

Article

Dis/abled Student Campusmaking: Sites of New Possibility

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Abstract: Scholars have attempted to reveal the structural barriers that dis/abled students cope with and navigate during college, but it remains unclear how these students interpret their experiences on campus and what strategies they employ to manage and respond to unsupportive and hostile campus climates. In this paper, we describe freedom movements that sought to secure equal access to opportunities and rights for people with dis/abilities, and we highlight and explain forms of resistance among d/Deaf and dis/abled postsecondary students. To do so, we draw on dis/ability critical race theory and also advance the concept of *campusmaking*, which refers to the ways that students navigate complex campus spaces and create sites of togetherness and resistance. We discuss broader structural and climate issues facing college students with dis/abilities, particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. In so doing, we gain insight into dis/abled student campusmaking amid and in spite of ableist and racist postsecondary contexts. We conclude with a discussion of the gaps in existing research and the questions that warrant further study.

Keywords: students with disabilities; campusmaking; resistance; campus climate; ableism; antiblackness; critical race theory; DisCrit; intersectionality



Citation: Comeaux, E.; Mireles, D.; Acha, A. Dis/abled Student Campusmaking: Sites of New Possibility. *Educ. Sci.* **2021**, *11*, 745. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11110745>

Academic Editors: Sylvia Hurtado, Krystle Palma Cobian and James Albright

Received: 31 August 2021
Accepted: 11 November 2021
Published: 17 November 2021

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1. Introduction

In postsecondary institutions in the United States, students with dis/abilities are a steadily growing and diverse subgroup. We write dis/ability with a '/' to "highlight the constructed and interdependent nature of both ability and disability" [1] (p. 65). In recent research, about 19% of undergraduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions reported having a dis/ability, although the number is likely higher due to nonreporting to avoid stigmatization and to a lack of access to formal diagnoses due to structural and medical racism [2,3]. The challenges of a coronavirus pandemic crisis over the past year have highlighted inequities and injustices in how we serve these students. College students with dis/abilities have had less access to critical health care and specialized on-campus support programs as well as inadequate access to accommodations when learning in a remote format [4,5]. The lack of learning environments tailored to the needs of students with dis/abilities has made it difficult for them to maximize learning opportunities and, ultimately, to prepare for life after graduation. While the pandemic has heightened the inequality that dis/abled students encounter, subtle and not-so-subtle structural forms of ableism on college campuses are not new.

Despite formal federal legislation, such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008), and the Americans With Disabilities Act Amendments Act (2008), students with dis/abilities have faced, and continue to face, social and political forces and policies that foster discriminatory experiences and outcomes as well as significant barriers to adequate learning environments and support programs, health and safety, and social inclusion in higher education settings [6–8]. These experiences are more pronounced for students who are dis/abled Black, Indigenous, and people of Color (BIPOC), as they are likely to encounter racially hostile or unsupportive environments that can influence their campus experience and subsequent educational outcomes [9,10].

Indeed, the campus climate—broadly defined as the history of the campus and the current views, behaviors, experiences, and standards of practice of faculty, staff, and students—is an important piece of understanding the everyday experiences of all students with dis/abilities [11].

Hostile campus climates make it more challenging for many students with dis/abilities to adjust to college life [12]. These students are likely to encounter a wide range of psychosocial stressors related to a lack of adequate support structures—stressors that might influence their levels of personal satisfaction and academic development. College students with dis/abilities have reported feeling unsupported, and those who are BIPOC experience racial stereotypes and microaggressions; as a result, they might avoid integration into the broader academic community through, for example, participation in projects with faculty and various student group discussions [9,10,13]. These circumstances may be worsened when students with dis/abilities face multifaceted, systemic challenges to seeking assistance, enjoyment, community, and belonging during college.

Nonetheless, at times, they will reject these oppressive campus environments [14], employing strategies to respond to the circumstances and to protect themselves. These actions take multiple forms, including creation of safe spaces to navigate the college experience and new ways of existing and being on their own. For example, in the fall of 2021, the Disabled Student Union at the University of California, Los Angeles, created a petition “ask[ing] that the university livestream all in-person lectures, eliminate in-person attendance requirements, record classes for students with attendance accommodations and those who test positive for COVID-19 and approve all faculty requests to teach remotely” [15] (para. 3). On a broader scale, a group called Berkeley Disabled Students (BDS) recently organized a protest against University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley), administrators, citing a campus culture of dis/ability discrimination [16]. BDS developed and released a list of demands aimed at addressing discriminatory UC Berkeley policies and practices toward the dis/abled student body. Their demands included (but were not limited to) an increased budget for the Disabled Students Program, better training for faculty on reasonable accommodations, and improved retention of students with dis/abilities. The organizing and collective protests of students, staff, and faculty under a common cause—in virtual and physical spaces—made it clear that BDS would recognize, challenge, and resist injustice.

The ways that students with dis/abilities adjust to college life and create and sustain sites of active engagement, belonging, and resistance is an important yet understudied phenomenon in higher education. Moreover, college student resistance is often characterized as negative, defiant, and destructive [17]. As such, an exploration of dis/abled college student resistance as positive and constructive reveals how these students demonstrate agency to create and recreate sites of resistance, expression, and togetherness. These sites are also autonomous places for survivance, abolition, and rejection of ableism and other oppressive structures.

2. Blackness, d/Deafness, Dis/ability, and Campusmaking

It is important to better understand how students with dis/abilities move collectively through the spatial boundaries of exclusion or in spaces that may not provide a sense of identity or a feeling of belonging to imagine, create, and experience new places of expression and celebration or new sites of possibility. Space and place are indeed relational concepts, and they are often used as interchangeable ideas; however, “space refers to the structural, geometrical qualities of a physical environment, and place is the notion that includes the dimensions of lived experience, interaction and use of a space by its inhabitants” [18] (p. 1). In other words, students can transform everyday campus spaces into places with meaning (campusmaking) through their struggles, social interactions, and active engagement in purposeful and diverse activities.

