The Right to Belong in School: A Critical, Transdisciplinary Conceptualization of School Belonging

Paul J. Kuttner (iD)

University of Utah

Belonging is a critical factor for supporting student success and well-being in school. Unfortunately, the work of fostering belonging at school for all students continues to face significant challenges. One reason is that the field of education is working from a limited conception of school belonging, based mainly in the discipline of psychology. Belonging is more than just a psychological sense—it is also a social, cultural, and even political process. In this article, Paul Kuttner explores six aspects of belonging that are underemphasized in the school belonging literature, arguing that we should think of school belonging as agentic, intersectional, systemic, political, place-based, and a right. Kuttner proposes a definition of belonging that encompasses these aspects and uses it to suggest future directions for research and practice.

Keywords: *belonging, critical theory, cultural citizenship, disparities, diversity, interdisciplinary teaching and research, learning environments, mixed methods, place-attachment, politics of belonging, school belonging*

A sense of belonging is widely understood by psychologists to be a fundamental human need and motivational driver (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Maslow, 1954). A feeling that you belong to a group—that you are important to the group and the group is important to you, that you have established long-term caring relationships—has been linked to a wide range of positive outcomes related to mental health, self-concept, life satisfaction, and overall health (Allen & Bowles, 2012; Allen et al., 2021a; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hagerty et al., 1996). A substantial body of research has also demonstrated that a sense of belonging is integral to positive student experiences in schools. Students who feel they belong at school are overall more motivated and engaged, have higher attendance, are less disruptive and distressed, achieve higher test scores, and complete school at higher rates (Allen & Bowles, 2012; Gillen-O'Neel & Fuligni, 2013; Hughes et al., 2015; Ma, 2003; OECD, 2017; Osterman, 2000; Pittman & Richmond, 2007; Sánchez et al., 2005).

Unfortunately, the work of fostering belonging at school for all students continues to face significant challenges (Riley, 2022). Schools are too often sites of othering and alienation, disproportionately impacting groups that do not align with the dominant culture, including Black students, Indigenous students, students of Color, LGBTQIA+ students, low-income students, students of immigrant and refugee background, and disabled students. This othering can take many forms, from bullying and overt discrimination (Assari & Caldwell, 2018; Dotterer et al., 2009; Espelage et al., 2015; Russell et al., 2014) to exclusionary discipline and tracking policies (Bottiani et al., 2017; He & Fischer, 2020; Morrison et al., 2005; Owens & McLanahan, 2020) to implicit messages in curriculum and practice that communicate to students that school is not a place for them or their communities (Celeste et al., 2019; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015). According to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), school belonging is decreasing on average around the world, with nearly one in three students reporting that they do not feel they belong (OECD, 2017, 2019). This includes significant in-country belonging gaps between the wealthy and nonwealthy, boys and girls, and immigrants and native-born students (OECD, 2017).

Belonging is complex, and students from communities that face othering may have other resources or mechanisms that facilitate school belonging. De Bortoli (2018) found that immigrant students in Australia reported higher sense of school belonging than those born in the country, and Parker et al. (2022) found that, when controlling for socioeconomic status, Indigenous status predicted higher school belonging. Still, the overall picture is one where belonging functions as a privilege that adheres to other systemic privileges, rather than a right available to all students.

Scholarship on school belonging has been very good at showing the importance of belonging but, as several scholars have pointed out, much weaker in understanding what it takes to create schools where belonging is the norm (Allen & Bowles, 2012; Allen & Kern, 2017; Allen et al., 2021b). One

reason for this is that the field of education is working from a very limited conception of school belonging. This conception is based heavily on the discipline of psychology. It focuses almost exclusively on the internal experiences of students—their *sense* of belonging and connectedness within the school community—as well as the individual and school-level factors that help or hinder it. Perhaps the most cited definition comes from Goodenow and Grady (1993): "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment" (p. 60). Commonly cited aspects of, or contributors to, school belonging include supportive teacher-student relationships, positive peer relationships, high academic expectations and supports, feelings of safety, engagement in extracurricular activities, and a sense of fitting in (Allen et al., 2018, 2021b; Dotterer et al., 2009; Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Haugen et al., 2019; Hughes et al., 2015; Wingspread Declaration on School Connections, 2004).

This psychologically based conceptualization of school belonging focuses our attention on some key facets that must be included in any definition. First, it demonstrates that belonging is, in part, *affective*. It is a feeling, a subjective experience that varies by individual—one person may feel belonging in the same situation that another does not. Second, it forefronts the centrality of *relationships* to school belonging. In fact, the concept of school belonging is sometimes used interchangeably with concepts like school connectedness, relatedness, and social capital (Allen et al., 2018) and measured by student reports of the quality of their peer and adult relationships in the school (Goodenow, 1993; Voelkl, 1996; Ye & Wallace, 2014). Although we may talk of belonging to a school, or a community, or a nation, we establish and experience that belonging through relationships with others. Relationships with people have been a primary focus of research, but people can also experience belonging through relationships with nonhumans—for example, with the land (Schein, 2009).

Although this conception of school belonging is valuable, it is also partial. It is limited, for example, in its ability to address the systemic nature of belonging and othering in schools or to understand the multiple ways that belonging is enacted across communities. Belonging is more than just a psychological sense; it is also a social, cultural, and even political process. In our quest to measure the impact of a sense of belonging on students, scholars of school belonging have all but ignored some key questions, such as: What do students belong to? What role do students play in defining and enacting belonging? How do macro dynamics of alienation or othering play into the student experience?

Questions like these require a more critical and transdisciplinary lens. There is a rich well of scholarship we can draw on from political science, sociology, geography, urban planning, and cultural studies that interrogates belonging as it relates to communities, institutions, cities, ethnicities, and nations. Concepts such as *cultural citizenship*, *place-making*, and the *politics of belonging* challenge us to look at the sociocultural underpinnings of group identity, the spatial dynamics of belonging, and how belonging can be an arena of struggle and social change (Fataar & Rinquest, 2019; Rosaldo, 1997; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In recent years, scholars have begun to draw these ideas into the school belonging literature through an inter- or transdisciplinary lens (Halse, 2018) with notable work in the areas of early childhood education (Souto-Manning, 2021; Stratigos, 2015; Stratigos et al., 2014; Sumsion & Wong, 2011) and higher education (Morieson et al., 2013; Qingjiu & Maliki, 2013; Samura, 2016). In a similar vein, Allen et al. (2022) document how several disciplines and subfields within education—including urban education, behavior analysis, creative arts education, design education, and economics—are working on belonging or belonging-like constructs. They argue that there is "a pressing need to bring transdisciplinary theory, research and discourse together under one broad shared narrative—belonging" (p. 257).

