Can Buildings be Racist? A Critical Sociology of Architecture and the Built Environment*

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Can buildings be racist? In the study of racism, there is extensive literature on racist popular culture. However, buildings and architecture, as potentially racist cultural products, are understudied. This article examines Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture in Southern California as an example of urban placemaking with racist origins and legacies. This article relies on archival research to examine how buildings can be just as, if not more, racist than other forms of visual culture. The built environment physically structures human activities and movements, but it operates in the background. This invisibility of the built environment as "culture" allows architects, builders, and other social actors to design structures that enforce racial boundaries both symbolically and physically. This article concludes with a discussion of how architecture and the built environment can be foregrounded in sociological research.

Introduction

Can buildings be racist? In the study of racism, there is extensive scholarship on racist popular culture. There are also many studies of how the built environment and urban planning reproduce racial inequality. Given recent debates regarding buildings named after slave owners and Confederate monuments, architecture requires critical examination by sociologists. Indeed, sociologists have studied architecture, space, and placemaking (Garrido 2013; Gieryn 2002; Jones 2006; Paulsen 2004). More recently, Bartram (2015, 2016) calls for the study of buildings, not as reflections of the social, but structures playing a material role in reproducing inequality. As Knox (1987) pointed out, building construction, legitimization, and social reproduction are processes that feed off each other. Architecture, after all, is a product of what Bonilla-Silva (1997) called "racialized social systems" (p. 444). Yet, architecture typically is not foregrounded by sociologists studying culture or cities.

This article seeks to foreground architecture in sociological studies of race/racism. The meanings behind space and place, after all, are produced by and within a racialized social world. In turn, a sociology of architecture can touch upon many of the issues sociologists are interested in culture, community, urbanization, and racism. Architecture refers to both the process of building structures and the material form of buildings. It is also a cultural product that

involves a wide range of human actors. This includes but is not limited to architects, construction workers, homeowners, public officials, and real estate agents. The built environment represents the ideas and structure of the society that creates it. Architecture, in this sense, is no different from other forms of cultural production that produce and reproduce racial inequality, e.g., filmmaking (Erigha 2018). It is also a field dominated by white men (Kaplan 2006). However, buildings are different in that they are often less visible than racist stereotypes on a screen. As buildings do not audibly speak, dwellers of physical spaces are often unaware of how they influence or structure our behavior. In turn, the way buildings operate parallels the way color-blindness and ignorance perpetuate racism (Mueller 2020).

Take, for example, the American Southwest. One can readily find Spanish-Colonial Revival Style structures with red tile, stucco, and pergola-covered patios that evoke a "romantic" Spanish past. These architectural features are not inherently racist. Instead, it is history, ideology, and social practices that make them so. While gated communities in the American South might use the word "plantation," the term "hacienda" adorns such enclaves in the Southwest. In both cases, dehumanizing forced labor generated wealth for White Americans and Europeans. Specifically, the erasure of colonialism, genocide, and ongoing racism when selling these buildings makes them racist. This is furthered by their presence in exclusionary neighborhoods, such as gated communities.

At the same time, the romance of these buildings exists alongside long-standing anti-immigrant and racist sentiments. For instance, a Spanish-Colonial Revival gated community might not have a native-Spanish speaker living there. Such exclusion is typical in cultural appropriation in general, whereby there is acceptance of cultural products but not necessarily people (DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly 2015; Ziff and Rao 1997). Whites, for instance, may consume Latin American cultures and believe in inclusion without necessarily working toward equity (Woody 2020). Here, we see that collective memory operates alongside the racialized ignorance which produces racist buildings.

There are many other examples of buildings being racist. They include buildings named after white supremacists and adorning public buildings' walls with only the pictures of past white (typically male) leaders. It can also comprise of surveillance technologies, such as security cameras, checkpoints, metal detectors, gates, and walls. Therefore, the answer to my earlier question is: Yes, buildings *can* be racist. As Manning (2004) notes, architecture can be "racism in three dimensions." Thus, a critical sociology of architecture would look at the multifaceted ways race/racism operate in the built environment. A sociological analysis of architecture, in turn, can expand our understanding of how buildings reproduce racist structures in society.

This article will focus on Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture. Spanish-Colonial Revival represents urban placemaking and the establishment of "heritage" that masks past and present racial inequality. Here, I define the style less in terms of physical characteristics and more as the discourse that frames it as Spanish-Colonial Revival. It is similar to Mission, Mediterranean, and even Moorish, Mayan, or Assyrian Revivals. Such revivals are typically based on myth—an oft-repeated story that is not true. Barthes (1957) argued that myth operates as a "natural image" that is generally unquestioned (p. 142). Correspondingly, myth justifies a particular image of the social landscape. This includes the reproduction and reinforcement of racial hierarchies within this social landscape (see: Collins 2004).

