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AMAE SPECIAL THEME ISSUE

Latin@ Students and the School-Prison-Pipeline

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Editors' Message

We are pleased to publish the 2013 theme issue focused on the Latina/o school-to-prison pipeline. We would like to personally thank the four co-guest editors, Drs. Lilia Bartolomé, Donaldo Macedo, Victor Ríos, and Anthony Peguero, who bring a wealth of experience from the fields of education, applied linguistics, and sociology. Their year-long efforts and dedication brought together a collection of timely and relevant articles from an impressive set of authors from across the country. The articles in this issue critically examine the severe implications of the social and educational problem of Latina/o youth and the prison-industrial complex. The scholarship and reflective writing across the pieces highlight the importance and complexities associated with the increasing punishment of Latina/o youth in the US educational system. Scholars, policymakers, and practitioners will find important recommendations in this issue that can further dialogue and pave the path for solutions in countering the negative impact that school discipline and criminalization have on Latina/o youth.

Sincerely,

Oscar Jiménez-Castellanos

Antonio Camacho

Patricia Sánchez

Latin@ Students and the School-Prison-Pipeline**GUEST EDITORS****Lilia Bartolomé****Donaldo Macedo**

University of Massachusetts, Boston

Victor Rios

University of California Santa, Barbara

Anthony Peguero

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Research demonstrates that youth who are disciplined at school can be diverted onto a path toward social exclusion, educational failure, and economic insolvency. The conceptualization of the school-to-prison pipeline and criminalization has emerged from researchers revealing the increasing punishment of racial and ethnic minority students. Zero-tolerance school discipline policies rose to prominence in the early 1990s, due to the perception that crime in schools was an ever-increasing and unending problem. It is estimated that over three million students are suspended at some point during each school year. This rate is nearly twice the annual number of suspensions that occurred in the 1970s. Although literature on the school-to-prison pipeline has primarily focused on the effect of school discipline, fewer studies have broadened their research scope, especially for a rapidly growing Latin@ youth population.

The consequences of the school-to-prison pipeline are serious for the Latin@ youth population. It is argued that the school-to-prison pipeline is an institutionalized mechanism of discrimination that can perpetuate Latin@ inequalities the United States (US). The school-to-prison pipeline is marginalizing schools, communities, and families by derailing the educational success and progress, restricting and excluding Latin@ youth from the labor market, and promoting the continuation of the historical sense of mistrust and resentment toward authority, the criminal justice system, and all forms of social control. As the US becomes increasingly immersed in a global competitive market, addressing a school system fraught with inequities, such as the school-to-prison pipeline, becomes imperative. Insuring and improving educational achievement and attainment of this nation's Latin@ youth is vital for American progress and growth.

This special issue critically examines the severe implications of the social and educational problem of "Latin@ Students and the School-Prison-Pipeline." We realized that a special theme issue was needed to highlight the importance and complexities associated with the increasing punishment of Latin@ youth in the US educational system. This special issue of the Association of Mexican American Educators thus fills an important void in the literature by addressing a few such questions.

While addressing a variety of topics, each of these articles deals seriously with the important issue of school discipline as a mechanism of social inequality that wrecks the educational progress and success of Latin@ youth. The special issue begins with Jesus Cortez's poems to remind the audience that the "Latin@ Students and the School-Prison-Pipeline" is beyond an academic dilemma but a predicament where the lives of actual families and children are being disrupted. Next, Henry Giroux broadly discusses how youth have become the targets of ruthless forms of state-sanctioned punishment. Alicia Pantoja encourages researchers and practitioners to apply intersectional analysis frameworks, such as Critical Race Theory, concerned with understanding oppression in intersectional, non-essentializing and deterministic ways about punishing Latin@ youth at school. Subini Annamma illustrates how authority figures demonstrate impatience and lack of understanding for undocumented students when addressing school discipline and juvenile justice for Latin@ youth. Patricia Krueger-Henney asserts that more participatory research designs that position Latin@ youth as co-researchers are needed to identify the dispossessing wires that run through the inter-institutional groundings of the pipeline. Victor Rios and Mario Galicia report that the criminalization of Latino boys as gang threats has become exacerbated during the current

era of mass incarceration, school to prison pipeline, and the increase of Latino immigrant populations throughout the United States and the xenophobia that follows. Luis Nuño provides an auto-ethnography about the social, cultural, and political context of Latin@ Students and the School-Prison-Pipeline. Richard Orozco denotes the consequence of perceiving Mexican Americans as perpetrators sets in motion the initiation of the school-to-prison pipeline. Eugene Fujimoto, Yvonne Garcia, Noemy Medina, and Eduardo Perez present findings that urban school leaders are pivotal figures in transforming the school-to-prison pipeline into a school-to-college culture, where community assets become the dominant form of capital. Finally, Sandra Quiñones reviews Victor Rios' award winning book *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. In our view, each article stands out for its original and noteworthy contribution to the literature on Latin@ Students and the School-Prison-Pipeline. We hope that this volume helps scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to further examine and propose solutions to the negative impact that school discipline and criminalization has on Latin@ youths. It has been a privilege to read these manuscripts, engage with their authors, and see them through to publication in order to provide an overview of a dire educational and social problem that Latin@ youth face and endure in our society.

POETRY**Northbound Letters**

I heard the news,
you were back behind bars,
the scars reopened,
the madness must
have taken over your soul...
and I failed you,
I did not embrace you goodbye,
I did not say those words
you might have needed;
now I write you letters
that carry my soul
to you behind those walls,
behind those bars,
physical and mental...
I wish I could
break you out
with my words,
that the brotherhood
that binds us could break down
walls and rip apart those bars,
that your smile
would return you to freedom...

I remember you as a boy,
running free down those mean streets
as I hoped you wouldn't
follow the path of street warriors;
the path to redemption
lies in your soul,
in the purity of your heart
that will never be imprisoned.

By: Jesus Cortez

Incarcerated King

I remember you as a boy,
running playfully through the city,
among the wretched of the earth,
those rejected by America,
learning the ways of street kings.

You grew among the spirits of the departed,
the children of mothers the color of the earth,
children of the sun,
sons of the city that condemned
them to live amongst a dying city.

You became a king among children,
a God of the streets among sinners
and borrowers of hope,
a hope that you carried in your pocket,
a hope that would kill the hopes of others.

Who could blame your ways?
Who can judge your actions?
Who is without sin to say you are bad?
Who can say they would do otherwise?
Who carries your pain with the same honor?

You will always be the king of streets
that will remember your soul, your name,
until the day of your return.

By: Jesus Cortez

ESSAYS

Punishing Youth and Saturated Violence in the Era of Casino Capitalism

Henry A. Giroux
McMaster University

An earlier version of this article first appeared online in *CounterPunch Magazine*,
<http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/10/31/casino-capitalism-and-higher-education/>

Abstract

This essay powerfully describes the rise of a neoliberal or “casino capitalism” as a punishing state that has been largely ignored by the mainstream media but is actively resisted by young people around the world. I highlight the pervasive use of violence and the celebration of war-like values that are no longer restricted to a particular military ideology, but have become normalized throughout our entire society, especially in public schools that serve vulnerable student populations. I also portray how schools have become militarized and prison-like sites that criminalize the behavior of young people, particularly that of poor males, minorities, and immigrants. This imposition of violence on children constitutes the “punishing of youth” as the title alludes to, and depicts the substantial numbers of Latin@ children who move straight from a prison-like school to becoming inmates in the US’s ever-increasing private, for-profit prison complex.

There is by now an overwhelming catalogue of evidence revealing the depth and breadth of the state sponsored assault being waged against young people across the globe, and especially in the United States. What is no longer a hidden order of politics is that American ¹ society is at war with its children, and that the use of such violence against young people is a disturbing index of a society in the midst of a deep moral and political crisis. Beyond exposing the moral depravity of a nation that fails to protect its youth, the violence used against American youth speaks to nothing less than a perverse death-wish, especially in light of the fact that As Alain Badiou argues, we live in an era in which there is zero tolerance for poor minority youth ²and youthful protesters and “infinite tolerance for the crimes of bankers and government embezzlers which affect the lives of millions.” While the systemic nature of the assault on young people and its testimony to the rise of the neoliberal punishing state has been largely ignored by the mainstream media, youth in Canada and the United States are resisting the violence of what might be called neoliberalism or casino capitalism. For instance, the Occupy Wall Street Movement and the Quebec Protest Movement are demonstrating against such assaults while simultaneously attempting to educate a larger public about the degree to which American and Canadian public spheres, institutions, and values have been hijacked by a culture of spectacular and unrelenting violence—largely directed against youthful protesters and those marginalized by class and race, who increasingly have become the targets of ruthless forms of state-sanctioned punishment.

Put into historical context, we can see that collective insurance policies and social protections in the United States, in particular, have over time given way to the forces of economic privatization, commodification, deregulation, and hyper individualism now ³driving the ongoing assault on democratic public spheres, public goods, and any viable notion of equality and social justice. At least since the 1980s, the American public has witnessed the transformation of the welfare state by punitive workfare programs, the privatization of public goods and

1. J. F. Conway, “Quebec: Making War on Our Children,” *Socialist Project*, E-Bulletin No. 651, (June 10, 2012). <http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/651.php>

2. Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of History*, tr. Gregory Elliott, (London, UK: Verso, 2012), pp. 18-19.

3. See Loic Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009).

spaces, and a hollow appeal to individual responsibility and self-interest as a substitute for civic responsibility and democratic engagement. Embracing the notion that market-driven values and relations should shape every domain of human life, a business-centered model of governance has eviscerated any viable notion of the public values and interests, while insidiously criminalizing social problems and cutting back on basic social services, especially for young people, the poor, minorities, immigrants, and the elderly. As young people and others organize to protest economic injustice and massive inequality, along with drastic cuts to education, workers benefits and pensions, and public services, the state has responded with the use of injurious violence, while the mainstream media has issued insults rather than informed dialogue, critical engagement, and suggestions for meaningful reform. Indeed, it appears the United States has entered a new historical era when policy decisions not only translate into an intentional, systemic disinvestment in public institutions and the breakdown of those public spheres that traditionally provided the minimal conditions for social justice and democratic expression, but are also merging with state-sanctioned violence and the use of mass force against the state's own citizenry. I am not referring to the violence now sweeping the United States in the form of the lone, crazed gunman shooting innocent victims in colleges, malls, and movie theaters. As horrifying as this violence is, it does not fully equate with the systemic violence now waged by the state on both the domestic and foreign fronts.