A critical and transdisciplinary lens on belonging brings out the deep complexities of this everyday term. In fact, the complexity is so striking that some scholars have moved from talking about *belonging* to *belongings* (Stratigos et al., 2014). For example, Sumsion and Wong's (2011) "cartography of belonging" identifies ten overlapping dimensions of belonging: social, cultural, spatial, physical, spiritual, temporal, moral/ethical, emotional, political, and legal (pp. 32–33). They also identify three *axes* of belonging, or ways that belonging "operates" across contexts and dimensions: categorization, resistance and desire, and performativity (p. 33). This cartography offers an expansive view of the many ways belonging manifests and can be studied.

The current article contributes to this emerging effort to develop critical and transdisciplinary approaches to belonging in education. Specifically, I propose a definition of school belonging that synthesizes six key insights from multiple disciplines and fields and focuses our attention on the ways that power operates to shape who belongs in school and how. In developing this definition, I refer to similar efforts to create inter- and transdisciplinary definitions of belonging outside of the education literature (Mahar et al., 2013; Youkhana, 2015). This article grew, in part, from my own experiences working to address persistent systemic othering of students from nondominant communities in schools. It responds to the aforementioned calls for bridging disciplinary divides in school belonging research and practice and to the possibilities of what Schein (2009) calls "belonging-as-social-justice"—an "oppositional politics" in which communities facing othering (re)claim their right to belong (p. 811).

Expanding Our Understanding of School Belonging

In this article, I outline six underemphasized aspects of school belonging that can lead us to a more critical, transdisciplinary understanding. I argue that we should think of school belonging as *agentic*, *intersectional*, *systemic, political, place-based*, and *a right*. I then propose a definition of belonging that encompasses these aspects.

Belonging as Agentic

Research on belonging in K–12 schools tends to downplay the agency of students. Belonging is conceptualized in large part as something that is given to students, or not given, by others in the school. For example, see Goodenow and Grady's (1993) popular definition: "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment" (p. 60); or Libbey's (2007) definition: when students "feel close to, a part of, and happy at school; feel that teachers care about students and treat them fairly; get along with teachers and other students, and feel safe at school" (p. 52).

Mahar et al. (2013) offer an alternative conception in their review of definitions of belonging across the disciplines. One of the five key aspects of belonging they point to is "self-determination," which "respects the right of the individual to choose to interact with referents and their perceived power in the interaction" (p. 6). They draw on research by Ahnallen et al. (2006) whose interviews with multiracial Japanese European Americans "emphasized *choice* and *power* in determining an individual's sense of belonging (Mahar et al., 2013, p. 6, emphasis added). While *power* refers to the systemic and social barriers to belonging (explored below), *choice* refers to the ways that the "individual has control over to whom or what they belong to and the power to develop satisfying reciprocal interactions" (p. 6). Choice, for the interviewees, included choices about how much to invest in a particular community as well as one's own self-perceptions of identity—as one interviewee put it, "My view of who I would identify with . . . not society's view" (p. 681).

Samura (2016) explores student agency in her work on belonging with Asian American college students. She critiques understandings of belonging that ignore "how students navigate, negotiate, contest, and understand their processes of belonging" (p. 137). Using symbolic interactionism and critical spatial perspectives, Samura documents how students "remake themselves," "reposition themselves," and "remake space" to establish belonging in the face of othering. Johnson et al. (2020) offer a K–12 example of agency in their study of high school youth in foster care, demonstrating how students were strategic about when and whether to reveal their foster care identity in an effort to fit in and avoid stigma. And Stratigos et al. (2014) point to several early childhood studies that show how even very young children are aware of and work to negotiate belonging and exclusion in relation to skin color and gender, through play and storytelling (Skattebol, 2005, 2006; Taylor, 2007; Taylor & Richardson, 2005).

These studies suggest that belonging is not just something a person experiences but something a person *does*. Noble (2019) refers to it as a form of "labour" that "produces and reproduces" the world around us (p. xviii). It is a reciprocal, interpersonal process that involves choice, even though that choice is constrained by factors out of a person's control. For example, one may not always have the choice to belong if one is excluded due to factors like skin color or perceived ethnic origin (Ahnallen et al., 2006). Even then, there is power in the choice *not* to belong in a particular group. Sociologist May (2011) refers to belonging as a negotiation and explains that the choice not to belong can be both positive and politically powerful.

> A feeling of not belonging need not always be experienced negatively. For many of us, there exists a tension between wanting to be similar to and belong with others, and wanting to be unique and different from others (Elias, 2001; Simmel, 1971). More importantly, this tension can be productive. . . . A sense of not belonging can open up new possibilities of, for example, political action if we become conscious of the fact that the routine paths we have so far traversed are not the only possible ones. (p. 373)

This facet of belonging raises important questions for K–12 education researchers, such as: What roles do K-12 students play in negotiating, contesting, or otherwise expressing power in terms of their own process of belonging in schools? How does this differ across developmental stages from kindergarten through high school? And how might schools support student agency to define their own belongingness?

Belonging as Intersectional

One of the questions rarely asked in the school belonging literature is: what exactly is it that students belong *to*? In most conceptions of school belonging, it is the school, or sometimes the classroom, that is the unit of belonging. This makes sense from the perspective of school leaders who are working to build a cohesive and school-centric community. However, this obscures the fact that schools are not necessarily one cohesive community. Perhaps more importantly, this approach obscures the complexity of the identity-development processes that young people go through as they figure out where and to what they belong and how their belonging to other groups or spaces intersects with school belonging.

