencing the history of colonialism that can be offensive to individuals that identify as Latinx. Latinx is a more preferable term because it is more inclusive geographically and socially.

and documented the events photographically. I held informal conversations with participants and observed the events as closely as possible. These field notes will be referenced in detail later in Section One, Chapter One.

I conducted two focus groups after completing the individual interviews. In the first focus group, I interviewed three Latinx Lancaster City artists as a group at Franklin and Marshall College. The group discussed their personal experiences with the arts and culture sector, representation in the city, and how they perceived the representation of Latinx overall in the city's arts and culture sector. I also assembled a focus group of ten Latinx, Asian, and Black residents to discuss Lancaster's arts and culture and how they perceived representation of Latinx. I recruited individuals by placing signs throughout the city, sharing on social media, and announcing the group meetings at local events. The local newspaper covered the focus group announcement in a short article that sparked interest among many Latinx⁵. Initially, I had intended to only collect the voices of Latinx residents but chose to expand to other non-White residents after they reached out following the publication of the event in the local paper. I chose to include their point of view because I believed that they could relate to the intersection of ethnicity or race in the city's arts. I also felt it was important to hear how non-Latinx people of color related to traditionally Latinx offerings. I will discuss the importance of their perspectives in Section Two, Chapter One and Two.

In addition to existing events, I planned an art exhibition of four Latina artists to gauge the community's reaction to Latinx art and culture programming first-hand. The exhibit opened September 3rd, 2016 and closed in October 15th, 2016. The four artists included Alejandra from

⁵ "Lancaster grad student studying connection between hispanics, city's art scene"
http://lancasteronline.com/news/local/lancaster-grad-student-studying-connection-between-hispanics-city-s-art/article_e5a8c6c6-b8d9-11e6-91b9-5b4fed1642a7.html

Lancaster City, Jezabeth Roca Gonzalez from Lancaster City, and Candy Gonzalez from Philadelphia and Salina Almanzar (myself). Programs included an artist meet-and-greet on the opening night, a screening of the film *Frida* (Taymor, 2002), a salsa lessons night, and a closing reception. During the event I held informal interviews with individual attendants as well as those attending in groups. I asked how they perceived the representation of Latinx in the city and how they felt about having an exhibition of Latinx artwork. I will discuss reactions from attendees in Section Two, Chapter Three.

Additional resources include recordings of the oral histories Latinx community stakeholders provided by Dr. Kimberly Mahaffy. Dr. Kimberly Mahaffy teaches in Millersville University and was involved in a research project that culminated in two community murals about Latinidad⁶. The murals were installed on Millersville University's campus and at the Clipper Magazine Stadium in Lancaster City. The interviews were recorded as part of the mural projects research and archived in Millersville University's library. Copies were given to me to review along with notes, images of the mural, and grant proposal drafts. This material contextualizes the Latinx experience in Lancaster.

Potential Limitations

Potential limitations to my study include the limitations of who and how many individuals I was able to interview. Other limitations included lack of documentation of past events, galleries, exhibits, or programs. I used the snowball method of gathering contacts. While the method proved to be successful, my contacts may have been limited to the contacts I already

⁶ Latinidad is a Spanish language term used to describe one's Latinx Identity or Hispanic Identity. It is commonly used to describe how culture and identity intersect. The term is a conflation of the term Latinx and Identidad (Spanish translation of Identity).

made, their specific agendas, and their subsequent contacts.

Statement of Personal Intent

To begin, I must disclose my personal connection to Lancaster City's Latinx community. I grew up in "The Ward"-specifically on Howard Avenue between Christian Street and Duke Street. I lived in the ward from 2001-2010 (or from age 11 to age 20). This part of town, a historically segregated area, is avoided by many White and middle class residents because it is "dangerous." I suppose I can attest to this via my personal experience with "dangers" of living in the "inner city" to some degree. However, I've always felt apprehensive of labeling all of Southeast Lancaster as dangerous. The perceived threat of danger in this particular area is code for the area being predominantly working class, Black and Latinx residents. The Ward, despite some of the real crime and neglect by the city, felt like home because I was surrounded by people that looked like me, spoke the language I heard at home, and cooked with the same scents I smelled every day in my kitchen. At the same time, I was one of a small group of kids in the area that went to a predominantly White private school. I learned to code switch⁷ at an early age and knew what it felt like to be out of place among people I might otherwise identify with solely based on the opportunities presented to me.

Growing up on Howard did teach me from an early age that certain kinds of people in Lancaster City live in certain parts of Lancaster City. At eleven years old, this was shocking as I moved to Lancaster City from the Bronx. Despite my age- just barely a pre-teen- I recall feeling a special kind of isolation from Downtown Lancaster living in The Ward that I never felt in my

⁷Codeswitching is a linguistic term that can also be interpreted as the act of alternating between languages, identities, or cultures. In conversations about race and identity politics, it is the ability to switch between one set of cultural rules to another i.e. Latinx cultural norms to Mainstream cultural norms in a given space.

old hometown. I have since moved to the Chestnut Hill area of Lancaster City-a much more affluent neighborhood and have felt the same twinge of isolation that I felt as an eleven-year-old navigating class politics in a new city. My new neighborhood has its perks: there's less crime, but less of an intimate community, and much Whiter, middle-class, educated residents. I feel the need to disclose this personal information because I feel that being wholly objective and divorcing my personal experiences of nuanced discrimination would rob my research the urgency and sincerity with which I conducted and would like to present it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rationale

In order to best approach my research question, I have chosen to examine the following segments of pre-existing research:

- 1) How economic and strategic plans have dictated the role of arts in Lancaster City.
- 2) How urban and economic housing policies have affected people of color in Lancaster. I believe redevelopment and housing policies are the most important aspect to examine because the restructuring of neighborhoods of color has had a long-term impact on the Latinx community and I believe this may be related to how the Latinx community has been represented in the arts and culture sector of Lancaster City. Understanding how communities have historically been forcefully removed, displaced, and corralled was important to understand because the segregation of and displacement of communities of color is recent. Therefore, the displacement and segregation of communities of color through development and placemaking in the past is a way to measure how new development and placemaking practices have or have not improved.
- 3) The history of migration of Latinx communities to Lancaster City.
- 4) How the arts can be used to assist in the self-determination of marginalized communities.

I am interested in how these four areas of focus intersect to reveal the uniquely complex issues that surround representation and participation of Latinx communities in arts and culture sectors in Lancaster City.



Figure 1: Map of Lancaster City Source: Google Maps

Lancaster's Arts District

As previously mentioned, Lancaster City emerged from a 15 year economic strategic plan that saw the formation of an arts district. The 1998 plan's success is evidenced by the increase in tourism revenue and the formation of a formal arts district. The 2015 plan targets the arts district as a strength to further improve upon and market for Lancaster's economic future success.

LancasterARTS was founded in 2007 to concentrate and facilitate a new arts district in the center of the city. This resulted in the formation of Gallery Row, a block of galleries and shoppes

focused on visual art and craft, as well as art events like First Friday art openings and seasonal Art Walks. In 2012 LancasterARTS commissioned a study of the organizations audience to gauge the success of the new arts district. Franklin and Marshall College, a local liberal arts college, partnered with the organization to survey Fall Art Walk attendees.

Two-hundred individuals were surveyed at a kiosk located in the center of the Art Walk's geographic footprint. The short study concluded that the majority of Art Walk attendees were middle aged and held Bachelor's degrees. 90% of the attendees surveyed were local, 90%⁸ had at least a college education however, no percentage was disclosed regarding median age of attendees (LancasterARTS, 2012). Although race and ethnicity data was apparently collected, the study concluded that "race was not a factor" in determining the demographic make-up of Art Walk (LancasterARTS, 2012). The study's ambivalence to examine race more closely than educational attainment effectively eliminated an opportunity to critically examine *who* LancasterART's offerings attracted.

Limitations in the data collection strategy include the small sample size (200 attendees) and a very limited amount of time to gather data (two evenings) (LancasterARTS, 2012). No studies around Lancaster art's district have been conducted since the 2012 survey. However, positive feedback from the survey has been used to continue to promote the image of a thriving arts district.

I am particularly interested in this study as a catalyst for a deeper look at Lancaster's arts and culture district as it relates to the Latinx population. The 2010 census revealed that in Lancaster City alone, 39.3% of the population identifies as Latinx (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). With no available data on the racial or ethnic make-up of Lancaster arts and culture attendees, it

⁸ Only 29.8% of Lancaster City residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher thus further calling into question the goals and accuracy of the data collected in this study.

is difficult to quantifiably know if the Latinx population is participating in local art and culture offerings. Despite the positive spin on the data collected in the study, I wonder how data might have changed if the study's timeline was extended and the data collected included salary or income, race or ethnicity, and location of residence in Lancaster City. Without more comprehensive data specifically looking at who attends arts and culture offerings, it is impossible to determine if the arts and culture audience attracts or represents all of Lancaster City.

Lancaster and Poverty

Three years after the LancasterARTs study was released, The Floyd Institute for Public Policy⁹ released a report that critically examined how economic prosperity is distributed geographically in Lancaster City. The 2015 study was a direct response to *Building on Strength*. The 2015 Floyd Institute study, titled "Lancaster Prospers?: An Analysis of Census Data on Economic Opportunities and Outcomes," revealed that despite the successes of recent economic and strategic plans, Lancaster City remains economically divided (Callari, Gentry, and Yost, 2015). The study also revealed that the economic disparities in the city fell on racial lines (Callari, Gentry, and Yost, 2015). Despite decades of economic revitalization efforts and assimilation, the city is still economically and racially segregated.

The findings separated the city into three categories (Figure 3): Economically Stable, Economically Stressed, and Economically Depressed (Callari, Gentry, and Yost, 2015). Comparing Figure 2, a map of Lancaster City, to Figure 3, we can see that the Economically Depressed (Group 3) area of Lancaster City is located in the Southeast quadrant. The majority of

⁹ The Floyd Institute for Public Policy is a research organization and an affiliate of Franklin and Marshall College. The Institute conducts research projects, data analysis and specializes in surveys and data collection for public policy and political research.

Latinx residents live in the Southeast quadrant (highlighted in Figure 2) however there is little conversation in either the LancasterARTs research or *Building on Strength* on the quality of life in this community. The city’s current economic development agenda fails to reckon with the significant racialized poverty made apparent by this study. Additionally, it appears that cultural leaders are apparently clueless about how to discuss the intersection of race and poverty in Lancaster City.

Map 1: Lancaster City Tract Groupings

- Group 1 - Economically Stable
- Group 2 - Economically Stressed
- Group 3 - Economically Depressed

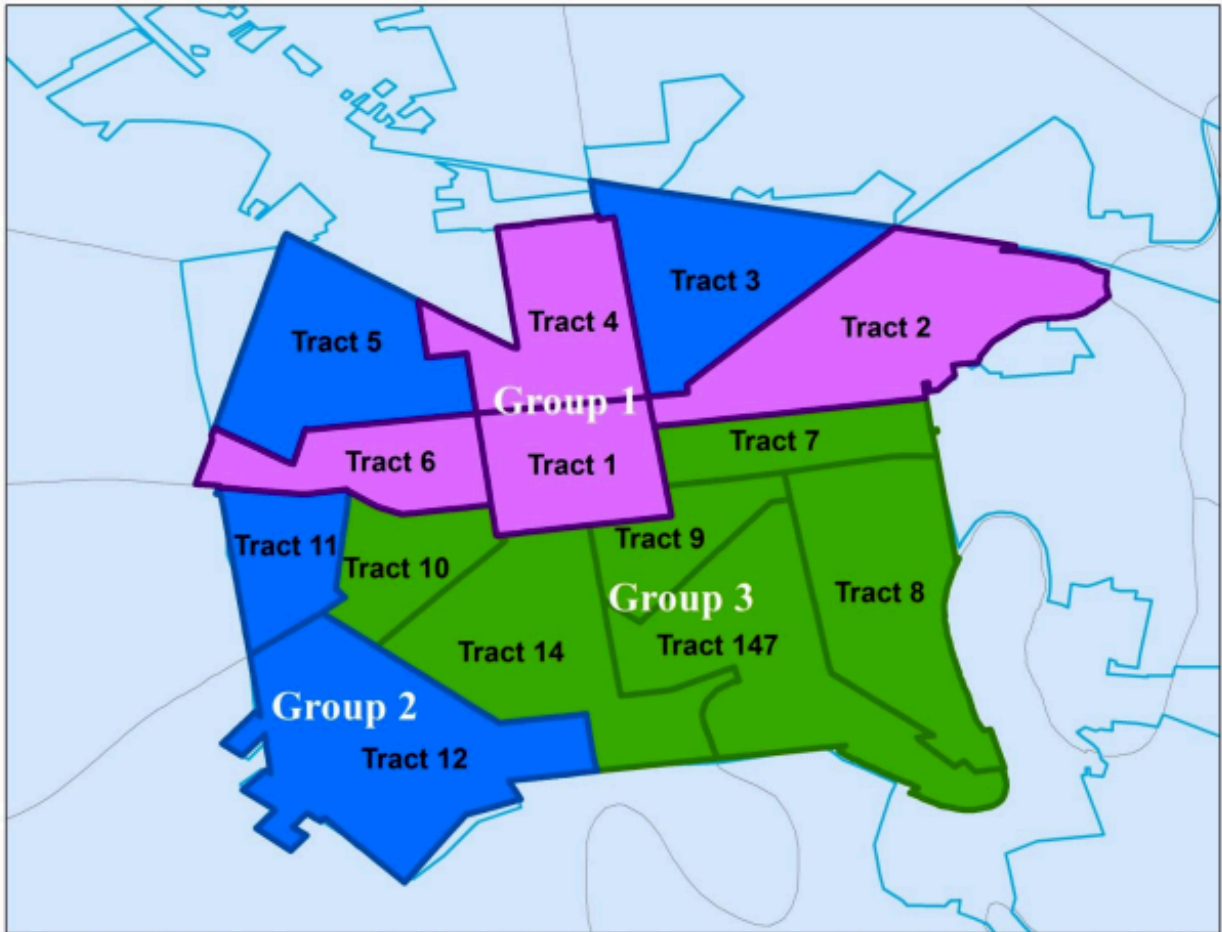


Figure 2: Outline of Poverty Distribution Source: The Floyd Institute for Public Policy “Lancaster Prospers?: An

Urban Development and Race in Lancaster City

The economic and racial segregation discussed above is significant because the Southeast was the site of major urban and economic redevelopment beginning in the 1940's (Callari, Gentry, and Yost, 2015, Schuyler, 2002). David Schuyler, historian and professor at Franklin and Marshall College, discusses the redevelopment of Lancaster in "A City Transformed: Redevelopment, Race, and Suburbanization in Lancaster, Pennsylvania 1940-1980," (2002). In the past, economic plans focused heavily on the city's downtown area and later on areas of suburban sprawl. As early as 1944, urban renewal plans focused on and played up the poverty of the Southeastern quadrant of the city—a historically Black and Latinx region (see figure 4 below). The Redevelopment Authority, established sometime around 1944 and dissolved in 1980, was appointed to declare "a War on Slums" in 1950 (Schulyer, 2002). Schuyler states:

Over the course of more than 200 years the area [Southeast] has been home to the city's poorest residents, its most recent immigrants, and its racial minorities... It was in the Southeast, where the minority population lived, that the Redevelopment Authority undertook its most extensive slum clearance efforts, where the vast majority of residential displacement occurred and where virtually all of the city's public housing was constructed. The Southeast was the crucible in which Lancaster's housing and redevelopment authorities applied the logic of urban renewal. One unspoken but incontrovertible component of the redevelopment process was a policy of containment, the perpetuation of a pattern of segregation in the city by concentrating subsidized housing in the Southeast. (Schuyler, 2002)

The War on Slums, headed by the Redevelopment Authority (heretofore referred to as the RA), forged ahead with a forty-year battle of discriminatory practices targeting Blacks, Latinx and poor Whites. According to Schuyler, the RA’s studies and plans “enabled public officials, the press, and citizens to depersonalize the issue of substandard housing, to think in terms of stereotypes rather than of human beings” (Schuyler, 2002).

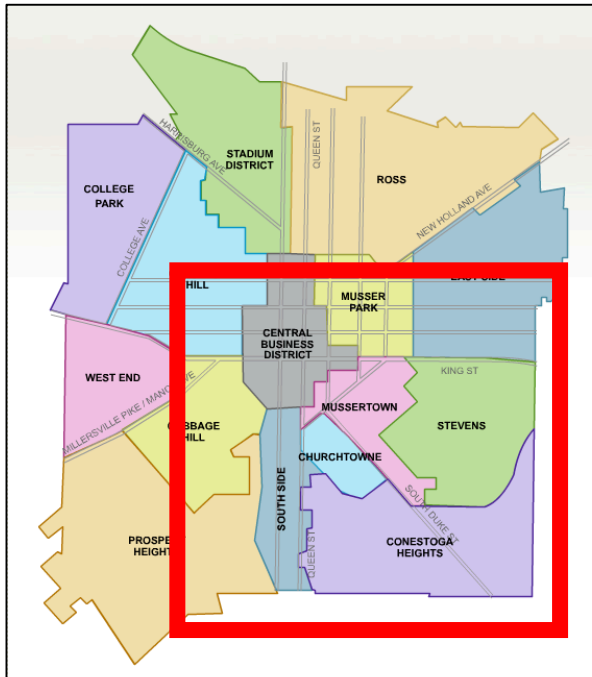


Figure 3: Map of Lancaster City with Neighborhood Labels. Source: Lancaster City Living. (Southeast highlighted in red by author)

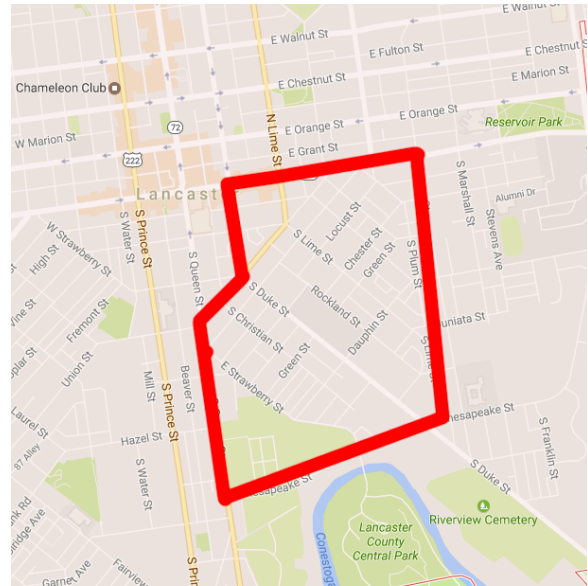


Figure 2: Map of Southeast Lancaster City with a rough outline of the five major development projects outlined in Schuyler's research. Source: Google Maps

The RA completed five major federally funded redevelopment plans. Two plans, the Adams Project and the Church-Musser Project impacted the Southeast the most (Figure 3 and 4). The Adams Project (ca 1964) was the first project undertaken by the RA. It encompassed 24 blocks with 1,200 structures. 900 structures were destroyed and reconstructed. The Church-Musser plan (completed 1979) was the last project backed by the RA. 865 structures were designated for redevelopment. The projects varied in their methods of redevelopment: The

Adams Project called for dramatic clearances of property and the Church-Musser project incorporated an initiative to preserve a select number of historic houses for middle class White families. In addition to clearance and preservation, an experiment in scattered-site¹⁰ housing was introduced as an attempt to desegregate the city and re-house residents moved from redevelopment sites. These projects nearly destroyed the Black and Latinx community.