On the domestic front, state violence in^{4 5} response to the Occupy movement in its first six months has been decisive and swift: "There have been at least 6705 arrests in over 112 different cities as of March 6, 2012." Similarly, in Montreal, Canada thousands of peaceful protests have been arrested while protesting tuition increases, increasing debt burdens, and other assaults on young people and the social state. What does it mean as young people make diverse claims on the promise of a radical democracy and articulate their vision of a fair and just world that they are increasingly met with forms of physical, ideological, and structural violence? Abandoned by the existing political system, young people are placing their bodies on the line, occupying shrinking public spaces in a symbolic gesture that also deploys concrete measures demanding their presence be recognized when their voices are no longer being heard. They have, for the most part, protested peacefully while trying to produce a new language, political culture, public institutions, and a "community that manifests the values of equality and mutual respect that they see missing in a world that is structured by neoliberal principles." Young people are organizing in opposition to the structural violence of the state while also attempting to reclaim the discourse of the common good, social justice, and economic equality. Rejecting the notion that democracy and markets are the same or that capitalism is the only ideological and economic system that can speak in the name of democracy, youth movements are calling for an end to poverty, the suppression of dissent, the permanent warfare state, and the corporate control of the commanding institutions of politics and culture.

Many of us have been inspired by the hope for a better future that these young people represent for the nation as a whole. Yet, of utmost concern is the backlash the protesters have faced for exercising their democratic rights. Surely, what must be addressed by anyone with a stake in safeguarding what little remains of U.S. democracy is the immediate threat that an emerging police state poses not just to the young protesters occupying a number of North American cities but to the promise of a real democracy. This threat to the possibility of a democratic social order only increases with the ascendancy of a war-like mentality and neoliberal modes of discipline and education which make it that much more difficult to imagine, let alone enact, communal obligation, social responsibility, and civic engagement. Unless the actions of young protesters, however diverse they may be, are understood as a robust form of civic courage commensurate with a vital democracy, it will be difficult for the American public to resist an increase in state violence and the framing of protests, dissent, and civic responsibility as un-American or, even worse, a species of criminal behavior.

Stuart Hall suggests that the current historical moment, or what he calls the "long march of the Neoliberal Revolution,"⁶ has to be understood in terms of the varied forms of violence that it deploys and reinforces. Such anti-democratic pressures and their provocation of the protests of young people in the United States and abroad have deepened an escalating crisis symptomatic of what Alex Honneth has termed the "failed sociality"

4. See <http://occupyarrests.moonfruit.com/>

5. Kyle Bella, "Bodies in Alliance: Gender Theorist Judith Butler on the Occupy and SlutWalk Movements," *TruthOut* (December 15, 2011), <http://www.truth-out.org/bodies-alliance-gender-theorist-judith-butler-occupy-and-slutwalk-movements/1323880210>

6. Stuart Hall, "The March of the Neoliberals," *The Guardian* (September 12, 2011), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/sep/12/march-of-the-neoliberals>

characteristic of neoliberal states.⁷ In turn, state and corporate media-fueled perceptions of such a crisis have been used to stimulate fear and justify the creeping expansion of a militarized and armed state as the enforcer of neoliberal policies amid growing public dissent. Police violence against young people must therefore be situated within a broader set of categories that enables a critical understanding of the underlying social, economic, and political forces at work in such assaults. That is, in order to adequately address state-sponsored violence against young people, one should consider the larger context of the devolution of the social state and the corresponding rise of the warfare state. The notion of historical conjuncture—or a parallel set of forces coalescing at one moment in time—is important here because it provides both an opening into the factors shaping a particular historical moment and it allows for a merging of theory and strategy in our understanding of the conditions with which we are now faced. In this case, it helps us to address theoretically how youth protests are largely related to a historically specific neoliberal project that promotes vast inequalities in income and wealth, creates the student loan debt bomb, eliminates much needed social programs, eviscerates the social wage, and privileges profits and commodities over people.

Within the United States and Canada, the often violent response to non-violent forms of youth protest must also be analyzed within the framework of a mammoth military-industrial state and its commitment to extending violence and war through the entire society. As the late philosopher Tony Judt put it, “The United States is becoming not just a militarized state but a military society: a country where armed power is the measure of national greatness, and war, or planning for war, is the exemplary (and only) common project.”⁸ The blending of the military-industrial complex with state interests and unbridled corporate power points to the need for strategies that address what is specific about the current neoliberal project and how different modes of power, social relations, public pedagogies, and economic configurations come together to shape its politics. Such considerations provide theoretical openings for making the practices of the warfare state and the neoliberal revolution visible in order “to give the resistance to its onward march, content, and focus, a cutting edge.”⁹ It also points to the conceptual value of making clear that history remains an open horizon that cannot be dismissed through appeals to the end of history or end of ideology.¹⁰ It is precisely through the indeterminate nature of history that resistance becomes possible. While there is always hope because a democratic political project refuses any guarantees, most Americans today are driven by shared fears, stoked to a great extent by media-induced hysteria. Corporations stand ready to supply a culture of fear with security and surveillance technologies that, far from providing greater public safety, do little more than ensure the ongoing militarization of the entire society, including the popular media and the cultural apparatuses that shape everyday life. Images abound in the mainstream media of such abuses. There is the now famous image of an 84-year-old woman looking straight into a camera after attending a protest rally, her face drenched in a liquid spray used by the police. There is the image of the 19-year-old pregnant woman being carried to safety after being pepper-sprayed by the police. There are the now all-too-familiar images of young people being dragged by their hair across a street to a waiting police van.¹¹ In some cases, protesters have been seriously hurt. Scott Olsen, an Iraq war veteran, was critically injured in a protest in Oakland in October 2011. On March 17, 2012, young protesters attempting to re-establish an Occupy camp at Zuccotti Park in New York were confronted by excessive police violence. *The Guardian* reported that over 73 people were arrested in one day and that “A woman suffered a seizure while handcuffed on a sidewalk, another protester was thrown into a glass door by police officers before being handcuffed, and a young woman said she was choked and dragged by her hair....Witnesses claimed police punched one protester several times in the head while he was subdued by at least four officers.”¹² Another protester claimed the police broke his thumb and injured his jaw. Such stories have become commonplace in recent years, and so many are startling reminders

7. Alex Honneth, *Pathologies of Reason* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 188.

8. Tony Judt, “The New World Order,” *The New York Review of Books* 11:12 (July 14, 2005), pp. 14-18.

9. Stuart Hall, “The Neo-Liberal Revolution,” *Cultural Studies* 25:6 (November 2011), p. 706.

10. Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York: Free Press, 1966) and the more recent Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

11. Philip Govevitch, “Whose Police,” *The New Yorker* (November 17, 2011), <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/comment/2011/11/occupy-wall-street-police-bloomberg.html>

12. Ryan Devereaux, “Dozens Arrested as Occupy Wall Street Marks Anniversary with Fresh Protests,” *The Guardian* (March 18, 2012), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/18/occupy-wall-street-six-month-anniversary/print>

of the violence used against civil rights demonstrators by the forces of Jim Crow in the fifties and sixties.¹³

These stories are also indicative that a pervasive use of violence and the celebration of war-like values are no longer restricted to a particular military ideology, but have become normalized through the entire society. As Michael Geyer points out, militarization in this sense is defined as “the contradictory and tense social process in which civil society organizes itself for the production of violence.”¹⁴ The war on terror has become a war on democracy, as police departments and baton-wielding cops across the nation are now being supplied with the latest military equipment and technologies imported straight from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. Procuring drones, machine-gun-equipped armored trucks, SWAT vehicles, “digital communications equipment and Kevlar helmets, like those used by soldiers used in foreign wars,”¹⁵ is justified through reference to the domestic war against “terrorists” (code for young protesters) and provides new opportunities for major defense contractors and corporations to become ever “more a part of our domestic lives.”¹⁶ As Glenn Greenwald confirms, the United States since 9/11 “¹⁷ has aggressively paramilitarized the nation’s domestic police forces by lavishing them with countless military-style weapons and other war-like technologies, training them in war-zone military tactics, and generally imposing a war mentality on them. Arming domestic police forces with paramilitary weaponry will ensure their systematic use even in the absence of a terrorist attack on U.S. soil; they will simply find other, increasingly permissive uses for those weapons.”

With the growth of a new militarized state, it should come as little surprise that “by age 23, almost a third of Americans are arrested for a crime.”¹⁸ In a society that has few qualms with viewing its young people as predators, a threat to corporate governance, and a disposable population, the violent acts inflicted on youth by a punishing state will no doubt multiply with impunity. Domestic paramilitary forces will certainly undermine free speech and dissent with the threat of force, while also potentially violating core civil liberties and human rights. In other words, the prevailing move in American society toward permanent war status sets the stage for the acceptance of a set of unifying symbols rooted in a survival-of-the-fittest ethic that promotes conformity over dissent, the strong over the weak, and fear over civic responsibility. With the emergence of a militarized society, “the range of acceptable opinion inevitably shrinks,”¹⁹ as violence becomes the first and most important element of power and a mediating force in shaping all social relationships.

²⁰²¹ The grave reality is that violence saturates almost every aspect of North American culture. Domestically, violence weaves through the cultural and social landscape like a highly charged electric current burning everything in its path. Popular culture has become a breeding ground for a form of brutal masculine authority and the celebration of violence it incorporates has become the new norm in America. Representations of violence dominate the media and too often parade before viewers less as an object of critique than as a for-profit spectacle and heightened source of pleasure. As much as any form of governance seeks compliance among the governed, the permanent war state uses modes of public pedagogy—practices of pedagogical persuasion—to address, enlist, and construct subjects willing to abide by its values, ideology, and narratives of fear and violence. Legitimation in the United States is largely provided through a market-driven culture addicted to consumerism, militarism, and spectacles of organized violence. Circulated through various registers of popular culture, cruelty and violence imbue the worlds of high fashion and Hollywood movies, reality TV, extreme sports, video games, and around-the-clock news media. The American public is bombarded by an unprecedented “huge volume of exposure to... images of human suffering.” As Zygmunt Bauman argues, “the sheer numbers and monotony of

13. Phil Rockstroh, “The Police State Makes Its Move: Retaining One’s Humanity in the Face of Tyranny,” *CommonDreams* (November 15, 2011), <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2011/11/15>

14. Michael Geyer, “The Militarization of Europe, 1914–1945,” in *The Militarization of the Western World*, ed. John R. Gillis (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 79.