Such realizations raise a few interesting questions. 1) Why is Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture not criticized for its cultural appropriation and racist history? 2) Can buildings be racist the same way other forms of visual culture? 3) What constitutes anti-racist architecture? In turn, I look at how this architecture was legitimized and became part of the local vernacular. Partially drawing on Steets (2016), I argue buildings are materialized structures of the social. Meaning is ascribed to the built environment by human actors. An example is how architecture can promote racist notions of privacy. Alternatively, I conclude by discussing anti-racist architecture.

Literature Review

Scholarship on race and architecture by necessity is interdisciplinary. In addition to architecture and architectural history, there is work in cultural geography, law, planning, and historical preservation studies (e.g., Cheng, Davis and Wilson 2020; Schindler 2015). In sociological work on architecture and buildings, there are a few common approaches. The first is an emphasis on architects or creators. In this body of work, the architectural profession is examined in a social and political-economic context. Architecture operates within a field of cultural production whereby architects negotiate the capitalistic nature of the field (Blau 1984; Jones 2009). As Larson (2018) points out, architecture is a competitive, creative, and political activity (p. 164). This competitive environment, in which architects fight for status can, in turn, be exclusionary. For instance, Kaplan (2006) examined black architects in a "White Gentlemen's Profession." (p. 21) Like with many other fields, the lack of diversity is not an accident. Architects of color must navigate white norms and expectations. This includes the way race shapes notions of aesthetic beauty.

Another body of work revolves around the social production of space. As Lefebvre (1991) argues, space is a social construct shaped by and shapes everyday life. However, Lefebvre is critical of how capitalism produces abstract

representations of space that affect social life. Consequently, sociologists have looked at how space—created by architects, planners, and politicians—has produced inequality. Notably, Gutman (1992) argues architecture traditionally serves powerful political and economic interests. Lawmakers and urban planners shape the built environment by establishing building codes, zoning, and large-scale construction projects. For example, urban planner Robert Moses's impact on segregation in New York is well documented (Gutman 2008; Schindler 2015). In turn, the built environment consists of "white spaces," those that reinforce racism and other forms of domination (Anderson 2015; LaFleur 2020; Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 2012).

Segregation is tied to the spatial organization of cities. Still, its impact can be felt at the local level of homes and neighborhoods. For instance, code enforcement for housing—which affects buildings' physical form—allows for both neglect and disproportionate policing (Bartram 2019). Communities of color, the poor, and other marginalized populations are disproportionately exposed to asbestos, lead, and other hazards within or around their homes (Bullard 1993; Pulido 2000). This is while being deprived of amenities ranging from clean air to broadband internet access. Such conditions are both a cause and consequence of environmental racism.

Other sociological work examines how space and place are oriented toward cultural norms and expectations. The esthetics of the built environment, architecture, and urban design embody the habitus of architects, builders, and homeowners (see: Bourdieu 1984; Sweetman 2009). These dispositions influence the intent and practice of building. Indeed, designing homes is not just about esthetics. Ableist and sexist expectations of what sort of bodies will occupy household spaces affect their design (Edwards and Imrie 2003; Livingston 2000; Tickamyer 2000). Similarly, American mass culture produces images of white middle class homes that affect expectations of how they should look (see: Halle 1984; Harris 2013; Kefalas 2003).

Notably, the form and function of homes are tied to dispositions and expectations of the so-called ideal home. Dwyer (2009) examined the McMansions' proliferation as part of changing consumption patterns in homebuyers. Since the 1990s, many new residential neighborhoods built in Southern California could be described as McMansions—or over-sized mass-produced homes—situated in gated communities. Moreover, in Southern California, they are typically Spanish-Colonial or Mediterranean Revival. Such neighborhoods limit access through design and marketing. Not only are there physical barriers but also they cultivate a homogenized understanding of the so-called good life (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Le Goix and Vesselinov 2012; Low 2004; McKenzie 1994).

Data and Methods

This article analyzes the discursive strategies used by proponents and opponents of Spanish-Colonial Revival between 1900 and 1930. This period was chosen because it coincided with the growth of the Los Angeles, its surrounding communities, and the rising popularity of Spanish-Colonial Revival. Using documentary evidence from social actors such as architects, real-estate boosters, design firms, historians, and journalists, this article looks at the racialized/racist language used to legitimize Spanish-Colonial Revival. Primary texts that dealt with Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture and/or regional history were used. In particular, I relied on archival collections at the Autry National Center, Los Angeles Public Library, the University of California Los Angeles Special Collections, and the Southwest Museum. Digital collections such as the California Digital Library, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, and Google Books were also used. There was a particular emphasis on periodicals such as *California Homeowner*, *Pacific Coast Architect*, *Southwest Builder & Contractor,* and the *Los Angeles Times*. Occasionally, personal letters and correspondences within archival collections were also examined.