A 1970 study regarding the massive development efforts that were already underway in the Southeast revealed the “disproportionate impact on the city’s minority population, particularly those most in need.” (Schuyler, 2002). Even the low-income houses proposed by the RA and Public Housing Authority (established in the 1960’s) were intended for higher income individuals. Most of the Black and Latinx population in the area that would be displaced would not be able to afford the supposed affordable housing units. The study also revealed that development efforts caused poverty to spread. “A donut-shaped ghetto” formed around the parts of the Southeast that were undergoing development (Schuyler, 2002). This proved that residents were unable to find adequate housing outside of the Southeast due to more than just income. Discriminatory practices were exposed in the realtor’s rejection of Black and Latinx residents, residents who were single parents, unmarried residents, and residents with bad credit. Instead of the lines of segregation disappearing, they simply moved to conform to where Black, Latinx, and poor White individuals were forced to reside.

The 1970 study was the first to integrate the voices of Latinx residents as most studies ignored or lumped Latinx together with Black residents. It proved that Latinx and Black

¹⁰ Scattered-site housing was defined by Schuyler as a method of re-housing displaced families. In Lancaster City, it was a last-ditch effort to de-segregate the community. Black and Latinx families displaced by redevelopment were re-housed in White neighborhoods. The method failed as some White neighborhoods were hostile or unwelcoming to Black and Latinx families and the addition of Black and Latinx families was often followed by White families fleeing to suburban areas (Schuyler, p 147,2002).

residents shared a similar history in the Southeast and were both victims of deeply rooted segregation practices by both the authorities assigned to help the area as well as residents opposed to integration. The last of the redevelopment efforts, the Church-Musser Project, was halted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1979.

The RA ceased operations in 1980 and failed to adequately address how race intersected with redevelopment in the Southeast. The majority of the RA's various proposals, projects, and plans did not succeed in alleviating blight and reinforced segregation. Schuyler states:

The differential between the national pattern and the Lancaster pattern of minority residence in suburbs is dramatic: a city where Blacks and Hispanics represented more than 21% of the population was surrounded by suburbs where the same minorities represented 1.6% of all residents. Thus even as a once-segregated minority population spread throughout Lancaster, municipal boundaries proved to be more than lines drawn on a map. Federal and state fair housing laws notwithstanding, minorities seeking places to live found the city limits to be a barrier as formidable as Howard Avenue had been to earlier generations of African Americans. (Schuyler, 2002)

Despite the RA's acknowledgement of poverty and the violence that stems from inadequate housing, the urban renewal programs proposed and implemented in the 1950's through the 1970's failed to address racial discrimination openly. Dismissing race as a factor essentially ignored Black and Latinx residents lack of access to property beyond the Southeast and the lack of mobility caused by discriminatory housing practices. Today, the troubles Schuyler outlines in the historic urban and economic strategic plans are the very same struggles and improvements Lancaster City leaders are still trying to fix. Schuyler's assessment of Lancaster's past development strategies reveal that at the core, urban development had "human

as well as financial costs that continue to haunt the city and its people” (Schuyler, 2002). The Floyd Institute’s 2015 study utilizes Schuyler’s research to call out the Lancaster City Alliance in their disregard for a more intersectional approach to urban and economic development. We find ourselves again looking at ways to develop the city for profit while ignoring the fact that residents of the Southeast are still reeling from decades of displacement, erasure, and discontent. Again, this context is crucial to understanding how the Southeast quadrant was shaped by and remains impacted by economic and urban renewal plans of the past.

Latinx in Lancaster City

With the general historical context established, it is important to understand how the Latinx community fits within the greater narrative of race and redevelopment. “Latinx in Lancaster County: Voices Perspectives, Myths and Realities” was conducted by Lillian Escobar-Haskins and George F. Haskins and represents the only body of research that looks specifically at the Latinx population of Lancaster county and city (Escobar-Haskins and Haskins, 2007). This particular study is important because it provided a voice for the Latinx population and examined the intersections of ethnicity, immigration, economics, language, and education. Each chapter is divided into issues that the Latinx community identified as significant. Included in each chapter are anecdotes from various Latinx individuals from Lancaster City. This works particularly well in Escobar-Haskins and Haskins’ study because Latinx residents are allowed to share their stories with their own words. Their responses, conflicting at times, harmonious at others, indicate a rich diversity of thoughts, experiences, and politics within the Latinx community. The quotes reveal the complicated issues Lancaster Latinx face and document the fact that these issues cannot be cleanly divided and tackled—that is, economic stress is not mutually exclusive from

educational barriers or crime or racial injustice.

A key portion of the study that I believe helps to contextualize my research question is the opening sections on how the Latinx population came to be the largest minority group in the city. At the time of the study in 2007, Puerto Ricans represented 72% of the 30-40% Latinx people in the city. The study opens with the history of Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States. Lancaster County became a hub for Puerto Ricans who were seeking seasonal farm work in the early and mid-1940's. Benito Bonilla is the first documented Puerto Rican to settle in Lancaster County circa 1948 (Escobar-Haskins and Haskins, 2007).

This is significant because there is an overwhelming stereotype that Puerto Ricans are recent newcomers to Lancaster City and are specifically from New York or Chicago. The reality is that many early Puerto Rican settlers arrived in Lancaster because they were seeking out seasonal work on farms and preferred rural life to urban life (Campos, 2001, Garcia, 2000, Garcia, 1997, Korrol, n.d., Landale, 2002, Oropesa, 2010). In the early 1950's demand for farm workers grew and more Puerto Ricans settled in Lancaster county. The Great Migration, as it is commonly called, occurred between 1930 and 1950 (Campos, 2001, Garcia, 2000, Garcia, 1997, Korrol, n.d., Landale, 2002, Oropesa, 2010). This period in history was the peak of migration of Puerto Ricans to the mainland. Two articles published in *Centro Journal*, a Hunter College¹¹ publication, outline the oft-forgotten migration of Puerto Rican farmworkers to the United States.

¹¹ Hunter College's Center for Puerto Rican Studies provides a wealth of information that begins to fill the gaps of the history of Puerto Ricans in the United States, however there remains little scholarly research outside of Centro scholars.

The popularized version of the Great Migration usually places Puerto Ricans at the heart of what would become El Barrio in New York City. Centro's "The Story of U.S. Puerto Ricans" and a study published in the *Centro Journal* "Enduring Migration: Puerto Rican Workers on U.S. Farms" discusses how Puerto Ricans were amongst the first farmworkers and day laborers in the East (García-Colón, 2013).

This narrative is where Lancaster's Puerto Ricans can most likely trace their roots. "Enduring Migration" functions primarily as a case study that examines how laborers may have been treated differently depending on their legal status. This study is significant in the context of the Escobar-Haskins and Haskins study because it reflects on the lack of information regarding the history and tribulations of Puerto Ricans in non-urban areas. Additionally, the Centro essay, cites how Puerto Ricans are still, "...treated and made to feel like foreigners in the communities in which they work" (García-Colón, 2013).

A similar sentiment is shared in a thesis titled "Emerging U.S. Latinx Politics: The Enfranchisement of Bethlehem's Latinx Community" (Campos, 2001). Here, the migration of Latinx, but especially Puerto Ricans, to small cities like Bethlehem is traced back to the Great Migration of the post-war era. In this study, the post war economic recession discussed by David Schuyler is observed as a catalyst to tensions rising between "Anglos [and Puerto Ricans] who saw the influx of new Puerto Rican migrants as a threat to the status quo and more specifically their jobs" (Campos 2001).

By the mid 1950's and early 1960's many Puerto Rican families began to settle in the Southeast quadrant of the city which came to be known as 'The Ward'. Despite the complex and tragic history covered by Schuyler, Escobar-Haskins and Haskins' study cites pleasant anecdotes from Ward residents who recall the influx of Latinx families in the 1950's and 60's (Escobar-

Haskins and Haskins, 2007). Due to the language barriers, most Puerto Ricans lived closely together in The Ward. Over time, Dominican, Colombian, and other Latinx migrants began to move to Lancaster City and found the Southeast to be the most welcoming. Catholic churches began to open their doors to the community and community members that were bilingual provided translations services. Escobar-Haskins and Haskins' paints a quaint and pleasant communal atmosphere in these early years. By 1968, the population grew to "700 persons" and "150 families" (Escobar-Haskins and Haskins, 2007). A front page Lancaster New Era article published June 19, 1959 stated "1,200 Puerto Rican's Now Live Here Year Around" (Escobar-Haskins and Haskins, 2007). Escobar-Haskins and Haskins mentions that some of these early estimates tend to underestimate the actual number of Latinx living in Lancaster.

The increase in families and segregation of people of color as well as the development strategies underway during the 1960's and 1970's caused more Latinx to fall victim to unemployment, poverty, and inability to secure steady jobs due to discrimination. By 1972, the Spanish American Civic Association (SACA) opened and established a hub for the Latinx community to gain access to housing, employment, financial services, and more (Escobar-Haskins and Haskins, 2007).

Included in the report is a catalogue of Latinx residents who opened businesses in the city, Latinx organizations like SACA that were established to fill the needs of the community, and Latinx residents who became champions of social justice and civic engagement starting in the 1970's and into the 1990's and 2000's. In addition to SACA, organizations like San Juan Bautista Iglesia Catolica and the Puerto Rican Committee became key organizations for political activism, social gatherings, entertainment, and civic engagement.

More recently, coverage of Latinx has implied that Lancaster's general community is

only just now recognizing the presence of Latinx residents. In an essay written for Penn Live, journalist Ivey DeJesus explored how Latinx residents were coping with attention following the results of the 2010 US Census. In 2011, DeJesus interviewed and presented the stories of several Latinx families from southern Pennsylvania. The article, titled “Latinx Country: Hispanic population surpasses Amish in Lancaster County, U.S. Census data show,” describes the change in Lancaster’s once Amish and Dutch driven economy as one that now has a “marked Latin accent” (DeJesus, 2011). Poignantly, DeJesus discusses census data and the fact that the Latinx population has always been “quietly” growing in Lancaster County since the late 1940’s (DeJesus, 2011). The author states that despite their presence, Latinx are only recently beginning to carve more visible spaces in politics, the arts, and the local economy.

Equity and Creative Placemaking

DeJesus’ article and the study conducted by Lillian Escobar-Haskins and George F. Haskins reveal that immigration or migration, language barriers, and racial tension dictate the feasibility of self-determination for Latinx in Lancaster City. The narrative of Latinx in Lancaster City can be simplified to the politics of belonging. Latinx residents in Lancaster City have claimed the Southeast as their home despite the fact that city officials viewed the region as a space to be acted upon without resident’s consent. Through a series of acts of reclamation, the Latinx community has been able to create a community out of nearly nothing. They have attempted to belong in a place that has historically rejected or ignored them. Roberto Bedoya, former executive director of the Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC), described “placemaking” or the “politics of belonging and dis-belonging” as a complex series of phases. In some cases, “before you have places of belonging, you have to have a sense you belong. Before you have places of belonging, you must feel you belong to a community, locale, or a place” (Bedoya,

2013). At the same time, placemaking can be reactionary, as in the case of Latinx in Lancaster City, where people in positions of power force less powerful individuals into a state of disbelonging. This often forces the less powerful or marginalized communities to creatively reclaim a sense of belonging.

The arts, as they are understood in Lancaster City's economic and strategic plans, are tools for tourism rather than community building. Linking the arts to development further alienates marginalized communities. Often, for marginalized communities phrases like "urban planning" or "economic development" are code for something more sinister. Bedoya asserts that many marginalized communities, especially Latinx communities, are already using the arts as a method of asserting a sense of belonging. Rasquachification, a term coined by Bedoya, stems from the Chicano experience. For Bedoya and other Chicanos that means painting their houses bright hues and covering their porches in papel picado¹². Bedoya explains, "Rasquachification challenges America's deep racial divide through acts of ultra-visibility undertaken by those rendered invisible by the dominant ideology of Whiteness" (Bedoya, 2014). A quick tour of El Barrio in Manhattan's upper west side or a walk through Lancaster City's Southeast area will quickly reveal that many Latinx cultures carry their own version of Rasquache. Bedoya invokes the voice of Latinx artist Amalia Mesa-Bains who defines Rasquache as "the capacity to hold life together with bits of string, old coffee cans and broken mirrors in a dazzling gesture of aesthetic bravado" (Bedoya, 2014). Again, for many Latinx, the colorful decorations are an act of self-determination.

Cultural leaders interested in helping a community thrive must then look at what a community is already doing to define or personalize their space. While public and community art

¹² Papel picado is a traditional Mexican craft. Small rectangles of bright tissue paper have designs cut into them and they are strung together and hung like banners.

programs can help communities, they can only work if the community has agency and can dictate the aesthetic and kind of programming it needs. For the arts to help a community, there must be “an understanding of the social dynamics on that street” (Bedoya, 2013). Without understanding a communities pre-existing aesthetic, projects, or needs, new artistic initiative meant to unify a place may simply add a curtain of art over gaping wounds of marginalization, exclusion, and mistrust. Additionally, in the case of Lancaster City, there must be a reclamation of the arts as a method of community building outside of economic agendas.

Intentionality in Arts and Culture Representation and Revitalization

Lancaster City’s arts district, a product of economic revitalization strategies, boasts dozens of venues, jobs, and programs. However, the mere existence of an arts district may not always correlate with an improved or strengthened community. The evidence cited in *Building on Strength* define the success of the arts district through the tourism revenue consequently generated. There is no evidence that proves that the formation of an arts district has positively or negatively impacted Lancaster City residents or more specifically the Latinx community of Lancaster City. This is significant because the arts have the potential to unify and empower communities. Despite this fact, Lancaster City’s leaders in development have not made this a priority in making amends with marginalized communities nor has the conversation about the arts shifted from economic benefits to social benefits.

A case study conducted in Boston in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s revealed that the presence of arts and community organizations does not correlate with social change. According to the study, titled “Neighborhood Resources and Community Change: A Longitudinal Analysis of Arts Presence and Social Disorganization in Boston, 1990-2010,” areas in Boston that had an

arts presence actually had the same or more social disorganization than areas that did not (Rustan, 2014). Conclusions drawn from extensive quantitative research echo Roberto Bedoya's admonishment of cultural leaders that enforce arts programs without getting to know their communities.

Rustan observed that there is potential for arts organizations of various sizes to positively impact their community however, "policymakers need to explicitly identify social goals as a priority for arts organizations and programming" (Rustan, 2014). Thus, the simple presence of one or many arts organizations in a community does not automatically mean that there is more diversity, more inclusion, or more community organization. Belonging and equity can only be achieved if the organization has clear goals and listens to the community it places itself in.

Examples of Intentional Outreach

An example of successful social justice and equity in practice can be seen in the Fleisher Art Memorial. In *Taking out the Guesswork*, The Fleisher Art Memorial's challenge to involve their local Latinx and Asian community is discussed. The Fleisher noticed an inconsistency between the community they were located in (predominantly "newly arrived immigrants from Latin America and Asia") and the audience they attracted (predominantly "White, affluent visitors from outside the neighborhood") (Harlow, 2015). Rather than add programming that seemed to target the Latinx and Asian demographic, the Fleisher chose to conduct extensive research in the field. The choice to forego adding programming came because, "No matter how much Fleisher was admired by its existing students, it lacked goodwill among newly arrived immigrants in the neighborhood...To [the target audience], Fleisher seemed to offer a Western European approach to art that had little relevance to their lives" (Harlow 2015, 17-18). Fleisher

Art Memorial faced what Rustan discusses in their 20-year study of arts organizations in Boston: The old adage ‘If you build it, they will come’ does not ring true, especially among populations that are marginalized or minoritized. In a conference talk, Magda Martinez, Director of Programs at the Fleisher Art Memorial, expanded on what worked with the target audience: 1) approaching the target audience sincerely, 2) showing them what the organization is about, 3) and ensuring the same services and people that greeted them on the streets greeted them in the institution (Harlow 2015, 21-22, Martinez 2016). Listening is the key. Listening to what the community needs and what it wants to know. Since conducting the research, the Fleisher has created more informed goals, measurable outcomes, and programming that has brought in more Latinx and Asian audiences.

Conclusion

Haskin’s in-depth portrait of the Latinx community in the early 2000’s combined with Schuyler’s historical take on race and urban development in Lancaster City neatly contextualize what I believe is the next step in this field of research-Lancaster’s Latinx population and the arts and culture sector. Haskin’s does the work of dispelling myths and explaining away stereotypes about Latinx residents while Schuyler provides a social and historical context. What Haskin’s and Schuyler’s studies lack is a discussion on how the Latinx population carves out spaces for self-determination in areas outside of health, housing, and education. Haskin’s begins to touch on way’s Latinx families deal with the complex space they occupy, however the argument is buried in discussions about education, poverty, and the justice system. I believe that Lancaster City’s arts and culture community has the capacity to critically examine who and how they are attracting audience members. The goal of this research is to show the Latinx community as a community with assets, not just residents with needs. Constantly covering issues of Latinidad in

terms of what the community needs perpetuates the idea that the community is incomplete, disorganized, and burdensome. My research will outline what the community has, specifically in arts and culture, and how we can use these assets in the future.

SECTION ONE

The following sections and chapters weave together conversations with stakeholders in the community with field notes from my visits to Latinx cultural events or spaces. I have also chosen to use this study to examine pre-existing cultural events throughout Lancaster City's history. This choice was motivated by conversations I had with community leaders who felt that one cannot critique Lancaster City's current relationship with the Latinx community without knowing the history of the community. I have chosen to organize my results by looking at past interventions made by the Latinx community followed by current Latinx offerings as well as mainstream offerings or attempts to address Latinx representation. I have closed with recommendations that are informed by my conversations with Latinx artists and residents. Past and present offerings are divided by the offering categories-that is festivals and parades are included in one section, artistic interventions like galleries or murals are in another section, and so on. All sections discuss the history of the offering or intervention and what that offering or intervention was like at the time this study was written. I chose to spend more words on the history and current state of Latinx arts and culture because I believe the information disclosed in the Literature Review provides an adequate enough context regarding Lancaster City's history with racial and ethnic representation in the arts and beyond. I believe my research question required that I hear, write about, and examine Latinx voices primarily. I also wanted to address the idea that what we have as a community is 'enough'. Pre-existing arts and culture events or

programs that have a Latinx focus *do* exist in Lancaster City. The point of this study is not to contest the idea that there are Latinx offerings, but to critically examine what these offerings look like and if they are adequate in terms of how they represent the Latinx community.