15. Andrew Becker and G.W. Schulz, “Cops Ready for War,” *ReaderSupportedNews* (December 21, 2011), <http://readersupportednews.org/news-section2/316-20/9023-focus-cops-ready-for-war>

16. Becker and Schulz, “Cops Ready for War.”

17. Glenn Greenwald, “The Roots of The UC-Davis Pepper-Spraying,” *Salon* (November 20, 2011), http://www.salon.com/2011/11/20/the_roots_of_the_uc_davis_pepper_spraying/

18. Erica Goode, “Many in U.S. Are Arrested by Age 23, Study Finds,” *New York Times* (December 19, 2011), p. A15.

19. Judt, “The New World Order,” p. 17.

20. Zygmunt Bauman, *Life in Fragments* (Malden: Blackwell, 1995), p. 149.

21. Bauman, *Life in Fragments*, pp. 149–150.

images may have a 'wearing off' impact [and] to stave off the 'viewing fatigue,' they must be increasingly gory, shocking, and otherwise 'inventive' to arouse any sentiments at all or indeed draw attention. The level of 'familiar' violence, below which the cruelty of cruel acts escapes attention, is constantly rising."

When an increasing volume of violence is pumped into the culture as fodder for sports, entertainment, news media, and other pleasure-seeking outlets, yesterday's spine-chilling and nerve-wrenching violence loses its shock value. One consequence is that today's audiences exhibit more than mere desensitization or indifference to violence. They are not merely passive consumers, but instead demand prurient images of violence in a way that fuels their increasing production. Spectacularized violence is now unmoored from moral considerations or social costs. It now resides, if not thrives, in a diverse commercially infused set of cultural apparatuses that offers up violence as a commodity with the most attractive and enjoyable pleasure quotient. Representations of torture, murder, sadism, and human suffering have become the stuff of pure entertainment, offering a debased outlet for experiencing intense pleasure and the thrill of a depoliticized and socially irresponsible voyeurism. The consuming subject is now educated to take intense pleasure in watching—if not also participating as agents of death—in spectacles of cruelty and barbarism. After all, assuming the role of a first shooter in the age of video game barbarism has become an unquestioned badge of both pleasure and dexterity, leading potentially to an eventual employment by the Defense Department to operate Drone aircraft in the video saturated bunkers of death in some suburban west coast town. Seemingly unconstrained by a moral compass based on a respect for human and non-human life, U.S. culture is increasingly shaped by a disturbing *collective* desire for intense excitement and a never-ending flood of heightened sensations.

Although challenging to ascertain precisely how and why the collective culture continues to plummet to new depths of depravity, it is far less difficult to identify the range of horrific outcomes and social costs that come with this immersion in a culture of staged violence. When previously unfamiliar forms of violence, such as extreme images of torture and death, become banally familiar, the violence that occurs daily becomes barely recognizable, relegated to the realm of the unnoticed and unnoticeable. Hyper-violence and spectacular representations of cruelty disrupt and block our ability to respond politically and ethically to the violence as it is actually happening on the ground. How else to explain the public indifference to the violence waged by the state against non-violent youthful protesters who are rebelling against a society in which they have been excluded from any claim on hope, prosperity, equality, and justice? Cruelty has saturated everyday life when young people, once the objects of compassion and social protections, are treated as either consumers and commodities, on the one hand, or suspects and criminals on the other.

Disregard for young people and a growing taste for violence can also be seen in policies that sanction the modeling of public schools after prisons. We see the criminalization of disadvantaged youth, instead of the social conditions which they are forced to endure. Behaviors that were once handled by teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators are now dealt with by the police and the criminal justice system. The consequences have been disastrous for young people. Not only do schools take on the technologies and culture of prisons and engage in punishment creep, but young children are being arrested and put on trial for behaviors that can only be called trivial. There was the case of the 5-year-old girl in Florida who was put in handcuffs and taken to the local jail because she had a temper tantrum; or the 13-year-old girl in a Maryland school who was arrested for refusing to say the pledge of allegiance. Alexa Gonzales in New York was another student arrested by police—for doodling on her desk. There is more at work in these cases than stupidity and a flight from responsibility on the part of educators, parents, law enforcement officers, and politicians who maintain these policies. Clearly, embedded in these actions is also the sentiment that young people constitute a threat to adults, and that the only way to deal with them is to subject them to mind-crushing punishment. Students being miseducated, criminalized, and subjected to forms of penal pedagogy in prison-type schools provide a grim reminder of the degree to which the ethos of containment and punishment now creeps into spheres of everyday life that were once largely immune from this type of official violence.

Some of the most shocking examples of the increasing tendency to use excessive forms of punishment on students as well as process them through what is called the "School-to Prison pipeline" is on full display in two recent reports. One Statelmpact report stated that public schools in Florida and Ohio often used a disciplinary

practice called “seclusion.”²² That is, they repeatedly ²³²⁴locked “children away in cell-like rooms, closets or old offices, sometimes without their parents’ knowledge.” In Ohio, “which sent students to seclusion rooms 4, 236 times in the 2009-2010 school year, sixty percent of these students had disabilities.”

Such practices boggle the mind and have no educational value whatsoever. In fact, seclusion has been found to be deeply traumatizing to some students and in some cases children have tried to hurt themselves or commit suicide. ²⁵²⁶²⁷*ThinkProgress* reported that “in one special education school in Georgia, a 13-year-old boy hung himself in a seclusion room in November 2004.” It gets worse. A Department of Justice report uncovered a “School to Prison pipeline” in Mississippi which revealed that principals and teachers in the schools in Meridian, Mississippi sent largely black and disabled students “to prison for minor disciplinary problems [such as] dress code violations, flatulence, profanity and disrespect.” These disciplinary practices suggest that students who are poor, disabled, and vulnerable now inhabit schools that have become “zones of abandonment” that exist beyond the formal rules of school governance where students “become unknowable with no human rights.” Under such circumstances, students become voiceless and thus powerless, subject to disciplinary procedures that erase any vestige of agency, subjectivity, or self-recognition.

All of these violations point to the ongoing and growing fundamentalisms and “rule of exceptions” in the American polity that bear witness to a growing militarization of American society. Such disciplinary practices also point to a society that is not only at war with its children, but is also in the thrall of a galloping authoritarianism in which the chief function of schooling is repression, especially for low-income and poor minority students as well as those with disabilities and special needs.²⁸ Public schools for low income and poor minority children have become what João Biehl calls a “machinery of social death” where young people considered disposable are “often placed in a state of ‘terminal exclusion.’”²⁹

Governing-through-crime policies also remind us that we live in an era that breaks young people, corrupts the notion of justice, and saturates the minute details of everyday life with the threat if not yet the reality of violence. A return to violent spectacles and other medieval types of punishment inflict pain on both the psyches and the bodies of young people. Equally disturbing is how law-and-order policies and practices in the United States appear to take their cue from a past era of slavery. Studies have shown that “Arrests and police interactions... disproportionately affect low-income schools with large African-American and Latino populations,”³⁰ paving the way for these youth to move almost effortlessly through what has been called the school-to-prison pipeline. Sadly, the next step one envisions for such a society is a reality TV franchise in which millions tune in to watch young kids being handcuffed, arrested, tried in the courts, and sent to juvenile detention centers. This is not merely barbarism parading as reform—it is also a blatant indicator of the degree to which sadism and the infatuation with violence have become normalized in a society that seems to take delight in dehumanizing itself.

The prevalence of institutionalized violence in American society and other parts of the world suggests the need for a new conversation and politics that address what a just and fair world looks like. Young people and others marginalized by class, race, and ethnicity appear to have been abandoned as American society’s claim on democracy gives way to the forces of militarism, market fundamentalism, and state terrorism. Until educators,

22. John O’Connor and Sarah Gonzalez, “Many Florida Schools Use Seclusion Rooms for Students With Disabilities,” *StateImpact* (April 9, 2012). Online: <http://stateimpact.npr.org/florida/2012/08/09/many-florida-schools-use-seclusion-rooms-for-students-with-disabilities> Students With Disabilities,” *StateImpact* (April 9, 2012). Online: <http://stateimpact.npr.org/florida/2012/08/09/many-florida-schools-use-seclusion-rooms-for-students-with-disabilities>

23. See John O’Connor and Sarah Gonzalez, “Many Florida Schools Use Seclusion Rooms for Students With Disabilities.”

24. Aviva Shen, “Ohio and Florida Public Schools Lock Mentally Disabled Children in Closets,” *ThinkProgress* (August 9, 2012). Online: <http://thinkprogress.org/education/2012/08/09/667931/ohio-florida-school-closets/>

25. Ibid. Aviva Shen, “Ohio and Florida Public Schools Lock Mentally Disabled Children in Closets.”

26. Annie-rose Strasser, “Mississippi Schools Sending Kids to Prison for Misbehaving in the Classroom,” *ThinkProgress* (August 13, 2012). Online: <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2012/08/13/681261/mississippi-schools-sending-kids-to-prison-for-misbehaving-in-the-classroom/>

27. João Biehl, *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 4

28. I have borrowed this idea of school as a repressive institution from Stanley Aronowitz, “Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy: Not Mainly a teaching method,” in Robert Lake and Tricia Kress, *Paulo Freire’s Intellectual Roots: Toward Historicity in Praxis* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2012), in press.

29. Ibid. pp. 10-11, 14.

30. Smartypants, “A Failure of Imagination,” Smartypants Blog Spot (March 3, 2010), <http://immasmartypants.blogspot.com/2010/03/failure-of-imagination.html>

intellectuals, academics, young people, and other concerned citizens address how a physics and metaphysics of war and violence have taken hold on American society and the savage social costs they have exacted, the forms of social, political, and economic violence that young people are currently protesting against as well as the violence waged in response to their protests will become impossible to recognize and act on. The American public needs to make visible and critically engage the underlying ideological, political, educational, and economic forces that embrace violence as both a commodity, spectacle, and mode of governing. Such an approach would address the necessity of understanding the emerging pathology of violence not just through a discourse of fear or isolated spectacles, but through policies that effectively implement the wider social, economic, and political reforms necessary to curb the culture of violence and the institutions that are sustained by it.