Belonging is intimately tied up with identity (Mucchielli, 1980; St-Amand et al., 2017). Anthias (2008) refers to the two concepts as "symbiotically connected" (p. 7). As young people develop an understanding of who they are, they are simultaneously figuring out where and with whom they

belong. In other words, there is an interplay between individual identity and social identity—the part of a person's sense of self that is defined by their membership in a group (Ellemers et al., 2002). This includes groups based on race, gender identity, sexuality, (dis)ability, neighborhood, country, language, family network, interest group, etc. Much of this identity work takes place in school and many of these social groups overlap with the school community. For example, a student may identify as a member of a local Mexican American community, and if they see other members of that community as students, staff, and teachers in their school, it may tie their sense of belonging to the community in with their sense of belonging in school as a whole—perhaps even seeing the school as part of the larger Mexican American community. Alternatively, a student in the process of identifying as queer may feel alienated in most spaces in their school but find belonging in an LGBTQIA+ student group that the school supports.

Research suggests that school belonging and sense of belonging to other groups are connected. Several studies have shown that students who have a stronger sense of racial or ethnic identity or pride show a stronger sense of belonging to the school as well. Dotterer et al. (2009) looked at racial socialization, ethnic identity, and school bonding among 148 African American adolescents. They found that experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination in school decreased school bonding, whereas racial socialization and ethnic identity increased school bonding and, for girls, moderated the effect of discrimination. Hernández et al. (2017), studying the experiences of Mexican American students, found both unidirectional and bidirectional associations between ethnic identity and school belonging. In both studies, differences were found between boys and girls, suggesting the need for intersectional analyses.

Studies have also explored how school belonging is affected by the alignment of school practices and demographic makeup with the racial and cultural groups with which students identify. When schools reflect, integrate, and validate the ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds of students into the school—for example, through culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining pedagogies—this can increase overall sense of school belonging for students from nondominant cultural groups (Bennouna et al., 2021; Borck, 2020; Byrd, 2016; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; Jaffe-Walter & Lee, 2018; Pak, 2018). Moreover, studies in higher education have shown that participation in student groups based on specific identities can be opportunities for students to achieve or claim belonging in the larger school or campus (Museus, 2008; Samura, 2016; Villalpando, 2003). This work is important in part because it challenges the idea that belonging must be about creating one homogenous shared culture—think pep rallies and school pride—suggesting the benefits of pluralist and multicultural approaches to conceiving of school communities (Celeste et al., 2019).

The previously mentioned research shows that the processes by which students develop attachments and identifications with school are intimately intertwined with the process of developing attachments and identifications to other social groups that overlap with the school community, at least for students who do not match the dominant cultures of US schooling. This suggests that, in addition to asking whether or not someone feels they belong in school, perhaps we should be asking: what social groups, places, or spaces do students feel they belong to, and how does the school intersect with those ecologies of belonging? This could open up new avenues for action and research related to family-school partnerships, racial and social justice activism, teacher hiring pipelines, the shifting demographics of U.S. schools, and school segregation/integration.

In making this shift, we can draw on analytical tools and frameworks from scholarship on citizenship and migration. For a long time, such research was generally based on an assumption of the primacy of the nation state (with its clear geographic boundaries) as the main political project of belonging—an assumption that Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) term *methodological nationalism*. Newer trends, reshaped by the period of rapid globalization at the end of the 20th century, have led to more complex paradigms focused on concepts like transnationality, flow, and intersectionality, which can account for multiple, overlapping, and evolving notions of identity and belonging (e.g., Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002; Youkhana, 2015; Yuval-Davis, 2006). These theories have parallels with developments in culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies (Alim et al., 2020), which complexify our approach to student identity and culture.

Belonging as Systemic

School belonging research has focused much of its attention on the individual experiences of students and their direct interactions with individuals and activities in the school. Much has been written, for example, about the importance of positive relationships with teachers and peers (e.g., Bouchard & Berg, 2017; Delgado et al., 2016; Thijs et al., 2019). Far less has been written about how school belonging is connected to less proximal factors such as school or district policies; historical power relationships; students' home communities; or broader social, economic, and political systems. Allen et al. (2016) document this overemphasis on what ecological systems theory calls the "microsystem"—the people, objects, and experiences that directly surround a student—and call for increased attention to factors across system levels.

Several researchers have explored factors that influence sense of belonging within the mesosystem—the realm of

interactions among microsystem actors like teachers, administrators, and families. This research points to school safety, fair discipline systems, high standards, inclusive practices, school leadership, and shared vision as among important school-level factors (Allen et al., 2016; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; Dimitrellou & Hurry, 2019; Ma, 2003; Riley, 2022; Theoharis, 2009; Wingspread Declaration on School Connections, 2004). Very little work has touched on the exo- and macrosystems, which encompass the broader institutions, policies, discourses, and cultures within which schools and families function, or on the chronosystem, which takes into account the passage of time (Allen et al., 2016).

One useful exception is the work of DeNicolo et al. (2017), who draw on research into the experiences of immigrant-origin students to describe an array of structural forces that impact belonging in schools. They point to restrictive language policies and ideologies related to the superiority of English, unequal access to advanced courses and culturally and linguistically relevant teaching, political discourses that criminalize and dehumanize immigrants, a teaching workforce that does not reflect the backgrounds and cultures of students, and the laws and ideologies surrounding citizenship, among others. They argue, "There is a crucial need for research that interrogates the structural conditions of schooling that undermine students' genuine notions of belonging" (p. 512).

Most research into larger systemic forces impacting belonging remain within a psychological framework in which belonging is an individual experience that is correlated with and/or impacted by institutional and systemic factors. If we look to sociology, we can see how belonging itself can be conceptualized as a systemic construct. Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that belonging is, in part, about our *social locations* or how we are located within the "grids of power relations in society" (p. 199). Each of us are categorized as *belonging to* a particular set of groups in society based on race, class, gender, migration status (e.g., immigrant, refugee), nation, and other axes of difference. Our internal experiences of belonging and the way that we identify are influenced by our social location, though they are not the same. One can identify themselves differently than society positions them, and it is in this space that there is a "possibility of struggle and resistance" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 203). Nevertheless, our social location, which is constituted by the intersection of multiple axes of differences, is often forced upon us and thus puts certain limits on our experiences of belonging (Schein, 2009).