CHAPTER ONE

FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Lancaster Latinx festivals are popular expressions of culture attract a wide array of Lancaster residents in both the Latinx community and mainstream community. Festivals are the biggest and most public displays of arts and culture. In this section I will explain the history of the most well-known festivals as they are staples in the community and are crucial to understanding the current state of cultural expression for Latinx in Lancaster City. The organizations I will discuss are the most influential in establishing a unique arts and culture sector for Latinx residents outside of the mainstream arts and culture sector. Many of the early organizations were formative in providing social services to the Latinx community at a time when Latinx residents were alienated or marginalized. Some of the organizations that founded festivals or parades no longer exist but I believe that their impact provides a necessary context to understanding the current Latinx offerings. I was unable to reach former founders or organization members directly—however, I was able to build a timeline based on archived news articles, anecdotes from conversation partners, and my personal experiences with the organizations. Included in this section are my field notes and observations regarding current festivals and celebrations promoting Latinx arts and culture.

The Puerto Rican Committee

The Puerto Rican Committee (PRC) of Lancaster was made up of Puerto Rican leaders from the community with a goal of promoting culture and providing social services to the Latinx community started in 1978-1979 in the Southeast. The PRC founded the Puerto Rican Parade and many other Latinx related fairs, festivals, and events throughout the city. Festivals were held initially held in the Southeast and progressively moved into more mainstream downtown spaces. Wilfredo Seda, the current disc jockey at WLCH Radio Centro, recalled that in the late 70's and early 80's Lancaster City was not a welcoming or safe place for Latinx. Seda believed that the efforts of local Latinx leaders like Carlos Graupera, who founded the Spanish American Civic Association in 1971, and the work done by the PRC are what paved the way for generations of Latinx to reclaim their narrative (Seda, 2016).

The PRC operated out of committee member's homes until 2005 when Hector Valentin and Rafael DeJesus purchased a former bar and German clubhouse located on the edge of Southeast Lancaster City. The committee members intended to transform the old bar into a brick-and-mortar cultural center for the PRC. The building was renovated and opened in 2007 as the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (Harris, 2007). PRC planned to include a computer lab, dedicated gallery space for artwork, staged performances and lecture, language classes for Spanish speakers and for English speaking Latinx who want to learn Spanish and more (Harris, 2007). The goals were driven by the PRC's mission to share Latinx culture as well as "reconnect [American-born ethnic Latinos] to their culture" (Harris, 2007). Modesto Rodriguez also stated that the center was "something that's been missing here [in Lancaster City] (Meadows, 2007). The PRC wanted to use the space to show young Latinos "who they are and where they come from" and having a concrete space helped provide that message with consistency. In September

of 2007, the doors to the Puerto Rican Cultural Center opened. The PRC began referring to itself as the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) to solidify the connection with the new space. The PRCC repeatedly appeared in local newspapers and held regular exhibitions for the first few years of its existence. The center closed sometime in 2012-2013 and the PRCC dissolved. There is no clear reason why the PRCC disbanded but there are many rumors as to how and why we no longer have one central Latinx committee for Lancaster City. Most conversation partners lament the closing of the PRCC and recalled memories of attending parties or lectures in the space. The loss of the center seems like a symbolic loss as no new building or committee has taken its place.

The PRCC Puerto Rican Parade

The most popular offering provided by the PRC was the Puerto Rican Parade. The parade occurred annually since 1987 according to Modesto Rodriguez (Harris, 2010). Like most of PRC's offerings, the parade started in the Southeast quadrant and later expanded to the downtown area of Lancaster City. The parade was usually held on a Saturday in September and included dancers, singers, prominent community figures, high school bands, vendors, and mayors from various Puerto Rican counties who flew out just for the celebration. The parades and related festival regularly had at least 10,000 or more attendees and 300-500 volunteers or parade participants (Harris, 2010, Walk 2008). In 2007, PRCC expanded the parade to include more Latinx cultures. Modesto Rodriguez stated, "We've been doing the Puerto Rican Parade for 28 years and this year decided to expand and invite other cultures from Latino nations in the Caribbean, South America and Central America" (Ingen, 2007). Along with the more inclusive stance, the parade was expanded to include two days of cultural events in Lancaster Square's Binns Park and the PRCC headquarters. In 2008, the Latinofest was shortened to one day due to

“the troubled economy” (Walk, 2008).

In 2010 the Puerto Rican Parade was nearly cut from the PRCC’s program altogether due to the addition of a new \$5,000 permit for weekend parades and the persistent economic strain of the 2008 recession (Harris, 2010). The parade was saved by the law firm Hagelgans and Veronis, who covered the permit costs. The addition of the \$5,000 permit was an unpopular move to attempt to generate revenue for “the cash-strapped city” (Harris, 2010).

In 2011, the Puerto Rican parade took to the streets one last time. The Puerto Rican Parade as well as other popular local parades like the American Spirit Parade were unable to continue due to the new permit cost and constraints on blocking off city streets (Harris, 2010). Many PRCC members felt the new permit and push to move the parade from Saturday to Sunday was a way of shutting down the annual event despite its popularity. No parades, Latinx or other, have returned to Lancaster City’s cultural festivities as of the completion of this thesis.

PRCC and the Formation of LACC and LAA

Since the dissolution of the PRCC, two organizations emerged as leaders in the Latinx community. The Latin American Cultural Center (LACC, established 2012) and the Latin American Alliance (LAA, established 2014). The organizations host similar programming throughout the year and are both known for their late-summer festivals. The groups are allegedly a product of the PRCC’s dissolution. I was not interested in digging into the details of why the PRCC may have split into two distinct organizations because I believed that covering internal strife was not within the scope of my research.

The following sections outline the Latin American Cultural Center’s and the Latin American Alliances festivals. I visited the festivals in the summer of 2016 and took field notes. I

chose to critically examine the festivals by acknowledging the elements I found successful and those that I felt detracted from the events.

Latin American Cultural Center Festival

The LACC held the Latin American Cultural festival on September 11th, 2016 in Binn's Park and Lancaster Square (see figure 5). It is a one-day affair and usually runs from the early afternoon until the late evening (about 2pm-11pm).

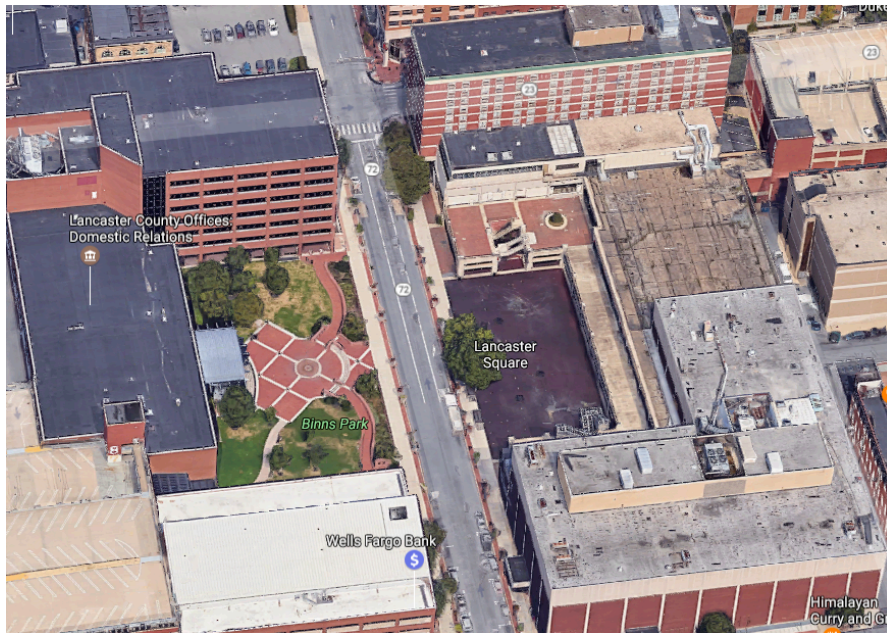


Figure 3: Satellite view of Binns Park and Lancaster Square Source Google Maps:

The festival is split into three focus areas: a stage for performances and music, a food and souvenir space with seating, and sponsored tables.



Figure 4: Photo of stage with performers at Binns Park for the Latin American Cultural Festival Source: Visit Lancaster City

The Stage

The stage (Figure 6), surrounded by ample standing room, hosts performances throughout the day. The performances represent each country of origin present in Lancaster City. The majority of acts throughout the day were dancers and musicians. An accompanying brochure (see figure 7) listed the acts and times they were expected to take the stage. Each performance lasted about 30 minutes. Other than the brochure, however, there seemed to be little organization in terms of how long each group performed. Some groups performed several sets in their allotted time and others one or two 30-minute-long sets. This caused some attendees to feel like some cultures or sub-cultures were under-represented. One attendee, who chose to remain anonymous, believed that, Mexico, Venezuela, and Spain seemed to be over-represented. They felt that there was little emphasis on Puerto Rican and Dominican culture and drew comparisons to the old PRCC parade that was more about Puerto Rican culture. Another attendee, Maritza¹³ felt that the

¹³ Maritza is my mother however we attended the event separately and I followed up with her thoughts in a group

Spanish dancers and musicians, seemed to occupy more stage time than some of the other groups.



Latin American Cultural Center
 "Proud of Our Roots!"
4th Annual Latin American Cultural Festival
 Sunday, September 11th, 2016
 2:00 PM – 9:00 PM
 Binns' Park, Lancaster, PA

Entertainment Schedule:

2:00 PM **Festival Commences**

- **Opening Ceremony** – Commemoration of the Heroes and Fallen of 9/11
 Presented by the Lancaster Red Rose Honor Guard
The US National Anthem – Performed by Landry Krebs – McCaskey High School Student
Himnos Las Americas
Display of Latin American Flags

2:30 – 2:45PM "WH Dance Academy – Latin Flair" – Latin Dances
 3:00 - 3:30 PM "Flamenco Flavor" – Flamenco De Espana
 3:45 – 4:15PM "Grupo Ultimatum" – Tex Mex Band
 4:45 – 5:15 pm "Joropo Jam" Venezuelan Music – Banda
 • "Folk Dance Casa Venezuela" – Venezuelan Dance (5:15-5:30PM)
 5:45 – 6:15PM "Impacto Vallenato" – Colombian Folklor (Band)
 6:15-6:45PM "X-Plosion Latina" – Bachata, Merengue, Salsa, Bomba & Plena (Band)
 7:00 PM "Ismael Miranda" 'El Nino Bonito de la Salsa' – Salsa (Band)
 8:30 PM **Festival Concludes**

"Jardin de La Infancia" (Kidz Korner): Sponsored by The Mix at Arbor Place

2:00PM – 4:30PM Fun –N-Games ☺ Face Painting ☺ Arts and Crafts

Off Stage Performances

2:45 -3:00PM Paul Rodriguez (learn to dance with Paul) Youth Group
 3:30 -3:45PM Zumba – Carmen Calixto
 4:30-4:45Pm Paul Rodriguez
 5:30- 5:45PM Zumba – Carmen Calixto

"Torneo de Dominos" | "Dominoes TOURNAMENT"
Sponsored by The Lancaster Dominoes Club

1:00PM – 2:00PM Sign up and registration for the tournament
 3:00 PM Tournaments Starts

Figure 5 Agenda for the 4th Annual Latin American Cultural Festival Source: Latin American Cultural Center

Despite the issue of timing-which may be out of the hands of LACC as the performers curated their time-slots (Figure 7)-I found the variety of representation refreshing. I believe the

interview wherein she mentioned her feelings about the festival.

choice to downplay Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic may have been deliberate due to the influx of a wider variety of Latinx cultures in recent years. The LACC's mission includes a statement about "promot[ing] and preserv[ing] the richness of the Latin American cultural heritage and shar[ing] common cross-cultural experiences" (LACC, 2017). The critiques, though valid opinions from the individuals I spoke with, imply a lack of clarity in the LACC's differentiation from the old PRCC events. The LACC has not made it clear enough that they are separate from or different from the Puerto Rican Committee. Additionally, the performers representing Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic chose to divide their time into shorter performance sets and varied representations of dance styles. The groups did little to explain the different dance styles which may have created the impression of less representation despite their having the same amount of time as the other groups

Vendors and Food

Similar to most Latinx festivals in Lancaster City and nationally, food seemed to be the most important aspect of the festival. The patio area across the street from the stage hosted a variety Latinx food trucks-mostly Puerto Rican and Dominican cuisine. Two souvenir stalls were also prominently displayed. The most prominent vendor display consisted of a large tent with several tables holding an array of souvenirs, Latin American and Caribbean flags, and CDs of Latinx music mixes. The display was enticing but the sound of shoppers sampling the music on a loud stereo system competed with the performances across the way. This proved chaotic because if an attendee was purchasing food, the performances were drowned out by salsa and reggaeton mixes on the stereo. Conversely, if one was watching the performance across the street, the stereo's ever-changing playlist could be heard in the background. The noise and concentration of

food trucks to the patio area seemed to reinforce the division caused by Queen street and caused the festival's main attractions to feel disconnected from each other.

Sponsored Tables

Rather than promoting successful Latinx entrepreneurs or artists, LACC chose to host politicians, health, and social services. I have found this to be a common theme in many Latinx festivals and I believe it sends the message that while residents can enjoy our cultural food, music, and dance, they must also realize that we are a group in need of charity or social services. A festival celebrating Latinx culture should not promote the idea that we are an incomplete or needy group. Comparatively, other events hosted in Lancaster Square tend to have tables for local businesses, raffles for gift baskets, tents for local artists and craftsmen, and tables sponsored by local museums with small traveling displays. With so much emphasis on Lancaster City's quirky arts scene in other Lancaster Square events, I can't help but wonder why the LACC feels the need to politicize the Latinx population or reinforce the perception that we are a needy community.

Conclusion/Critique

Overall, my impression of the performances was that they were well executed and impressive but a bit disorganized in terms of announcements and transitions. I personally would have appreciated if signage was available around the festival space with the schedule of events. I would also suggest more information about the individual dance styles in the program as well as an explanation of each group or dance style from the Masters of Ceremonies. Perhaps better

division of time would also ensure that there is equal representation of all Latin American cultures.

More obvious welcome tables or hosts at the entrances would have helped to guide and engage attendees. It would also help clarify the LACC's mission and vision if greeters handed out pamphlets throughout the event. I asked conversation partners who attended the LACC festival how they felt about the organization of the festival. All conversation partners were confused by the purpose of the celebration (i.e. was this celebrating something specific about each culture? Or all cultures? Who was the organizer? etc.). Despite the confusion, most conversation partners enjoyed the celebration.

Lastly, I believe the space, Lancaster Square and Binns Park, is a problematic location to host festivals in general. If the space was divided differently, then the festival might feel more cohesive. In most events held in the Square that do not have a welcome table, audience retention is difficult. Many residents either passed through the festival or stop by for food but will not stay for the duration of the evening. Perhaps tables with a welcoming committee at each entrance would help create the illusion of an enclosed space and allow for more audience retention throughout the festival.

The festival is a success but can use quite a bit more organization and a clearer purpose to be truly successful. I believe that having more artwork and expanding activities or performances throughout the venue space can help liven up the festival. Sponsored tables should be required to host an activity or provide more than just pamphlets of their services. Including more local Latinx entrepreneurs will also help create a positive impression of the community and provide networking opportunities for all attendees.

Latin American Alliance Festival

The Latin American Alliance held the Festival Latino Americano on September 24th, 2016. The festival was also a one-day event with performances and food as the primary attraction. Leading up to the event, LAA launched a new website and marketed the Long's Park event heavily. I believe the intense nature of the marketing campaign was in part due to the fact that the Longs Park festival is relatively new in comparison the LACC's Binn's Park festival and the location is outside of the city proper (Figure 8 and 9). Attendee's to the festival were greeted at the entrance and handed brochures with a schedule of events. The brochures were nicely printed and I found myself referencing the map provided as well as the schedule repeatedly.

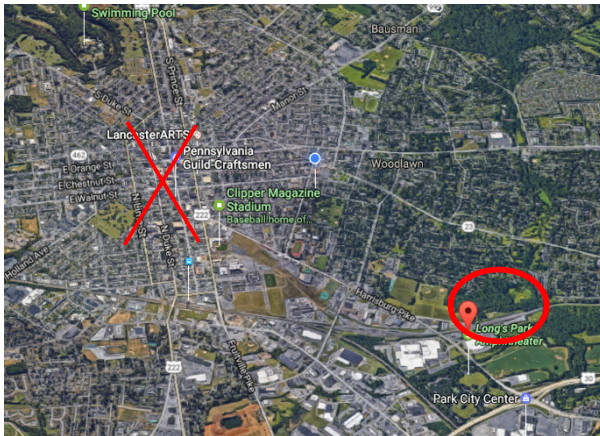


Figure 8: Map indicating Lancaster City marked with an X, Long's Park highlighted with a circle Source: Google Maps



Figure 9: Satellite view of Long's Park highlighting location for festival highlighted with a circle Source: Google Maps

The Stage

The stage (Figure 9) performances included representatives of an array of Latin American cultures and included many dance groups and a few musical groups. There was an upper stage and lower stage that was utilized as a dancefloor for some groups and as additional performance space for others. For example, a Brazillian instrumental group had dancers that danced on both the upper and lower stage space. A group of Argentine dancers used the lower stage for their performance. The flexibility engaged the audience well and allowed for participation. Many conversation partners who attended the LAA festival were frustrated by the fact that the lower stage made it difficult to see especially from the back of the crowd. This could have been solved by placing the second stage a bit higher than laying it on the ground.

The Masters of Ceremonies were lively and helped to explain various dance styles throughout the festival. They also announced breaks in the performance schedule and instructed attendees to visit food, vendor, and sponsor tables between performances which helped create a cohesive experience. There seemed to be a pleasant balance between the representations of each Latin American culture, where no one culture seemed over or under represented. Conversation partners that attended the LAA festival felt that the performance times seemed more organized than the LACC festival and they liked the variation in performers usage of the stage despite the problems with visibility. The LAA festival headlined the event with a performance by Michael Stuart, a prominent Nuyorican¹⁴ salsero.

Vendors and Food

Arranged in a semi-circle around the stage were tables and food trucks. Mostly Puerto

¹⁴ Nuyorican is a colloquial term for a Puerto Rican person who is born and raised in New York City.

Rican and Dominican vendors were represented. The souvenir vendor, the same vendor from the LACC festival, had about the same space as every other vendor and was less disruptive. I believe that the arrangement and proximity to the stage discouraged the vendor from sampling CD's too loudly. In the middle of the space was a children's corner where parents could watch performances while their children to played in the miniature petting zoo. Overall the food variety was similar to the LACC festival.

Sponsored Tables

I was most impressed by the representation of sponsor tables. Sponsor tables were interspersed between food trucks. The variety of sponsorships was representative of many of the offerings available in Lancaster City in general and did not focus heavily on social or human services. Included in the sponsorship table was La Voz, the local Latinx bilingual newspaper. La Voz's table distributed backpacks, frisbees and the September issue of the paper. The Editor-in-Chief mingled with attendees and talked openly about the paper and its recent rebranding. The Hershey Company handed out pins and free candy from a Kiss-Mobile on one end of the crescent while Turkey Hill handed out free ice cream on the other.