There is a cult of violence in America and it is reinforced by a type of collective ignorance spread endlessly by special interests such as the National Rifle Association, politicians wedded to the largess of the military-industrial complex, and a national entertainment-corporate complex that both employs violence and uses it to refigure the meaning of news, entertainment, and the stories America tells itself about its national identity and sense of destiny. Violence is not something to be simply criminalized by extending the reach of the criminal justice system to the regime of criminals that now run the most powerful financial services and industries. It must be also understood as part of a politics of distraction, a poisonous public pedagogy that depoliticizes as much as it entertains and corrupts. That is, it must be addressed as a political issue that within the current historical moment is both deployed by the neoliberal state against young people, and employed as part of the reconfiguration or transformation of the social state into the punishing state. At the heart of this transformation is the emergence of new form of corporate sovereignty, a more intense form of state violence, a ruthless survival of the fittest ethic used to legitimate the concentrated power of the rich, and a concerted effort to punish young people who are out of step with neoliberal ideology, values, and modes of governance. Of course, these anti-democratic tendencies represent more than a threat to young people, they also put in peril all of those individuals, groups, public spheres, and institutions now considered disposable because that are at odds with a world run by bankers, the financial elite, and the rich. Only a well-organized movement of young people, educators, workers, parents, religious groups, and other concerned citizens will be capable of changing the power relations and vast economic inequalities that have generated what has become a country in which it is almost impossible to recognize the ideals of a real democracy.

Reframing the School-to-Prison Pipeline: The Experiences of Latin@ Youth and Families

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Abstract

In this paper, I argue that school-to-prison pipeline (SPP) research on Latin@s shows the existence of an interconnected system of policies and social practices, in and out of schools, punitive and non-punitive in nature, which together work to criminalize Latin@ students and their families. This intersection (Crenshaw, 1991) and multiplicity (Hames-Garcia, 2012) of oppressive immigration, mass incarceration and schooling systems, among other factors, shapes the process and outcomes of Latin@s' criminalization (Scott & Saucedo, 2013; Timmons Flores, 2013; Campano et al, 2013). As a result, I believe we must re-conceptualize the "pipeline" metaphor in a way that views policies and social practices that criminalize Latin@ students and their families as part of an interconnected, interdependent system or web. Such an expansion of how we understand this term challenges a central assumption inherent in this "pipeline" metaphor; that the criminalization of youth flows unidirectionally and unidimensionally from schools to prisons and that disruption of such criminalization should be primarily focused on fixing punitive policies in schools. Advocacy and research efforts built upon the reconceptualization of this system or web would address the criminalizing social practices and policies that, while interconnected with much of the existing SPP literature, have been largely missed in the dominant SPP discourse.

Over the last decade, education, sociology and legal scholars have been researching the school-based criminalization of minoritized youth in the United States, particularly as it relates to high U.S. incarceration rates, in order to account for, and disrupt, a disturbing relationship between schools and prisons (e.g., Advancement Project, 2005, 2010; Wald & Losen, 2003). What the research on this relationship has yielded is the "School-to-Prison Pipeline" (SPP), a theory that suggests punitive school policies, such as detentions, suspensions and truancy policies, among others, disproportionately punish minoritized students³¹ pushing them out of schools and consequently sharply increasing the likelihood they will end up incarcerated³² (e.g., Advancement Project, 2005, 2010; Croger & Hewitt, 2011; Skiba et al., 2011; Wald & Losen, 2003, 2011).

Overall, SPP research proposes that there is a direct and explicit connection between institutionalized racism in schools and the growing mass incarceration crisis in the U.S. SPP studies often indicate that the factors constructing the "pipeline" – Jim Crow legacies (Alexander, 2010), zero tolerance policies (Advancement Project, 2005, 2010), high stakes testing (Advancement Project, 2010), and the "race threat hypothesis" (Wald & Losen, 2011) for example – do not all, or completely, originate within schools (Morris, 2012). Yet SPP studies are anchored on the "pipeline" metaphor, which implies "the school" as the universal starting point (point A) of the criminalization pipeline and "the prison" as the universal ending point (point B) of it.

It is crucial to note that this "pipeline" metaphor has successfully shaped SPP advocacy efforts, making clear that there is a troubling relationship between schools and prisons and, in doing so, pointed to two sites – the education and criminal justice system – and to specific policies – zero tolerance policies in schools and discriminatory juvenile justice system policies – as central targets in the imperative to disrupt the SPP. In doing so, however, the research has also encouraged a linear (school → prison), simplistic and deterministic understanding of the school-based criminalization of minoritized youth. Even so, the "pipeline" metaphor has

31. Compared to White students, African Americans are 3 times more likely to be suspended and 3.5 times more likely to be expelled while Latin@ students are 1.5 times more likely to be suspended and twice more likely to be expelled than White students (Croger & Hewitt, 2010).

32. Currently, Latin@s make up 53% of U.S. prison population and African Americans make up 37% of it (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2013).

gone almost completely unchallenged by SPP researchers and legal or education practitioners³³. As a result, SPP scholars and advocates of disrupting the SPP have risked ignoring – and thus not researching and addressing – criminalizing policies and social practices that do not originate solely within the school. Consequentially, practices and policies that do not result in students' deterministic interactions with the criminal justice system yet still crucially shape the school-based criminalization experiences of minoritized students and their families, have similarly gone under-researched within the SPP field.

It is also important to highlight that dominant SPP research has focused on the “Black-White dyad” (Portillos, Gonzalez, & Peguero, 2012) of school-based criminalization. As a result, the study of the criminalization experiences of African American male students has been prioritized (Morris, 2012) while the study of the school-based criminalization experiences of other minoritized students (e.g., female, Latin@s, Native Americans, LGBTQ students) have been marginalized (Gebhard, 2013; Meiners, 2011, 2006; Morris, 2012; Portillos, Gonzalez, & Peguero, 2012) and thus make up a very small percentage of the SPP research.

As a result of my interest in these characteristics of the SPP literature, in this thinking paper I review the nascent SPP research that moves beyond the dominant focus on school-based criminalization experiences of African American males and into that of the less researched experiences of Latin@ students and families. As I do so, I challenge the dominant “pipeline” metaphor and argue that SPP research on Latin@s shows the existence of an interconnected system of policies and social practices, in and out of schools, punitive and non-punitive in nature, which together work to criminalize Latin@ students and their families. I argue that, for this community, the intersection³⁴ (Crenshaw, 1991) and multiplicity³⁵ (Hames-Garcia, 2012) of oppressive immigration, mass incarceration and schooling systems, among other factors, shape the process and outcomes of Latin@s' criminalization (Campano et al., 2013; Scott & Saucedo, 2013; Timmons Flores, 2013).

Thus, as I broadly synthesize the literature, I argue for a reconceptualization of the “pipeline” metaphor in a way that views policies and social practices that criminalize Latin@ students and their families as part of an interconnected, interdependent system or web. Such an expansion of how we understand this term challenges, among other things, one of the current implications inherent in this “pipeline” metaphor; that the criminalization of youth flows unidirectionally from schools to prisons (Richardson & Judge, 2013), that it originates at the school and, subsequently, that disruption of such criminalization should be primarily focused on fixing punitive policies schools.

This framework shift would allow scholars and practitioners to better understand and address the “multiple pipelines” (Richardson & Judge, 2012) that intersect (Crenshaw, 1991) and mutually constitute each other (Hames-Garcia, 2012) to form a criminalization web or system. Thus, advocacy and research efforts built upon this framework would continue to disrupt criminalization in the education and criminal justice systems yet expand to address criminalization policies and social practices that fall outside the school-prison pipeline metaphor and are interconnected to those already identified in the SPP literature. For example, in the case of the criminalization of Latin@ youth and families, the deportation of Latin@ immigrant youth and/or their families would become part of the ongoing SPP research and advocacy efforts (Scott & Saucedo, 2013; Timmons Flores, 2013) in order to most effectively understand and address this population's school-based criminalization.

33. Richardson & Judge (2013), Scott & Saucedo (2013) and Morris (2012) are the only scholars I have found have suggested that the “pipeline” metaphor might not accurately explain the criminalization experiences of minoritized youth in schools. I explicate their critiques later in this paper.

34. Kimberly Crenshaw's (1991) “intersectionality” concept refers to the ways in which ascribed social categories (race, gender, sexuality, class, etc.) intersect in ways that shape people's experiences. Therefore, an intersectional approach to social inequity is essential to understanding the ways in which oppression is experienced as various minoritized identities intersect. In the case of the SPP experiences of Latin@s, I find that Crenshaw's intersectional approach to analysis critically allows us to see that oppressive systems (of immigration, incarceration, schooling, among others) intersect, and as they do, their intersection defines the criminalization experiences of Latin@s.

35. Michael Hames-García's (2011) concept of “multiplicity,” builds upon Crenshaw's “intersectionality” one, and argues that assigned identity categories (citizenship, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, etc.) not only intersect but also are interdependent and “necessarily constitute one another” (Campano et al., 2013, p.317). In the context of the SPP experiences of Latin@s, the concept of “multiplicity” allows us to see that systems of oppression not only intersect, as Crenshaw's intersectional analysis puts forth, but also are interdependent and mutually constitute one another (Campano et al., 2013), so that the criminalization experiences of Latin@s (a heterogeneous community) are shaped by their identities' multiplicity and by the multiplicity of the systems that criminalize them.

Overview

In order to address the question of how the criminalization of Latin@s in schools takes place, and also to construct the argument above, I first present a brief review of the “school-to-prison pipeline” literature³⁶ (e.g., Advancement Project, 2005, 2010; Bahena et al., 2012; Cregor, Hewitt, 2011; Kim, Wald, Losen, 2010; Losen, Hewitt, 2010; NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2005; Meiners, 2011, 2007; Richardson & Judge, 2012; Scott, Saucedo, 2012; Welch, Payne, 2011; Wald & Losen, 2003) as it has been framed over the past decade by the mass incarceration crisis (Alexander, 2010) and the prison-industrial-complex (Davis, 2003). In this section I highlight the main arguments made in the research about these students’ experiences and consider their implications for Latin@s.

Next, I review the nascent “school-to-prison pipeline” literature on Latin@s (Gonzales & Portillos, 2007). Peguero, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2009, 2008; Peguero & Shekarkhar, 2011; Portillos, Gonzalez, & Peguero, 2012; Rios, 2011, 2006; Scott & Saucedo, 2013; Sallo, 2011; Timmons Flores, 2013). Here, I pay attention to how scholars define “criminalization” of Latin@ youth and families and argue that this body of research shows the existence of a web of policy and social practices within, through and outside of schools that – influenced by criminality myths derived from current immigration policy in U.S – position Latin@ students and families as criminals.