While builders of such structures may have had racist beliefs, meanings can shift and change. In turn, documentary evidence comes from a range of social actors who were both proponents and opponents of the Spanish-Colonial Revival. As Harris (2013) found in post-war American periodicals, the depiction of ideal homes reinforced hegemonic notions about race. Houses were constructed—both physically and culturally—with Whiteness as a core element in explicit and implicit ways. Such was also the case with Spanish-Colonial Revival in the early twentieth century. While analyzing the data, I paid particular attention to *how* the aforementioned social actors legitimized the *idea* of Spanish-Colonial Revival. Architects, builders, and real estate agents collectively sold racially coded buildings to Californians. Data collected represents the discourse and arguments that justified building structures in that style.[1] How actors spoke about houses and buildings reveals the racial ideologies that shaped the region's vernacular landscape. In particular, I look closely at how the mythmaking behind Spanish-Colonial Revival dealt addressed colonialism and race, as well as notions of security. Table 1 illustrates the relative positions of actors.

I argue that the myth of Spanish-Colonial Revival allowed White Anglo-Saxon Protestant architects to claim the Spanish inspired them, not Mexican, Moorish, or other architectures (also see Deverell 2004; Fu 2011). Mythmaking is a social process and a form of legitimization that shapes human activity and interactions. Legitimization and acceptance is a social process that involves multiple actors and institutions (Fu 2012; Johnson, Dowd and Ridgeway 2006).

Table 1 Mapping Discourses Around Spanish-Colonial Revival

	Construction of history	Race	Architectural form
Proponents	Emphasized the Spanish "heritage" in the region	Deracialization of Spanish "pioneers"	Celebration of "security"
Opponents	Promoted the Black Legend	Challenged non-European influence on architecture	Criticism of buildings that lacked "restraint"

While Spanish-Colonial buildings have a history in California and the American Southwest, the romance of colonial settlements such as the California Missions was manufactured.

Throughout the twentieth century, we see that real estate boosters and journalists, educators, historians, architects, and other cultural producers embedded this myth into the collective consciousness. For instance, Carpio (2019) has examined how different organizations, including historical societies, constructed both myth and a racial hierarchy in California's Inland Empire. This hierarchy could be seen in buildings such as Riverside's Mission Inn—a resort that catered to white elites who had profited from the burgeoning citrus industry. The promotion of this myth was so widespread that since the 1960s, California school children have been building scale models of the missions every year. Here, we see public education playing an active role in promoting this idealized architecture while whitewashing its history (Kryder-Reid 2015; Menchaca and Valencia 1990).[2]

This set of actors operating within a social and historical context is essential. As Bourdieu (2003) asks, "Who created the creators?" While the subsequent actors discussed in this article will clearly express their views on Spanish-Colonial Revival, they operated in a broader field. They were in dialog with each other and the general public. Here, proponents positioned Spanish-Colonial Revival as part of the region's heritage. At the same time, they needed to address critics. Notably, both proponents and opponents used racialized/racist language. This speaks to the hegemonic way race operates in American culture —including architecture and buildings.

Origins of Spanish-Colonial Revival and Racist Legitimization

Unsurprisingly, scholarship on Spanish-Colonial Revival is primarily found in the fields of art and architectural history (Gebhard 1967; Weitze 1984). Research in history and geography has also looked at Spanish-Colonial Revival within California's social landscape (DeLyser 2005; Kropp 2006; Starr 1990). Defining Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture is similar to defining racial categories. Both are characterized by physical traits (cf. Morning 2011). However, upon closer examination, those traits are relative, if not arbitrary, unless one considers the broader cultural and racial forces that delineate those boundaries. It is not so much the use of red tile or stucco that make a building Spanish-Colonial, as much as the social and historical context that results in that designation.

Similarly, the concept of race is a byproduct of colonialism (Quijano 2000). This colonial history impacts Spanish-Colonial Revival in three ways. First, the Spanish invasion and conquest of the Americas inspired it. Second, the Umayyad Caliphate's expansion from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula influenced its form. These two expansions correspondingly meant that buildings had military and multiethnic influences. This history is one of the reasons Spanish-Colonial Revival is similar to other revival architectures. The third dimension is the expansion of the American Empire, which coincided with the growing popularity of various architectural revivals.

In the United States, Spanish-Colonial Revival became popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s. It was part of a broader "Colonial Revival" movement that included other colonial architecture, paintings, literature, and products. There was also home décor and even faux-Spanish branding of consumer products. For example, utility company Pacific Light and Power even had advertisements for "El Tosto" for toasters and "El Perco" for coffee pots on their receipts.[3] Colonial revivals often invoked a racist nostalgia of an earlier America. Not coincidentally, this was also when Confederate monuments were built, and Colonial Williamsburg became a popular tourist destination. As Deverell (2004) argues, this nostalgia creates a foundational history that is "whitewashed" as European achievements were foregrounded, and history was sanitized. This is particularly evident in the so-called restoration of Olvera Street in Los Angeles whereby the local Chinese and Black communities' heritage was erased (Estrada 2008).