I was pleased to see a representation of art at the Church World Service and League of Women Voters table. They displayed a miniature photography exhibition from a series title *InVisible Americans*. The exhibition represented part of a larger collection of images and stories of undocumented immigrants. The photographs of undocumented individuals were accompanied by text pulled from interviews that explained their immigration status or their impression of living in the United States. Many individuals discussed hiding their undocumented status or the

journey to becoming a naturalized US citizen. Church World Service (CWS) employees and some of the subjects of the images helped explain the content of the project. They also helped attendees register to help CWS or register to check their voting status. I was impressed to see some representation of visual arts made with the Latinx community in a Latinx festival especially a body of work that was provocative and potentially controversial. Overall, I was impressed that there were far fewer health and social services tents so the focus shifted from serving a needy community to celebrating a thriving community.

Conclusion/Criticism

Location is the most problematic component of this event. Long's Park's location is not easily reachable via public transit or on foot and is roughly 3 miles from the center of the city where most residents live. An event celebrating Latinx arts and culture should be closer to the community it is claiming to represent OR have a shuttle or carpool option for city residents. The benefit of hosting a festival in Long's Park is the landscape and architecture of the space. It is wide open, has a focal point (the stage), and parking. Additionally, there are few paths to the festival therefore effectively forcing attendees and greeters to interact. The preliminary encounter with a greeter allows the LAA an opportunity to introduce their organization and create an entry space for the audience.

The overall organization of the festival was impressive and open. I found the central space to be the most comfortable because I could hear and see stage performances at a distance while also mingling with friends and family. The vendors arranged on the periphery helped create a boundary around the festival and the addition of Latinx and Caribbean flags just outside of the

vendor boundary helped establish a tone and theme for the festival. The park offered a relatively blank canvas that a more urban environment like Lancaster Square doesn't really have.

The vendors were well curated however the lack of arts or craft wares reinforced the sense that Latinx culture is all about food and performance. The addition of the photography exhibition helped fill the visual art void, but in the future there should be more artwork, artifacts, or craft tables. Having positive assets to the community like *La Voz* helped create a sense that the Latinx community is thriving. The stands were engaging and gave away free souvenirs or treats which helped engage the audience.

Finally, the performances were curated well. A few performances had announcers explain or translate the songs and dance moves to the audience. I believe this was a crucial moment in the festival because the audience was not only entertained but educated. Creating a context, especially a historical context, helps add value to a cultural experience. In the future, I believe that having consistent commentary for performances is necessary to facilitating a cultural festival that both educates new audiences and reminds veteran audiences of their roots. This context can also help establish a mission or vision that is currently lacking from this festival. Though celebrating the Latinx culture is sufficient, the goal is still unclear.

San Juan Bautista Festival

I attended San Juan Bautista's four-day festival and recorded my observations. I attended with the intention of gathering observational data and attempted to talk to as many attendees as possible. I chose to ask general questions and let the conversations evolve naturally rather than approach the attendees as a researcher. I wanted candid, genuine responses and considering the

history of the Southeast, I believed approaching the community as a researcher would cause the community to feel guarded or question my intentions. The following section describes the festival’s history, my personal critique of the event, and stories from conversation partners related to the festival.

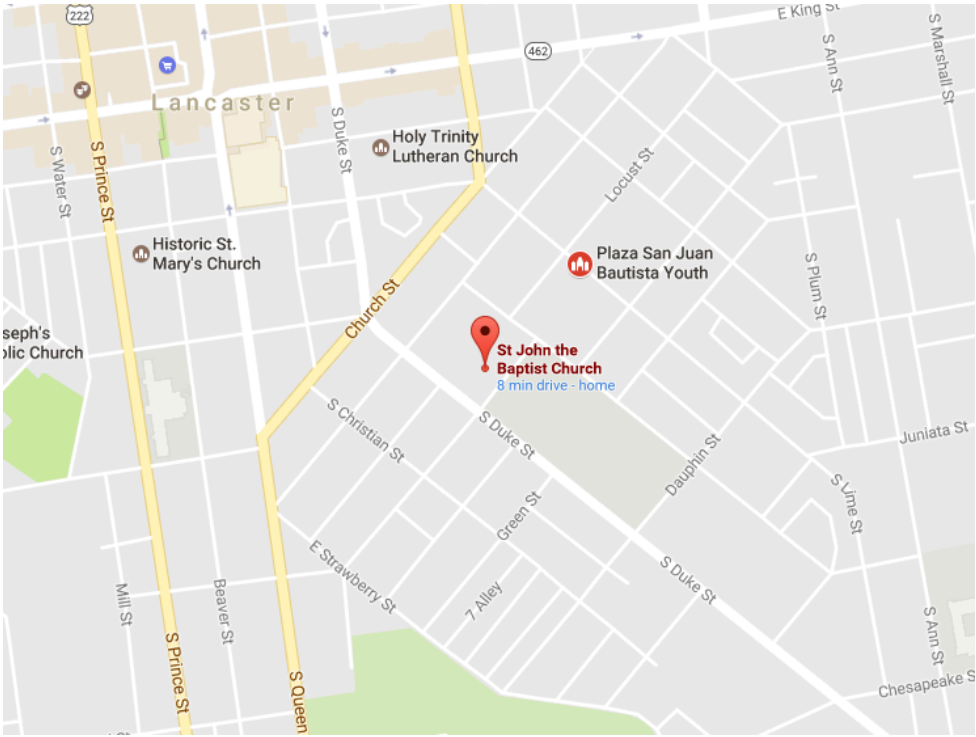


Figure 10: Map highlighting location of San Juan Bautista Church in Southeast, Lancaster Source: Google Maps

Background /History of the San Juan Bautista Festival

San Juan Bautista’s festival is a four-day festival and is the largest fundraiser for the church. It consists mostly of food and music. The Catholic church is located in the Southeast area of Lancaster (Figure 10) and is the church home of the many of Lancaster’s Latinx residents. The general idea of the festival has changed little since its inception: Parish members host stands that represent their country of origin’s cuisine. Money collected from the festival is funneled back to

the parish to fund general operations. Each day of the festival, local talent-usually dancers and traditional musicians- are featured on the stage. Tables are sponsored by local businesses and organizations and carnival-like attractions are arranged behind a wide array of food stands.

San Juan Bautista's festival began as a fundraiser for the church in 1982. "25 years ago as a much more modest celebration of mostly Puerto Rican food, was then held in the church's basement. It expanded greatly in 1992, when festival organizers began to offer a car as the grand prize of the raffle. They now sell about \$35,000 a year in raffle tickets. A decade later [in 2002], the festival gained its first corporate sponsorships. That provided money for hiring professional musicians and increasing advertising" (Harris, 2008). 2008 marked the first year that the festival extended from three days to four. The change occurred as the Puerto Rican Committee declared that it would no longer be hosting the Puerto Rican Parade.

While San Juan Bautista's festival has become an integral part of the social fabric of the Latinx community, it has also suffered from the stigma of the Southeast. Waves of crime reports and rumors tend to dictate participant turnout. During focus groups and group interviews with Latinx residents, individuals reported that they had attended the festival in the past or as children but stopped attending do to crime and rumor of crime in the area. Many conversation partners recall the festival being bigger with more carnival rides and activities (Figure 11 highlights the current footprint). Sarah, a participant in a focus group, recalls an altercation ending in a shooting around the time of the festival some years ago. She reported that this particular incident was what caused her to avoid going at all. More about the perception of criminal activity and Latinx festivals will be discussed in Section Two, Chapter Two and Three. Crime is definitely a real problem in the Southeast. Growing up there, it was not uncommon to hear gunfire late at night or see transactions of illegal substances in broad daylight. However, it is not clear if this

sentiment is grounded in truth or a persistent stereotype of the Southeast.

The 33rd Annual Festival

San Juan Bautista's 33rd annual festival began July 27th, 2016 and ended on July 30th, 2016. The festival was full of attendees from Wednesday until Saturday and attracted residents from all quadrants of Lancaster City. Many families from my neighborhood, the West End, co-mingled with long-time Southeast residents.



Figure 11: Outlined here is the satellite view of the footprint of the festival location. Source: Google Maps

Food and Vendors

The culinary options spanned Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Venezuela. Each stand sold out of food nearly every night and the stand holders I spoke with were overjoyed by the turnout. The vendors at each stand were members of the parish and represented their country

of origin, i.e. a Venezuelan-American family sold Venezuelan ceviche and agua fresca, three Mexican-American families banded together to sell a wide variety of Mexican diaspora foods and snacks etc. Each stand is labeled with the country they represent so attendees can easily identify their food's origins. When the stands weren't busy, I was able to engage the vendors and they were happy to talk about the ingredients they used and where their traditions come from. The focus for the festival is overwhelmingly culinary. However clichéd it may be, gathering for a meal seemed to help bring out a wide range of Lancastrians to the festival.

Atmosphere and Attendees Stories

While the atmosphere of the festival was lively and generally pleasant, I noticed an increased presence of police officers the second and third nights. Their presence added a bit of tension as they patrolled the event. Members of San Juan Bautista wore walkie-talkies and also patrolled the event. They seemed to communicate amiably with police officers. The officers did not engage the attendees very much. In retrospect, I wonder if the tension could have been eased by more communication with the vendors or attendees. Perhaps a sponsored table for the Lancaster City Police Department could have also helped connect the officers with the community.

The second night of the festival an altercation occurred in the gas station across the street from the festival location. Officers were dispatched in cars and rerouted traffic. The sirens and lights caused a bit of tension to rise in the festival proper. Many attendees began exiting to their cars or hovered on the fringes until the officers left. I spoke to a few attendees that described the incident as "business as usual" but also said that "incidents are usually a sign that we should head home" (Anonymous 1, 2016).

A small altercation occurred on the third night that caused more tension to rise. A group of teenagers huddled in the entrance became rowdy. I happened to be standing within a few feet of the altercation and it seemed like harmless rabbleroxing. The officers rushed to the scene and quickly removed the group. Some attendees seemed shaken by the altercation but continued to enjoy the performances and mingle. I am not sure what happened to the teens and was unable to receive a response from festival planners about the incident. Moreover, I must acknowledge my own bias and interrogate whether recent national conversations about police brutality had an effect on the tension I was reading in the atmosphere.

During the festival I spoke with attendees informally about their experience in Lancaster. One family¹⁵ -a father (heretofore referred to as Joe) and daughter (heretofore referred to as Sarah)- lamented the shrinkage of the festival over the years. They felt that the increase in policing reinforced the idea that Latinx festivals always end in crime. This sentiment-the association of Latinx festivals and parades with crime-extends beyond Lancaster City. The family believed that majority Black and Latinx festivals, parades, or gatherings are often criminalized while majority White events of similar size or tone are excused. In New York City the Puerto Rican Parade, arguably the largest parade in the nation that celebrates Puerto Rican culture on the mainland, is consistently portrayed in the media as a celebration that ends in violence. The family I spoke with, as well as parents (whom happened to be in attendance and a part of this conversation) are from New York City. In Lancaster City, being from New York has often been interpreted as code for 'thug' or 'ghetto'. There is no real, tangible proof other than my personal lived experience as the child of Nuyoricans and interactions like the one I had with the family at the festival. Throughout the conversation they believed that many non-Latinx

¹⁵ The family was aware of my research and wanted to contribute but requested to remain anonymous.

Lancaster residents perceive the Latinx population as more prone to violence than other populations. I would argue that many Latinx residents have also grown to believe that stereotype as well. The family also believed that their being *Nuyorican* specifically has caused them to be viewed as more prone to violence or to be verbally aggressive.

Sarah recounted her experience moving to Lancaster. She said that her father, who is from the Bronx, had moved to Lancaster with 15 years of experience in electrical work and plumbing. They had plans of opening a restaurant and moved to Lancaster to get away from the busyness of city life. Joe felt that many of the obstacles they encountered were fueled by nuanced racism and their mistreatment worsened when landlords or realtors learned he was from New York City. He thought that with his experience he would be able to easily find an apartment building to purchase and rent apartments from to raise money for his restaurant. Realtor after realtor allegedly denied Joe's proposals claiming he needed special certification or had to be a resident for a certain amount of time.

Eventually he found a building and landlord who was willing to work with him under an agreement that placed his family under two years of probation. He found this insulting but conceded believing that this was the only way to 'make it' in Lancaster. Joe and Sarah started a street-side rotisserie as a way of working around more denial for a restaurant space. When asked if he faced the same problems in food-service he shook his head in agreement but refused to get too much more involved in recounting the struggle to maintain his business. The conversation ended and we parted ways.

This conversation was a crucial component to understanding the festival and the Latinx community beyond the surface value of the otherwise lively celebration. I am grateful willingness of the family to open up and share their experience in the city and believe that their

candid response reveal a common thread among many Latinx in Lancaster City. There is a sense of belonging as well as dis-belonging that permeates even the most Latinx events. More anecdotes and stories of belonging are discussed in Section Two Chapter One and Two.

Sponsored Tables

A selection of sponsored tables were arranged near the stage. Tables were held by the Spanish American Civic Association, a local Jeweler, two funeral homes boasting bilingual services, a Catholic radio show, and C-Town supermarket. The tables were not attended well and mostly offered brochures for their services. The odd mixture of health, financial, and funerary services also seemed to reinforce the message that Latinx are in constant need of social services. Again, I found the choice to host mostly social service tables odd because there are a growing number of small businesses owned and operated by Latinx residents that could have occupied or sponsored tables in a much more meaningful way. In the financial district alone a Latinx-owned boutique, florist, restaurant, and hair salon operate and regularly host networking events with some of the same individuals that coordinate the festival. I was unable to secure an interview with the festival coordinator and was unable to find out who is responsible for curating the sponsor tables.

Conclusion/Critique

Overall, the festival seemed well organized, though schedules of performances were lacking. Like most festivals, there was a lack of visual arts representation. I have contacted San Juan Bautista representatives but have not been able to conduct an interview. I am not sure why

artwork is not shown or incorporated into the festival. News coverage of the festival usually spends more words on the array of foods as a way of understanding or representing Latinx culture. I believe that in the Latinx diaspora food is a way of conveying culture and history however I often wonder if we are limiting our representation by only focusing on the culinary aspects of our culture. As an insider, I understand the significance of food and its ties to tradition, but I also believe that we need to expand cultural literacy beyond culinary arts. In Lancaster City, Latinx culture might remain pigeon-holed as a culture with good cuisine if we continue to allow it to dominate our festivals and celebrations.

As for the policing of the event, I believe that the festival organizers need to use some version of community policing. Community policing helps police officers become part of the social fabric of a community by inviting them to partake in festivals while also protecting attendees. As I previously proposed, a table where officers can recruit for their department and share what their goals are for the community would be ideal. This will help build trust between the officers and the community.

Millersville University Offerings

Campus Offerings

Millersville University has hosted a variety of celebrations of Latinx arts and culture in the past with the earliest accessible document declaring a Latino festival sponsored by Millersville University in 1990. Since 1990, Millersville has sponsored a week-long celebration of Latinx art. The celebration offers lectures from visiting artists and Millersville University Latino Studies professors in addition to theater productions, spoken word, music, dance, and artwork by Latinx artists. Today, the festival is led by Dr. Kimberly Mahaffy and it is known as

the Rosario Caminero Latino Cultural Celebration. The celebration/festival is usually concentrated on Millersville's campus and caters mostly to the Millersville University community. According to Dr. Mahaffy, the festival is an attempt to fill in the gaps of the Latino Studies department while connecting the local Latinx community with relevant arts and culture offerings.

We don't have regular courses offered in the arts that focus on Latinos...so one of the goals of the Rosario Caminero Latino Cultural Celebration is to make sure that we bring in Latino artists, whatever visual arts, or performing artists because to me the curriculum already addressed you know especially the social science piece- which is what I do...and we've got the history piece and we've got geography but we don't have the arts" (Mahaffy, 2016).

Dr. Mahaffy went on to express concern with how the lack of arts representation is a void that can only be filled with a dedicated space or "institute" for Latinx culture. Education, she believes, can help young Latinx connect the arts with their culture and vice versa. Her goal is to start instigating the need to fill this void by bringing artists in the festival to the local schools.

The Rosario Caminero Latino Cultural Celebration has partnered with the Lancaster School District to help spread awareness about Latinx artists. Dr. Mahaffy believes that as educators and people who are aware of the void we need to meet people where they are. In her words, "instead of saying 'hey, come on out! I'm doing this class', you know, kind of bring the stuff to them and then see if, you know, you can get people involved that way" (Mahaffy, 2016).

Millersville University Satellite Campus

The Ware Center is located in a high-traffic area of town, near Gallery Row and a string of local restaurants (Figure 12). Fran Rodriguez and Norman Bristol-Colon, local politicians and community leaders, were contacted by Millersville University to create a Latino Arts Festival for the new satellite campus in 2010. Fran and Norman are often called upon to help create and facilitate programs for the Latinx community. They have worked together in Pennsylvania state government and local government. They have partnered with each other to advocate for the for nearly every issue related to the Latinx community in Lancaster City and County though their focus has been on civic engagement and education in the Latinx community. Fran and Norman are key figures in the Latinx community and an example of ambitious leaders who's initiatives have changed the fabric of the Latinx social scene.

I interviewed Fran Rodriguez to learn more about her role in the Latino Arts Festival and her perspective on Latinx engagement in the city. Initiatives like the Latino Empowerment Project, a leadership and support program for Latinx residents of South Central Pennsylvania, and Adelante Education Forum, a program for young Latinx students in the School District of Lancaster were the result of Fran's tireless efforts in advocating for increased support of the Latinx community. Fran stated that she and Norman knew they needed to make sure Latinx artists were highlighted at Latinx cultural events and strongly believed that the artists should be selected by Latinx stakeholders. When the opportunity came along at the Ware Center she and Norman knew they had to take on the task. She stated that planning the program was not easy. "We're moving in the right direction *but* that took a lot of work. And it took a lot of convincing that [a Latino Arts Festival] was not only necessary but the right thing to do...so it's slowly

moving in the right direction... We're not there yet" (Fran Rodriguez, 2016). She believes that Lancaster City residents and decision makers aren't always aware of their discriminatory practices because they often make decisions out of habit or their personal experiences.