Relatedly, Hunter and colleagues described *Black placemaking*, referring to “the ways that urban black Americans create sites of endurance, belonging, and resistance through social interaction” [19] (p. 31). Black placemaking, they argued, is where Black people

endeavor to create places where they collectively derive a sense of everyday pleasure and feel a sense of agency and power. These creative practices are especially important for vulnerable and deeply marginalized populations who seek to change hostile, oppressive environments into sites of affirmation, community, and connection. Hunter and his colleagues applied an intersectional perspective to explore several avenues for Black placemaking in Chicago, including writings on social media platforms, Black public housing reunions, Black lesbian and gay nightlife, and a Black Little League baseball team [19]. This Black imaginary is evident on a number of different levels. For example, they documented the significance of virtual platforms as spatial units for Black people that serve similar functions and objectives to physical spaces, such as individual neighborhoods or communities that comprise Black people [19]. Through a Black placemaking approach, they were able to show how Black Chicagoans have turned spaces into meaningful places.

In postsecondary contexts, Mustaffa, in a historical overview of antiblack violence and higher education, introduced a theory of *Black life-making* [20]. He recognized how Black people historically have been poised to engage in the practice of self-care, creating and sustaining sites of humanness, celebration, and possibility for themselves amid and in spite of antiblackness and violent racial climates on their campuses. Other studies and conceptual contributions using a Black placemaking analytical lens have prioritized Black agency at predominately nonblack campuses and historically Black colleges and universities [21–23]. For example, Tichavakunda explored Black students' experiences and demonstrated how a Black placemaking framework can be applied to different contexts at predominantly nonblack higher education institutions [21]. The author concluded that "Black placemaking in higher education . . . provides a theoretical toolkit attuned to Black collegians' agency and humanity" [21] (p. 14).

Here, we build on both the critical work of Hunter et al., which first applied a Black placemaking approach, and on subsequent theoretical contributions [19]. We view colleges and universities as complex, dynamic, and particular sites where minoritized groups engage in what Comeaux termed *campusmaking* [23]. Campusmaking explicitly names and foregrounds the ways that minoritized groups create sites of new possibility within postsecondary campus environments—sites that might otherwise go unnoticed. It is indeed central to the experiences of minoritized groups as they attempt to create and sustain intentional sites of resistance and community in spite of hostile climates on their campuses. They are capable of using their collective agency—and are generally poised to do so—serving as agents rather than as spectators on the sidelines to create new, sustainable places. In their campusmaking, minoritized groups share similar histories, experiences, ongoing struggles, and various forms of resistance [23].

We recognize that the interplay between varying forms of spatial resistance and power can serve as sites of pleasure and kinship and provide a humanizing experience for marginalized people. However, Saidiya Hartman reminds us that these acts of collective and organized resistance are significant for the new possibilities they create and recreate and gratification they bring, but they generally do not facilitate social transformation or meaningful change [24]. Too often, structural change is an inevitable and ongoing struggle. Rather than pursuing social transformation, Hartman described a different vision of and approach to utopias that focuses on everyday political acts that

illuminate inchoate and utopian expressions of freedom that are not and perhaps cannot be actualized elsewhere. The desires and longings that exceed the frame of civil rights and political emancipation find expression in quotidian acts labeled 'fanciful', 'exorbitant', and 'excessive' primarily because they express an understanding or imagination of freedom quite at odds with bourgeois expectations. [24] (p. 13).

Indeed, Hartman has described a vision for another world. This paper is not meant to critique Hartman's politics or undermine different forms of resistance as immaterial. Rather, we argue that in addition to serving as a form of resistance, campusmaking can

be collective radical, political, and principled action aimed at pursuing transformation of oppressive structures on campuses.

Campusmaking as collective radical, political, and principled action seeks to reimagine, to contest, and—in contrast to the theoretical orientations upon which it is based—to *permanently change* oppressive spatial arrangements of campuses. This is consistent with Solórzano and Bernal's framework of resistance, and specifically *transformative resistance*, which results from the culmination of both a social justice orientation and a critique of oppressive conditions [25]. This is best illustrated by institutional actors who are motivated to change structures and social relations. The combination of a social justice orientation and critique of oppressive structures may lead to broader social impact and influence structural inequalities [25]. External resistance tends to be overt and public and to be “outside the traditional system”; internal forms are more subtle, such as personal actions that go unnoticed because they do not appear to be disrupting the larger system [25] (p. 326). Campusmaking, then, is a tool and form of politics that can disrupt and adequately respond to oppressive structures within colleges and universities. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in the 1960s is one example of campusmaking as collective radical and political action [26].

In seeking to understand how dis/abled student communities move collectively through complex and hostile campus spaces, we do not dismiss the violent and oppressive structures within institutions of higher learning. Rather, our goal is to highlight the dynamic intersection of structure and agency and how dis/abled students over time transform spaces into places that have value and meaning in spite of toxic and exclusive campus environments. A campusmaking approach, then, attempts to redeem and illuminate the agency of dis/abled students that is often glossed over or erased in existing scholarship.

To explore this broad sense of the concept, in the sections that follow, we document forms of resistance and expression among d/Deaf and dis/abled students in the face of injustices and hostile campus climates as well as freedom movements that sought to secure equal access to opportunities and rights for people with dis/abilities, particularly BIPOC individuals with dis/abilities. At the same time, we recognize the limitations of civil-rights-based policy, models, and movements, which “tend to further entrench the very institutions and value systems that marginalize and entrench [marginalized people] in the first place” through “heteronormative models of belonging” [27] (p. 44). Mitchell and Snyder referred to these as *ablenationalist inclusion models*, which involve treating people with dis/abilities as “exceptional bodies in ways that further valorize able-bodied norms as universally desirable and as naturalized qualifications of fully capacitated citizenship to others inevitably aspire” [27] (p. 45).