If we understand school belonging as something constituted within larger systems, our attention is turned to the very real forces of othering and inclusion that are infused throughout society, including our schools. A student's subjective feeling of belonging is not infinitely mutable or just "in their head." Rather, it is a natural response to actual forces of belonging and othering, even if it is experienced differently by different individuals. This perspective encourages researchers and practitioners to ask questions such as: How is othering constituted in schools by policies, practices, discourses, and power dynamics, and how can educators and policymakers disrupt such forces?

Belonging as Political

The K–12 school-belonging literature rarely touches on how belonging is tied up with politics. But education is inherently political, a fact that has once again become front page news with recent debates around critical race theory, school curriculum, and school libraries. To fully address school belonging among students who do not fit the hegemonic culture in schools, we will need to explicitly address what Yuval-Davis (2006) calls the *politics of belonging*.

The politics of belonging emerge where human agency meets the systems that categorize and position us within the grid of power. The term refers to the ways that communities or nations define their boundaries—who is *us* and who is *them*—and what one must be, do, feel, or believe in order to belong (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Belonging, in this sense, is not a "feel-good concept" because it necessarily includes both inclusion and exclusion (Nagel, 2011; Stratigos et al., 2014, p. 178). The politics of belonging involve both "the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers" as well as efforts to resist and contest these boundaries (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 205). Therefore, these boundaries are never set in stone. As Stratigos et al. (2014) put it, belonging

> is not something that is achieved with any kind of finality; it is constantly in process, being enacted, contested and negotiated in the various times, places and groups in which we live our daily lives. (p. 178)

Fights over citizenship and immigration are perhaps the most explicit, macro example of the politics of belonging, and one with significant impacts on K–12 students (El-Haj & Bonet, 2011). For example, when Donald Trump became president of the United States, he and his allies made it an explicit project to narrow the boundaries of who is and is not American, who can or cannot participate in American society. They did this both through concrete immigration policies—the ban on Muslim's coming to the United States, the border wall with Mexico—and through racialized rhetoric criminalizing and othering certain immigrant groups. These moves had a direct impact on the exclusion of immigrant-origin students in schools, raising fears of deportation and increasing discrimination from peers (DeNicolo et al., 2017). I saw this play out in schools that I work with in Utah. Many families kept their students home and stayed away from schools out of fear of deportation. At the same time, I saw

people push back on these policies—engaging actively with the politics of belonging. For example, educators in my area refused to share information about family and student documentation, whereas young adults organized demonstrations to challenge exclusionary policies.

The politics of belonging do not just play out at the macrosystem level or in explicitly political ways. They also play out at the microlevel, through everyday interactions, as individuals both reify dominant concepts of belonging and resist the boundaries of belonging in their context (Sumsion & Wong, 2011). For example, a transgender student making the choice of which school bathroom to use is engaging with the politics of belonging, as are the adults and peers who either encourage or discourage them. Such everyday actions can illuminate new possibilities, opening cracks in the dominant politics of belonging. They allow us to ask questions like: "What liminal spaces are produced by the tensions between inclusion and exclusion? How do lines of division become places of encounter? What border crossings become possible?" (Sumsion & Wong, 2011, p. 34).

If we understand school belonging as a political struggle that takes place both in explicit political and policy arenas and in the everyday interactions of people, we can more fully explore the experiences of students who face othering in schools. We can look for resistance to othering among students and adults in schools and investigate how resisting the "right to exclude" might, itself, foster resilience and strength. And we can begin to answer El-Haj and Bonet's (2011) call for "robust accounts of the role that schools play in shaping the parameters of social membership and political participation" (p. 32).

Belonging as Place-Based

Schools are *places*—physical spaces imbued with meaning through the ways that we think about and live within them (Fataar & Rinquest, 2019). So, one way we can talk about school belonging is by talking about how students relate to and connect with schools as places. Mee and Wright (2009) argue that belonging is "an inherently geographical concept" that "connects matter to place, through various practices of boundary making and inhabitation which signal that a particular collection of objects, animals, plants, germs, people, practices, performances, or ideas is meant 'to be' in a place" (p. 772). Education scholar Kathryn Riley (2022) also sees belonging as a place-based concept. She defines it as "that sense of being *somewhere* you can be confident that you will fit in, a feeling of being safe in your identity and *at home in a place*" (p. 1, emphasis added).

The concept of place attachment is relevant here. Place attachment refers to the bonds, emotional connections, and identifications that people form with places, both as individuals and communities. It is an interdisciplinary concept that (along with related concepts like place identity and sense of

place) can be used to explore the geographic, psychological, architectural, social, and discursive dynamics that lead people to feel rooted or at home in a particular place (Low & Altman, 1992; Gillespie et al., 2022; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2013; Rieh, 2020). Place attachment and belonging are intimately connected; in fact, the terms are sometimes used interchangeably (Benson, 2014; Moghisi et al., 2015). Place attachment has been used by postsecondary scholars to study student transitions into new and unfamiliar spaces on campus (Moghisi et al., 2015; Qingjiu & Maliki, 2013). Scholars have also explored how children's place attachment in school increases when we design schools to promote safety, autonomy, social engagement, creativity, and connection to the natural world (Borzooeian, 2014; Koller & Farley, 2019; Rieh, 2020; Soheili et al., 2020).

Students are active agents in establishing place attachments in school (Koller & Farley, 2019). In fact, if we turn to scholarship on the production of space, we can see that students participate in the very creation of place itself. Place does not occur naturally but rather is produced by the people who inhabit it. As Fataar and Rinquest (2019) explain, "'Empty' or 'lifeless' physical space is transformed into something 'lived' through the presence of people and their interactions with each other as they are engaged in making it a place" (p. 3). Through their research in South Africa, Fataar and Rinquest (2019) analyze how two high school students establish a sense of belonging in school through the individualized ways that they navigate out-of-classroom spaces. The authors draw on the pioneering work of Henri Lefebvre to document how the students take part in "making place" (p. 4) by navigating Lefebvre's (1971) three dimensions of space: perceived space (the physical dimension that we can perceive with our senses), social space (how people live and interact within the physical space), and mental space (how the space is designed and conceived in our minds).