She and Norman approached the Latino Arts Festival fully aware of the ways they would have to fight for more representation. Both individuals are often the only Latinx representatives "at the table." She explained:

It's hard for people who want to bring change [to the city] to do it pretty quickly. It takes time for [mainstream] organizations to embrace that this [change] is safe...and it's actually going to help us in the long-run...so once they see that it's going to help them-it's for the betterment of them-then they say 'yes.' But if it's for the betterment of Latino culture, it's like they're a little skeptical. (Fran Rodriguez, 2016)

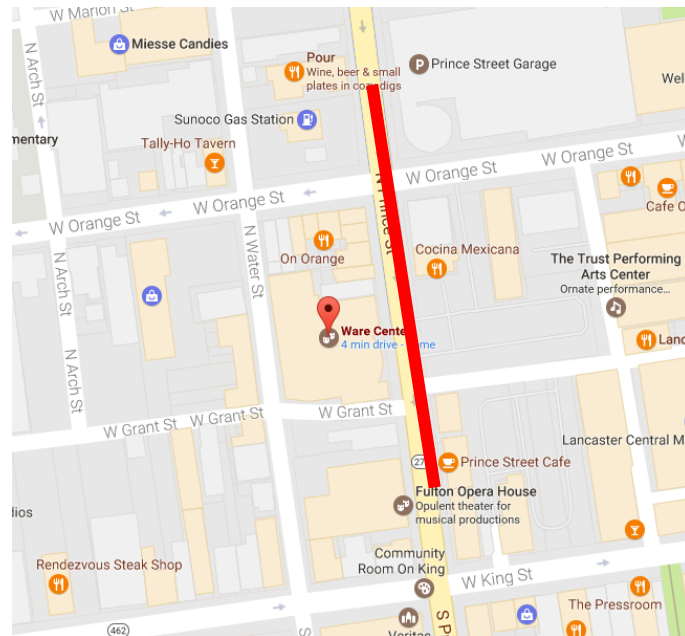


Figure 12: Location of the Ware Center with gallery row highlighted in red. Source: Google Maps.

2011 marked the formation of the Latino Arts Festival at the Ware Center. The festival, on its 6th year as of the completion of this study, offers “music, arts, dancing, theater,” spoken word, film, academic lectures, and more (Umble, 2015). Fran Rodriguez stated that the goal of the festival was to make sure others knew how complex and wide-ranging Latinx culture is. She explained that “as Latinas, we bring our culture to the table, but we [also] celebrate everything” (Umble, 2015).

The festival is one of the first of its kind in recent years to take a step beyond showcasing food, dance, and music. It is a three-day affair usually in the early spring. The majority of the festival is free and but ticketed events are intentionally priced for families and students. The Ware Center is located near the center of downtown Lancaster and serves both the Lancaster City community and Millersville students.

Conclusion/Critique

Dr. Mahaffy and Fran Rodriguez’s programs are an example of meeting a community where they are (i.e. hosting University events in the downtown campus, pricing for the audience etc.) and providing multiple avenues of cultural literacy (i.e. lectures, visual and performance art, non-traditional and traditional music etc.) The programs are wide ranging and in spaces that are familiar to the Latinx community. Having additional workshops in schools and libraries shows the community that they’re not being forced to enter unfamiliar space if they don’t want to. Additionally, the two programs strive to legitimize Latinx arts and culture beyond food or entertainment value.

Conclusion

Festivals are an important act of belonging for many communities. With the Latinx community in Lancaster City, festivals appear to be a lasting remnant of what may have been a more lively line-up of cultural events. With the dissolution of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, the loss of the building, the indefinite cancellation of the Latinx parade, and the apparent decrease in other Latinx cultural celebrations, the four festivals detailed above carry much more weight in terms of ownership and self-determination for the Latinx community. They are spaces in time and spaces in the city that allow the Latinx community to be temporarily as unapologetically Latinx as possible. I believe this is necessary and crucial work, however, I also believe that these short-term expressions of culture signal a need for a more established space of expression or sustained expressions of culture that offer historical context and opportunities to enhance cultural literacy. The focus of entertainment and food is necessary as is space for revelry and pride, however true cultural literacy allows a community to ground their pride in a shared cultural history and is rooted in cultural artifacts that convey the story of a community.

CHAPTER TWO

GALLERY SPACES AND PHYSICAL ARTS AND CULTURE SPACES

According to LancasterARTS' data from 2010, Lancaster City was home to "125 professional art venues" (LancasterARTS,2010). Art venues include artist studios, café galleries, galleries, museums, and shoppes with gallery space. Lancaster City's Gallery Row¹⁶, the stretch of galleries on North Prince Street between West Walnut and West King (Figure 12 and 13), is the site of a majority of brick-and-mortar art spaces in the city. Other art spaces are scattered throughout the city. The following chapter focuses on Lancaster City galleries and art spaces created by Latinx residents for Latinx residents.

¹⁶ Gallery Row was formally designated sometime between 2007 and 2010 as part of the art's revitalization efforts promoted by city officials.



Figure 13: Map of Gallery Row Source: Google Maps

Spanish American Civic Association-“El Museo”

The Spanish American Civic Association (SACA) began in 1971 in the Southeast of Lancaster City. SACA’s mission is “to foster and perpetuate the cultural, social and economic well-being of the Latinos residing in the City and County of Lancaster, and thereby contribute to the general well-being of the community at large” (SACA, 2016). The majority of SACA’s programs are in developing properties for home-ownership through their home ownership assistance program and providing health and social services for the community.

While SACA’s focus has historically been on assisting the community primarily in health

and education they have also attempted to open spaces for artistic exploration. The majority of what I was able to uncover about SACA's exhibition work was through word of mouth. The only documented proof I could find of a resembling a SACA museum exhibition space was a 1992 partnership with the North Museum, a local natural science museum. The North Museum received a five-year grant through the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. The grant was used to "help educate children about science in both English and Spanish (Gerhard, 1992). The majority of funds were used to translate and create bilingual exhibitions and curriculum guides. The program was successful according to interviewees quoted in 1992 and 1993 newspaper articles about the partnership. There is no documentation of an arts component nor is there any mention of an artistic space in newspaper or SACA archives.

In 1975, SACA reportedly opened a Latinx themed exhibition space, El Museo, in the Southeast through a partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS). There is no documentation about the exhibition space or newspaper articles regarding the space that I could access. I interviewed Wilfredo Seda, former Assistant Director of SACA and current disc jockey of SACA radio programs, to gather more information about what SACA has done and is currently doing in the Latinx community. Wilfredo said that SACA bought a property on South Lime and Dauphin and converted the building into a museum. Wilfredo stated that the Latinx community was aware of Latinx artists who created work but they were never recognized by the greater Lancaster City community. He stated:

They were art teachers or folks that were artists that were doing things that happened to live in Lancaster so we started promoting those individuals, okay, and letting the wider community know, you know, yeah, we have artists too and they're not only drawing a palm tree on the beach, okay, because again that's the stereotype" (Seda,

2016).

According to Wilfredo, El Museo was a way for SACA to help the Latinx community understand that they can be more than the stereotype. Wilfredo believed that the success of the museum came from showing the community Latinx individuals that were making art and showing their work locally and nationally. Through the partnership with OAS, SACA was able to borrow work from various museums in the DC area and showcase them in Lancaster City. Wilfredo described El Museo's programming as a "very grassroots mission" (Seda, 2016). He recalled SACA staff renting vans to pick up artwork or artifacts from OAS and driving them down to Lancaster. No curators or art handlers were involved at the time, just SACA staff and their desire to show the community diverse examples of Latinx artwork. All promotion and marketing was through word-of-mouth and local news outlets.

The reception of El Museo was exceptional according to Wilfredo. He recalled the community being excited about the space and having well attended openings. El Museo lasted about three years. The program stopped because SACA needed to focus their attention and funding on their health, education, and poverty relief programs. I asked Wilfredo if he thought SACA would attempt to open a similar space again. He believed that while he is an enthusiastic appreciator and promoter of the arts, SACA should maintain its focus and allow other Latinx to establish an arts and culture venue. He stated, "It would be good...to have something again with folks that are really interested in the arts because our organization can't be everything to everybody. Because you have to focus in sometimes, you know, and have the folks that that's their expertise and their passion [establish venues]" (Seda, 2016).

Cosas Gallery

In terms of visual arts space, there appears to be only one documented visual arts space that showed the work of Latinx Lancaster City artists regularly. Cosas gallery opened in 2009 and was the brainchild of Connie De Alva Higgins, a Latinx painter and city resident during the gallery's run. The gallery was located at 257 West King Street near the edge of Gallery Row. I was able to contact Connie De Alva Higgins but was unable to secure a date to hold a formal interview. In lieu of an interview, I sent a few questions but was unable to secure a response from Ms. Higgins. The gallery is not mentioned in any local newspaper archives. Cosas Gallery was listed in LancasterARTS archives for two exhibitions that indicate the galleries Latinx focus. The first exhibition titled "Remembering Puerto Rico" was listed in May of 2009 and featured the work of Arlene Rivera. A subsequent exhibition was listed in the June LancasterArts newsletter and featured the work of Pedro Arocho and Connie De Alva Higgins (Lancaster Arts Archives, 2016). There are no other listings on record and there is no clear indication of the success of the gallery. A few conversation partners recalled the gallery but did not recall whether the exhibitions were well attended or well received. The gallery closed in 2010.



Figure 14 Location of Manicato Taino Cultural Center Source: Google Maps

Manicato Taino Cultural Center

Manicato Taino Cultural Center is a multi-functional space dedicated to preserving Taino¹⁷ culture, presenting Taino artifacts, and educating the community. With a heavy focus on craft and spirituality, the Taino tribal leaders of the Yukayeke (or Taino village) teach the community about Taino traditions in Puerto Rican and Dominican indigenous culture. The center is located Beaver St. in the Southeast. They are a 501 (c)(3) and have received awards for their educational work from the Bronx Museum of Art.

¹⁷ Tainos are the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean. Most Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cuban, Haitian, and Jamaican communities can trace their roots back to the Taino.



Figure15: Facade of Manicato Taino Cultural Center Source: Google Maps

The space resembles a house from the outside (Figure 15). Beaver is a primarily residential area and is known as a “violent” neighborhood. I grew up knowing that Beaver was a street to avoid. Rafy jokes about the neighborhood’s reputation stating that the local “gang-bangers’ keep an eye on the space because they struck a deal with the tribal leaders. The tribe members are aware of their unconventional space but believe that they can better serve the community by situating themselves in the midst of the “worst” of the community. Rafy and the elders believe that as long as a group or organization come to the community with respect they, the community, will return the respect.



Figure 16: Display cases and ceremonial instruments in the main gallery space Source: Manicato Taino Cultural Center

Inside Yukayeke Manicato (Figure 16 and 17), however, resembles a miniature museum and sacred space. An in-progress mural of goddess Atabeira is painted along the right wall and on the left glass cases of Taino artifacts and replicas of traditional tribal garb cover the walls. Original artwork by one of the elders decorates what little empty space there is. Rafy shared that the center has about 500 Taino artifacts from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The majority are from the Dominican Republic due to their more relaxed regulations on the purchase of indigenous historic pieces. The center has 6 core active members who are also the elders and founders of the Yukayeke. Cacike Guatu Iri (Mark Ortiz) is the tribal leader and buyer of all of the artifacts. Sub Cacike Nicoari (Jose Torres) helps Cacike Guatu Iri with planning and

implementing programs. Behike Toa Kao (Erlinda Cruz) is the medicine person or shaman. Tekina Guamoel (Rafael Torres aka Rafy) is the spokesperson and teacher for the Yukayeke. Guatiao Ironhorse (John) is the craftsmen and maintains the brotherhood. Itu Lisa is the Tribal leader and appoints positions (Yukayeke Manicato, 2016). Rafy explained that the Yukayeke members refer to each other in their tribal names. Their names represent their roles in the Yukayeke as well as the Anglo equivalent-i.e. Guamoel translates to voice of the people which translates role-wise to the public relations person.



Figure 17: Full Moon Ceremony in the main space Source: Manicato Taino Cultural Center

The mission of Manicato Taino Cultural Center is “to educate people, preserve our rich cultural history through arts, language, music, literature, and traditions while honoring our Taíno ancestors of the Caribbean” (Yukayeke Manicato, 2016). The center was founded in 2013 but the Yukayeke has been around since 2009. Rafy shared that his family has always valued community building specifically with the Latinx community. He and his brother joined the

Yukayeke and helped start the center because they believed they needed to provide a literal space to share and preserve Latinx culture. He stated:

[My parents] came in through that struggle you know. So what do my parents do? Just like all of our Hispanic parents do and pretty much all the people coming to this country- you have to assimilate in order to survive...so one thing that my dad did-and he's just turned 70 years old and I thank them for having that vision-he told us as young kids that when you go to school you go to school to learn. You're not going to sit there and waste time. You learn everything and anything that you've been taught. But once you step foot in this house then things are going to change because now I'm going to teach you and we are going to teach you our ways...But when you step outside of the door then you have to make sure that you're on point with what's going on outside that door. We had two different worlds going at one time" (Rafy, 2016).

For Rafy, the space helped him continue the work of his parents. He believes that the Yukayeke helps youth connect with their indigenous Latinx culture in a special way. Rafy and the elders feel that many young Latinx in Lancaster City are disconnected from their culture and aren't taught about the indigenous tribes that inform so much of Latinx traditions. For Rafy the loss is tied to the necessity to code-switch, to have "two worlds going at once" (Rafy, 2016). Code-switching generation after generation can cause some traditions to fall away as parents are trying to assimilate and help their children 'fit-in'. Rafy also attributes the loss of cultural literacy to the "colonization of the mind" caused by assimilation (Rafy, 2016). This colonization causes individuals to "forget what they know or what they had back in Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico" and they "forget to paint and draw and so forth" (Rafy, 2016). For Manicato they believe that the arts are the key to reconnecting with their indigenous roots. Rafy believes that it

is through handling the artifacts, studying them by drawing them, reading and writing, and participating in the song and dance of the full moon ceremonies that youth, especially, can start to learn their history and respect their culture.

The majority of their educational resources and library of books and articles come from years of independent research and the sharing of academic papers and studies from universities. Rafy started his research after hearing rumors of Taino blood running through his family. After serving in the marines, he began seriously digging into literature about indigenous cultures in the Caribbean. He credited the advent of the internet as the tool that allowed his research to be more in-depth and specific. Rafy was open about how he used internet sources to research and connect.

Rafy shared that his older family, specifically his father, came from a generation taught to believe that indigenous culture was extinct in Puerto Rico. He believed that the generational divide persists and many people look at Manicato Taino Cultural Center in the same way that his father did-like they are a bunch of Latinx holding on to something that may not be real. A surprising resource for the Yukayeke to share their stories and connect with others indigenous educators has been social media. Rafy reported that through social media he has been able to connect with Yukayekes in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic in addition to various Yukayekes in New York and New Jersey. Through these connections Yukayeke Manicato's Caciques have been able to meet with other Caciques and compare how their respective Yukayekes are doing. They trade information, books, and research to hold each other accountable. This connection also helps them reinforce that what they are doing is legitimate and real.

The dream scenario for Manicato Taino Cultural Center is to have a permanent space

prominently on display in downtown Lancaster. Rafy shared that despite Beaver Streets close proximity to the city's center, it is primarily residential. Additionally, many city residents still believe Beaver St. is a dangerous neighborhood. Despite the complexities of the neighborhood, however, Yukayeke Manicato is thriving.

Conclusion

I admire the boldness with which Rafy and the elders conduct the Yukayeke. I know this block and I know this neighborhood. Never in my life did I think I could feel the kind of safety and spiritual refreshment I felt in that space. What struck me most is that the feeling is mostly from the artwork and artifacts decorating the small living room space. Rafy disclosed that most visitors have the same reaction. He believed that the cultural art and craft is the proof we as Latinx need to know that we aren't new arrivals and that the artifacts are like proof that we are part of a complex and long historical narrative. Manicato Taino Cultural Center is the only permanent space that preserves and educates with cultural artifacts, historical context, and artwork. Spaces that showcase art regularly or hold space for cultural literacy are important for communities that have been displaced or forced on the margins. The loss of galleries like Cosas or SACA's Museo might go unnoticed in a marginalized community dealing with poverty or other social issues however, their absence can be felt in the lack of context in festivals or other expressions of culture. Festivals and one-time events are often place-less. Even if they happen annually, the space is often converted back into a parking lot or park for general use. With permanent spaces like Manicato Taino Cultural Center, the community has claimed a space that can be visited and revisited as needed. Permanent spaces are important to help a community heal from years of dis-belonging because they help the community regain grounding and establish a

reliquary for cultural artifacts to preserve and ensure space to exercise cultural literacy.

CHAPTER THREE

MURALS

The following chapter discusses murals as spaces for cultural expression. The two murals discussed here are examples of public art that speaks explicitly to the Latinx experience or story in Lancaster City. These murals contain imagery or icons that are drawn from Latinx culture that make them definitively Latinx rather than mainstream or non-cultural. I will discuss the Office of Public Art and its role in creating public art for Lancaster City in Section One, Chapter Five.

Millersville University Latino Community Mural Project

In 2011 Dr. Kimberly Mahaffy and Professor Phillipone of Millersville University decided to use their classes as a way to improve upon what they identified as a lack of visibility of Latinx on Millersville's campus and in nearby Lancaster City. Dr. Mahaffy has taught and worked at Millersville University for sixteen years. She teaches Latinx study courses and has worked toward improving the retention of Latinx students in Millersville University. She began teaching in 2000 and was struck by the lack of representation of Latinx on Millersville's campus. Dr. Mahaffy stated:

I noticed that on campus there were *no* visual representations of Latinos. And there were visual representations of lots of other people! But there were no visual representations of what you can perceive as being Latino. So I really tried to think about

how could we increase that representation, what could we do. And I had been kind of poking around the web looking for local artists or artists somewhere...[Christine Phillipone] came in like 2011 so this was a while...and we started talking and I said 'I have this idea...we really need to do something about the lack of visual representation for Latinos...and she said 'look, I know somebody' (Mahaffy, 2016)

Dr. Mahaffy shared her concerns with Christine Phillipone, an Art Historian and Professor at Millersville University. Following the conversation, Christine connected Dr. Mahaffy with Michelle Angela Ortiz, an artist who specializes in community projects and public art. Michelle agreed to come to Lancaster and work with Christine and Dr. Mahaffy. She pushed for two community-made murals, one for Millersville University and one for Lancaster City. At the time of the mural project, the population of Latinx students at Millersville was about 10%. Dr. Mahaffy had been working on helping increase the retention of Latinx because she noticed that Latinx students seemed to drop-out after the first year and many Latinx students felt unprepared despite their high marks in high-school or college prep programs. She believed that the college wasn't doing enough to support the Latinx students and a prominent, visible display would help Latinx students feel welcome.



Figure 18: Final installation of the MVU mural Source: Dr. Kimberly Mahaffy, Latino Community Mural

The group was able to easily find a location for the Millersville mural however, finding a location in Lancaster City was difficult. They wanted the mural to be visible and semi-permanent. To help ease the process, Michelle suggested printing the murals on vinyl so that it can be hung and removed as needed. Eventually, the Clipper Magazine Baseball Stadium accepted the mural. The second most difficult aspect of putting the artwork together was the collection of oral histories from the Latinx community. Michelle's work is heavily dependent on community participation. Dr. Mahaffy explained that "the beauty of Michelle's work is that it's not just 'Give me some ideas and I'm going to throw a mural up.' It's more that a community has to be invested in the process. And you have to build the relationship...and they have to buy into the concept" (Mahaffy, 2016).