Moreover, these models privilege white, cis-male, middle-class, and physically dis/abled people who have access to formal diagnoses and documentation through the medical-industrial complex. As Puar explained, “the production of most of the world's disability happens through colonial violence, developmentalism, war, occupation, and the disparity of resources—indeed through U.S. settler colonial and imperial occupations, as a sign of the global reach of the empire” [28] (p. xix). In other words, the mainstream Disability Rights Movement and the Disabled Student Movement have “center[ed] people who can achieve status, power, and access through a legal or rights-based framework, which we know is not possible for many disabled people, or appropriate for all situations” and “simultaneously invisibilized the lives of disabled people of color, immigrants with disabilities, disabled people who practice marginalized religions (in particular those experiencing the violence of anti-Islamic beliefs and actions), queers with disabilities, trans and gender non-conforming people with disabilities, people with disabilities who are houseless, people with disabilities who are incarcerated, people with disabilities who have had their ancestral lands stolen, amongst others” [29] (p. 15).

In light of the challenges we have just outlined, we blend our campusmaking analysis with dis/ability critical race theory (DisCrit), a branch of critical race theory. DisCrit's genealogy can be traced to the fields of disability studies and critical race studies as well as

“the work of intellectual ancestors such as James Baldwin, W. E. B. DuBois, Yuri Kochiyama, and Bayard Rustin” [30] (p. 1). DisCrit “recognizes racism and ableism as normalizing processes that are interconnected and collusive . . . often work[ing] in ways that are unspoken, yet racism validates and reinforces ableism, and ableism validates and reinforces racism” [31] (p. 14). We are guided by two tenets of DisCrit in particular: the fifth tenet, which “considers legal, ideological, and historical aspects of disability and race and how both have been used separately and together to deny the rights of certain citizens”; and the seventh tenet, “which supports activism and promotes diverse forms of resistance” [31] (p. 25–27). Using campusmaking and DisCrit together, we discuss broader structural and climate issues facing dis/abled and multiple-marginalized dis/abled students. We critically review and analyze what is known empirically about their campusmaking, including celebratory experiences and active engagement in different forms of resistance amid and in spite of structural ableism and other forms of oppression. In so doing, we gain new insights into the ways that dis/abled students navigate ableist postsecondary contexts.

3. Historical Context: Education and d/Deaf and Dis/abled Resistance

Dis/abled students attended higher education long before federal legislation established protections in the mid- and late 20th century, although many colleges and universities did not admit or accommodate them [14,32,33]. As a result, dis/abled and d/Deaf resistance on U.S. campuses has been codified throughout history. For Black dis/abled or d/Deaf students, this resistance has been further complicated by endemic antiblackness, broadly defined here as contempt and disregard for Blackness and society’s recurring failure to recognize Black humanity [23]. The coordinated, interlocking construction of Blackness with d/Deafness and dis/ability in the United States is irrevocably embedded in the context of education, characterized by adaptive institutional violence [28,34,35]. As we discuss, the established legacy and ongoing reality of resistance within education, particularly the claiming and development of affirming spaces, has been illustrated by the actions of d/Deaf and dis/abled students. We analyze d/Deafness and dis/ability in concert because they are impacted by, and subsequently resist, the same policies and practices in higher education. Because many d/Deaf individuals engage with d/Deafness as culture (rather than as a dis/ability) as a form of resistance [36], where relevant, we specifically disaggregate d/Deaf experiences to recognize d/Deaf community cultural autonomy and to support all manifestations of resistance [35].

Dis/ability has long been leveraged as a sociocultural and legislative dehumanizing tool to disenfranchise other marginalized social constructions, including blackness [37,38]. The contemporaneous establishment of Jim Crow and “ugly laws”—which were designed to keep individuals with dis/abilities out of sight—devalued and restricted Black and dis/abled visibility in the late 19th century [39]. These laws did so by linking “physical, intellectual, and psychological flaws, deficits, and deviations” with Blackness to justify white cisheteroableistpatriarchal violence [40] (p. 28). Black protests for humanity strove to disassociate Blackness from dis/ability rather than delegitimize dis/ability as a marker of devaluation [40], as evidenced by the exclusion of dis/ability as a protected group in the Civil Rights Act of 1965 [41].

Because educational access correlated with sociocultural value and financial power, academic disenfranchisement of othered individuals was commonplace. For example, it was at the behest of white, wealthy, abled parents that the first d/Deaf school was established in 1817 [38]. In concert with ugly laws, the asylums and institutions that were established nationally restricted the visibility of d/Deaf—and often blind—bodies [36,39]. Further, they segregated students by gender, race, and dis/ability [41,42] and offered primarily vocational training through manual pedagogical methods [42]. And the sexual and physical violence endemic to these institutions [36] was facilitated by the dehumanization of dis/ability [40,43]. However, the critical mass of d/Deaf bodies transformed spaces of institutional violence into meccas of d/Deaf identity, pride, and resistance [36], and this

marked d/Deaf and blind residential schools as one of the earliest identifiable instances of d/Deaf and dis/abled student campusmaking.

As many as 95% of d/Deaf people are born to hearing families [44], creating d/Deaf isolation and communication deprivation. Thus, the congregation of d/Deaf pupils with d/Deaf teachers providing access to American Sign Language (ASL) incited the development of d/Deaf communities around these locations—communities that persist today [36,42,45]. A few scattered Black d/Deaf students were educated in these institutions after 1852, but most attended underresourced d/Deaf schools for Black students that resulted from postemancipation forms of antiblack segregation in the late 19th century, especially in southern states [46]. During this antiblack segregation, Black d/Deaf students also reclaimed their educational spaces and racialized the development of d/Deaf identities, culture, community, and language [46].