In a modern capitalist context, place is often tied to ideas of property and ownership. The question, then, is not just *who belongs in a place*, but also *who does a place belong to?* Freidus (2020) explores this in her critical ethnography of debates around school rezoning in a gentrifying New York City neighborhood. The debates were steeped in fears from Black residents about losing their local schools and fears from White residents that their children would lose their "right to a quality education" if put into schools alongside Black students (p. 18). Drawing on Harris's (1993) concept of Whiteness as property, Freidus finds that "Questions of diversity and integration—or who belongs in a school—could not be separated from questions of possession and property rights—or to whom a school belongs" (p. 832). Souto-Manning (2021) makes a related argument through a counterstory of how she and her son navigated racism and assimilative pressures in schools as immigrants of

Color. She theorizes belonging as the property of whiteness, arguing that dominant definitions of belonging in early childhood education confer on whiteness the "right to exclude" (Harris, 1993, p. 1714).

If we understand that belonging is tied up with the production of space and place, our attention is drawn to questions of planning and design. How is the experience of belonging shaped by the physical structure of the school or the art and signage on its walls? What can we learn from the ways that students utilize spaces in and outside of class? How might we engage students in school-based *placemaking*, an idea that has gained popularity in planning, community development, and community arts (Barry & Agyeman, 2020; Courage & McKeown, 2019)? And, for those of us in settler colonial societies, how will we contend with histories of colonization of Indigenous peoples—the "troubling legacy of 'placemaking' manifested in acts of displacement, removal, and containment" (Bedoya, 2013, p. 20)?

Belonging as a Right

In 2014, the US Department of Arts and Culture (USDAC), a national grassroots network of artists and cultural workers, launched a campaign with the hashtag #RightToBelong. They argued that belonging is the US's "chief cultural deficit" (USDAC, 2014, p. 3), explaining:

> Every day in the United States, people are denied the fullness of belonging on account of race, religion, gender, orientation, disability, immigration status, and other characteristics. Instead of true cultural citizenship—belonging without barrier, requiring no legal papers, no border walls—sanctuary is denied, travel is limited, people are expected to silently accept disrespect for their heritages, their contributions to history and community life, and their right to culture. (p. 2)

As the previous quote notes, the idea of belonging as a right is rooted in the concept of *cultural citizenship.* Developed in the fields of political science and cultural studies, cultural citizenship is about the ability to participate actively and effectively in a group or nation while simultaneously advancing one's own cultural practices and ways of being (Kuttner, 2015). Or, as Rosaldo (1994) puts it, cultural citizenship is "the right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense" (p. 402). Although definitions of cultural citizenship vary, they all recognize that citizenship has a cultural dimension and that people who have access to formal citizenship in the civil, political, and social realms can still experience second-class citizenship due to cultural marginalization and oppression (Miller, 2002; Stevenson, 2001).

As an example, many school districts in my area do not allow Pacific Islander students to wear traditional leis during high school graduation. In doing so, they are denying students their cultural citizenship, their right to participate in a way that is meaningful in their community. When students

and their communities push back—and sometimes win—the right to wear leis at graduation, and in so doing bring attention to the cultural traditions and histories of Utah's Pacific Islander communities, they are practicing cultural citizenship. Citizenship, here, is understood in an expansive sense that goes beyond the nation-state to include membership in diverse forms of human community (Miller, 2002).

Pakulski (1997) used the concept of cultural citizenship to delineate a set of cultural rights or "a new set of citizenship claims that involve the right to unhindered and legitimate representation, and propagation of identities and lifestyles through the information systems and public fora" (p. 80). These claims include the right to "symbolic presence and visibility (vs marginalisation); the right to dignifying representation (vs stigmatisation); and the right to propagation of identity and maintenance of lifestyles (vs assimilation)" (p. 80). Perhaps the most well-known elucidation of a cultural right is in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits" (United Nations General Assembly, 1948, Article 27).[1]

The school-belonging literature has not generally taken a deep look at the cultural dimensions of belonging, but we do see an exploration of these ideas within the literature on multicultural and culturally relevant/responsive/sustaining education. For decades, scholars have explored the fundamentally assimilative function of schooling. At one time, this goal of schooling was largely explicit, as with the American Indian boarding school system (Adams, 1995), but now is more often unstated—a "hidden curriculum" that implicitly but effectively teaches certain norms and values, rooted in the culture of the groups most dominant in the country (Apple, 1971). In response, educators and scholars have called for something much like cultural rights in schools. To effectively educate all students, scholars have called for representation of a multivocal array of perspectives, histories, knowledges, and experiences (e.g., May & Sleeter, 2010; Sleeter & Grant, 2003); pedagogies that build on the cultural wealth of young people and engage them in critically addressing injustice (e.g., Alim et al., 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Yosso, 2005); policies like detracking & inclusion that distribute resources equitably and challenge assumptions of who can and cannot succeed in school (e.g., Banks & Banks, 1989); teacher training that supports educators in confronting biases and developing multicultural and antiracist orientations (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2000; Vavrus, 2002); and school cultures that are welcoming for, and honoring of, students' families and communities (e.g., Dantas & Manyak, 2011), among other approaches.

Although these scholars do not usually frame their argument in terms of rights, it is not a big leap. If belonging is a basic human need, and youth must spend a significant part of

School belonging is...
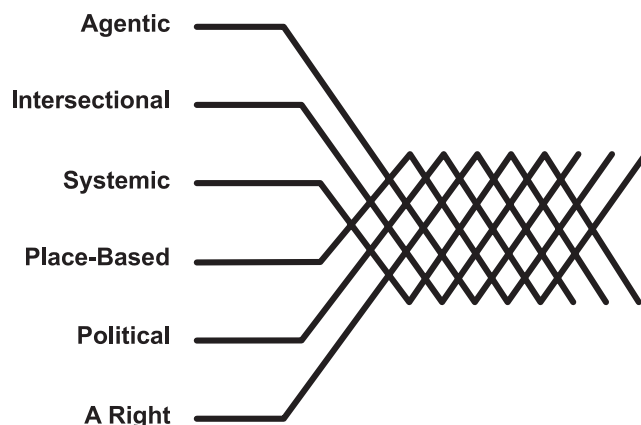
Agentic

Intersectional

Systemic

Place-Based

Political

A Right

School belonging is...

a dynamic social process in which students engage interpersonal relationships, intersecting and fluid identities, their locations within systems of power, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion as they establish a place for themselves and realize their right to be — and feel that they are — valued and active participants, on their own terms, in formal educational spaces.