Figure 19 and 20: (left to right) Detail of MVU mural Source: Dr. Kimberly Mahaffy, *Latino Community Mural*

The group decided that they would conduct meet-and-greet gatherings for community members and students, information sessions for interested participants, and make bilingual fliers to help prime the community. This required a majority of the groups time and energy. Dr. Mahaffy mentioned that surprising ideas about the Latinx community began to emerge that both challenged and enriched the project. Dr. Mahaffy’s class was predominantly Latina while Christine’s class was predominantly White women. When Michelle told the class that they would be responsible for collecting oral histories, Christine’s class seemed afraid of going downtown. “I watched [my students] go like ten shades of red. My students, they were so angry.” Dr. Mahaffy explained, “And I saw this one girl who was so quiet. She said, ‘You know what. My aunt lives on Manor....I go there all the time.’ And they were just so infuriated that the students were terrified of coming downtown...So there was this kind of tension that we couldn’t, we didn’t talk about” (Mahaffy, 2016). Eventually, Dr. Mahaffy believed that Christine’s class had a change of heart. She explained, “[They] came away with a much deeper appreciation for the people that they interviewed...though I think they also resented the amount of work that was involved, whereas I felt that my students knew that it was a lot of work. But they felt like they were doing it for...friends and family” (Mahaffy, 2016). In the end, both classes were able to

bridge a divide and create a piece of artwork that tracked their journey. The Latinx students were able to participate in a project special to their particular diaspora and they were able to show their classmates why representation mattered. The non-Latinx students were exposed to a different culture and worked through issues they may not have ever encountered.



Figure 21: Clipper Magazine Stadium Mural Source: Dr. Kimberly Mahaffy, Latino Community Mural

Dr. Mahaffy was pleased with the how the murals were received and thrilled that both classes were able to work through their differences. The mural at the baseball stadium was rehung every year until it began to deteriorate. Dr. Mahaffy hopes to replace the mural or create more in the future for the city. The Millersville mural is still prominently displayed in one of the academic buildings. She shared that a few faculty have asked why the mural was still up. This question frustrated her at first, but she believes that as long as individuals are questioning a mural celebrating Latinx culture means that she needs to continue fighting for more representation.



Figure 22: Clipper Magazine Stadium Mural Source: Dr. Kimberly Mahaffy, Latino Community Mural

Dr. Mahaffy's dream scenario is to establish or help establish a center for Latinx studies, arts, and culture somewhere in the city. She stated that she has been collecting information for a few years now and wants someone or some organization to take on the task if she can't. She shared, "I was over at McCaskey [High School]...and I was actually surprised that they had some murals that represented Puerto Rico and different kinds of cultures of origin....I wasn't expecting that ...I'm troubled by the fact that there's such a profound absence [everywhere else]" (Mahaffy, 2016). She went on to say, "I think that now with this kind of priority of the arts in Lancaster City to me it just seems natural to create a place...I think there's like a void. I mean where are our kids? Or even adults getting the opportunity to express themselves?" (Mahaffy, 2016). The mural project and the reception from the community were proof for Dr. Mahaffy that Latinx residents want and need more visibility. Her encounters with detractors, though few, also helped her see that most non-Latinx residents are simply unaware of the power of representation and deliberate community outreach. She believes that public spaces and public displays can help

educate and empower a community.

SACA Mural Project

The Spanish American Civic Association's El Centro Hispano is located in the heart of the Southeast. Carlos Graupera, executive director of SACA, felt that the organization needed to honor and "respect what happened in this community" with a work of public art (Harris, 2012). In the summer of 2012, a mural was installed with the help of Poetry Paths that depicts twenty-eight individuals who were instrumental to establishing SACA. Poetry Paths is a public art initiative established by Franklin and Marshall College's Philadelphia Alumni Writer's House. The program commissions artwork and poetry for sites throughout the city. For El Centro Hispano, Poetry Paths wanted to honor the story of the Latinx community and convey the significance of SACA's impact on the neighborhood. The mural stretches the width of El Centro Hispano's wall and is one of the only murals that honor's Latinx community leaders. Jared Bader, the artist commissioned to paint the mural, began by taking photos of people at the center as well as photos of people gathering at the weekly farmers market. Gathering around food plays a prominent role in the Latinx diaspora and is a key component to SACA's success. SACA provides free meals for any Southeast resident in the evenings, meals morning to evening for the elderly, and a weekly farmers market so neighborhood residents can have ready access to fresh, healthy produce. A poem titled "La experiencia latina en Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Una siembra fertile y fecunda" or "The Latino Experience in Lancaster, Pennsylvania: A rich and fertile seed" (Harris, 2012). The poem, by local poet Persio Asencio, "speaks of the countries from which they came, their coming together in the face of adversity and the prosperity they have found in this 'legendary city'"(Harris, 2012).



Figure 23: Poetry Paths Mural located on the side of El Centro Hispano



Figure 24: Image of Poetry Paths mural during the unveiling.

Conclusion

Murals, unlike galleries and festivals, are not only a permanent reminder of a group's

presence and contribution to a community but highly visible. Murals function like advertisements or signals of priorities in a city. They are also highly visible examples of representation. In Lancaster City, murals have been a part of the city's social and cultural fabric for at least a decade. Rather than celebrating the diversity in Lancaster City, most murals depict generic representations of city life or historical figures or abstract murals. This is problematic because communities, especially in cases of marginalization or historical displacement, benefit from seeing themselves reflected in a positive manner. I believe that adding more public art, especially murals, that speak to the presence of Latinx in the city will help reinforce a sense of belonging as well as convey the importance of the Latinx community to the greater narrative of Lancaster City.

CHAPTER FOUR

LATINX PERFORMANCE GROUPS AND THEATER

This chapter documents performance groups and theater that focuses on Latinx culture in Lancaster City. Performance and theater, unlike murals, cultural spaces, or festivals, are semi-temporary events that require an often static audience. There is only one explicitly Latinx theater group in the City. I will discuss Latinx performances on mainstream stages in Section One, Chapter Five.

Paloma Players

The Paloma Players are Lancaster City's first bilingual Latinx theater group. They were barely a year old when I spoke with Katerina Rodriguez, the designated Public Relations representative for the group. The mission of Paloma Players and La Academia Paloma is "to serve the Hispanic population of Lancaster with authentic Latino/a Theatre. [They] seek to enrich and be represented in the cultural identity of the growing Arts Community of Lancaster through original productions, guest-artist appearances and professional touring productions with Latino/a themes and artists. The Paloma Players are a company of bilingual performers from a variety of backgrounds. As part of [their] commitment to serve the Hispanic population, La Academia Paloma provides professional actor training programs in both English and Spanish to educate and equip the next generation of Hispanic performers" (Paloma Players, 2016).

The idea to create a Lancaster based Latino theater group is one-year-old but the Paloma

Players as a formal group completed its first year in November of 2015. Katerina is one of three founders: Katerina Rodriguez, Marion Wood O'Sullivan, and José G. Rodríguez-Plaza.

According to Katerina, the idea came from the void she felt after graduating high-school. There were no opportunities for individuals who weren't involved in colleges to continue acting in Lancaster City. Marion Wood O' Sullivan, a professor at Millersville University, met Katerina at a local gym. Katerina shared her dream to become an actress and her frustration with Lancaster's local theaters being inaccessible to Latinx. Marion, who had grown up in Texas in a predominantly Latinx area, shared her vision to have some sort of organization for Latinx theater. Thus Paloma Players was formed. The first performance was *Don Juan is Dead*. It was performed for Millersville University's Ware Center during the production of Georges Polti's acting exercise "36 Dramatic Situations" production. Since their debut, Katerina said that Paloma Players has received an overwhelming amount of support from the Latinx community and Lancaster's artistic community.

As of now, Paloma Players is made up of ten regular members. Depending on the size of the production, however, more players are added. Katerina stated that while all of their productions are from Latin American, Caribbean, or US-born Latino writers, they are open to adding new members. "We don't want to play favorites but some members are always there because they're dependable and reliable but if someone comes out and wants to audition [it's okay]. Anyone can join and the truth is you don't even need to be Latino to join" (Katerina Rodriguez, 2016). For Katerina and many of the members, they felt like they had no space to go if they wanted to see productions that related to the Latinx experience. As actors, they also felt left out of the loop for auditions or opportunities for local theater involvement. Katerina felt that not having academic experience set her back despite her being from Lancaster City. She states:

“Lancaster...has a very large Hispanic community yet when it comes to arts and theater there’s no place for us to go” (Katerina Rodriguez, 2016). Jose Rodriguez-Plaza also shared a similar sentiment: “Theater was never a part of the Latino community here” (Halohan , 2016).

It would be remiss to make such a blanket-statement about Latinx theater. Newspaper archives show that in 1995 Luis Antonio Colon Tirado started Lancaster’s first Latinx puppet theater, Casabe Puppet Theater (Schmidt, 1995). Aside from the brief 1995 write-up, there is no other mention of Latinx based theater troupes. Paloma Players is indeed the first Latinx theater group in the past decade to fight for more visibility and to address the gaping need for bilingual, multicultural productions AND education FOR the Latinx community.

Paloma Players are the first theater group to distinguish their productions as different from ‘community theater.’¹⁸ Katerina wanted to clarify that while she sees the value in community theater, she wanted to make sure that the Latinx community had access to professional theater as well. She believed that holding auditions with high standards, selecting productions of Latin American classics, and welcoming professional actors set Paloma Players apart from community theaters that are more about community building. She believed that emphasizing professionalism legitimized Latinx theater in a way that community theater would not. Katerina stated, “We travel to communities [in Lancaster] and we’re doing community work but at the same time we’re professional and we are getting paid” (Katerina Rodriguez, 2016). The distinction is further emphasized by the Players themselves. At least two of the Players came to Lancaster from their country of origin with a wealth of professional experience under their

¹⁸ Community theater, though a valid asset for communities, is often looked down upon in fine-arts settings. Community theaters are usually free and begin in community centers as an outlet or escape for youth. Productions are usually limited to the community center space or public spaces and the actors are usually regular community members that don’t necessarily have an interest in pursuing theater as a career.

belt. The majority of their theater and acting experience, however, was in Spanish language productions. Despite knowing English, they're accent or inability to improve in English held them back. Since joining the Paloma Players, these actors are able to exercise their English while also showing their talents in their native Spanish. Language flexibility is highly valued in Paloma Players. It is obvious to a seasoned bilingual person if an actor is struggling to seamlessly transition between English and Spanish or sometimes use a conflation of the two (commonly known as Spanglish or Ingleñol).

An incidental benefit that Katerina would like to further capitalize on is the learning experience of the Paloma Players during their productions. I attended a production of *Bocón*, a Mexican/Central American play about a loud-mouthed young boys immigration journey and his encounters with traditional Latin American mythological characters. While some of the folkloric characters were familiar to me, many were new. I shared how I appreciated being exposed to new cultural references within Latinx culture. Katerina explained that the cast and production team also value the learning experiences they have while putting on productions. *Ana in the Tropics* was her favorite example to cite. She said

We learned so much from *Ana in the Tropics* about the Cuban culture that we hadn't [known] before. Like the lectores. You know Cuban factories used to have lectores read to them while they worked? Kind of like their TV but they would read a book them...And so that was in *Ana in the Tropics* and it's something that when you learn the history...you're like 'That's real!' you know" (Katerina Rodriguez, 2016).

The kind of learning that happens on Paloma Players is two-fold: Actors are learning about a culture they might identify or learning about new ideas from a culture akin to their own

while simultaneously sharing what they've learned with the audience who may also identify with what they see on stage. The learning process benefits both the actor and the audience.

Paloma Players is the first theater group to establish a steady presence rather than only annual productions during cultural heritage months. The Ware center and Millersville University and Fulton Theater are the only other somewhat consistent with their annual Latino Festival of the Arts or occasional Latinx production, however both organizations lack the dedicated space for Latinx actors and theater enthusiasts.

The dream scenario for Paloma Players according to Katerina is to partner with the Fulton Theater, Lancaster City's main stage and the country's longest continuously running theater. She is part of a committee through the Fulton Theater to improve Latinx relations specifically for the 2017 season's production of *In The Heights*. A bigger dream, however, is for Paloma Players to have a space of their own. "So there would be the Fulton Theater and the Paloma Players Theater" Katerina clarified (Katerina Rodriguez, 2016). Katerina believed that there is space for Latinx arts and culture organizations right alongside mainstream spaces. During our committee meetings we expressed concern with organizations like the Fulton Theater that are primarily White, older, and cater to audiences looking for 'classical' theater. For the Fulton, attracting more Latinx audience members is an occasional project. Katerina and her partners believe that Lancaster's Latinx residents are Latinx ALL of the time and thus need a theater space that expresses their culture ALL of the time.

Conclusion

A significant take-away when discussing performance in the Latinx community is that the Paloma Players are majority millennial. There is a new demand for theater and non-traditional

Latinx arts and culture and Paloma Players is striving to fill that demand. Again, theater and performance are an example of preserving and sharing Latinx arts, culture, and history, in a different way than festivals, visual art, and public art. Performance and theater engage representation by reflecting a community on stage and sharing their story. Katerina's closing sentiment about having a dedicated space to express and share Latinx theater is crucial and similar to Dr. Mahaffy's desire to create a Latinx institution. Both women understand that having a Latinx space right alongside non-Latinx cultural spaces enriches a community rather than competition. Paloma Players is able to adapt their content to their audience's needs, be unapologetically Latinx, and educate others on Latinx culture through their work. The troupe is able to act out a sense of belonging by imaginatively carving out spaces to tell Latinx stories. Ultimately, these creative acts of belonging will encourage the Latinx community to carve out and demand visibility in a way that hasn't happened in decades.

CHAPTER FIVE

NON-LATINX OWNED/MAINSTREAM INITIATIVES

In the following chapter I discuss efforts made by mainstream organizations (galleries, theaters, etc.) to engage or represent the Latinx community. The successes of the organizations varies and only reflects what I could find through word-of-mouth or archival research. Discussions on the perspective of Latinx residents can be found in Section Two, Chapter One and Two.

Lancaster Museum of Art and Latinx

The Lancaster Museum of Art is one of the oldest art institutions in Lancaster City. The museum was established in 1965 with a mission to “[reflect] the cultural and arts renaissance taking place in Lancaster, and the impact this has both locally and nationally” (Lancaster Museum of Art, 2017). Family Day is the only Latinx celebration the Lancaster Museum of Art offers. The day began during the 2012 exhibition of Puerto Rican artist, Rafael Ferrer’s work. The museum wanted to connect with the Latinx community and to share Ferrer’s work with his

community. The day was successful and replicated the following year¹⁹. The exhibition on view for the 2013 family day was not directly tied to the Latinx community and the celebration felt forced. The exhibition was a celebration of past Scholastics Art Award winners and displayed work from their most recent artistic endeavors however, none of the artists on view were Latinx. A tour was given to try and connect the youth with the exhibition on view but with little preparation, the connections were lost on the attendees. Activities like story time, a banking lesson in the upstairs gallery, and mask making were offered but were not attended as most families stood outside with the food and musical performances. Many community members came out to enjoy the food, but with no connection to the artwork in the galleries, the family day was nothing more than a museum sponsored gathering.

In 2015 the museum hosted a third family day with more fanfare as the exhibition on view was Mexican Masks. I did not attend this gathering, but was wary of the idea of hosting another Latinx gathering hosted by a primarily White organization that was promoting a White man's collection of Mexican masks. I helped host a Puerto Rican vejigante mask making workshop at an off-site location. The children were receptive and excited after seeing the exhibition however, the educators failed to see the difference between Mexican cultural masks and Puerto Rican masks. The conflation of cultures seemed dangerous to me and I wondered if the same kind of monolithic understanding of Latinx cultures permeated the children's tour of the exhibition. Did the tour guide assume any Latinx child on the tour would somehow connect to the masks by default? Did they target specific groups of Latinx (i.e. the Mexican and Chicano community) to better connect with the exhibition? Or did they assume that any Latinx child

¹⁹ All information regarding the Lancaster Museum of Art is from my personal experience working as Docent and Museum Assistant in the past.

would get it? I am not sure and was unable to secure an interview with museum representatives.

Lancaster City Office of Public Works- Public Art and Latinx

Lancaster City is one of very few small (third class) cities that has a permanent Public Art Manager that is part of the city's Office of Public Works budget. The Public Art Manager position is a product of the 1998 Ten Year Plan previously cited in the Literature Review. Heidi Leitzke is the current Manager of Public Art. I interviewed Heidi to gather information on how city-funded art's initiatives were tackling issues of equity and representation. When I met with Heidi the Office of Public Works was in the midst of completing a new ten-year plan for public art. Heidi began by explaining her background as a practicing artist, arts administrator, and teacher. In her nine years of residing in Lancaster City, she has taught at the local college of art and design and was the curator and art director of the college's gallery space.

Since the formation of the Public Art program, several Public Art works have been installed throughout the city. Within the past two years, the Office of Public Works completed a series of installations in Lancaster City public parks. The installations were promoted as an attempt to connect neighborhoods in the city and placed significant emphasis on beautifying poverty-stricken communities. According to Heidi, one of the most important aspects for new projects is "community involvement and feedback" (Leitzke 2016). She explained that community involvement has become especially important because the most recent series of projects are located outside of the downtown business district. The most recent project titled *Moving in the Right Direction* was recently installed at Martin Luther King Elementary School in the Southeast. The project "was one of the first examples of public art...integrated into the a functional project" (Leitzke 2016). The installation was a decorative fence that would surround

one of the city pools located on the property of King Elementary School. Heidi explained that she joined the Office of Public Works after the artist was chosen but was part of the drafting, planning, and community engagement process. A committee was selected for the project that included Milzy Corazco, Director of Development at San Juan Bautista and Ariselys Eswards of Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary. They also chose to invite King elementary students to give feedback on the preliminary drawings. The students insisted on incorporating a quote from Martin Luther King Jr. and community members requested that the quote be in English and Spanish. Heidi believed that involving community member and including children in the conversation helped make the project one of the most inclusive installations of the Public Art Program. Heidi stated “Milzy and Ariselys said ‘well you know this school has like 70% Spanish-speaking students. It would be really meaningful if that could be translated into Spanish as well. And that’s something that I didn’t think of. But because of the structure of the program- getting community feedback and the feedback of the people that do know the community-like I don’t have to know that because I’m relying on them to share [what they need]” (Leitzke 2016). In part, Heidi’s conviction about relying on the community to tell her what they need is a good step toward allowing the community to be leaders in their own development and beautification. The *Moving in the Right Direction* fence is an example of how community involvement can help enhance public artwork and incorporate the voice of various community members in a cohesive way.



Figure 25: Moving in the Right Direction post installation at King Elementary School Source: City of Lancaster, Office of Public Art

Unfortunately, Latinx involvement has been hard to solidify especially in the Public Art committees and boards. Heidi explained that she feels limited by who current board members know and is struggling to find younger Latinx who will be willing to sit on a board. There have been a few Latinx board members though currently there is no Latinx representation. She also admitted that in her position she needs to make sure that she's representing all of Lancaster and is therefore careful how much she focuses on what particular community. I asked if she has ever attempted to have more Latinx representation in boards and planning committees given the large population of Latinx Lancasterians. Heidi responded reluctantly, "I don't think so, I mean if we did... we would have to have a person representing every segment of [the population] and we don't necessarily have that [right now]. We have tried to diversify the Public Art Board when possible" (Leitzke 2016).