The late 19th century was also characterized by the rise of oralism [47], which promoted speech training and lip reading for d/Deaf students, rather than ASL. Oralist pedagogy decreased educational quality, increased physical violence to deter ASL use, and delegitimized d/Deaf educators [37]. Beyond classrooms, however, d/Deaf students made space on campus to use ASL, in residential dormitories and on campus grounds away from oralist instructors [36]. Though the perceived superiority of oralism preserved manual pedagogy in (and subsequently affected the quality of) Black d/Deaf schools, Black students were incommensurately prepared for vocations rather than for postsecondary education [42,46]. Gallaudet University has served white d/Deaf students since its founding in 1864, but it was not until 1952, when *Miller v. Board of Education of District of Columbia* desegregated d/Deaf education, that Black d/Deaf students were able to expand their claim to academic spaces from K–12 to higher education [42,46].

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, educational access for people with dis/abilities outside of d/Deaf residential institutions was severely limited [32]; it was, in fact, governed predominantly by calls for veteran workforce reintegration to meet labor needs [45]. The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1918 improved dis/ability education access for veterans, and the Smith-Fess Act in 1920 extended that access to civilians [48]; later, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 provided some educational assistance and services to veterans with dis/abilities [32]. Irrespective of service, however, Black people's dis/abilities were attributed to illness that was "endemic" to Blackness, regularly invalidating claims and impeding education access [43] (p. 56). Moreover, the 1972 attempt to include dis/ability as a protected class by amending the Civil Rights Act was widely rejected by the act's supporters and Black civil rights leaders, who feared the dilution of its potency [41]. This continued the condemnation of dis/ability by minoritized populations advocating for others to acknowledge their humanity [37,40].

By 1973, dis/abled students represented approximately 3% of the undergraduate student population [49]. As Madaus et al. explained, "federal law has [since] played a significant role in increasing access to postsecondary institutions for students with disabilities" [50] (p. 33). Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was constructed to provide federal dis/ability nondiscrimination protections [32,48] without the racial context provided by the Civil Rights Act. Specifically, Section 504 "outlawed discrimination based on dis/ability in any program or activity receiving federal funding" and "acknowledged that dis/ability rights are civil rights, laying the groundwork for the [Americans With Disabilities Act]" [51] (p. xvii). Two years later, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 provided state funding for dis/abled students [48], but it predominantly supported white students and excluded postsecondary education [52]. While some nonveteran white dis/abled students were present on campus—such as Ed Roberts, John Hessler, Fred Fray, Judy Heumann, Bobbi Linn, and Frieda Tankus, who played pivotal roles in dis/ability activism on and off campus—their presence was uncommon and sometimes met with hostility [14,33].

Nearly two decades later, in 1990, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed; its subsequent amendments, known as the ADA Amendments Act, greatly ex-

panded the protections offered through the Rehabilitation Act. This included “expand[ing] the scope of protection beyond activities and programs receiving public funding to privately owned businesses and public institutions” [53] (p. 114). Said differently, the ADA “strengthened students’ rights by prohibiting discrimination regardless of whether the institution had accepted federal funding” [53] (p. 126). Last, the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 increased the accessibility and affordability of postsecondary education for dis/abled students and provided aid as well as transition and postsecondary programs for people with intellectual and developmental dis/abilities [50].

While these policies provided protections even as they maintained inequities, dis/abled and d/Deaf student resistance persisted in academic spaces. For example, the 1960s scholarly recognition of ASL [47,54] and the 1980s acknowledgment of Black ASL [38] gained ground against oralist pedagogy in d/Deaf education. And the unilateral success of d/Deaf student campusmaking during Gallaudet University’s 1988 “Deaf President Now” movement marked the university as bilingual (English and ASL), resulted in the appointment of the first d/Deaf postsecondary president, and mandated increases in d/Deaf faculty members and 51% d/Deaf membership on the board of trustees [55,56]. The white hegemonic support and uncompromisingly positive media coverage of this movement bolstered political perceptions of dis/ability in congress [57], facilitating a “favorable climate of opinion” that supported a multitude of d/Deaf and dis/ability civil rights legislation [56] (p. 213). Most notably, this climate supported the ADA in 1990 [48,56]. The ADA and Section 504 remain the most influential pieces of policy that govern dis/abled and d/Deaf experience in higher education.

Taken together, dis/abled and d/Deaf student campusmaking is evident during these historical moments. A campusmaking and DisCrit analytical lens can further illuminate varying forms of resistance (including radical and political action), sense of belonging, and community among students who span multiple historically marginalized identities. Such a lens is also valuable in an analysis of the level of agency, sacrifice, and spontaneity required of dis/abled and d/Deaf students to sustain and affirm their campus communities. First, however, it is worthwhile to summarize how accommodations for postsecondary students with dis/abilities are typically provided.

4. Accommodations for Students with Dis/abilities in Higher Education

Both Section 504 and the ADA require that students prove that they have a disability [38,58]. Students must provide “written documentation confirming that they have a physical or mental impairment” [38] (p. 102). This is one of three legal prerequisites that students must meet to access accommodations after informing their college or university of their disability [38]. The second prerequisite involves students “demonstrating that their disability affects a ‘major life activity’”; the third requires the student to show that the disability “creates a ‘substantial limitation’ to that major life activity” [38] (p. 102–103). As Simon explained, “Unexpectedly the ADA resulted in a new hurdle for students with disabilities”; it placed the onus on them for “demonstrating that they have disabilities and are entitled to protection” [59] (p. 100). While the ADA Amendments Act clarified that extensive documentation is not needed [59], college and university campuses often “give preference to the medical paradigm when forming opinions” [38] (p. 102). In other words, students are often required to provide documentation from medical professionals to prove they have a dis/ability.

To comply with federal legislation, many campuses have designated disability resource centers that “primarily focus on academic accessibility and accommodations” and “strive to ensure that students can access course content and materials” [60] (p. 1184). These centers must provide reasonable accommodations, such as qualified sign language interpreters, note takers, screen reader software, and academic adjustments, including extended time for tests and completion of coursework [59]. The focus on civil rights in these offices, specifically legal and compliance issues, has several limitations. Mitchell and Snyder explained that “the U.S. disability rights movement used a normalizing framework to

give weight to their critique of exclusion." This resulted in "a disability rights-based model of policy intervention [that] relies on assimilationist claims in order to gain access to key neoliberal institutions such as education" [27] (p. 85). In other words, a civil rights model of dis/ability does not fundamentally challenge the ways in which ableism, and specifically discourses of normativity and non-normativity, are embedded into these institutions.