FIGURE 1. *Braiding a Definition of School Belonging.*

their early lives in school, should we not think of belonging in/at school as a human right? Souto-Manning (2021) makes this argument in the realm of early childhood education.

> Because belonging is a complex and political process through which "the boundaries of group membership are produced and reproduced" (Stratigos, 2015, p. 48), it is neither a given nor a competency to be achieved by young children (Sumsion & Wong, 2011). As such, belonging must be reconceptualized as an aspect of justice, a right of every child and a core responsibility of the field of early childhood education and society writ large. (p. 4)

We could easily adapt the rights of cultural citizenship into a school context: for example, the right to symbolic presence and visibility in school curriculum and materials, or the right to propagation of identity and maintenance of lifestyles in the school, rather than having to assimilate to the dominant school culture. How would school-belonging research and practice shift if we understood belonging as a cultural right? Could this help to marshal new theoretical and financial resources to the work of advancing belonging for all students? How might we support students in demanding their "right to inhabit the dominant social, visual and intellectual spaces of the school" (Van Ingen & Halas, 2006, p. 382)? And what about the right not to belong?

A Critical, Transdisciplinary Conceptualization of School Belonging

I have presented the six aspects of belonging separately for the sake of clarity, but they are not separate phenomena. They are aspects of a unified whole—school belonging. To that end, I offer a definition of belonging that braids together the six aspects explored in this paper, along with belonging's affective and relational aspects emphasized in established psychological definitions (See Figure 1).

School belonging is a dynamic social process in which students engage interpersonal relationships, intersecting and fluid identities, their locations within systems of power, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion as they establish a place for themselves and realize their right to be—and feel that they are—valued and active participants, on their own terms, in formal educational spaces.

Conclusion

The goal of this paper is to present a critical, transdisciplinary conceptualization of school belonging that can help drive research and practice. This definition should be seen as preliminary, and I have no doubt it can be improved upon. For example, more research will be needed to explore how these six facets of belonging relate to one another and if some are more salient for some students than others. It also needs to be tested in real life. Do efforts built on this understanding of belonging ultimately impact students' learning and development in positive ways? Still, even in its more preliminary state, this definition suggests several avenues for research and practice.

I have proposed directions for inquiry at the end of each section, inspired by that aspect of belonging. However, it is by combining them that the value of a definition like this emerges. This would necessarily require mixed-methods designs. For example, I could envision a project that situates students' felt experiences of place and belonging within the meso and macro power dynamics at play in their schools by combining sense of belonging surveys and student interviews with critical ethnography and policy analysis. I could envision a project asking how community organizing by students and families can impact both the structures of inclusion and exclusion in schools as well as those students' and families' own experiences of belonging, using community-based methods in partnership with organizing groups.

In fact, this definition's focus on student agency and social construction of belonging suggests that community-based and participatory research methods will be critical tools. Some scholars have had success using photovoice methods and drawing exercises to engage children in analyzing their own experiences of belonging (Koller & Farley, 2019; Riley, 2022). How else might we engage youth and adults in schools as co-researchers, bringing their lived expertise to bear on questions of belonging? In my own work, I am testing this definition of belonging through a community-engaged, interdisciplinary research project looking at how belonging in high school and college is established through a multisite urban agriculture program.

When it comes to practice, this definition points to the need for comprehensive approaches that address belonging at multiple system levels. We could take a page from the US Department of Arts and Culture and begin developing state and district "policies on belonging" (USDAC, 2014). Such policies would establish belonging as a core principle and ensure that education policy changes are analyzed for how they will impact belonging, like how new developments in a city go through an environmental review. Or, building on the work of scholars like Riley (2022) and Theoharis (2009), we could focus on school leadership, educating current and future school administrators on how they can increase belonging through their roles guiding the relational, spatial, and political dynamics of the school building.

I suspect that, in addition to specific initiatives, there is a need for a broader movement demanding the "right to belong in school" or something similar. As this article makes clear, school belonging is highly complex and tied to some of society's thorniest problems. We will need all hands on deck if we are going to establish school systems where belonging is the norm for all students, not only those privileged enough to access it.

ORCID iD

Paul J. Kuttner https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4739-1358

Note

1. While the idea of citizenship is most readily associated with a state, here the concept is used more broadly with the recognition that "the state is no longer the sole frame of citizenship in the face of new nationalisms and cross-border affinities that no single governmental apparatus can contain" (Miller, 2002, pp. 4–5).

References

Adams, D. W. (1995). *Education for extinction: American Indians and the boarding school experience, 1875-1928*. University Press of Kansas.

Ahnallen, J. M., Suyemoto, K. L., & Carter, A. S. (2006). Relationship between physical appearance, sense of belonging and exclusion, and racial/ethnic self-identification among multiracial Japanese European Americans. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, *12*(4), 673.

Alim, H. S., Paris, D., & Wong, C. P. (2020). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A critical framework for centering communities. In N. S. Lee, C. D. Lee, R. Pea, & M. McKinney de Royston (Eds.), *Handbook of the cultural foundations of learning* (pp. 261–276). Taylor & Francis.

Allen, K. A., & Bowles, T. (2012). Belonging as a guiding principle in the education of adolescents. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*, *12*, 108–119.

Allen, K. A., & Kern, M. L. (2017). *School belonging in adolescents: Theory, research and practice*. Springer Singapore.

Allen, K. A., Kern, M. L., Rozek, C. S., McInerney, D. M., & Slavich, G. M. (2021a). Belonging: A review of conceptual issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *73*(1), 87–102.