Finally, in my last section and conclusion, I point to gaps and current directions in the literature in order to propose further research that a) more complexly theorizes the “pipeline” metaphor (Morris, 2012; Richardson & Judge, 2013; Scott & Saucedo, 2013); b) considers the nascent research on “crimmigration” from legal studies (Sen & Mamdou, 2008; Stumpf, 2006) and theorizes on its implications for the school-related experiences of Latin@ families; c) takes up critical race theory analysis frameworks, such as LatCrit (Fernández, 2002; Portillos, Gonzales, & Peguero, 2012; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002); and d) expands the research on the SPP to include the experiences of parents and families (Campano, Ghiso, Yee, & Pantoja, 2013; Cregor & Hewitt, 2011; Dyrness, 2011; Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2011; Jimenez-Castellanos, Gonzalez, 2012). I close by presenting the theoretical and advocacy implications of carrying out more complex studies so that we may best understand and address the equity issues for Latin@s within and beyond educational institutions in the United States.

The School-to-Prison Pipeline

This section provides a brief overview of dominant SPP research in order to contextualize the review of the SPP research as it relates to the experiences of Latin@s in U.S schools³⁷. Below, I first present the statistics that give shape to the pipeline and then present the key factors that the literature argues explain these SPP statistics and therefore prove the existence of the SPP.

Overall, SPP studies focus on the high correlation between a) the increasing rates of school suspension and school drop out of African American and Latin@ students in the United States and b) the rapidly growing incarceration rates of these populations in the US. According to recent data from US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, there has been a 50% increase in school suspensions and expulsions since 1970, making these the highest rates of punitive school incidents in U.S history (Croger & Hewitt, 2011). Compared to White students, today African Americans are three times more likely to be suspended and 3.5 times more likely to be expelled while Latin@s are 1.5 times more likely to be suspended and twice more likely to be expelled (Croger & Hewitt, 2010). Further, Latin@s currently make up around 35% of the prison population while African Americans make up about 37% of it (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2013).

36. This conceptual piece is intended to present a broad picture and synthesis of the topics addressed in the SPP literature and is not intended to be comprehensive. The literature reviewed in this paper was found in peer-reviewed publications and was gathered through online searches using the following terms: school to prison pipeline; Latino; immigrants; immigration; race; zero tolerance policy; criminalization; behavior problems; child behavior; young children; violence; prison; education; deviance; penalty; discipline; gender; high school; school; educational environment; educational legislation; mothers; parent attitudes; Latino parents; Hispanic Americans; student behavior; family school relationship; minority group children. Databases used for the review include: EBSCO MEGAFILE (Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson), Education Index Retrospective: 1929-1983 (H.W. Wilson), ERIC), Google Scholar, ISI Web of Knowledge, Franklin – Penn Library Catalog, Amazon; and JSTOR.

37. For concise comprehensive SPP reviews see Richardson & Judge, 2013, Advancement Project 2010, 2005 and Croger & Hewitt, 2010, among others.

Across SPP research, these alarming statistics are shown to correlate and used to demonstrate that disproportionate punishments in schools for minoritized populations result in disproportionate incarceration for these very populations (e.g., Advancement Project, 2005, 2010; Bahena et al., 2012; Cregor & Hewitt, 2011; Kim, Wald, Losen, 2010; Losen & Hewitt, 2010; NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2005; Wald & Losen, 2003; Welch & Payne, 2011).

Factors Contributing to the SPP

Disproportionate and Discriminatory Punitive School Policies

Central SPP studies demonstrate that discriminatory and disproportionate punitive school policies overwhelmingly criminalize minoritized youth in U.S. public schools. A representative SPP study is Skiba et al. (2011) research where, using disciplinary data collected from four hundred elementary schools in the United States, the authors showed that African American and Latin@ students were punished in schools at much higher rates than their White counterparts. Specifically, the study revealed that, while Latin@ and African American students tended to be suspended for what Skiba et al. called “subjective” reasons, such as “disrespect,” White students were punished for “objective” reasons, such as “smoking” (Croger & Hewitt, 2011, p. 5). In an earlier (2000) paper, Skiba concluded that none of the SPP studies “provide any evidence that racial discrepancies in school punishment can be accounted for by disproportionate rates of misbehavior” (as cited in Richardson & Judge, 2013). This is an important claim consistent across SPP literature, and one further strengthened in a study by Welch and Payne (2011), which concluded that school exclusionary discipline policies were harsher in schools where African American students made up the majority of the student body. The authors claim that the “race threat hypothesis” is correct: the racial composition of a school directly shapes which kind of disciplinary policies are enacted there, so that schools with a minority-majority population enact more “zero tolerance” disciplinary policies in response to a perceived “race threat” irrespective of actual student behavior.

A Criminal Justice System that Reflects Jim Crow Legacies

The “race threat hypothesis” that Welch and Payne (2011) prove in their central SPP study aligns with Michelle Alexander’s (2010) argument that the racial caste in the U.S. did not end but remains alive today in a redesigned manner. This, she explains, means the racism that sustained Jim Crow laws in the U.S prior to the Civil Rights movement today shape a criminal justice system that disproportionately incarcerates African American women and men, criminalizing their behavior in a manner wholly inconsistent with how the White population’s behavior is policed and punished.

As can be seen by the conclusions of the studies above, SPP research is grounded on the correlation between high rates of school punishment of African American students and high incarceration rates of these very youth. Thus, the clarity of “the problem” as visualized through the “school-to-prison pipeline” metaphor provides a concrete site of research and advocacy (i.e., disciplinary policies in schools as they connect to the criminal justice system) and heightens the urgency of disrupting this link. This solid framework has a great merit; it has been very useful in evidencing injustice and mobilizing educators, families and advocacy groups towards de-criminalizing minoritized youth and communities.

Approaches to Disrupting the SPP

While many SPP studies do indicate that the factors constructing the pipeline – Jim Crow legacies, “zero tolerance” policies and high stakes testing³⁸, for example – do not all (or completely) originate within schools

38. Dominant SPP research has not, as a whole, identified high stakes testing as a central factor in the SPP. However, a recent report (2010) by the Advancement Project (*Test, Punish, and Push Out: How “Zero Tolerance” and High-Stakes Testing Funnel Youth into the School-to-Prison Pipeline*) centers this issue as a school-based non-punitive policy that criminalizes minoritized students. Because I could not find other studies that followed up this report and due to time and scope limitations, I did not include a dedicated section in this part of the paper on high-stakes testing. However, a review of studies that center high-stakes testing policies and practices in the conceptualization of the SPP would greatly contribute to the process of reframing the SPP.

(e.g., Advancement Project, 2010; Alexander, 2010), as a whole SPP studies largely support a faulty assumption: that the relationship between point A in the pipeline, “the school”, and point B in the pipeline, “the prison”, is unidirectional (school leading to prison). For example, recent SPP publications, such as Kim, Losen and Hewitt’s (2010) *Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Structuring Legal Reform* and Bahena et al.’s (2012) *Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline*, primarily focus on researching and fixing school policies and therefore disrupting the pipeline where the metaphor suggests it begins. These scholars and practitioners propose, for example, curbing zero tolerance policies and implementing “restorative justice” or “positive behavior support” practices within schools in order to weaken the relationship between schools and prisons (Bahena et al, 2012; Kim, Losen, Hewitt, 2010), in a process that begins at the school.

Though solutions like these have proven to be successful programs for decreasing punitive incidents and punishment in schools (e.g., Mirsky, 2003), minoritized youth criminalization continues to take place in schools via criminalizing policies and practices that are not necessarily disciplinary in nature and/or born solely within schools. Thus, conceptualizing schools as “point A” and as the central target for action limits the SPP discussion and advocacy to particular policies within specific sites and hinders larger possibilities for sustained change.

The Need to Rethink the “Pipeline” Metaphor

As an educator and researcher, one of my concerns with this “pipeline”-driven school-centered research and advocacy approach lies in how it impacts education policy. Overwhelmingly, schools and educators are seen as the “point A” of larger societal inequities, such as issues of access to higher education, health or economic disparities, and other social inequities, which have complex, society-wide origins. Therefore, citing public schools as “point A” in the pipeline can be used by public school critics to raise support for the privatization of education (i.e. increase creation of charter schools), as well as for mandating militarization and high standardized testing regimes. All of these “solutions” get implemented for the sake of addressing the supposed “point A” of numerous societal ailments. A second crucial concern – one which gets my focus on the experiences of Latin@ children and families – is that in embracing a point A → point B approach, the research and policy discourse ignores the web of systems which support and contribute to the relationship between schools and incarceration. Even systems widely recognized as broken and as contributing to educational equality, such as U.S immigration policy, are neither objects of study nor targets for reform within SPP research.

SPP Factors as Interconnected

Noting this very issues, Richardson and Judge (2013) thoughtfully caution SPP scholars and practitioners to consider the “causal connections”, the “magnitude and directions,” as well as the “theoretical and methodological consequences” (p. 1) of framing this criminalization phenomenon using the “pipeline” metaphor. At the heart of their complex argument is the following multi-tiered claim: The common trend in the SPP literature of contrasting student behaviors and positioning “racial disparities as the predictable outcome” (p.4) of such behaviors risks conceiving of these factors as individually independent when, in actuality, all behaviors and events “are embedded, or indebted, to others, and are so across different times and locations” (p.4) while also not always, necessarily or purposefully intending to work together. Thus, in SPP studies, while the interconnectedness of factors (students’ race, school policies, gender, etc.) are acknowledged in the literature as causing the SPP, their intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and multiplicity (Hames-Garcia, 2011) tends to be “blurred or only verbally acknowledged” (Richardson & Judge, 2013, p. 4) and single factors with “significant” statistical relationships are the only ones studied. Thus, Richardson & Judge’s assertively propose that, instead, SPP factors get understood and studied as interdependent ones that behave in relation to each other. This would imply viewing the currently recognized SPP outcome – incarceration – as an outcome of these intersecting relationships and the “pipeline” as an interconnected system.