Shallish argued that the university's focus on compliance "eclipse[s] an understanding of disability history, social collectives, culture and emerging disciplines that transcend biomedical interpretation" [61] (para. 6). Moreover, Shallish noted, "the general campus population" is unfamiliar with relevant federal regulations, and the framing of legal compliance is single-identity focused. As such, it "leaves little opportunity for intersectional understanding of experiences related to dis/ability and minimal realization that there exist benefits to the inclusion of disability on campus" [61] (para. 28). This includes the ways in which disability intersects with other social positions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, documentation status, religious identity, and so on, to shape the experiences of multiple-marginalized dis/abled students. And Martin noted that students with more stigmatized dis/abilities, such as mental illness, are often denied protection under the ADA and are subject to disciplinary action that results in involuntary leaves of absence or expulsion by their colleges and universities [53].

In the next section, we shift our focus to students' experiences with campusmaking and the ways they have created spaces on college and university campuses. In particular, we discuss in greater depth the politics and history of dis/ability freedom movements in higher education. We also examine how dis/abled and d/Deaf students have engaged in collective action and movement-making, leading to changes in policy and practices on the campus level and the passage of federal legislation, such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 [14,33].

5. Politics and the History of Dis/ability Freedom Movements

In the United States, the 1960s and early 1970s marked a period of civil unrest and grassroots activism that set the context for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 [27]. The freedom movements and collective action of dis/abled and d/Deaf people, sometimes referred to as the Disabled Student Movement, are less well known [62]. Similar to other marginalized groups, dis/abled and d/Deaf students were creating spaces and engaging in collective action on and off campus [14,33,56,63]. At UC Berkeley, the University of Illinois, Long Island University, The Ohio State University, Macalester College, and other institutions, dis/abled students employed strategies used by Black and other racially minoritized activists to raise awareness of their increasing presence on college campuses. In particular, they drew parallels between the oppression of dis/abled students and racially minoritized students—often in ways that erased the experiences of Black and Brown dis/abled students—and called attention to the inaccessibility of campus buildings [14,33,64].

Research on the history of d/Deaf and dis/abled resistance on college campuses describes tactics such as sit-ins, protest marches, and other actions used by protesters on campus and during sit-ins focused on the passage of 504 at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the San Francisco Federal Building. This work has largely focused on the contributions of white dis/abled students, such as Ed Roberts, Judy Heumann, and Fred Fray, ignoring the participation and contributions of Black and Brown dis/abled people—for example, Brad Lomax, who was both a key figure in the dis/ability rights movement and a member of the Black Panthers [65], or Dennis Billups, a Black, blind student at San Francisco State University who took part in the sit-in and played a major role during the protest [65,66]. Schweik called attention to the ways that "the historiography of 504 activism is an example of what Chris Bell calls 'whitewashed' or 'white disability studies'" in order to "suggest that in real and almost entirely unrecognized ways, the 'power of 504' was enacted as and through a very particular seventies locus of Black power" [65] (para. 1). Moreover, the historiography of 504, which often draws comparison to Black liberation movements and feminist power, erases the experiences of people at

the intersections of race and dis/ability [61]. This focus on white dis/abled activists has minimized and erased the contributions of “disabled queers, disabled radical black activists, and disabled Chicanas and so on” [65] (para. 9).

One of the best-known groups of dis/abled student activists was the Rolling Quads, who were led by Ed Roberts and John Hessler at UC Berkeley in the 1960s [14]. Roberts and Hessler were the first residents of Cowell Memorial Hospital, a segregated, makeshift dormitory that housed dis/abled UC Berkeley students [14,33]. Initially, it provided a space for dis/abled students to build community and develop a sense of collective and shared identity due to their lived experiences on and off campus [33]. Ultimately, these students created “a coalition of dis/abled students determined to increase accessibility across campus, build a residence outside of the hospital, and secure financial assistance for personal care attendants” [33] (p. 479). The Rolling Quads lobbied to establish the Disabled Students Program on campus; they secured a grant through the Higher Education Act of 1965 to fund the program and staff, wheelchair repairs, accessible vans, and conference expenses and to provide financial support for students [33]. Students also established the Committee for the Removal of Architectural Barriers (CRAB), which “catalogued architectural barriers around campus and initiated the necessary contracts within the university to have them removed” [33] (p. 480).

In 1969, the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), which had been increasingly monitoring and surveilling dis/abled students on campus (because of the funding they provided to students) and instituting new sets of academic standards, notified two undergraduate students that their funding had been withdrawn; DOR also notified Roberts, who was a graduate student, that his dissertation funding would not be continued [14]. The residents of Cowell Memorial Hospital mobilized to stage a protest at Sproul Hall, the site of previous UC Berkeley civil disobedience. The protest focused on the removal of these students and challenged dominant ideologies that dis/abled students, and dis/abled people in general, were “incompetent, incapable, and requiring supervision by nondisabled persons” on and off campus [14] (p. 525). Students were ultimately granted a significant amount of control over the services and funds they received from the DOR, and the DOR-appointed counselor on campus was removed [14]. The Rolling Quads were instrumental in creating the university’s program of dis/ability services, and their work was a “launching platform for the disability rights movement” and the independent living movement during the 1970s [14] (p. 535).