Allen, K. A., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., Hattie, J., & Waters, L. (2018). What schools need to know about fostering school belonging: A meta-Analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, *30*(1), 1–34. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-016-9389-8.

Allen, K. A., Riley, K., Boyle, C., Gowing, A., Lim, M. H., Boyle, C., Vota, R. M., Richardson, M., Wolfe, M. J., Cruwys, T., Stevens, M., Leif, E., Marwan, S., van Der Zan, R., & Ammerman, M. (2022). Coming together: A comprehensive overview of the transdisciplinary perspectives of school belonging. In K. A. Allen, M. J. Furlong, D. A. Vella-Brodrick, & S. M. Suldo (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology in schools: Supporting process and practice* (3rd ed., pp. 246–266). Taylor and Francis.

Allen, K. A., Slaten, C. D., Arslan, G., Roffey, S., Craig, H., & Vella-Brodrick, D. A. (2021b). School belonging: The importance of student and teacher relationships. In M. L. Kern & M. L. Wehmeyer (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of positive education* (pp. 525–550). Palgrave Macmillan.

Allen, K. A., Vella-Brodrick, D., & Waters, L. (2016). Fostering school belonging in secondary schools using a socio-ecological framework. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, *33*(1), 97–121.

Anthias, F. (2008). Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality: An intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging. *Translocations: Migration and Social Change*, *4*(1), 5–20.

Apple, M. W. (1971). The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict. *Interchange*, *2*(4), 27–40.

Assari, S., & Caldwell, C. H. (2018). Teacher discrimination reduces school performance of African American youth: Role of gender. *Brain Sciences*, *8*(10), 183.

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (1989). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. John Wiley & Sons.

Barry, J., & Agyeman, J. (2020). On belonging and becoming in the settler-colonial city: Co-produced futurities, placemaking, and urban planning in the United States. *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and the City*, *1*(1-2), 22–41.

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*(3), 497.

Bedoya, R. (2013). Placemaking and the politics of belonging and dis-belonging. *GIA Reader*, *24*(1). Retrieved from https://www.giarts.org/article/placemaking-and-politics-belonging-and-dis-belonging

He, J., & Fischer, J. (2020). Differential associations of school practices with achievement and sense of belonging of immigrant and non-immigrant students. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *66*, 101089.

Hernández, M. M., Robins, R. W., Widaman, K. F., & Conger, R. D. (2017). Ethnic pride, self-esteem, and school belonging: A reciprocal analysis over time. *Developmental Psychology*, *53*(12), 2384.

Hughes, J. N., Im, M. H., & Allee, P. J. (2015). Effect of school belonging trajectories in grades 6–8 on achievement: Gender and ethnic differences. *Journal of School Psychology*, *53*(6), 493–507.

Jaffe-Walter, R., & Lee, S. J. (2018). Engaging the transnational lives of immigrant youth in public schooling: Toward a culturally sustaining pedagogy for newcomer immigrant youth. *American Journal of Education*, *124*(3), 257–283.

Johnson, R. M., Strayhorn, T. L., & Parler, B. (2020). "I just want to be a regular kid:" A qualitative study of sense of belonging among high school youth in foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *111*, 104832. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104832

Koller, D., & Farley, M. (2019). Examining elements of children's place attachment. *Children's Geographies*, *17*(4), 491–500.

Kuttner, P. J. (2015). Educating for cultural citizenship: Reframing the goals of arts education. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *45*(1), 69–92.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, *32*(3), 465–491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Fighting for our lives: Preparing teachers to teach African American students. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *51*(3), 206–214.

Lefebvre, H. (1971). La re-production des rapports de production. *L'homme et la société*, *22*(1), 3–23.

Libbey, H. P. (2007). *School connectedness: Influence above and beyond family connectedness.* University of Minnesota.

Low, S. M., & Altman, I. (1992). *Place attachment* (pp. 1–12). Springer.

Ma, X. (2003). Sense of belonging to school: Can schools make a difference? *The Journal of Educational Research*, *96*(6), 340–349.

Mahar, A. L., Cobigo, V., & Stuart, H. (2013). Conceptualizing belonging. *Disability and Rehabilitation, 35*(12), 1026–1032.

Manzo, L., & Devine-Wright, P. (2013). *Place attachment: Advances in theory, methods and applications*. Routledge.

Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality* (3rd ed.). New York.

May, S., & Sleeter, C. E. (Eds.). (2010). *Critical multiculturalism: Theory and praxis*. Routledge.

May, V. (2011). Self, belonging and social change. *Sociology*, *45*(3), 363 -378.

Mee, K., & Wright, S. (2009). Geographies of belonging. *Environment and Planning A*, *41*(4), 772–779.

Miller, T. (2002). Cultural citizenship. In E. F. Isin & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *Handbook of citizenship studies* (pp. 231–244). Sage.

Moghisi, R., Mokhtari, S., & Heidari, A. A. (2015). Place attachment in university students. Case study: Shiraz University. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *170*, 187–196.

Morieson, L., Carlin, D., Clarke, B., Lukas, K., & Wilson, R. (2013). Belonging in education: Lessons from the Belonging Project. *International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, *4*(2), 87–96.

Morrison, B., Blood, P., & Thorsborne, M. (2005). Practicing restorative justice in school communities: Addressing the challenge of culture change. *Public Organization Review*, *5*(4), 335–357.

Mucchielli, R. (1980). *Le travail en groupe*. ESF.

Museus, S. D. (2008). The role of ethnic student organizations in fostering African American and Asian American students' cultural adjustment and membership at predominantly White institutions. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*(6), 568–586.

Nagel, C. (2011). Belonging. In V. J. Del Casino Jr, M. E. Thomas, P. Cloke, & R. Panelli (Eds.), *A companion to social geography* (pp. 108–124). Wiley-Blackwell.

Noble, G. (2019). Putting belonging to work. In S. Habib & M. R. M. Ward (Eds.), *Youth, place and theories of belonging*. Routledge.

OECD. (2017). PISA 2015 results (volume III): Students' well being. PISA, OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264273856-en

OECD. (2019). *'Sense of belonging at school'. PISA 2018 Results*, volume 3, chapter 9. OECD. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/publications/pisa-2018-results-volume-iii-acd78851-en.htm

Osterman, K. F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, *70*(3), 323–367.