Jones (2006) argues that both physically and socially, architecture constructs a sense of collective identity. In North America, there is no doubt that race/racism plays an integral role in nation-building (Smedley 2018). Similarly, we see it locally in the production of place—as manifested in homes and other buildings. Spanish-Colonial Revival in California was primarily a creation of

White Anglo-Saxon Protestant elites of the era. Establishing a new regional vernacular is not unlike nation-building projects that also produced national culture that have a racial hierarchy. This article focuses on California. However, we see a similar Spanish-Colonial Revival deployment throughout the American Southwest and Florida (see: McDonough 1998). Nation-building projects have always been as much about exclusion as they have been about inclusion. Vernacular architecture is produced and reinforced by nation-building myth. In this case, European colonialism is elevated while excluding other peoples and cultures from the story.

Spanish-Colonial Revival and its acceptance as part of California's vernacular landscape did not appear overnight. Hall (2000) argued that consumption requires the acceptance of cultural codes. In architecture, signifiers such as red-tile roofs and stucco must be linked to value systems palatable to consumers. Put another way, Spanish-Colonial Revival needed to appeal to White Anglo-Saxon Protestant customers who may have preferred wood shingles and clapboard instead of red tile and stucco. Marketing had to address existing racial and ethnic biases associated with different building materials. The anti-Spanish and Catholic legacy of the Black Legend, as well as anti-Latinx prejudice and xenophobia of the era should not be underestimated (DeGuzmán 2005). As Omi and Winant's (1994) work on racial formation reminds us, racial categories are created over time. There is a symbolic dimension to race. Yet, this is a product of politics, conflict, and reinforcement. Developments in architecture and the built environment are influenced by and part of this process.

This legitimization was a multifaceted process. First, there was the elevation of all things Spanish. A prolific writer and well-connected within Los Angeles high society, Charles Fletcher (Lummis 1923) insisted that "the romance of California is Spanish romance. Everybody knows that, who knows anything" (p. 8). As a journalist and founder of the Southwest Museum, he famously claimed that the Spanish were "pioneers" (Lummis 1914). This claim was not unlike other celebrations of American colonialism, whereby colonizers were seen as heroes or explorers. Or, put another way, Lummis and others made the Spanish colonizers white, like the British (see: Allen 1994; Brodkin 1999).

Lummis was not the only one to appropriate Spanish conquistadors and integrate them into local historical narratives. Of particular note are educators and historians that promoted Spanish contributions to the region's history (see: Hunt 1914, p. 75; Mason 1904, p. 631). In addition, celebrities were also involved. Movie star Mary Pickford remarked, the "Spanish... influence in California is one of the great charms our state possesses, a precious heritage second only to our climate, and that it should be preserved in every possible way" (quoted in Gebhard 1996, p. 10). Pickford, then known as "American's

Sweetheart," did not just endorse this interpretation of the past. She, and her husband Douglas Fairbanks, threw their weight into this myth. For instance, Pickford starred in an adaptation of Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel *Ramona*—a story that played an influential role in selling California's Spanish past (DeLyser 2005). Douglas Fairbanks, who portrayed Zorro, also invested in Spanish-Colonial Revival suburban developments with Pickford (Kropp 2006, p. 159).

However, the proponents of this myth had to address opposition, and often racist resistance, to this interpretation of California's history. For instance, Pineda (2018) argued that the 2015 canonization of Junípero Serra, founder of the California Mission system, represents a process of de-racialization. This process began in this period, along with the construction of California's mythic history. Historian Charles Chapman (1921), for example, argued, "the venerable Junípero comes out far better in the light of the facts than have the heroes of other historic 'legends'" (p. 353). This elevation and de-racialization of Spanish colonizers helped to drive the restoration of California's Missions. Lummis, Pickford, Fairbanks, and others were active fundraisers for such projects and ultimately constructing what would be Serra's legacy nearly a hundred years before his canonization. The rebuilding of these structures was not only a material act but also it built and reinforced the idea that California's heritage was Spanish. Referring to the trail that connected the 21 California Missions, it was not uncommon to see architects, authors, and historians argue that "El Camino Real should be the pride and joy of every Californian" (Craig 1922, p. 63; also see: Guinn 1915, p. 68). In addition to generations of school children building replicas, they became tourist sites and inspirations for contemporary buildings.

Architects were often evangelists looking to convince others that Spanish architecture was adaptable to modern train stations, theaters, and homes. Arthur Benton, architect of the Mission Inn in Riverside and the Arlington Hotel in Santa Barbara, aggressively promoted the style (see: Benton 1910, 1911). In addition to architects, architectural critics also insisted that the "Spanish atmosphere which was the glory of early California" be reclaimed through the built environment (Allen 1926, p. 6). The result was the proliferation of Spanish-Colonial architecture. It soon became more than something that people wanted. Rather, it became something that people expected. For instance, in 1924, Santa Barbara established an annual event called "Old Spanish Days" to package itself as a tourist destination. The city readily used Spanish-Colonial Revival structures in advertisements. Publications such as the *Los Angeles Times* celebrated Santa Barbara's "beautiful Spanish Colonial streets" as a part of both Santa Barbara and the region's heritage (Sexsmith 1924b, p. d7). Santa Barbara was not alone. In addition, San Clemente in Orange County sold itself as a "Spanish Village by the Sea" (Los Angeles Times 1927, 1928). Douglas

Fairbanks' Rancho Santa Fe in San Diego was explicitly planned to revive "the old Spanish glory" and had restrictions in place so that "not one bit of ugly construction or distasteful architecture shall mar the view of other residents" (Shippey 1922, p. 52).