Similar freedom movements were occurring on the other side of the country, in Illinois and New York. Unlike at UC Berkeley, the students involved in the dis/ability rights movement in these other locations formed networks through shared experiences at rehabilitation centers and camps [33]. In the 1960s, the Warm Springs Institute in Illinois “was the premiere treatment center for post-polio rehabilitation and spinal cord injuries” and “had a record of referrals to the nationally prominent Rehabilitation Education Services Program” at the University of Illinois [33] (p. 475). Shared experiences at Warm Springs, and later the university, led students to create their own spaces on campus, including a coed fraternity, student newspapers, an architectural barriers committee, and the first college wheelchair basketball team [33]. They also undertook other forms of collective action, such as taking sledgehammers to curbs to expedite the process of adding curb cuts when the administration was unresponsive [33].

In New York, students who had attended Camp Jened, “a summer getaway and rehabilitation center for teenagers and adults with dis/abilities,” began attending college and organizing on campus [33] (p. 481). Judy Heumann, Bobbi Linn, and Frieda Tankus, who met at Camp Jened and would later play critical roles in off-campus dis/ability rights organizing, formed student groups at their respective campuses. In the late 1960s, at Long Island University’s Brooklyn campus, Heumann and other students established the Handicapped Integration Movement “to demand equal rights and accessibility in higher education”; further, they “organized a conference at the university for disabled students to

raise awareness about the discrimination people with dis/abilities faced in employment transportation, housing, and education” [33] (p. 482).

At Brooklyn College, Tankus and other dis/abled students established the Student Organization for Every Disability United for Progress (SOFEDUP); Linn and other students organized People United in Support of the Handicapped (PUSH) at Hofstra University [30]. SOFEDUP sponsored intramural sports and “formed an ad hoc committee for the Advancement of Higher Education for the Disabled in the City University, spreading their mission from Brooklyn College to Universities in the CUNY system” [33] (p. 483). Likewise, PUSH worked to make sure that dis/abled students had equal opportunities and to make dormitories wheelchair accessible. They also “held workshops and distributed pamphlets around campus to educate faculty and able-bodied students on the experiences of disabled students” [33] (p. 483).

There were also instances of cross-campus organizing and collective action. For example, in response to Heumann failing a medical examination that was required to receive her teaching license (and the civil rights case that followed), SOFEDUP, PUSH, and Handicapped Integration Movement members formed Disabled in Action. It was “one of the first cross-disability organizations incorporating people with different disabilities, rather than representing people with one particular disability, dedicated to eradicating systemic discrimination against people with disabilities” [33] (p. 484). During the development of Section 504, Disabled in Action, members of the Rolling Quads, Timothy Nugent at the University of Illinois, as well as Ted Childs and students at Long Island University’s Brooklyn campus were consulted [33]. After Nixon’s second veto of the Rehabilitation Act, students organized a march across the University of Illinois campus [33]. Chihak recounted less-known narratives of dis/ability activism and coalition building at Macalester College, a liberal arts college in Minnesota, beginning in the early 1900s [64]. Likewise, Tyjewski examined the Disabled Students Civil Rights Movement at The Ohio State University, which spanned from 1993 to 1996 [67]. These instances highlight the ways in which dis/abled students have, over many years, engaged in campusmaking and collective action.

Notably, however, many of these examples focus on white students with physical dis/abilities. As Patterson explained regarding activism at the University of Illinois, “the racial segregation of [Warm Springs] influenced the formation of white leaders, ultimately influencing the dynamics of the disability rights movement for decades to come” [33] (p. 475). Chihak explained how Ed Roberts, who was white, gained national prominence during the independent living movement, but the labor of Black dis/abled activists Donald Galloway and Johnnie Lacy was given less attention [61]. As well, Chihak discussed how the Expanded Opportunity Program (EEO), “designed to admit low-income students, mostly students of color, to Macalester with financial aid and other supports such as career counseling,” played an important role in disability history [64] (p. 28). Specifically, Chihak argued:

It is possible that EEO and the debates it sparked among student activists in the [student newspaper] helped pave the way for language disability activists would use later, when they demanded rights to accommodations and pushed against the idea that they should be grateful to be allowed to attend [Macalester] [64] (p. 31).

While not a direct connection, Chihak encouraged a rereading of dis/ability history on campus to recognize the contributions of Black and Brown students. Similarly, Schweik’s rereading of the 504 sit-ins highlights the contributions and leadership of Black dis/abled activists, such as Lomax and Billups [66]. As discussed previously, the dominant narratives surrounding the Disability Rights Movement and the Disabled Student Movement have centered whiteness, despite being “enacted as and through a very particular seventies locus of Black power” [65] (para. 1). As Schweik argued,

Instead of understanding the Panthers as in solidarity with the disability rights movement at the moment of ‘504’—solidarity implying clear-cut relations between social bodies, political agents and cultural identities that are fully formed, perpetually intact, active in ways we can easily track—we might instead find here a model of what Diane Nelson calls being in fluidarity [65] (para. 32).

Understanding this history of broad, organized resistance is valuable, but it does not tell the complete story of how dis/abled students experience campus life. To fully explore students' campusmaking, we must also account for how their experiences are shaped by the campus climate. In the next section, we shift our focus to these more individual experiences.

6. Dis/ability and Campus Climate: Policy and People

Campus climate broadly refers to how students perceive their campus environments and the impact these perceptions have on persistence, retention, and attrition [58,68]. Using the framework of Hurtado et al. [69] for understanding diversity in the context of campus climate, Hurtado and Ponjuan explained that "the campus environment is influenced by a historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion of groups, by the structural diversity or numerical representation of diverse people, the nature of interactions among diverse groups, and individual perceptions of the environment" [68] (p. 235). Although Hurtado and colleagues' framework has not previously been applied to dis/abled students, these categories of analysis are useful for considering their experiences.

The literature on how dis/abled students perceive their campus climate is limited [58,63,70–72]. As Harbour and Greenberg explained, "many campuses do not address disability as part of diversity and campus climate efforts" [63] (p. 4). Consequently, dis/abled students are often overlooked in these important conversations. Even less is known about how multiple-marginalized dis/abled students, such as Black and Brown dis/abled students [9,10,73] and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) dis/abled students perceive their campus climates [72,74]. We do know that dis/abled students navigate unique barriers, including structural and institutional barriers [63], accommodations and self-advocacy [58], stigmatization and Othering [75–77], faculty, staff, and peers' attitudes and beliefs about dis/ability [78,79], and insufficient knowledge of legislation [80–83]. Zehner explained that "campus climate may encompass additional challenges," such as "the willingness of the institution to grant needed accommodations and the effectiveness of the accommodations provided" [58] (p. 125).