Richardson’s and Judge’s (2013) argument stands out in the larger SPP literature as confronting the prevailing assumption that the relationship between schools and incarceration is unidirectional, deterministic and experienced by Latin@s and other minoritized groups in ways similar to that of African American students.

I here take up their critique and build upon it by suggesting that Hames-Garcia's (2011) and Crenshaw's (1991) intersectional and multiplicity frameworks be utilized in researching the roles of additional institutions, systems and student/community populations not yet considered in the dominant "pipeline"-anchored SPP research.

The Need to Understand the SPP Beyond White-Black Experiences

As mentioned earlier, mainstream SPP research has historically focused on the school-based criminalization experiences of African American males in relation to those of White males (Portillos, Gonzalez, & Peguero, 2012). There are, however, a small number of scholars who have begun to expand SPP research in ways that reflect the need to consider other SPP factors outside of punitive school policies, a discriminatory criminal justice system and the experiences of African American males. For example, Morris (2012), who is interested in the SPP experience of Black girls, calls for SPP researchers to go beyond studying the SPP in the context of African American males and apply "rigorous intersectional [Crenshaw, 1991] and comparative analysis" (p.3) that questions the epistemological assumptions of dominant SPP research and works to develop "culturally competent, gender-responsive policies" that may more effectively disrupt the pipeline (p.3). Similarly, Meiners (2011, 2006) encourages researchers and practitioners to study the SPP experiences of LGBTQ students, particularly through feminist theoretical frameworks. Similarly, Gebhard (2013) points out the absence of the study of "aboriginal youth's" experiences in the SPP literature. Relatedly, Morín (2009), writing about Latin@s and incarceration, highlights that we must pay attention to the role that "myths [that link] criminality to immigration status" (Oboler, 2009, p. 2) play in the experiences of this population.

Finally, Timmons Flores (2013) and Scott and Saucedo (2013) argue that SPP researchers must study the role that deportation, (and its related incarceration), play within the SPP experiences of Latin@s and immigrant communities, in general. Along with other scholars researching families and incarceration (Gadsden & Genty, in press), Timmons Flores (2013) argues that SPP research and advocacy must expand to include the criminalization experiences of parents and families. As a whole, I believe the arguments of these non-mainstream SPP scholars provide a strong rationale for examining the uses and limitations of the current "pipeline" metaphor, and further expanding the SPP focus beyond experiences of African American male students, so that school-based criminalization may be more complexly understood and most effectively addressed.

SPP Research on Latin@ Youth

In this section, I review the nascent SPP research on the experiences of Latin@ youth. The concept of "criminalization" is one consistently present across this non-mainstream SPP research branch. Thus, in this section I position this term as central to demonstrating how the SPP literature on Latin@ experiences – albeit not quite questioning the direction, causality and advocacy implications of the "pipeline" metaphor – portrays school-based criminalization as an interconnected system (Richardson & Judge, 2013) or web of policies and practices that together criminalize Latin@ youth and families. Thus, the research described below does not fully anchor itself on a "pipeline" metaphor. Further, it contains studies which have made a concerted effort to portray Latin@s and Latin@ immigrants as a heterogeneous groups whose criminalization experiences must be studied through theoretical frameworks that account for this characteristic, such as Critical Race Theory's "LatCrit" (Portillos, Gonzales, & Peguero, 2012). In terms of organization, I begin this section by describing how two central studies conceptualize "criminalization" in ways that resemble a web metaphor.

From there, I briefly discuss the key roles that schools, immigration and families play in the criminalization web that this literature identifies³⁹.

Conceptualizing "Criminalization"

39. Due to time and space limitations, this section does not include all SPP studies that address the criminalization experiences of Latin@ youth. Instead, I focus on a small number of representative studies that portray larger trends in the literature as they relate to a) identifying specific points in a web of criminalization, and b) to applying non-mainstream theoretical frameworks, such as LatCrit, as analytical tools. Further, the particular points in the web on which I focus (schools, immigration and families) are a few from a larger number of the factors and actors (not all reviewed here) that are criminalization players.

Based on his ethnographic study on the criminalization of Black and Latino boys in California, sociologist and ethnic studies scholar, Victor Rios, defines “criminalization” as “the [systematic] process by which styles and behaviors are rendered deviant and are treated with shame, exclusion, punishment, and incarceration” by a “youth control complex” – i.e. “schools, police, probation officers, families, community centers, the media, businesses, and other institutions” (Rios, 2011, p. XIV). This framework speaks to Richardson’s and Judge’s (2013) proposal to re-conceptualize SPP as a system of interconnected factors, Rios (2011) theorizes school-based discrimination in a way that usefully avoids the unidirectional and essentializing implications of a “pipeline” metaphor. His proposal of a “complex” allows one to see the interconnectedness of various criminalizing institutions (Richardson & Judge, 2013) and factors, along with their “intersectionality” (Crenshaw, 1991) and “multiplicity” (Hames-Garcia, 2011). Furthermore, by suggesting a “complex”, Rios shifts the origin (point A in the SPP concept) of criminalization away from schools and towards a system. As a result, we are forced to notice that there are interactions between institutions and actors, which together position students as criminals. Further, in a “complex” metaphor, imprisonment (point B in the “pipeline” metaphor) is one, out of various, possible outcomes.

Similarly to Rios’ (2011) “complex,” in their study on how “Chicanas/os and school officials perceive and experience ... [punitive] techniques as part of a broader process of criminalization” (p. 172), Portillos, Gonzalez and Peguero (2012), do not take up a “pipeline” metaphor. Instead, they build upon Engel and Silver’s (2001) definition of criminalization as “unfair punishment in a specific setting” (p. 173) and further conceptualize this phenomenon as “a broad process where multiple criminal justice policies and agencies are used to disproportionately process Latina/o youth through the criminal justice system” (p. 173, emphasis mine). Though their definition does not provide a clear web-like visual, such as a “complex” (Rios, 2011) or system (Richardson & Judge, 2013), the description of a “broad process” with “multiple” actors, stands in sharp contrast to a “school-to-prison pipeline” metaphor, which clearly identifies two specific actors in the narrow criminalization process that this pipeline creates. Further, “broadness and multiplicity of actors” connotes that criminalization takes places across more sites than just “the school”, that there is an interaction between multiple “policies and agencies” and that there are more outcomes than becoming part of the criminal justice system. As these two representative studies show, the “pipeline” metaphor has been far less utilized and centered in research pertaining to the criminalization experiences of Latin@s in schools.

The Role of Schools in Criminalization Web

As I mentioned in the introduction to this section, SPP studies that focus on Latin@s’ experiences of school-based criminalization identify specific actors in the criminalization system, “complex” or “broad process” in schools. In this subsection, I present three arguments⁴⁰ on the role that schools play in the criminalization system that SPP researchers on Latin@s’ experiences put forth, and which portray the school as one of many players in the criminalization process. It is imperative to note that each of these arguments about the criminalization roles of schools are equally about the role of the Jim Crow legacies of the U.S. criminal justice system and about the Eurocentric ideologies in U.S. society as they are about their manifestations within schools.

Criminalization in schools leads to multiple outcomes. A key finding that Rios (2011) discusses in his study, one which speaks specifically about the “outcome” of the criminalization “complex” of Black and Brown bodies in schools – is that criminalization can also lead youth to develop a critical consciousness which allows them to see the dynamics of this criminalization complex and denounce the oppression they endure. Students might still end up dropping out, as Fine (1991) argues in *Framing Dropouts: Notes on the politics of an urban public school*. Yet, as she points out, and as Rios likely believes, their leaving school is often a choice made as a result of developing this critical consciousness and recognizing the institutional racism that criminalizes them within and beyond school. What Rios and Fine propose here are important points to consider; they allow us to

40. These are not the only three arguments that this literature presents on the role of schools in the criminalization experiences of Latin@ youth. However, due to space and time limitations, I present these three as representative of larger trends. There likely are other studies, which highlight additional contributions by schools to the criminalization of this community.

conceive of student agency and to also recognize that critical consciousness development – as a result of school disciplinary policies shaped by a racist criminal justice system – does not always guarantee, or imply, a different outcome than incarceration. It does, however, imply different dynamics and causations to incarceration within the criminalization web of policies and practices that shape school environments.

Similarly to how Rios' introduces agency and critical consciousness as a possible outcome of schools' punitive policies, Portillos, Gonzales and Peguero (2012), use their findings to argue that criminalization is "one possible outcome of school security measures" (p. 172) and not the sole one, since in some instances their study's Chicano/a students did find that punitive school policies "provide[d] [Chicano/a students with] a sense of security" (p.172). Thus, though their overall findings do support the claim that punitive school policies turn schools into "racialized spaces" – which the authors define as criminalizing places (resulting from discriminatory school security measures and Eurocentric ideologies) that disproportionately punish and devalue the language and culture of racial and ethnic minorities – the authors also emphasize that these spaces are not experienced by all students as criminalizing. Portillos, Gonzales and Peguero (2012) present a complex argument which I believe results from their choice to move beyond the "pipeline" metaphor, as well as to center Critical Race Theory's Lat Crit⁴¹ as a central analytical framework. Their claims, along with Rios' (2011), provide a more complicated understanding of the role that schools play in the process of criminalization of Latin@s while still proving that inequity and injustice are prevalent in schools and have serious racialized consequences.

Schools reflect societal discriminatory practices. Grounding themselves in a LatCrit analysis framework, Portillos, Gonzales and Peguero (2012) explain that the school-based criminalization of Latin@ students takes place through the Eurocentric socialization that students experience in U.S. public schools, so that they are taught to accept their inferiority as students belonging to a culture with social practices, behaviors, knowledge, experiences, languages and cultures that do not match those privileged in schools (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Thus, central cultural practices such as speaking Spanish or hanging out in large groups with friends, for example, are deemed punishable in schools via "zero tolerance" policies and/or via the social and pedagogical practices of educators and administrators. As mentioned before, though these oppressive practices are reproduced within schools (Bourdieu, 1973) and thus shape the role that schools have in the process of criminalization, they do not solely originate in schools.

Therefore, though Portillos, Gonzales and Peguero (2012) describe these criminalization features as delivered within schools, they are careful to bring it a LatCrit framework to explain that the origin of criminalization are the Eurocentric and nativist ideologies that enter the schools and get reproduced there (Bourdieu, 1973). I would say that these ideologies result from the mutual constitution (Hames-Garcia, 2011) and intersection (Crenshaw, 1999) of various systems of oppression and that, together, they reshape each other and inform educational norms and expectations.