Finally, Heidi disclosed that in her position she has to balance the scale for everyone and

often that means erring on the side of general statements of Lancaster City pride. However, she explained that the Office of Public Works is hoping more community leaders will take up the task of creating more public art that speaks to specific communities. A recent project completed in 2016 and sponsored by the Office of Public Works was the Lancaster *Sound Map*-a multimedia sound and photo project. The *Sound Map* attempted to catalogue the various sounds of Lancaster City from the business district to the inner city, from college campuses to public parks. The *Sound Map* also included images of a wide array of city residents and a record of music and auditory art inspired by the collection of Lancaster City sounds. Heidi cited this as another example of equitable public art because of its breadth and depth. The project portrayed *all* of Lancaster City on a level playing field and the sounds were provided by a large group of community members.

Since the inception of the Office of Public Works, some community projects have come forward to represent histories and stories often forgotten in broad-ranging public art. These projects were implemented and installed solely by the community. The *Ewell-Gant* mural was a community funded and completed project that honored prominent Black figures in the Southeast. Additionally, projects like the previously discussed Millersville University mural and the SACA mural speak to Heidi's hope that the community will fill the gaps left by the Office of Public Works.

Fulton Theater

Fulton Theater is viewed by many conversation partners as the premier art space and an example of how good Lancaster's arts and culture sector can be. The Fulton is the oldest arts and culture space in the city. Its age shows especially negatively in its overwhelmingly White

production line-up. With a new artistic director, however, the Fulton is making concerted efforts to diversify its production schedules as well as its audience. Until recently, Fulton's youth theater and education programs were the most diverse aspect of the organization. A highlight or positive moment for many conversation partners was the production of *West Side Story* in 2007. The production was promoted heavily in the local Spanish language newspapers and outreach to local Latinx organizations and neighborhoods helped temporarily inject the Fulton with some color. Since *West Side Story* the theater had no Latinx productions and saw a sharp decline in the presence of Latinx audience members. The theater did improve in its lack of diversity in productions by adding *Dream Girls* and *Sister Act* but the connection and trust build with the Latinx community was tainted by the lack of representation immediately following *West Side Story*. Additionally, according to Wilfredo Seda, Disc Jockey at WLCH (SACA's Latino radio station), *West Side Story* may have been a bad choice as many older Latinx recall the controversy *West Side Story* represented. It perpetuated stereotypes that many Latinx were working hard to dismantle.

In the Heights is on the production schedule for March of 2017. I was invited to be part of a committee of local Latinx stakeholders to help the theater better understand what the community wants and needs. Myself and about 15-20 other Latinx of various ages, backgrounds, and levels of community involvement met once a month to help create an outreach strategy. Many of the older members recall the *West Side Story* production and are excited about *In the Heights* yet skeptical that it might be another temporary fix to a bigger problem. What we all agree on is that the Fulton is yet another White space that occasionally reaches out. Some of us believe that this can change while others firmly believe that despite the changes the theater makes, it may never change in the eyes of the Latinx community. A simple programmatic tweak

or community outreach initiative may not be enough to erase decades of exclusion.

A surprising early conclusion I made with the Fulton Theater Latinx outreach committee is that there seems to be a generational divide within the Latinx community. During our brainstorming sessions, many younger Latinx (primarily millennials) were skeptical that simply putting on a Latinx play would be enough. We expressed the need to meet the people where they are. This received a surprising amount of backlash from some of the older Latinx (Latinx of the boomer generation) who believed that bringing theater to the Latinx community is unfair. Citing “laziness” in the Latinx community as a primary set-back for many organizations, some committee members believed that bringing theater to the community would continue to reinforce “laziness”. The accusation of laziness, shared openly, ignited a fierce debate over internalized prejudice in the Latinx community and the need to breakdown stereotypes between economic groups therein. Wilfredo Seda, also a member of the committee, disagreed with the laziness accusation and stated in a follow-up interview that, “[Latinx] support things that they connect with and that give them something...they [have to] get something out of it or [it has to] fall within the purview of their interests” (Seda, 2016).

The older and younger generation also have differing relationships with stereotypes in the Latinx community. Representation for younger Latinx was expressed as seeing actors, stage crew, ushers, and directors that ‘looked like us’ in the Fulton Theater family. For older Latinx, representation was equated with playing salsa loudly on opening night, having salsa dancing in the lobby, serving food, and having Spanish speaking ushers to help guide people in. A few individuals thought that having jibaro²⁰ decorations would help draw a bigger Latinx crowd. For

²⁰ A Jibaro is a folkloric figure that is meant to represent poor, quaint, farmers in Latin American countries. The Jibaro can also be a symbol of a nostalgic, pre-colonial past.

many of the older Latinx, playing into stereotypes seemed like the only way to gain a Latinx audience. Younger Latinx felt that loud music, food, and dance only scratches the surface and seems to give non-Latinx the impression that that is what Latinx culture is about. As of the completion of this research, some consensus was reached with the Fulton Theater committee however, divisions within the Latinx community remain.

Conclusion

For Non-Latinx spaces to successfully reach out and change their demographic or engage the Latinx community, it will take much more than the occasional program, committee, or exhibition. Organizations that want to change how they are perceived in the Latinx community need to take stock of where they are now and thoroughly research how the Latinx community wants to be engaged. Again, decades of exclusion cannot change overnight. Additionally, it will also take having more Latinx at the decision making table to help steer new outreach efforts. Rather than assembling a temporary committee of Latinx residents, organizations like the Lancaster Museum of Art or the Fulton Theater need to ensure that their staff, board, artists, and actors include more local Latinx residents. In conversations with Fulton Theater staff and Lancaster Museum of Art staff, it seems like their concerns are more about who enters the building rather than who is helping manage the space. This disconnect is obvious to Latinx residents and could easily be unpacked if and only if organizations ask the community what they want or need. Finally, it will take more work for a historically White space to shift out of having a predominantly White audience. Collaborations with Latinx organizations like Paloma Players or Latinx artists can help close divisions and take some of the skepticism of a historically exclusive organization suddenly asking more Latinx to be involved. Collaborations offer a

community something familiar in an unfamiliar space.

SECTION TWO

The following section unpacks conversations I've had with groups of Latinx individuals regarding the state of Latinx representation and participation in the arts and culture sector. As previously stated, I conducted two focus groups. I interviewed three Latinx Lancaster City artists as a group at Franklin and Marshall College. The group discussed their personal experiences with the arts and culture sector, representation in the city, and how they perceived the representation of Latinx overall in the city's arts and culture sector. I also assembled a focus group of ten Latinx, Asian, and Black residents to discuss Lancaster's arts and culture and how they perceived representation of Latinx.

CHAPTER ONE

FOCUS GROUP A-LATINX ARTISTS

The following chapter is a summary of key points raised during a group conversation with Latinx artists. Three Latinx artists joined me to discuss their personal perspective of the arts and culture sector in Lancaster City. The artists involved represented film, music, and photography. They came to the group discussion on their own volition and spoke from their lived experience. The theme for the discussion was how artists who identify as Latinx perceive the arts and culture sector, what spaces they identified as doing the work they wanted art to do, and how their identities tied into being an art maker and appreciator. In the following sections I will identify key themes from our conversation and discuss how their perspectives tie into contexts covered in the Literature Review and overall discussion from previous chapters of Latinx and non-Latinx art spaces. The artists were:

- Megan, Film Maker, moved to Lancaster in 2014
- Chris, Photographer, life-long resident of Lancaster City
- Arielle, Curator of Music for Noisedive Collective, elected member of the Public Art Advisory Board, life-long resident of Lancaster City

First Fridays

A common observation from all three conversation partners hinged on the advent and

evolution of Lancaster's most popular art event-First Friday. As previously discussed, First Friday's are the first Friday of each month and a product of the LancasterARTS creation of a formal arts district. Galleries stay open late and often offer snacks, lectures, music, and artist meet-and-greets in their spaces. As a newcomer to Lancaster, Megan noticed that First Friday's were all she heard about when she asked about the art scene in the area. She also observed that it felt more like a social event than an appreciation of art. Megan has not been to a First Friday event at the time of the conversation. I asked what she had heard about the event and she stated "a lot of [my friends] just go to eat food...which kind of sucks because I would like to see more of the art stuff because that's what I'm interested in" (Focus Group A, 2016.). She does not recall hearing anything about any other arts events or specific galleries despite having the impression that there was some sort of art scene in the city. Megan's point was crucial to breaking down the reality of First Friday especially from her 'outsider' perspective.

Arielle and Chris, long-time residents of Lancaster City, believed that First Friday's started off as something fun, interesting, and necessary to the city. They recall more DIY spaces (old warehouses overtaken by artists and craftsmen) and vendors on the street but currently believe that the past few years have become more about marketing to tourists than authentic art experiences. Arielle recounted her experience stating that she felt that going away for college and coming back seemed to change her perspective on First Fridays. An important take away from her anecdote was the fact that pre-college she, like many young artists, was a by-stander and simply enjoyed the night out with friends. After college however, she began to be more involved and go to know the people running First Friday. For Arielle, this shattered the illusion that First Fridays were all about art and inclusivity. She summed her anecdote up by saying "For better or worse we all support First Fridays by attending it but we also roll our eyes at it" (Focus

Group A, 2016).

For Chris First Fridays became frustrating because of tourists. He felt as though the galleries that lasted the longest were the ones that catered specifically to generic tastes. He added that the influx of tourists made First Fridays feel rushed and that they were too-crowded. He added: “I just want to see more. I feel like it’s just been the same and I love that it’s bringing people into the city but there’s nothing new” (Focus Group A, 2016).

A City...Authentic?

Related to First Fridays is Lancaster City’s campaign usage of the term “authentic” as a branding strategy. I asked my conversation partners if they felt that the art scene reflected an authentic Lancaster. They unanimously responded that it did not. For the long-time residents, an authentic Lancaster meant showcasing the rich cultural diversity of the city and moving beyond the one block radius of Gallery Row. This speaks to my previous critique of Lancaster City’s tendency to self-proclaim artsiness, quirkiness, and, now, authenticity. For the artist in the conversation group, authentic seemed to wash over the sense of exclusion many of them felt in the arts and culture sector. For Arielle and Chris, the term cliquy seemed to be the right fit but didn’t quite describe the arts they were involved with. Chris agreed that Lancaster City seems to be made up of definitive groups in the arts but that “they’re still friendly enough and they’ll push you in the right direction” (Focus Group A, 2016). Arielle compared her experience living for a short time in Philadelphia and agreed that there were advantages and disadvantages to the Lancaster art scene cliques. She observed that Philadelphia also had cliques within the arts as well. A poignant point made by Arielle was that many of the Lancaster arts organizations-in her

case music venues and bands-might think they are doing enough outreach and simply are not aware of their tendency to be exclusive. In Arielle's perspective, venues and bands reach out within their friend groups and rarely beyond because they hope that friends will bring other friends and grow organically.

Ideal authenticity for all three artists was difficult to define. Chris believed that having more Latinx themed shows throughout the year would help create some unity or sense of inclusiveness. "I just feel like it [Latinx arts and culture] should be incorporated with all the events we already have like [on a] First Friday [I] should be able to boom boom know there's a Latinx place and there's music that I can relate to...I just would like to do more" (Focus Group A, 2016). Arielle and Megan agreed. Chris went on to say, "There's more Latinx culture and more African-American culture and just none of that's represented...I feel like when I think of Lancaster I think of all of those things and when people visit Lancaster they get this idea of Lancaster that's...Gallery Row and the Amish...[Lancaster] can be a little reserved, a little conservative" (Focus Group A, 2016).

Chris's observations carried the group into a discussion about Lancaster's representation of its arts and culture to the public and to tourists. Chris and Arielle recalled that in High School they knew that Latinx were a majority in the city due just looking at the make-up of their classrooms. As adults however, they lamented the fact that young Latinx rarely see themselves represented in the ad's or publications for Lancaster City let alone the art scene. Arielle observed, "[Young Latinx] are just as much a part of Lancaster as anyone else that gets publicity...I don't think they should be represented any less just because they don't have the resources" (Focus Group A, 2016). Many of the publications that promote Lancaster as a tourist destination or artsy city also serve as advertisements for specific businesses. Fig Industries, a

local magazine, was discussed by the group as an example of the pay-to-play set up for most Lancaster publications. Arielle cited this as another key problem in understanding the lack of representation in the arts. If an artist doesn't have the funds to pay for an advertisement or mention in a publication, their voice is effectively left out. Arielle also said "That does totally skew an outsider's perspective and maybe they want to know more about those kinds of artists but it is the lack of exposure [that stops them]" (Focus Group A, 2016). Megan agreed stating that she was unaware that the city's Latinx population was so high and felt that part of this was because she was surrounded by the college community and not Lancaster City residents. She also stated that she has little opportunity to venture into the city and would have believed Lancaster City to be a predominantly White city if she had not attended the conversation.

Latinx Festivals: Stereotypes, Identity, and Dream Scenarios

There is a sense in the city that certain cultural events are unique to one specific period of time-that is, celebrating Latinx culture outside of a designated Hispanic Heritage Month or week is inappropriate. This theme came up in both the Focus Group A and later in the Focus Group B. Arielle suggested that the problem may lie with the Latinx organizations that perpetuate that idea and tend to market to a specific kind of Latinidad. Chris observed that he could never identify a clear goal or mission in any of the Latinx festivities he's attended. "Are we trying to educate people? Because it seems like just food stands and vendors that are completely unrelated" (Focus Group A, 2016). Arielle agreed and stated "I think that [a mission statement] would help make people feel more welcome if the goal was to educate or inform rather than just kind of be like 'this is what we do and if you don't get it (shrugged shoulders)'" (Focus Group A, 2016).

Ultimately, the group seemed to identify problems on both sides of the Latinx-Mainstream Lancaster arts scene. There simply is no Latinx art scene according to the conversation group. At the same time, there is no Latinx group that is trying to create an arts scene. The groups that do exist seem to alienate young Latinx artists who already feel that they are disconnected from their Latinidad. Chris and Arielle agreed that family defined their Latinidad and otherwise they felt unwelcome in Latinx spaces in Lancaster City. Arielle described how growing up bi-racial made it hard for her to feel comfortable claiming Latinx culture. What helped her feel more connected was that her father would take her to the San Juan Bautista festival. “Now I’m older. I’m aware of it. I know it’s happened for a long time and it’s a tradition, but I still feel different now where I have to make the decision to go on my own” (Focus Group A, 2016).

Additionally, Arielle observed that the festival she grew up familiar with is a church fundraiser. The affiliation with a religion, she believes, has further alienated her from wanting to go. “My family used to be religious...and I’m pretty sure a lot of the Latino culture [in Lancaster] revolves around the church community [and]...It’s turned me away from a lot of things because I feel like...I don’t feel welcomed” (Focus Group A, 2016). Arielle’s feelings do speak to a widely believed stereotype that all Latinx are religious. In Lancaster City, there is a tendency to lean on Latinx churches and social service organizations to gain a Latinx following—for example Heidi Leitzke’s attempt to connect with the Latinx community through San Juan Bautista or city planners using San Juan Bautista to gain the Latinx perspective. The intentions are indeed not meant to be offensive or exclude voices, but the impact is that non-religious Latinx are largely left out of the conversation.

For Chris attending Latinx festivals was a combination of feeling disconnected and

simply being unaware that they were happening. Chris felt like marketing was limited and he often only heard of a Latinx festivity the day of or the day after it was scheduled to occur. “I have a problem identifying and relating with other Hispanic people. And maybe it’s just the way I was raised and it’s since I’ve moved out I’ve just been surrounded by White people. So I always feel like an outsider at those events and it’s hard to go alone and it’s especially harder to go with other White people because they don’t get it. I’ve been more reserved” (Chris int).

Megan agreed and compared Chris’ observation to her own experience in a predominantly White school. Having friends that understand Latinx culture when family is unavailable or out of area makes attending and feeling connected to Latinx events difficult. The added layer of Arielle’s early observation (lack of a clear goal or mission) makes it difficult-we become both the educator and the observer in a space that should technically be our safe space.

Throughout the conversation it was clear that the deeper issue is the sense that the group seem to be disconnected from our Latinidad unless we are performing Latinidad within our families. Additionally, each conversation partner had a similar coming-of-age experience: mostly White friends, mostly White college experience, and the *ni de aqui, ni de alla* experience. The conclusion seemed to be that the Latinx community needs more organization unity and to create spaces for visibility themselves rather than rely on Lancaster City galleries to offer up the space. Additionally, there seemed to be a consensus that most of the art spaces in Lancaster City are unlikely to show artwork that wasn’t somehow profitable (serene landscapes, abstract art, Pennsylvania landmarks etc.). One of the only currently running galleries cited as the most ethnically diverse was Pennsylvania College of Art and Design (PCA&D). Other than PCA&D, the artists stated that they did not know of any art spaces or events that welcomed or showcased Latinx art. The artists also discussed the possibility that the gallery and museum administrators

were simply unaware that more Latinx art was a want or need in the community.

CHAPTER TWO:

FOCUS GROUP B (LATINX AND OTHER NON-WHITE STAKEHOLDERS)

Following Focus Group A, I hosted a second larger discussion for Latinx residents who were interested in discussing the arts. I posted signage throughout the city and the event was covered in Lancaster Newspaper. The coverage sparked interest among many Latinx residents who dropped in or emailed me expressing their interest. The article was published the day before the discussion and many Latinx residents expressed that they were unfortunately unable to attend. In total ten individuals came to the discussion. Three were not Latinx but were invited by their Latinx friends. I chose to allow them to speak because I wanted to hear their perspectives as members of the Black and Asian community in the city. The discussion took place over an informal dinner and I recorded and transcribed the conversation. I will identify key themes from our conversation and discuss how their perspectives tie into contexts covered in the Literature Review and overall discussion from previous chapters of Latinx and non-Latinx art spaces. The conversation partners were:

- Omar-A bindery assistant at Cenveo, moved to Lancaster in 2001
- Chris-A product photographer at the Webstaurant Store, life-long resident of Lancaster City

- Josue-A computer science major at Millersville University, life-long resident of Lancaster City
- Dan-A teacher, life-long resident of Lancaster City
- Rafael-A community organizer, moved to Lancaster County in 1998, moved to Lancaster City in 2009
- Penny-A writer and social media strategist, raised in Lancaster City but moved away for 15 years, she recently moved back to Lancaster City
- Osmyn-A metalworker at A.R.T. Research and foundry, life-long resident of Lancaster City
- Jeline- A illustration and fine-art major at Pennsylvania College of Art and Design, life-long resident of Lancaster City
- Sarah-A clinical service specialist, moved to Lancaster in 2001
- Maritza-A mother, artist, and home-school instructor, moved to Lancaster in 2001

First Friday

Similar to Focus Group A, First Friday's were heavily critiqued by Focus Group B discussion participants. Rafael semi-jokingly summarized First Friday as "super representative of the desires of the suburbs" (Focus Group B, 2016). Osmyn described his feelings about First Friday as frustrating because "artists can't get [their] voices out and get [their] artwork out" because many of the galleries and artists represented have "been there for years" (Focus Group B, 2016). Jeline, who was the youngest of the group, recalled attending because she thought it was cool to do especially for younger teens. She also mentioned that her experience was quickly soured by the way young teens, especially teens of color, were perceived to be more rowdy. She admitted that

she knew many teens that had started trouble, mostly being loud and running around on sidewalks, but she also felt that the increased policing targeted youth of color. Jeline's sentiments were anecdotal but most of the group agreed that they noticed a definite shift in First Friday's treatment of younger attendees and a shift in the galleries or art spaces that seem to echo the shift in demographics. Rafael felt that his experience with First Friday changed after graduating high school. He and other conversation partners in their twenties recall First Friday suddenly becoming a trendy or hip thing to do and then shifting to a tourist attraction. He added:

Overall Lancaster [City] definitely got cooler and more hip with more places to go out and stuff but as we've all sort of discussed before it's in a very specific kind of way...the thing about like the 'new Brooklyn' and 'new Portland' sort of stuff is like, yeah all the hip stuff there is all dramatically White. And it's built on the backs of like people getting kicked out of neighborhoods. That's like the other half of it we can't ignore. So we've had this deep growth of development within Downtown of like making these nice pretty spots but...a lot of people [that benefit] were already in the nicer neighborhoods...that prosperity doesn't get spread. It's not *our* (gestures to table) Lancaster. (Focus Group B, 2016)

Rafael's point was received with resounding agreement from the other attendees. All of the attendees, many of whom were meeting for the first time that evening, agreed. Maritza, who grew up visiting Lancaster City since the 1970's and finally moved to the city in 2001, agreed with Rafael. She stated, "It feels touristy. And it feels more focused on tourists with these types of things (referring to a comment about the kinds of work sold in galleries) and not what the local people want" (Focus Group B, 2016).