Another dimension of legitimization was juxtaposing good architecture against ugly or distasteful architecture. Thus, the second part of this process meant downplaying, erasing, or demonizing Mexico/Mexicans and peoples and histories outside of Europe. A journalist's tour of *Ramona* tourist sites in San Diego noted that a house that was "no longer sightly. Its only inhabitants are some very poor and dirty Mexicans, and their stock of animals, while the empty rooms are dark, bare, and foul" (Glover 1910, p. 19). It was common for historians to blame Mexico for mismanaging the work of so-called Spanish pioneers, which led to "the disappearance of the peaceful pastoral life" (McComish and Lambert 1918, p. 21; also see: Chapman 1921, pp. 255–469; California History Nugget 1924, pp. 18–24). In reviews of California architecture, the *Los Angeles Times* would typically speak of "Spanish" and not "Mexican" architecture. At least one Californian at the time lamented there was too much "jazzy Mexican" architecture polluting the landscape (Los Angeles Times 1923).

This tension between "Spanish" and "Mexican" is not limited to aesthetic arguments. It had consequences for how cities would look decades later. McGirr (2001) notes that despite the ubiquitous use of Spanish place names and architecture, the lack of racial diversity in the present was not an accident. The real-estate boom in the early twentieth century led to the construction of these buildings amidst the routine use of redlining and restrictive covenants (Kurashige 2008). The same covenants that mandated Spanish-Colonial Revival also included deed restrictions that prevented selling to racial and ethnic minorities.[4]

The popularity of Spanish-Colonial Revival in the early twentieth century generally coincided with the changing position of the United States globally. This had consequences for racialization/racism in this era (Calderón-Zaks 2011). American imperialism in Latin America, geopolitical struggle with Asia-Pacific states, and interest in Middle Eastern oil shaped domestic conceptualizations of race. In turn, legitimization had to address the Islamic or Moorish influence on Spanish architecture. As one commentator lamented, California had "Spanish styles, Argentinian houses, Italian villas, French rococo, Mexican haciendas, Indian pueblos; even Egyptian tombs, Tut-ankh-amon style" in its landscape (Waugh 1926, p. 233). Due to Islamic and other cultures' influence, the whitewashing was not limited to racist commentary on the Mexican influence on Spanish-Colonial Revival (Fu 2011). As Edward Said (1978) famously pointed out, the justification of empire requires creating cultural representations

of an exotic Orient, and a less civilized "Other." In turn, architects and authors often downplayed Near Eastern influences (see: Benton 1911; Blackmar 1891; Byers 1929). When Islamic influence was discussed, proponents of Spanish-Colonial Revival often used the word "restraint" to justify WASP use of the architecture (see: Neuhaus 1916; Sexton 1927). Here proponents suggest that Victorian values such as "restraint" bring dignity to spaces versus the gaudy approach typical of "Moorish" architecture (Bell 1906; Hamilton 1925).

In the present, critical analysis of such discourses regarding buildings is still important. Take, for instance, mosque construction in the United States. Islamophobic resistance to their presence often weaponizes local architectural styles to prevent their construction (Foley 2010). Even in California, where architecture may have Islamic influences, there is resistance against mosques (Fu 2011). In turn, many American mosques often do not readily look like one. As such, we see how architecture is legitimized, or de-legitimized can lead to discrimination.

Can Buildings Be as Racist as Other Forms of Visual Culture?

Indeed, we see that the origins and legitimization of Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture had racist intent. While this history is essential, it is also necessary to evaluate such buildings' materiality within a broader social context. There is a long history of American politicians militarizing the U.S.-Mexico border. However, this was heightened level with Donald Trump's "build the wall" as a catchphrase. This history of excluding Latinx people, immigrants, and other groups is vital in understanding how buildings can be racist (see: Castañeda 2019). Buildings are not only mirrors of racist beliefs but also directly impact how we navigate social life. LaFleur (2020) argues we need to consider how space factors into our understanding of racial categories. Correspondingly, we can examine how the American Southwest's militarization of space maintains the color-line.

While gated communities vary, they all have an obsession with security. Within the broad framework of security, values such as privacy appear prominently in the literature. Caldeira (2001, p. 308) notes gated communities are spaces where "internalization, privacy, and individuality are enhanced." Primarily understood as being free from observation, in practice, privacy operates alongside surveillance (Anthony, Campos-Castillo and Horne 2017). Andrzejewski (2008) argues that surveillance-oriented architecture came to prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In buildings, this means controlling and regulating physical or visual access to spaces. Simply put, buildings are designed to give occupants the ability to survey outsiders, but not vice versa.