The Experiences of Families in the Criminalization Web

The relationships between the criminalization of students and the criminalization of their parents. An under-researched aspect of SPP in relation to Latin@s experiences is that which considers the role that the school-based criminalization of students has on their families. In his 2011 ethnography, Rios briefly discusses the concept of "courtesy stigma" (p.83), which he borrows from Goffman (1967), to describe the "countless descriptions [by school police officers and administrators] of parents as "deviants" by virtue of being related to the stigmatized, i.e. criminalized, youth (Rios, 2011, p.87). Unfortunately, beyond Rios' brief exploration, there is a crucial dearth of SPP literature that looks into this part of the criminalization web.

When considering how the criminalization of Latin@ parents affects their children, Campano et al. (2013)

41. Critical Race Theory (CRT) seeks to theorize race and racism as it intersects (Crenshaw, 1991) politically, structurally and representationally with other forms of oppression (sexism, classism, etc.), as well as to challenge mainstream ideologies and dominant Eurocentric epistemologies such as fairness, colorblindness, objectivity, truth and meritocracy (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004). One of the branches of CRT is LatCrit Theory, which layers CRT's intersectionality framing further by analyzing the heterogeneous positionalities, identities and racialized experiences of Latin@s in relation to language, culture, accent, gender, immigration status, migration, ethnicity and religion/spirituality, for example. Thus, when applied to analyzing the SPP as it relates to Latin@ families and children, LatCrit powerfully enriches the current analysis on the causes and consequences of school-based criminalization by bringing in these complex intersectionality layers and yielding a more nuanced understanding of it.

and Jimenez-Castellanos and Gonzales (2012) contribute important arguments. Campano et al. (2013) highlight the ways in which truancy policies in schools are disconnected from the realities of immigrant families, so that the bureaucratic and punishing truancy policies ignore the language, literacy, cultural and documentation practices that non-mainstream, non-white families engage in on a daily basis. In doing so, truancy policies position parents as criminals by making assumptions about their behaviors, intentions and abilities that are not culturally nor linguistically knowledgeable, and which assume ease of interaction with mainstream language and literacy practices, as well as with bureaucracy, schools, criminal justice and immigration systems, that is not present.

Thus, I believe this argument demonstrates that parents and students experience criminalization in interconnected, interdependent ways, so that the criminalization of one affects and defines the criminalization of the other. Hence, challenging this harsh treatment also requires intergenerational coalitional work. In their paper, Campano et al. (2013) emphasize the coalitional work that minoritized parents do engage in to help each other, and each other's children, move through the criminalization they face in schools, and in society as a whole. Regrettably, there is a lack of similar further research, contextualized in the SPP, which takes up this kind of resource-approach to how families and their children work experience criminalization and work, in coalition with each other, to challenge the criminalization they face in and beyond schools.

The School-based criminalization of families and students is defined by nativist ideologies that originate outside of this site. Timmons Flores (2013) and Scott and Saucedo (2013) also view the criminalization experiences of students as related to their parents', as well as fully influenced by nativist immigration ideology. For example, these authors argue that the myths of "immigrants as criminals"⁴² (Portillos, Gonzales, & Peguero, 2012; Scott, Saucedo, 2013) and prevailing stigmas such as "all Latin@s are undocumented" (Timmons Flores, 2013) have "made their way into schools and consequently exarcerbat[ed] the marginalization of an already vulnerable youth population: the children of immigrants" (Peguero, 2013).

Similarly to how Campano et al. (2013), Timmons Flores (2013) and (Peguero, 2013) argue that the criminalization experiences of students are tied to that of their parents and vice-versa, as well as to nativist ideologies, Jimenez-Castellanos and Gonzales (2012) have explored the effect that micro-aggressions on undocumented Latino fathers have on their levels of parental engagement (which connect to how their children are criminalized in schools). These authors' argument is simple: parents encounter severe micro-aggressions – related, among others, to their race, gender and immigrant status – which exclude them from the school community and which result in parents' signaling to the school that they do not value their children's education. One example of this process is Latin@ students' missing class because their parents fear immigration raids at schools, which is a fear that results from micro-aggressions targeting the parents' and families' immigrant status.

Like Campano et al. (2013), Jimenez-Castellanos and Gonzalez (2012) bring the concept of "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) to frame the parents' resilience in the face of this criminalization through a resource-orientation lens. This is an analytical choice that I believe should be taken up in further SPP studies, in order to ensure that the criminalization experiences of Latin@s are not understood in simplistic, deterministic or deficit-oriented ways. Similarly, both of these articles seek to understand the criminalization effects of parents in relation to their children and vice versa, as well as to document the role that Eurocentric policies and ideologies in our society at large play within and beyond criminalization processes in and beyond schools, which I believe must also play a larger role in the SPP literature to come.

Finally, the immigration-based framing present across the literature I discussed in this section demonstrates that immigration policies and nativist ideologies, as they intersect with the criminal justice system⁴³

42. Relatedly, in a study focused on the role that generational immigration status and gender play on Latin@ students' criminalization in schools, Peguero and Shekarkhar (2011) found that second and third generation students are punished the most in schools and that Latinas have higher drop out rates than Latinos, a phenomenon which urgently requires further study. I have not included a longer review of this study within this section on immigrant families due to space and time limitations. Nonetheless, I want to emphasize that this study challenges the "all immigrants are criminals" myth since it argues that second and third generation youth have higher rates of misbehavior (though their rates of punishment are still discriminatory and disproportionate in relation to their actual rates of misbehavior), so recent immigrants do not misbehave at higher rates than U.S born students.

43. Legal studies scholar Juliet Stumpf (2006) has been researching the collaboration between the criminal justice and immigration systems and calling this scholarship's subject "criminalization." Her research helps one see how the education, criminal justice and immigration systems conspire to create a "school to deportation pipeline" (Timmons Flores, 2013), which identifies deportation (and its related incarceration) as a possible outcome of immigrant Latin@ youth and families criminalization in schools.

and education systems, are additional actors – not currently acknowledged in the dominant SPP research – in an interconnected, mutually constituting, system of practices and policies working together to construct and sustain the criminalization of Latin@s in schools.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have sought to review the SPP research, particularly the nascent SPP research that focuses on the criminalization experiences of Latin@ youth and families, in order to argue for the need to re-conceptualize the current “pipeline” metaphor that anchors dominant SPP studies. I have also sought to reframe SPP studies through intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and mutual constitution frameworks (Hames-Garcia, 2012). My argument’s intention is that we may then view the multiple policies and social practices that together criminalize Latin@ students and their families as an *interconnected, mutually constituted and together forming an interdependent system or web* with factors and actors beyond the currently recognized education and criminal justice systems.

My hope is that this expansion and shift in how the criminalization of minoritized students is conceptualized would allow scholars and practitioners to gain a more nuanced, culturally responsive, and comparative understanding of the criminalization process as it manifests within and beyond schools and across communities. And, as a result, that advocacy and research efforts to disrupt the SPP would also target institutional policies and social practices that work together to powerfully impact school-based criminalization of minoritized students and yet remain largely ignored in the SPP literature.

As I sought to demonstrate in this paper, this re-conceptualization of school-based criminalization as a web more accurately illustrates Latin@s’ experiences of criminalization than the dominant “pipeline” metaphor does. Current SPP research on Latin@s shows that some of these currently overlooked actors include nativist immigration policies and related ideologies that sustain criminalizing myths about Latin@s, as well as discriminatory Eurocentric pedagogical and social, linguistic and literacy practices within schools that encourage minoritized students to commit symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1973) on themselves (self-criminalize while believing it makes sense to do so). Indeed, the SPP criminalization of Latin@s we see is a result of injustices within the criminal justice and education systems but we must not limit our research and advocacy to these sites.

Finally, I also hope that this paper encourages researchers and practitioners to apply intersectional analysis frameworks, such as Critical Race Theory, concerned with understanding oppression in intersectional, non-essentializing and deterministic ways. As scholars whose work I reviewed here already urged us to do, we must pay careful attention to how all minoritized communities (families and children, male, female, transgender and gender non-conforming) experience criminalization within and beyond schools. Comparative and intersectional SPP research would benefit all criminalized and mainstream communities equally.

Researchers and practitioners committed to truly effective, culturally responsive and sustainable equity in schools must build on the incredibly useful groundwork of mainstream SPP scholars who constructed the pipeline metaphor and now reframe how we understand and attempt to disrupt criminalization in, and beyond, schools, in a way that most complexly and accurately illustrates what is going on in our communities. I hope this paper, which reflects a beginning and imperfect thinking-through SPP research on Latin@s, is a useful step for others in this process.

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FEATURED ARTICLES

Undocumented and Under Surveillance: A Case Study of an Undocumented Latina with a Disability in Juvenile Justice

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Abstract

Using data collected from a larger qualitative study that explored the educational trajectories of young women of color with disabilities through the School to Prison Pipeline, this empirical case study focuses on how one student's undocumented status impacted her education in juvenile justice. Research has begun to provide us with statistics about the Pipeline; however, there is still very little known about the actual experiences of students. Using a combination of interviews, observations, and document analysis, I collaborated with an undocumented Latina labeled with an emotional disability to share how her intersectional identities impacted her experiences in juvenile justice.

Introduction

Veronica and I were discussing her first days at a maximum-security juvenile incarceration setting for girls when she told me she was undocumented. Veronica was a part of the growing Latin@ population in the School to Prison Pipeline (the Pipeline). The Pipeline disproportionately impacted students of color through excessive discipline and increased police in schools (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010). It is clear that the problematic interactions between education and other social service agencies as well as neoliberal immigration policies directly feed the Pipeline, which is part of the trend towards mass incarceration (Alexander, 2010; Díaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007). These interactions and policies must be examined and dismantled in order to construct undocumented students not as criminals, but as citizens with significant aspirations that contribute to society and limit their entrance into the Pipeline. This article focused on education experiences of an undocumented student inside juvenile incarceration, as it provided an understanding of what occurs once she entered the Pipeline (Kim et al., 2010).

