Counter-mapping Suburban Los Angeles

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Apply course concepts to the study of suburban environments and processes
- Use spatial ethnography to describe everyday built environments, as well as people's embodied practices.
- Create public-oriented interpretations of these materials through thick-mapping

CONTEXT

Suburbs have long been sites of racial and ethnic exclusion for aggrieved Latinx and other communities through legal segregation, redlining, and racial violence. But, in recent years, Latinx people are increasingly moving to the 'burbs. How do we make sense of this shift in the face of dominant suburban imaginaries that would mark these movements odd? In this quarter-long assignment, students will spatial ethnography and thickmapping to ask, how are Chicanx, Central American, and other Latinx populations reshaping suburbs?

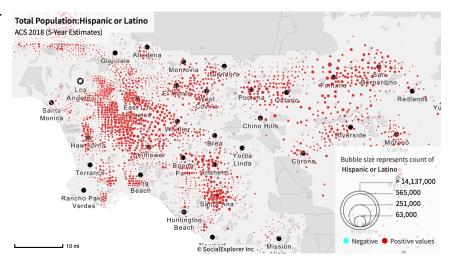


Figure 1 Map of Total Hispanic or Latino Population by Census Tract, 2018, https://www.socialexplorer.com/691a1dced8/view

DESCRIPTION

Working on sites throughout Greater Los Angeles, you will collaborate with your classmates on a public-facing, digital map on the topic of Barrio Suburbanism. As a thick-mapping project, we will include locational pins, descriptive and analytic text, and visually rich resources. The aim of the map is to disrupt static ideas of suburbia that erase the multi-variant place-making strategies of Latinx populations, past and present. Thus, our map will share your investigations into the ways Latinx populations have and are impacting the socio-spatial contours of Greater Los Angeles. As a public-oriented resource, the map will also encourage users to reflect on the significance of these spaces by asking them to share their own place-based experiences in an ongoing web submission process.



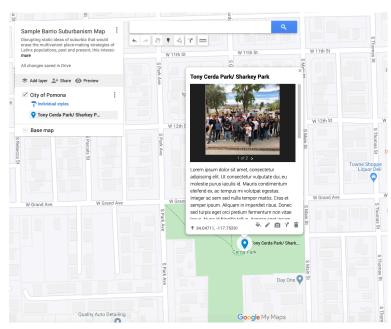
PROJECT COMPONENTS

Suburban Analysis Paper: Choose a suburb in Greater Los Angeles of interest to you. Using course themes and a minimum of one primary source, write a background report that describes its major attributes, dominant narratives, and how Latinx communities shape this place.

Counter-Map Workshopping: Choose a physical site that helps illustrate the processes you discovered in your research. Using the tools of spatial ethnography (i.e. observation, interviews, and photography), assemble the following elements for use in a collective map:

- Name of your place
- Address
- Text description (museum-length caption of 150 words)
- "Learn more" resources and hyperlinks
- Photographs (1-3, open-access)

During an in-class workshop, upload these elements as a geolocated pin to our shared Figure 2 Sample Pin using Google Maps https://bit.ly/2BGd4qM Google Map. Together, we will add a



"Share more" link to each pin, which will redirect the public to a Google Form where they can submit their memories of, present experiences with, and hopes for this site.

Our Map Project: In the remaining weeks of class, add four unique pins to our shared map that demonstrate how Chicana/o and Latinx (sub)urbanization shapes your selected suburb. As you add each pin, seek to highlight a new element uncovered in your research.

Collective Word Cloud & Final Analysis: Together, we will generate a Word Cloud from



Figure 3 Word Cloud generated from past student entries using Wordle, 2016

everyone's pin entries. We will use this to identify shared themes across our suburbs and to reflect on the larger region in which they are enmeshed. In a 1-page memo, provide a three-point vision for regional equity based on one of these themes. That is, if you could imagine a new future for the region as connected to this theme, what would it look like and how might we foster its realization? In the memo, use our thickmap and collective insights as the bases for your recommendations.