As we noted earlier, postsecondary students do not automatically receive accommodations. Rather, they must make a formal request and "provide medical or other professional proof they are entitled to that accommodation" [58] (p. 125–126); [84,85]. This shifts the responsibility of accommodations from administrators and instructors to the students themselves. Moreover, it ignores the barriers that students—particularly Black and Brown students and/or students who come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds—encounter as they seek to obtain documentation [10,58,79]. And while the literature shows that faculty generally perceive themselves as open to students' accommodations [80,86], some studies have found that students do not seek or use accommodations because of negative experiences with faculty [79] and that "students view faculty as less receptive to accommodations than faculty view themselves" [80] (p. 324). In addition, while faculty generally understand that they are mandated to accommodate students, they often lack adequate training, resources, and support from the institution to meet students' needs [87].

The exploratory study by Marshak et al. examined why students with dis/abilities do not use accommodations. The researchers interviewed 16 white students (15 undergraduate and one graduate), most of whom were women, at a medium-sized public university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States [79]. Using an "editing analysis style," they identified five themes: (a) issues related to identity—specifically, "a desire for self-sufficiency," "a desire to shed the stigmatized identity they had in high school," and "a desire not to integrate the presence of a disability into their college identity"; (b) an avoidance of stigma and negative social interactions; (c) insufficient knowledge related to services and dis/ability; (d) the quality and usefulness of services, including expediency of delivery and compatibility with accommodations; and (e) negative experiences with professors [79] (pp. 153–154). In their conclusion, Marshak et al. suggested that offices of dis/ability services can actively work to "create a campus climate amongst students, staff, and faculty

that values students with disabilities and is as generally educated and understanding as possible about disability and accommodation issues” and provide coaching to students on “how to explain, in layperson’s terms, what their disability entails, how it interferes with functioning in an academic environment, and how certain accommodations are necessary” [79] (pp. 159–160).

Baker et al. investigated faculty and student perceptions of students with dis/abilities at a small women’s liberal arts college in eastern Pennsylvania. They surveyed 268 students and 76 faculty members through an online Likert-scale survey. They found that faculty understood they had a legal obligation to support dis/abled students, but they were not familiar with laws that facilitate campus policy and student experiences [80]. Further, 56.4% of faculty perceived the campus climate for dis/abled students as favorable or very favorable, in contrast to 30.6% of students. And while 53 of the 268 student participants self-identified as dis/abled, 74.5% of them reported not disclosing their status to other students and 61% reported not disclosing their status to professors, citing a potentially hostile climate, ineffective accommodations, and a lack of awareness of available resources.

Zehner used the 2016–2017 Student Experience at the Research University (SERU) survey to examine how students with dis/abilities across 15 large, public research universities perceived their campus climate [58]. The study found that students with dis/abilities were less likely than students without dis/abilities to hold favorable views of campus climate. This was particularly the case among students with psychological dis/abilities and multiple dis/abilities. Students who had negative experiences with faculty were less likely to agree that their university was welcoming and were less comfortable with the climate for diversity. Moreover, students who did receive accommodations were “only slightly more likely to agree that their institution is a welcoming campus, that they [felt] respected as an individual, or any other measure of climate” [58] (p. 140). Zehner also examined the impact of socioeconomic status and found that students from poor or working-class backgrounds who had dis/abilities held less favorable views of campus climate than their middle- and upper-income counterparts.

Miller and Dika also drew from the SERU undergraduate survey. Their goal was to understand the perceptions, experiences, and campus climate experiences of LGBTQIA+ students with psychological dis/abilities and to triangulate their own findings from a qualitative study (further discussed below) [72]. Their sample of 405 students mostly came from middle- or upper-middle-class households where at least one parent had attained a 4-year college degree; more than half identified as white. Approximately one-fifth reported receiving dis/ability accommodations from the institution. The researchers examined perceptions based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and the nature of dis/ability. They found that across most gender identities, sexual orientation categories, and disability categories, fewer than half of participants agreed with statements about the campus having a diverse, safe, and secure, and welcoming climate and about feeling like they belonged. Moreover, across sexual orientation categories, most participants reported “hearing their peers expressing negative or stereotypical views about sexual orientation” [72] (p. 91). And across disability categories, “low proportions of students agreed that students with a physical, psychological, or learning disability like theirs were respected on campus” [72] (p. 91).

Research on dis/abled students in higher education has also examined how they resist dominant ideologies regarding ability as they intersect with other social positions, such as race, ethnicity, and queer identity [9,13,72–74,88]. For example, Miller and Dika used grounded theory to examine how 13 LGBTQIA+ undergraduate students with dis/abilities at research universities perceived their campus climate and found that the students had mixed views. They described navigating normative spatial expectations, seeking refuge on campus, and needing time alone or to recharge. They also experienced microaggressions and discrimination, which led to a desire to become involved with identity-based organizations and assume leadership positions on campus [72].

Broadly speaking, advocacy and ableism resistance manifest on the individual level in relation to disclosure, nondisclosure, and accommodations [84,85,89]. Resistance also mani-

ests on the collective level as protests to university action, policy, and influential legislation, as seen during the 1990s university-based activism that supported the ADA [41], the 2020 antiracism student protests at Gallaudet University [90], and ongoing antideficit ideological movements that aim to pivot away from medical-model approaches to dis/ability [76,91]. Collective resistance and solidarity can also be found in online communities, particularly through blogging and social media, which lend both accessibility and numbers to organized movements [74,92].