Walls play a vital role in this, as they have both form and function. The use of walls helps us understand their function in Spanish-Colonial Revival and practices that reproduce racial inequality. Due to the immobility of buildings, builders utilize design to control movement in space. Walls influence how we navigate space. They affect what can and cannot be seen. In turn, they may serve to intimidate, confine, as well as defend. Ellin (1997) points out past walls sought to keep people out of the city (p. 101). Architecture in this way can—from a functional standpoint—generate internal divisions throughout the city and region. In the early twentieth century, the construction of new residential communities—was often reflective of "bourgeois nightmares" or "fears of almost everyone and everything" (Fogelson 2005, p. 117). These divisions and fears are racialized.

While myth perpetuates the popularity of Spanish-Colonial Revival, its emphasis on walls provided White consumers privacy and seclusion. Indeed, cities have always had walls, and elites have always attempted to control space's public-ness. However, they are also symbolic. Van den Scott (2016) argues that walls have both passive and active dimensions. Walls are both technology and a form of cultural practice. They can, for example, be decorated and interacted with daily. Stucco-covered walls fortify contemporary gated communities and beautify an otherwise militaristic organization of space. Like all design choices, walls are a materialization of beliefs with a direct impact on social life.

Despite the early twentieth century boosters celebrating California Missions as utopian settlements, they were ultimately colonial outposts. There is no doubt that a militaristic/defensive organization of space-inspired Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture. As Bauman (2002) noted of frontier-land warfare, "adversaries are known to be constantly on the move" (p. 291). In turn, buildings can be spatial products that discipline human spatial practices (see Foucault 1995). A building's geometry has a tactical dimension from floor plans to walls, enclosure, and fortification. In 1758, a Spanish treasury official reported that "presidios are erected and missions founded in *tierra firme* whenever it is necessary to defend conquered districts from hostilities and invasions…." (quoted in Bolton 1960 [1917], p. 11). In the 1760s, King Carlos III appointed the Marqués de Rubí to analyze and suggest improvements for the system of presidios in North America. The most significant proposal was a cordon of 15 presidios between Altar in Sonora to La Bahía in Texas. The function of such settlements was the eradication of the Apache nation (Weber 1994, pp. 215–17).

In architecture, "whitewashing" transformed physical fortifications into cultural forms that reflect architects, builders, and homeowners' habitus. The mission system resulted in the Indigenous population's enslavement and murder

(Madley 2016). While mission construction varied due to the availability of construction materials, they often had thick walls, parapets, and crenellations. Positioned strategically and tactically, they were approximately a day's journey from each other to serve as nodal points in a network (Jackson 2005). Design elements such as arcades, walls, and windows, deployed initially to control the native population, still order the space of twentieth-century buildings. An early advocate of Spanish California romance, Bolton (1960 [1917], pp. 11–13), was clear regarding the nature of mission architecture, calling it a 'frontier institution.' Correspondingly, he argued that they "often served as fortresses," as agents of "discipline," and a "symbol of force."

In the twentieth century, architects and builders brought form and function to myth by strategically using walls to reinforce this Spanish romance and create a sense of security. For instance, walls helped make the patio a physical extension of Spanish-Colonial mythology. An article in *Pacific Coast Architect* argued that some walls "make the more effective certain garden gates or openings into some near-Paradise" (Ford 1922, p. 12). Architects celebrated enclosed patios or a private utopia, unlike an open semi-public space, such as the front yard. Similarly, periodicals frequently described the patio as an extra room or enclosed space. The *Building Review,* discussing a home designed by Myron Hunt, noted that "The interior court, so-called the patio, peculiar to houses of Spanish, Mexican, or Mission design, afford[s] the means of securing seclusion" (Woodman 1922, p. 32). Key is the emphasis on privacy and seclusion, while celebrating the enclosed patio as a charming part of Spanish-Colonial Revival homes. In turn, journalists and builders supported the logic of an inward-turning design—whereby facing away from the public—was seen as a virtue.

Throughout the archival evidence, writers emphasized turning away from the house's front. A *Los Angeles Times* critic wrote, "the desirability of turning the best rooms of the house toward the garden instead of toward the street has often been insisted upon in these articles" (Sexsmith 1924a, p. D7). Author George Wharton James wrote: "Our privacy, on the other hand, should be merely a frank request for home seclusion, where husband and wife, brother and sister, parents and children, with friends may have the pleasure of home intercourse out of doors, free from the prying eyes of curious outsiders" (James 1907:238). This included patios being able to "Screen objectionable views and objects such as your neighbor's chicken house or garbage can" (Gregg 1919, p. 81). It was also suggested that the enclosure of space allowed one to be "perfectly secure from either change or intended molestation" (Price 1914, p. 58). The goal, in other words, was to "exclude the intruder" (Newcomb 1927, p. 64).