Maritza's comment followed a comment by Osmyn, a local artist and alum of Pennsylvania

College of Art and Design. He expressed a concern about the galleries that tend to survive in Gallery Row or Lancaster City in general. He stated that he began going to First Friday's in college and he really liked a few of the galleries that were around at the time. Now "they progressively got rid of the places that were being progressive for artists" (Focus Group B, 2016). As an example, Osmyn mentioned the Keppel Building art space that lasted a few years. The Keppel Building, which is under construction and will be transformed into high-end condominiums, was an old warehouse that was transformed into a DIY art space that hosted open studios on First Friday's. It was condemned by local officials and sold to developers according to Osmyn and other members of the group. Osmyn also recalled two spaces that announced their closure in the early summer of 2016—Sunshine Art + Design and the Discerning Eye Center for the Arts. He believed that the problem with retaining progressive art spaces comes from the economic stress of paying rent and making a profit while supporting new art. He also felt that the high turn-over of new, progressive galleries was discouraging to emerging artists.

Gallery Row and Arts and Culture Offerings in Lancaster City

The conversation about First Friday quickly veered into conversations about Gallery Row in general and arts and culture offerings in the city in general. Everyone in the group felt that Gallery Row was not representative of the Lancaster City they knew or grew up in. A common theme expressed eloquently by Osmyn was that "our city was growing but...it's [not] growing for *us*" (Focus Group B, 2016). Osmyn's perspective, and the agreement of the group, is a limitation of the focus group—those that attended the discussion were those that were interested in critiquing the arts in Lancaster City. The 'us' in Osmyn's statement was directed toward the people of color at the table as well as the young artists at the table.

Maritza felt that what frustrated her most was the fact that many Lancaster City organizations seem to rely on social media or word-of-mouth to share their events. She believed that the combination of word-of-mouth advertising and tendencies toward exclusion in Lancaster's history created a somewhat hostile environment wherein people of color simply feel unwelcome. Two examples she recounted were "Slide the City" and Lancaster's annual Fete en Blanc party. "Slide the City" is a pop up water-slide that has become popular nation-wide. Lancaster's slide takes over a portion of road that is also commonly viewed by many locals as the division between the city and the county. It cuts through the edge of the Southeast and runs alongside the local vocational school. This particular street is a majority Latinx neighborhood. Maritza felt that the slide was like a "slap in the face" because driving past, residents see mostly White people lining up for a slide that runs through a portion of town that they otherwise never frequent. Rafael agreed and felt that the twenty-five-dollar price tag was problematic because "even basic social services [in the city] have to be behind a 'pay-wall'" (Focus Group B, 2016). Maritza believed that the event was also not well advertised thus skewing the demographic who attends the water-slide event to those that found out via social media. While the majority of the group believed the slide event was silly and exclusionary, Penny believed that the problem with the slide was really the fact that it was poorly advertised and had a prohibitive cost. She believed that most people regardless of ethnicity would go if the slide was free. Her comments were in response to the sense that the majority of the group believed the slide to be a 'White-thing' to do. Penny, who had spent fifteen years living in New York City, believed that Lancaster's history of racial segregation might be the reason why residents of color feel unwelcome to many city-wide events in a way that is different from a bigger city like New York.

Maritza also expressed her concerns about events like Fete en Blanc. Fete en Blanc is an

international event that usually manifests in a pop-up picnic or dinner where all guests wear White. Maritza recounted her experience with Fete en Blanc by sharing how her son's soccer team were forced to move their match to a different park due to the Fete en Blanc activities. This made her feel as though her community was less important than the pop-up party. She stated "My issue was that when we came home I [felt like] why didn't we know there was an event? That's always been my issue. I'm like, how are you moving my soccer field? We had to relocate all of the kid and they didn't say anything" (Focus Group B, 2016). Penny, who had written an opinion piece on the 2016 Fete en Blanc, agreed that their treatment of the local community was problematic. She stated "All around the world-if you Google it you'd see-that they do them in other countries. Africa, in Jamaica and New York. It was inspired by this thing in France but the thing about it is the translation *here* looked so off and didn't seem representative of the community" (Focus Group B, 2016). Penny mentioned that in the comment section of the digital release of her opinion article many White residents claimed that she was being divisive and that there were "tons of Latinx" (Focus Group B, 2016).

Chris, local photographer, stated that he has been trying to get a ticket to the event but has been consistently rejected. He stated that in order to get on the invite list "you have to be in the know" and that "it's supposed to be secretive so it's all done through Facebook and their website" (Focus Group B, 2016). Additionally, you must email the planners for a chance to get in. Penny also stated that she has emailed consistently and has never received an invite. The location also changes each year and the planners transform the space for their party starting the morning of the event. The group expressed a concern that the exclusionary nature of the party, despite its intentions of being a fun surprise event, seems to be at the expense of poorer communities and communities of color. Rafael shared that Penny's article had received a lot of backlash online. He

said that Penny had tried to reach out to the event planners but “when they were getting the criticism-that was all very valid-the organizers tried to be like-‘Well look it was openly marketed on the website. It says just send an email. That’s how you get your invite and it’s free’” (Focus Group B, 2016). Maritza closed the conversation about Fete en Blanc stating “I think what bothered me more was the fact that I felt like I was displaced” (Focus Group B, 2016). The conversations about the slide, Fete en Blanc, and even First Friday stemmed from a sense that arts and culture offerings tend to be exclusionary and organizers tend to be defensive when they are called out.

The group identified spaces that they felt welcome in or that represented the city the ‘right way’ as the following: Central Market, local shopping malls and shopping outlets, and Pennsylvania College of Art and Design’s gallery space. A comment regarding the PCA&D gallery that struck artists in the group as surprising was that PCA&D’s gallery is the only gallery that shows a wide variety of ethnicities, orientations, and age groups. Rafael commented that this is probably due to standards set forth as a non-discriminatory academic institution. While this may be true, Jeline, Osmyn, and Chris-PCA&D alum and current students- believed that PCA&D’s gallery openings are always well attended especially on First Fridays. In regards to Central Market and the local shopping centers, Penny mentioned that she believed “wherever there is commerce...there’s diversity” however she believed that “when there’s conversations, culture, or entertainment, that’s when Lancaster’s segregation comes out” (Focus Group B, 2016).

Lastly, the group discussed what adequate representation might look like in the city. Similar to the Focus Group A, the conversation partners struggled to identify good or right ways in which local leaders can express or convey their Latinidad. I asked the group if they could identify Latinx leaders in the arts or Latinx run arts and culture programs. As predicted members

of the group mentioned annual festivals and a few mentioned the exhibition I organized a few months prior to the discussion. Maritza mentioned that she could not identify any Latinx store owners that weren't bodega owners, stylists, or cooks. She cited the recent development of East King Street, an block near the center of the Downtown area, as an example of gentrification. East King Street's store fronts, historically Black, Latinx, and Asian storefronts were recently bought out and renovated. New shops opened up a few summers prior to the discussion. Maritza lamented the loss of the old stores though she mentioned that many of them were check-cashing locations or bodegas that were abandoned or ill-attended. Chris pointed out that currently there are at least four Latinx owned businesses on East King street though he believed that they didn't really "show off" their Latinidad. This exchange prompted Penny to ask what, then, does adequate expression of Latinidad look like? She asked, "What's the identification process of...the Latinx narrative? [what does] ownership and authenticity look like?" (Focus Group B, 2016). Chris stated that he believed most of the Latinx entrepreneurs either stuck with Latinx news outlets like the local Spanish-language newspaper or radio station and others avoided being tied to the Latinx news outlets. He speculated that this might be a fear of being pigeon-holed. Tokenism and the need to code-switch came up as the group grappled with what adequate representation looked like.

Similar to the Fulton Theater group, the focus group concluded that there is a thin line between cultural appreciation and cultural exploitation. They felt that when organizations do try to reach out it's often through stereotypical avenues (i.e. politicians blasting salsa music, only hosting Latinx related things during designated cultural months, etc.). Rafael concluded that representation is "more than just more Brown faces in photos" but more Latinx in leadership roles, more Latinx "at the atable" and more Latinx entrepreneurs reaching back into their communities to network rather than "catering to affluent White people" (Focus Group B, 2016). He also stated that

the exhibition I organized featuring only Latinx artists was eye-opening because it was deliberate and hosted by a Latinx person. The group could not recall another art related offering that was hosted, organized, and showcased by only Latinx artists. Furthermore, the Chris and Rafael believed that it worked and helped them feel like they had a voice because it was organized without only catering to one group or the other (i.e. only Latinx people or only the usual arts attendees).

The feelings, comments, and conclusions drawn from the large discussion group seem to be directly tied to the common sense of disconnection each conversation partner felt. Rafael expressed his desire to reconnect and help with Latinx representation in the city as “work [and] studying or practice” (Focus Group B, 2016). Broadly speaking, what each conversation partner agreed on, regardless of age, was the need to be more open about what works or doesn’t work and to demand more representation in all facets of arts and culture (i.e. planning, facilitating, etc.). The group was skeptical that predominantly or historically “White” spaces could begin to be more inclusive for the same reasons the Paloma Players believe they need to make their own space. The group believed that Latinx artists need to carve out their own space to truly start to change the way they are represented in Lancaster City.

CHAPTER THREE

AN EXPERIMENT- ATREVETE: A SHOWCASE OF LATINX AND HISPANIC VISUAL ART

The Atrevete exhibition was an experiment in Latinx programming that I chose to use to enrich the conversation I had with individuals about representation. The exhibition consisted of four Latina artists work including my own. The work of each artist was unique in style but related in message. We each made work that documented the struggle to accept or discover one's Latina identity. Our experiences varied based on our country of origin however they all shared the sense that we felt out of place in our local community and disconnected from our Latinidad. I felt the exhibition was a way for second and third generation Latinx to talk about their feelings of disconnection while also making the city aware of the lack of representation of Latinx artists in general. The show was in a small DIY art space away from Gallery Row. I advertised and promoted the exhibition myself on social media and distributed postcards in English and Spanish to both Latinx businesses and mainstream café's and venues. I deliberately chose to advertise in both locations to see if I could attract a cross-section of both the mainstream arts audience and the Latinx community. WLCH heard about the exhibition and invited the artists to speak on their morning show and mentioned that Atrevete was the first exhibition of all Latina artists in Lancaster City's history. I have not been able to confirm this statement but was also unable to

find any other exhibitions that deliberately featured only Latina artists or dealt with Latinidad explicitly.



Figure 26: *Atrévete* Invitation sample Source: Salina Almanzar

On opening night I tracked the audience and 70-80 attendees dropped in with at least 40 attendees in the space at any given time. I had conversations with at least 20 individuals. The audience was about half Latinx and half non-Latinx though I did not ask attendees about their ethnic background. In the conversations I had, many Latinx individuals felt relieved and excited to see Latinx art showcased in Lancaster. One family said they were recent transplants from New York and missed the diversity of their old city. They had seen the event on Facebook and felt compelled to come. A woman came to the show with her young daughter because she felt that it was necessary to show her daughter what Latina's are capable of. She said that she brings her daughter to as many arts and culture events as she can so that she can see and appreciate art from

a young age. She also stated that she remembers coming across Latina artists in her teens and wishing she had been exposed earlier. She believed it was difficult for her to find Latinx exhibitions in Lancaster City so she often travels to Philadelphia or New York to supplement.





Figure 27, 28, 29, and 30: Atrévete Opening Reception Source: Salina Almanzar

Criticisms of the exhibition were minimal and the reception was mostly positive. In the future, I believe the exhibition or other Latinx themed exhibitions could be improved by having more outreach to majority Latinx populations and educational programming. School trips or community center trips would help reach younger audiences and ensure that the artists message is conveyed clearly. I would also like to see the exhibition *in* the Southeast (i.e. meeting the Latinx audience where they are). There have been no exhibitions or exhibition spaces made in the Southeast quadrant of Lancaster City. While it can be problematic to continue placing Latinx themed programs in the Southeast, I also believe that it is necessary to reach the Latinx audience where they are and simultaneously show Latinx art and culture alongside mainstream arts offerings.

CONCLUSION

Through this research and documentation of conversations, I have begun what I believe is the first step in establishing a sense of belonging in the Latinx community in Lancaster City. I have documented what we've done, provided a brief history (that I hope will be further fleshed out and owned by the Latinx community as I am not the only voice in this conversation), and have documented how we as a community perceive our current place in Lancaster City's development. Lancaster City has a Latinx community with an arts and culture sector of its own whose success has manifested in projects, organizations, and programs that are constantly relegated to the outside of the city's core arts and culture development. Because of this lack of support, most of these manifestations of self-determination fizzle out or die off as enthusiastic leaders move on or grow weary. Today, representation of Latinx in the arts and culture sector is slowly starting to change. The desire for more representation is evidenced by recent initiatives like the Latinx mural arts project at Millersville University and Paloma Players. So the question is no longer *if* there is a Latinx community that wants to create or be part of an arts and culture sector, but *how* does Lancaster City's cultural community help maintain and cultivate spaces for the creation of sustainable models for the Latinx community (and eventually all marginalized communities) to continue to thrive in the arts.

I strongly believe that the *how* can be solved by encouraging and supporting spaces created by Latinx community leaders for the Latinx community. Physical spaces like the old

PRCC or temporary spaces like those created by traveling festivals and acting troupes are spaces where the Latinx community unquestionably belongs. Today, the community has few dedicated spaces that they can use for refuge or edification. Temporary spaces are necessary, however there is something about having and maintaining a space dedicated to cultural expression and preservation that helps a community feel like they belong.

The work of justifying and advocating for space is exhausting and reignites historical and generational trauma from dis-investment, displacement, and containment. Thus, the need for help from established foundations, organizations, and wealthy communities is key to helping the existing Latinx arts and culture community. To be clear, this assistance does not look like existing organizations folding the Latinx community into their framework. Rather assistance from privileged and established institutions or communities looks like equal partnerships and collaborations with existing Latinx community initiatives. The Latinx community needs the support of Lancaster City officials in dollars and in advocacy to help existing Latinx leaders to sustain spaces for the Latinx community and to ensure their posterity. Lancaster's cultural community must recognize that the Latinx community has their own methods of placemaking that need to be honored and can only be done authentically by Latinx cultural leaders.

Support from the Lancaster City cultural community must also be focused and dedicated *to* the Latinx community. Many Lancaster organizations seem to be afraid to commit to supporting the Latinx community for fear of appearing divisive. Established organizations feel a responsibility to make amends with *all* marginalized groups thus hampering their ability to make amends with certain groups. Though their intentions are sincere, the impact seems to be that programs have a diluted mission or choose to avoid addressing marginalized groups altogether. Our cultural communities need to be comfortable with having uncomfortable conversations

about how historic displacement intersects with contemporary economics and public policy and thereby intersects with social and cultural development. We need to stop looking for cookie-cutter development options and dig down into the specific and unique histories each cultural sector has. We also need to address the ways cultural sectors like the Latinx community are already or have historically coped with displacement, how they view improvement in their specific communities, and honor that social and cultural difference is something to be celebrated not erased or appropriated.

The unforeseen result of avoiding difficult conversations about Lancaster City's racial and ethnic tensions within the arts and culture sector is that Latinx residents are keenly aware of their experiences of marginalization and discrimination and simply do not feel welcome to most mainstream arts and culture offerings. Most Latinx residents feel like they cannot speak openly about their experiences. Mainstream arts and culture organizations have gone the route of declaring color-blindness rather than engaging the ways in which they might be perpetuating segregation with the arts and culture sector. Thus, the mere mention of a particular ethnicities unique problems in the community are viewed as divisive, prejudiced, or problematic. I believe that it is time for the arts and culture sector to take a bold step forward and invest in consultations that will help facilitate these conversations. This will signal that the City's cultural community values diversity beyond having more Black or Brown faces in the audience.

Our recent focus in Lancaster City has been on transforming traditionally or predominantly White spaces into more inclusive and equitable spaces. I honor this work and I believe it should continue however, trying to transform traditionally White spaces is going to take time and energy and frankly, the Latinx community has waited long enough. This should not be the only way to instigate changes in Latinx representation and participation. The Fulton

Theater is an example of how years of planning, programming, and outreach are still not enough to overcome decades of ignoring audiences of color. Despite the Fulton's attempt to rectify their own ethnic and cultural blind-spots, they are understaffed and ill-prepared to truly make a change in how they reach out to marginalized communities. It takes more than the occasional showing of *West Side Story* or *Carmen* to prove that an organization is open to the Latinx community.

In order for a group of people to feel they can be part of what makes a place great, they need to feel like they belong. Roberto Bedoya declared, "One needs to reflect upon US history and its troubling legacy of "placemaking" manifested in acts of displacement, removal, and containment" (Bedoya, 2013). At the same time, one needs to also allow groups, especially groups that have been victims of dis-investment and displacement, to fully own their spaces, create their own spaces, and self-actualize in those spaces. Cultural leaders interested in helping a community thrive must then look at what the community is already doing to define or personalize their space. For the arts to help a community, there must be "an understanding of the social dynamics on that street" prior to any initiatives or outreach (Bedoya, 2013). It is admittedly far easier to enter a space like Lancaster City and believe that applying current trends in placemaking or urban development will fix all the wrongs in every quadrant of the city. However, what is easy is not always right or just and will only delay for a short time animosity between those that are in power (or those that make decisions) and those that are acted upon.

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