Literature examining dis/abled BIPOC in higher education, while limited, outlines the necessity of investigating both the intersectional oppression of multi-marginalized students [93] and students' resistance to oppressive structures, policies, and practices [9,13,73,88,94]. A qualitative study examining the experiences of four Black dis/abled women, for example, detailed their resistance to others' perceptions of their capabilities and motivations [13]. One participant described being disallowed from college visits, advised not to enroll in college by a college counselor, and accused of laziness. She rejected ongoing negative messaging about her race and dis/ability by pursuing a graduate degree, counter-stereotyping herself as hardworking, and practicing self-advocacy through persistent disclosure and documentation. Another participant used nondisclosure as a tool of resistance by compensating for her dis/ability in secret to avoid negative stereotypes about her intelligence, ability, and motivation. Both of these participants resisted oppressive structures by developing critical consciousness that supported their circumnavigation of intersectional roadblocks in higher education [13].

In a doctoral dissertation, Joseph identified cultural, intersectional, and academic resilience as factors that allowed five American Indian students with dis/abilities (AISD) to develop counternarratives to anti-Native deficit dis/ability messaging. Explicitly naming white supremacy, imperialism, and colonization as oppressive obstacles for AISD, Joseph highlighted the critical role tribal communities play in the development of AISD resilience [73]. Likewise, Banks and Hughes examined the college experiences of 12 Black men at a historically Black college. Study participants described navigating academic "perceptions of incompetence" fueled by classist, ableist, and antiblack rhetoric by developing counternarratives that emphasized their resilience and motivation to disprove stereotypes [9] (p. 377). Employing our campusmaking conceptual framework, it is apparent that BIPOC campus life is not only about suffering or distress but also about expression and varying forms of resistance to oppressive and exclusive campus environments. Building on Banks and Hughes, a campusmaking approach might explore the enjoyment, personal fulfillment, and love that can be captured in the beautiful struggle of intersectional dis/abled BIPOC students who traverse the complex educational terrain. Collectively, the work of Petersen, Joseph, and Banks and Hughes begins to paint a picture of intersectional dis/abled BIPOC resistance in higher education through critical consciousness and counternarratives [9,13,73].

Dis/abled reality on college and university campuses is influenced both by the policies that shape accessibility for students and their interactions with other campus actors. Much of the existing literature on campus climate and dis/abled students, however, is ahistorical and does not utilize a DisCrit framework. Specifically, it does not consider how historical legacies of exclusion on college and university campuses impact the experiences of dis/abled students today. Absent a DisCrit lens, too much is overlooked: the history of eugenics movements on college campuses, the struggles of intersectional dis/abled BIPOC students, the institutionalization of false intellectual and biological hierarchies, the relationship between the institutionalization of intellectual and developmentally dis/abled people and higher education, for example. It is also important to consider intersectionality and how multiple-marginalized dis/abled student experiences with campus climate are shaped by the multiple social positions they occupy.

7. Conclusions

Dating back to the civil rights era, it is evident that dis/abled and d/Deaf students have repeatedly sought to create spaces and ways of existing that are unique to their campuses. We have aimed to demonstrate how dis/abled and d/Deaf campusmaking has resisted and rejected the trope that these students do not have agency on campus and also to challenge the existing deficit in master narratives about these students' experiences. The labor required of dis/abled students to create and sustain these places is an invisible tax, however—one that includes considerable emotional costs. Our examples of dis/abled student campusmaking—Deaf President Now, the Rolling Quads, SOFEDUP, PUSH, and so on—do not suggest that various structural forms of ableism do not continue to undermine the ability of dis/abled and d/Deaf students to actively engage within the academic community. Rather, they describe the reality of resistance and resilience among dis/abled students. Dis/abled student campusmaking and articulations of space shift otherwise oppressive, ableist environments into sites of humanness, curiosity, joy, and organizing, and they create mechanisms for change.

Researchers have attempted to understand the structural barriers that dis/abled students cope with and navigate during college; however, most of these studies are limited methodologically and theoretically. In particular, many of the studies described above employed quantitative analytic techniques. As such, they fail to give voice to dis/abled students or to document contextual factors that influence their campusmaking; they neglect to describe the collective endeavor of bringing students, including dis/abled students, together as a meaningful site. The literature as a whole would be strengthened by complementary large-scale qualitative studies, which would offer a more robust understanding of how dis/abled students transform everyday spaces into places and actively engage in various types of strategies to resist institutional challenges. In short, we must learn more about what campusmaking in virtual and physical spaces for dis/abled students looks like *in practice*—for example, how students manage and respond to structural ableism and campus climate issues or share similar histories, experiences, ongoing struggles, and various forms of resistance, including campusmaking as radical, political, and principled action. Moreover, we need to advance our understanding of the ways dis/abled students transform spaces into sites of acceptance, curiosity, and joy. At present, the extant research primarily focuses on dis/abled student resistance strategies.

Further, many existing studies and models have focused on a unitary approach to identity rather than on understanding how dis/ability intersects with other social positions, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and documentation status in college campusmaking. It would be instructive to engage in intersectional analysis to better understand the oppressive structures that dis/abled students encounter. Otherwise, their college experience can appear equitable and inclusive across multiple historically marginalized identities when this is not, in fact, the case. As such, future studies should employ critical theoretical perspectives, such as DisCrit, Black feminist thought, antiblackness framework, that resist oppressive social constructions to explore the experiences of dis/abled students, including BIPOC. A multidimensional understanding of the experiences of dis/abled students can offer a unique perspective on campus diversity that helps to prepare all students for life and work in a pluralistic society. The consolidation of knowledge about dis/abled college students' experiences in this paper offers a solid foundation for future work. By pursuing the avenues of inquiry identified above, we can help ensure that dis/abled students, who are among the most vulnerable institutional actors on campus, receive the quality educational experience they deserve.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, E.C.; data curation, D.M. and A.A.; writing—original draft preparation, E.C., D.M. and A.A.; writing—review and editing, E.C., D.M. and A.A.; project administration, E.C. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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