This inward turn and control of space went as far as looking away from open spaces. Despite the views some homes had, they often turned inward into their gardens. As a result, contemporary renovations of these 1920s homes, contractors sometimes would have to update it with oversized windows to take advantage of the view outdoors. For example, despite one Newport Beach resident's desire to follow Wallace Neff's 1920s style of Spanish-Colonial as closely as possible, their 2006 renovation had to be reworked to take advantage of the bayfront view (Bush 2007; McMillian 1996).

It should be noted that enclosing one's backyard with physical walls, while common in California, is less common in other parts of the United States. Not surprisingly, some opponents noted the unwelcoming nature of walls. Walls, after all, could also be associated with a variety of negative meanings. An article in *Pacific Coast Architect* pointed out that, "Truly the mere sound of the word wall is forbidding, yet there are walls and walls... There are some walls that we associate with prisons, some that we associate with stuffy houses" (Matson 1925, p. 12). The celebration of privacy drowned out these concerns. Perhaps more telling is a letter to the *Los Angeles Times* that argued that despite the presence of "barred windows and iron gates... We love walls" (Richardson 1922, p. II2). The letter writer went on to talk about the need for privacy, which seems to foreshadow NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) attitudes and support for gated communities 60 years later.

The emphasis of seclusion was not neutral. For example, it was argued in the *Atlantic Monthly* that seclusion could be found in the "Anglo-Saxon heart" (quoted in Fogelson 2005, p. 167). As such, this defensive architecture was directed toward immigrants and communities of color, as well as working-class families. Like many other cities, Los Angeles saw its black population dramatically grow amidst the Great Migration (Sides 2003). Early twentieth-century reports on living conditions for Mexicans, Chinese, and other immigrants living in Los Angeles often included remarks regarding dirty homes, drunkenness, and crime (see: Coffey 1906; Murphy 1921, p. 119; Ritter 1924, pp. 95–6).[5] A particular target in Los Angeles was the original Chinatown and Sonoratown—in the city's downtown area. Such racism allowed for the demolition of homes in Sonoratown and the destruction of Los Angeles's original Chinatown to construct the Spanish-Colonial themed Union Station in the late 1920s-1930s (Axelrod 2009; Estrada 2008; Quintana 2015).

Spanish-Colonial Revival, as a defensive architecture, was also reinforced by various legal practices. Developments such as the Palos Verdes Estates and Rancho Santa Fe had bodies such as "Art Juries." These entities not only mandated homes be Spanish-Colonial Revival but prevented neighbors from "objectionable" land use. Moreover, these neighborhoods barred the sale of homes to racial and ethnic minority groups. The focus on Spanish-Colonial Revival walls

coincided with the growing use of deed restrictions or racial covenants across the United States. Palos Verdes, which the Olmsted Brothers designed in the 1920s, prohibited occupancy of people of "African or Asiatic descent or by any person not of the white or Caucasian race, except that domestic servants, chauffeurs, or gardeners" (Olmsted Brothers 1925, p. 18; also see: Akimoto 2003, 2007).

As Gotham (2000) suggests, the use of deed restrictions or racial covenants by developers played a significant role in segregation. It also provided homeowners associations tools to maintain racial homogeneity (also see Davis 1992). Buildings, generally speaking, remain in the built environment for some time. There are long-term social and material consequences. This love for walls and privacy continued throughout the twentieth century, in part because this foundation had been laid. Home designer Cliff May argued that "The early Californians had the right idea... They built for the seclusion and comfort of their families." (quoted in Haas 1996) May popularized the California Ranch House after World War II, a synthesis of Spanish Colonial Revival and modernism, whereby homes turned inward toward a patio. Even in the late 1990s, one could find home and architecture publications celebrating the historical use of walls. An issue of *California Homes* profiling Santa Barbara's Casa de la Guerra explained:

> To keep out the heat of the day as well as the prying eyes of curious Chumash Indians, de la Guerra made the walls of his house 20-30 inches deep, punctuated by small, glassless windows (Davis 1997, p. 35).

This romance of walls eventually included gated communities, guarded apartment complexes, offices, and intricately designed shopping malls that survey and control one's movement.

Today, the security of walls is complemented by cameras that can be hidden or obscured by architecture. While gated communities and their residents are more diverse than is often stereotyped, their proliferation reflects a withdrawal from a heterogeneous public (Sanchez, Lang and Dhavale 2005). California has long been cited as an exemplar of postmodern urbanism whereby buildings with simulated facades turn inward away from public places favoring interdictory spaces (Dear and Flusty 1998; Ellin 1996). This, however, has both historical and architectural precedents.

How Can a Critical Sociology of Architecture Approach Racism Within the Built Environment?

I have illustrated how race/racism influenced the building of Spanish-Colonial Revival buildings. Architects and builders adapted and fused several styles to create the ubiquitous structures seen today. They were both

byproducts and producers of racist ideologies, leaving behind a long-lasting physical landscape. This includes both how race affected, the form buildings takes, and their function. This legacy operates both culturally but also with a direct impact on our day-to-day movements and interactions. Therefore, when looking at physical buildings, one is answering Golash-Boza (2016)'s call to "understand how race and racism work on the ground." (p. 139) Here, the analysis of the ground floor of a building directly looks at how race works in society.

