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Jimenez-Silva, M., & Bempechat, J. (Eds.) (2021). *Latinx experiences in U.S. schools: Voices of students, teachers, teacher educators, and education allies in challenging sociopolitical times*. Lexington Books. pp. 284. ISBN-13: 978-1793611871. Hardcover: \$105

Bruna Damiana Heinsfeld

University of Texas at San Antonio

Aiming to remind us that equity is a collective and moral imperative, the book *Latinx experiences in U.S. schools: Voices of students, teachers, teacher educators, and education allies in challenging sociopolitical times* brings together the voices of students, teachers, teacher educators, and allies in the pursuit of building equitable learning environments for Latinx communities in the U.S. The common thread in the book is the election of ex-president Donald Trump, along with the sociopolitical context that fostered and disseminated a politically sanctioned hate rhetoric that still affects numerous lives today. The texts in the book permeate the impacts of this derogatory and hateful rhetoric in the lives of children, teens, and young adults in school.

The Latinx community is the largest and second fastest growing minoritized group in the United States, adding up to 18% of the nation's population (Pew Research Center, 2020). However, as the book's editors state, most educational debates on Latinx students focus on underachievement and deficits that befall this community. Thus, *Latinx experiences in U.S. schools* serves as a non-traditional counternarrative, presenting the strengths and resilience of the Latinx community. Divided into four sections—Voices of Students, Voices of Teachers, Voices of Teacher Educators, and Voices of Education Allies—, each composed of an introduction and three chapters, the book details lived experiences of Latinx communities in education, striving for a more equitable system. The work illuminates and collects authentic narratives of people participating in a transformation movement while incorporating critical theory lenses. Each section disrupts hegemonic accounts on learning, offering its readers not only means for critical inquiry but encouragement and inspiration to pursue a just-just education (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

The overall narrative of the scholarly piece reminds us that education and knowledge are political matters (Freire, 1987). The political nature of education serves an agenda. Teaching

aids, technologies, and methodologies are politically oriented. Likewise, knowledge is not neutral. The definitions of knowledge and scientific knowledge are political. Additionally, the works in the book also dialogue with the importance of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995; López, 2016) and LatCrit theory within the field of critical race theory (Delgado Bernal, 2002). The book relates to other strong works on the subject, such as *Encyclopedia of Critical Understandings of Latinx and Global Education*, edited by Yolanda Medina and Margarita Machado-Casas (2022), which presents critical scholarship fundamental to understanding the Latinx diaspora in the U.S. and its echoes in education through a multidisciplinary global approach.

By centering the voices of students in the first section, the authors of *Latinx experiences in U.S. schools* promote a critical pedagogy approach and legitimize students' narratives and experiences. The scholarly works in this section highlight the role of cultural pluralism, language, and identity in education, while also addressing coloniality and imperialism. The following section of the book touches, through the voices of teachers, on the leadership role of activist teachers, the relationship between justice and the teaching labor, and the implications of promoting anti-racist pedagogies and culturally relevant pedagogical practices. The third section, defined by teacher educators, addresses critical perspectives in teacher education, considering the sociopolitical struggles of our times. The chapters challenge what is regarded as official and scientific knowledge and investigate how teacher education programs can educate teachers to work with Latinx children, considering the preparation of teachers as the cornerstone to harvest an open-minded and respectful educational system. Finally, the fourth section underlines the role and importance of the allies, the *voces unidas*, who advocate in favor of Latinx communities, combating the epistemic violence and assimilationist ideologies that stigmatize and discriminate against students of color. One of the major strengths of the book, along with opening space to voices that are frequently unheard, such as the voices of the Latinx students and the education allies, is the use of storytelling as a strategy to challenge and displace preconceptions and myths about the Latinx community. However, the book could have included one more section: the voices of the *familias*. Recent works, like Richins et al. (2021), reinforce the importance of Latinx families in the engagement of Latinx students. The relationship between Latinx families and school benefits not only the students, but also the community, and their voices would have been a valuable addition to the book.

The richness of voices contemplated in this work is fundamental to the understanding of how critical pedagogical practices can be built upon lived and shared experiences, honoring the humane aspect of education—especially in times when we witness the global growth of hate groups, racism, and anti-immigrant rhetoric. Although focusing on the Latinx community, each story resonates with other minoritized groups in the U.S and beyond borders, being relevant to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities around the world. The scholarship and the voices presented in this book are a constant reminder for all teachers, students, and communities, especially those who have been marginalized, to demand transformative education for their liberation. It is a must-read for educators (and education allies) who seek to dismantle systems of oppression and advocate for dignity, equity, and liberation. All in all, paraphrasing Freire (1987), any attempt to liberate the oppressed without their participation adds up to the oppressive objectification process already suffered by them.

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