Owens, J., & McLanahan, S. S. (2020). Unpacking the drivers of racial disparities in school suspension and expulsion. *Social Forces*, *98*(4), 1548–1577.

Pak, C. S. (2018). Linking service-learning with sense of belonging: A culturally relevant pedagogy for heritage students of Spanish. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *17*(1), 76–95.

Pakulski, J. (1997). Cultural citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, *1*, 73–86.

Parker, P., Allen, K.-A., Parker, R., Guo, J., Marsh, H. W., Basarkod, G., & Dicke, T. (2022). School belonging predicts whether an emerging adult will be not in education, employment, or training (NEET) after school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *114*(8), 1881–1894. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000733

Pittman, L. D., & Richmond, A. (2007). Academic and psychological functioning in late adolescence: The importance of school belonging. *Journal of Experimental Education*, *75*, 275–290.

Qingjiu, S., & Maliki, N. Z. (2013). Place attachment and place identity: Undergraduate students' place bonding on campus. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *91*, 632–639.

Rieh, S. Y. (2020). *Creating a sense of place in school environments: How young children construct place attachment*. Routledge.

Riley, K. (2022). *Compassionate leadership for school belonging*. UCL Press.

Rosaldo, R. (1994). Cultural citizenship and educational democracy. *Cultural Anthropology*, *9*(3), 402–411.

Rosaldo R. (1997). Cultural citizenship, inequality, and multiculturalism. In W. V. Flores & R. Benmayor (Eds.), *Latino cultural citizenship: Claiming identity, space and politics* (pp. 27–38). Beacon

Russell, S. T., Toomey, R. B., Ryan, C., & Diaz, R. M. (2014). Being out at school: The implications for school victim-

ization and young adult adjustment. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *84*, 635–643.

Samura, M. (2016). Remaking selves, repositioning selves, or remaking space: An examination of Asian American college students' processes of "belonging." *Journal of College Student Development*, *57*(2), 135–150.

Sánchez, B., Colón, Y., & Esparza, P. (2005). The role of sense of school belonging and gender in the academic adjustment of Latino adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *34*(6), 619–628.

Schein, R. H. (2009). Belonging through land/scape. *Environment and Planning A*, *41*(4), 811–826.

Simmel, G. (1971). The metropolis and mental life. In: D. N. Levine (Ed.), *On individuality and social forms* (pp. 324–339). University of Chicago Press.

Skattebol, J. (2005). Insider/outsider belongings: Traversing the borders of whiteness in early childhood. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *6*(2), 189–203.

Skattebol, J. (2006). Playing boys: The body, identity and belonging in the early years. Gender and Education, *18*(5), 507–522.

Sleeter, C., & Grant, C. (2003). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender* (4th ed.). John Wiley and Sons.

Soheili, F., Karimi, R., Avazpour, B., & Sepasgozar, S. M. (2020). The effect of place attachment on educational efficiency in elementary schools. *In S. Shirowzhan & K. Zhang* (Eds.), *Smart cities and construction technologies Intechopen.*

Souto-Manning, M. (2021). On the abolition of belonging as property: Toward justice for immigrant children of color. *Urban Education*, https://doi.org/10.1177/00420859211017967.

St-Amand, J., Girard, S., & Smith, J. (2017). Sense of belonging at school: Defining attributes, determinants, and sustaining strategies. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, *5*(2), 105–119

Stevenson, N. (Ed.). (2001). *Culture and citizenship*. Sage.

Stratigos, T. (2015). Assemblages of desire: Infants, bear caves and belonging in early childhood education and care. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *16*(1), 42–54.

Stratigos, T., Bradley, B., & Sumsion, J. (2014). Infants, family day care and the politics of belonging. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, *46*(2), 171–186.

Sumsion, J., & Wong, S. (2011). Interrogating 'belonging' in belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *12*(1), 28–45.

Taylor, A. (2007). Playing with difference: The cultural politics of childhood belonging. *International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations, 7*(3), 143–149.

Taylor, A., & Richardson, C. (2005). Home renovations, border protection and the hard work of belonging. Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education, 12(1), 93–100.

Theoharis, G. (2009). *The school leaders our children deserve: Seven keys to equity, social justice, and school reform*. Teachers College Press.

Thijs, J., Keim, A. C., & Geerlings, J. (2019). Classroom identification in ethnic minority and majority students: Effects of relationships and ethnic composition. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *89*(4), 707–725.

United Nations General Assembly. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights*. Author.

US Department of Arts and Culture [USDAC]. (2014). *Policy on belonging toolkit*. Retrieved from https://usdac.us/belonging

Van Ingen, C., & Halas, J. (2006). Claiming space: Aboriginal students within school landscapes. *Children's Geographies*, *4*(3), 379–398.

Vavrus, M. J. (2002). *Transforming the multicultural education of teachers: Theory, research, and practice* (*vol. 12*). Teachers College Press.

Villalpando, O. (2003). Self-segregation or self-preservation? A critical race theory and Latina/o critical theory analysis of a study of Chicana/o college students. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, *16*(5), 619–646. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000142922

Voelkl, K. E. (1996). Measuring students' identification with school. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *56*(5), 760–770.

Wimmer, A., & Glick Schiller, N. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation-state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks*, *2*(4), 301–34.

Wingspread Declaration on School Connections. (2004). *Journal of School Health*, *74*(7), 233–234.

Ye, F., & Wallace, T. L. (2014). Psychological sense of school membership scale: Method effects associated with negatively worded items. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, *32*(3), 202–215.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(1), 69–91.

Youkhana, E. (2015). A conceptual shift in studies of belonging and the politics of belonging. *Social Inclusion*, *3*(4), 10–24.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of prejudice, 40*(3), 197–214.

Author

PAUL J. KUTTNER is associate director with University Neighborhood Partners at the University of Utah; email: paul.kuttner@partners.utah.edu. Paul is an engaged researcher whose work focuses on the relationships between educational institutions and communities that face othering in our schools.