Building metaphors are common in sociology. In the built environment, social actors *include* building structures that directly impact social life. The study of it rests at the intersection of cultural and urban sociology. Sociologists examining segregation, gentrification, suburbanization, and other processes have increasingly called for studying housing, not just only as a context but also as something material. Foregrounding architecture can reveal the day-to-day impacts of the built environment on human interaction. Powerful cultural and symbolic processes shape and are shaped by architecture (Pattillo 2013). This includes race/racism. The physical environment is both a cause and consequence of social action. As such, it cannot be dis-entangled from understanding how human beings reproduce inequality and oppression.

A critical sociology of architecture can and should be both intersectional and global. The construction of modern homes, for example, shapes domesticity. Indeed, gender, race, and power shape and are shaped by architectural spaces. For instance, Quintana (2015) examines how Chinese and Mexican women navigated and re-ordered home spaces in communities around the Los Angeles Plaza in the early twentieth century. Globally, modernization projects have long included building projects that re-shaped the built environment and gender roles (see: Heynen 2005; Mills 1996). We can look at cases where buildings play an integral role in why and how people are in various spaces.

The remnants of Spanish-Colonialism—adobes, missions, and presidios— are both sites of real trauma and icons of manufactured mythology. Still, there should be caution in the examination of race/racism in architecture globally. Cultural products and what they are associated with are contextual. Lopez (2010) has looked at how migrant remittances are used to construct California-style houses in Mexico. This follows a trend where homes and buildings worldwide, especially among elites, look more or less the same (Fu 2020). Therefore, we cannot just reduce its ubiquity to just cultural imperialism. While structured by trends in urban planning, the forces of colonialism, and global capitalism, there is real potential for anti-racist architecture.

The subjectivity of architecture, like other cultural products, allows for a degree of agency. This raises questions as to how anti-racist buildings should look. Red-tile roofs and stucco are not inherently racist. Instead, history,

ideology, and building practices make them so. The WAI Architecture Think Tank (2020) starts its anti-racism manifesto, pointing out that "buildings are never just buildings." A recognition that buildings serve ideologies is a starting point in creating structures that support communities. For example, California school curriculum recently de-emphasized students building models of missions and shifted toward coverage of Indigenous and Native history. Within the curriculum, there is also an understanding that such structures were not and are not neutral. That said, a more inclusive curriculum is just a start.

While greater awareness of the past is important, it is important to directly confront these legacies in the present. As Kryder-Reid (2015) documents, the building of mission models is deeply entrenched in the region's collective memory. For instance, terms such as "tradition" or "rite of page" are still invoked when discussing this school project. A critical sociology of architecture, and one that is anti-racist, would question such practices and their consequences. However, it is not enough to know that Spanish-Colonial Revival architecture has racist origins. Rather, such knowledge should be used to guide anti-racist building practices in the present. That said, the conflict is real. One only needs to look at those who defend Confederate monuments as heritage, and the moral panic around critical race theory.

Finally, it is also important to look at who plans and builds homes. The lack of diversity in architecture needs to be addressed. More broadly, control of building and the narratives around such spaces also need to be shifted from elites and corporations to local communities. A building process that emphasizes city-dwellers through participatory planning is an alternative (Hayden 1995; also see: Lefebvre 2003; Grabow and Heskin 1973). The goal would be a move away from homogeneity and toward heterogenous neutral spaces, such as what Elijah Anderson (2011) calls "cosmopolitan canopies." There would not be a one size fits all mythologized home. Rather, traditionally marginalized groups and their stories would be included in the planning process.

ENDNOTES

[1]Due to word count limitations and the racist nature of some archival documents, I have chosen not to extensively quote explicitly racist sources. However, they are properly referenced in the works cited section of this article.

[2]It was not until 2017, that the state revised its fourth grade curriculum and school districts began to move away from the project.

[3]See: Pacific Light & Power Corp. Receipts. Bill Stub, April 14, 1916. Braun Research Library, Los Angeles, CA [uncatalogued].

[4]Also, an active Ku Klux Klan reinforced white supremacy like many other parts of the country. In the 1920s, city council elections in Anaheim frequently had Klan tickets running. In response, Lummis complained to anti-Klan journalist William Allen White of "K.I.G.Y" (Klansman, I Greet You) signs in Santa Ana and Anaheim, calling the group a "skulking mob." See: Lummis, Charles Fletcher to William Allen White. October 1, 1924. Charles Fletcher Lummis Correspondences. MS 1.1.4617. Braun Research Library, Southwest Museum, Los Angeles. Also see: "Klan Agitating in Anaheim," *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1926.

[5]Also see: *A Community Survey*. (Los Angeles: Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, 1919). [Braun Research Library: Eph 917.9494.104]

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