Students of color experience the process of being simultaneously raced and criminalized in education (Rabaka, 2010). Connections between race, education and crime have been essential to understanding how children of color become incarcerated at higher rates than whites. However, there are other points of social location that made it more likely that students were relegated to juvenile detention. Pipeline literature often left special education unexamined (Kim et al., 2010). However, an average of 33-37% of students in juvenile systems have been identified with a disability⁴⁴, whereas public schools have a national average of 12-14% of students labeled with disabilities (National Education Association, 2007; Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, & Poirier, 2005). Moreover, particular types of disabilities are correlated with being incarcerated; students with an emotional disability designation comprised almost 50% of students with disabilities in juvenile incarceration but less than 1% of public schools (Osher, Woodruff, & Simms, 2002). In this article, I explored how Veronica's education was impacted by her intersectional identities, including race, disability, gender and undocumented status.

Undocumented and Identity Construction in Schools

In 2011, it was estimated that there were 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. and about one million of those were under the age of 18 (Passel & Cohn, 2012). The construction of an undocumented

44. Due to overrepresentation of students from non-dominant communities in judgment categories in special education, I say "labeled with a disability" in order to trouble the medical model of disability as a biological condition. As Harry and Klingner (2006) note, "many have questioned the accuracy of the professional judgments made in diagnosing" these disabilities.

status by the state negatively impacted the lives of the unauthorized immigrant population by questioning their legitimacy, affecting their safety and producing feelings of shame (Abrego, 2008). Basic statistics on students who are incarcerated and undocumented are scarce and literature that captured incarcerated education experiences of undocumented students was almost non-existent (Díaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007). Much of the literature on undocumented students' education focused on public school experiences and higher education access, experiences (Abrego, 2006; Pérez & Rodríguez, 2011).

Though not directly related to juvenile detention, this literature provided insights about unauthorized students' education and the construction of their identity in schools. Unauthorized students who had access to institutional agents, such as teachers and counselors, through "positive" tracking had better chances of achieving educational success than students who felt disconnected from school and its agents (Díaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007; Gonzales, 2010; Pérez & Rodríguez, 2011). Undocumented high achievers spoke of aspirations that allowed them to re-define their citizenship and discussed belonging neither to their home country or the U.S.; this social exclusion resulted in exhaustion (Torres & Wicks-Asburn, 2013). College-going literacies, the learned participation of accessing higher education, were inequitably taught to undocumented students and they had less access to these literacies than peers with citizenship documentation (Gildersleeve & Romero, 2010). Understanding undocumented status not as a demographic descriptor, but a tool in which students can learn about their potential educational outcomes, provided a nuanced understanding of children's education experiences (Gildersleeve, 2009). Every aspect of undocumented students' lives was impacted by neoliberal immigration policies (Díaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007). Those disconnected from school and its agents were constructed as not only undocumented but also problematic in achievement, limiting access even further to college-going literacies and their opportunity to re-define their citizenship, while increasing their social exhaustion.

Conceptual Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and its branches, FemCrit, LatCrit and DisCrit, enabled an intersectional analysis that rendered visible how Veronica was positioned and educated in the Pipeline (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Montoya, 1994). CRT exposed how "neutral" policies and pedagogy reinforced normative standards of white, male and able-bodied; marking those that differ from norms as biological deficits, medical conditions of bodies and minds (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ferri & Connor, 2009; Watts & Erevles, 2004). In other words, CRT recognized the social construction of race, gender, and disability as society's response to differences from the norm and the material impacts of those constructed identities. Issues viewed uni-dimensionally, (e.g., *only* race or gender) limited the understanding of how multiple subordinated identities interacted (Crenshaw, 1991; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). CRT troubled singular notions of identity and deeply analyzed the intersections of race, ability, and gender (Garland-Thompson, 2003; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Finally, CRT demanded a focus on counter-narratives contrasted by the master narrative (Matsuda, 1987).

For example, the master narrative highlights how young women of color are more dangerous than their white counterparts and more deserving of incarceration (Chesney-Lind & Jones, 2010). Though there is little evidence for this claim, dominant discourse highlighted the rise of the "bad girl," a modern girl who is more violent than in the past (Chesney-Lind, 2010). An analytical approach that emphasizes intersectionality and counter-narratives provided an opportunity to view Veronica not as inherently bad or violent, but as a thoughtful young woman maneuvering dangerous situations. This approach allowed me to center Veronica's voice, as a historically marginalized person, in order to understand not only ways hegemony is enacted, but also ways an undocumented student resisted institutional racism, sexism and ableism.

Methodological Pluralism

This case study is part of a larger empirical study, in which I collaborated with 10 young women of color with disabilities to map their trajectories through the Pipeline. The research site is a maximum-security center (e.g., chain link fences, barbed wire, security guards, intercom system, locked doors). At the time of the study, 26

of the 40 girls were females of color and 19 had a disability label (principal interview, 2012). Because of the doubly sensitive nature of this case (under 18 and incarcerated), specific details about Veronica were not provided.

Critical phenomenology attended to two interdependent strands of social life: “the conditions of structural inequality and structural violence that shape...position and status” and impacts on “individual and collective experiences” (Willen, 2007, p. 13). Methodological pluralism is, a “strategy of data collection and analysis to document how change and discontinuity, braided with a desire for narrative coherence and consistency, shape the stories young people tell about themselves, over time and space” (Katsiaficas, Futch, Fine, & Seluck, 2011, p. 120). Accordingly, this case study included: in-depth phenomenological interviews with Veronica (5), classroom observations (12), document analysis of school records (4) and data analysis by the participants. The research question was: How did Veronica’s undocumented status impact her education and experiences in juvenile justice?

To answer the research question, I sifted data throughout the collection process and included participant analysis whenever possible (Erikson, 1996). In mining the data, the girls made connections I had not. Data construction was top down from the literature and bottom up from the data. I looked for patterns and disconfirmed evidence, generated conceptual categories, developed a code thesaurus and frequency counts (Erikson, 1998). I refined my codes by continually returning to the data, settled on final codes and used them to systematically explore the data for atypicality (Glaser & Straus, 1967). I then crafted vignettes representative of the common experiences in different points of the Pipeline as well as outliers that represented each girl’s individual experiences. Veronica’s story emerged from these outliers as someone undocumented in detention. I then re-coded her interviews as single case study (Yin, 2009).

I faced a precarious position researching undocumented status in the Pipeline. I did not want to share Veronica’s undocumented status but wanted determine how it was being addressed. Veronica told me that all the staff knew, including her teachers. However, the principal and teachers claimed there were no undocumented students. School personnel could have known but did not want to expose the legal status of their students. However, this reveals a complex situation for researchers. How do we recognize the dangerous situations our students face and get them support without exposing them to harsh penalties (Paris & Winn, 2013)? It is clear that part of the answer is linking undocumented students’ education experiences to neoliberal immigration policies (Díaz -Strong & Meiners, 2007).

Findings

The case study uncovered two major findings: 1.) Often in juvenile incarceration, Veronica’s behavior was interpreted without consideration of the sociocultural context of her life 2.) Efforts to regulate and control Veronica’s body and thoughts were not met with passive acceptance or impulsive resistance. Instead, they exemplified Veronica’s thoughtful and complex negotiation of how to respond to efforts to surveil and control.

Undocumented and under surveillance

Over the course of several interviews Veronica told me how her undocumented status was discovered, addressed and how that impacted her experiences in juvenile incarceration.

SAA: How did they figure out your immigration status?

Veronica: They did because I got arrested by the (Western City) Police...they took my fingerprints and they ask me if I have a security number and I was like no. And then they’re like, you’re Mexican, huh? And I was like, yeah. And they’re like well you’re undocumented right? And I was like yeah. And then they filed it and everything.

This was the first concerning part of Veronica’s story; the police questioned a juvenile with a disability without a lawyer or even an adult present to advise her. Veronica revealed her undocumented status without fully understanding the potential consequences. The ramifications were long lasting. She explained what she faced

after incarceration.

SAA: What do you want to do after school?

Veronica: I don't know. I have this like immigration thing coming up. So before I parole, they come, well somebody has to call them, ya know? And then they'll come....then I have to go like get detained but we're fighting, because there's more chances they'll send me out of the country.

SAA: So they're threatening to call?

Veronica: No, they're not threatening. They just have to call. So then they make the decision if they want to come or not. They got 24 hours to pick me up. But for that time, I have to have like a packet so like show them that I did good and that I need one more chance, you know?

It was difficult for Veronica to imagine a life after incarceration. Uncertainty about her future was compounded by potential deportation.

SAA: Do you know how old you were when you came over?

Veronica: Yeah, I was 7.

SAA: And do you remember what it was like?

Veronica: Well we came here with our passports and stuff, our visas and stuff. So we came here legal and then I don't know, we only had it for like 2010 or 2011. Then we lost it because we never went back and like, go through the same process again. We were leaving there, my dad had a business and it was too dangerous to go back. So we just didn't go.

SAA: So you said your mom and your stepdad are in the process of trying to get their stuff?

Veronica: Yeah.

SAA: So is part of the stress around that is like, even if you get sent back, would they go back too?

Veronica: No, they wouldn't go back. My family would stay here.

SAA: So you'd have to go live with relatives or something?

Veronica: Well that's the problem; I don't have no one in Mexico.

Veronica was fearful of being sent back to a country she had not lived since she was seven.

In 2010, over nine million people belonged to a mixed status family, where some family members have documents that authorized them to be in the country while others do not (Taylor, Hugo Lopez, Passel & Motel, 2011). Veronica identified this mixed status as a major stressor because she faced deportation without any family or friends to return to in Mexico. She faced losing access to her family and the country she had known since she was seven. I asked her who she talked to about this in juvenile incarceration,

SAA: Have you talked about your immigration status with (your therapist)? Does she know for sure?

Veronica: Yeah.

SAA: I don't think any of your teachers know.

Veronica: Why do you say that?

SAA: Cuz I asked them the general question, are any of your students undocumented and they all answered, no one....The reason I bring this up is because, I feel like this might be a big stress point in your life and I'm just not sure who you are getting to talk to about it.

Veronica: I don't really talk to no one. I just kind of keep it to myself.

SAA: That seems to be a big part of what your therapy should be about. That's a scary thing to have hanging over your head.

Veronica: I know. I go to sleep over it and I'm like, what the fuck? My life depends on what the immigration judge is going to say and I'm like, damn that sucks....Yeah, and there's a lot of things that I haven't told (my therapist) yet. And she's like, I don't know, I would tell my therapist but it doesn't feel right. I feel like, like I should have never told no one, it was a long time ago when I was young. I thought that if I ever told someone, they better die (laughing). Or I'll be dead or something. Like I was going to take that secret with me to the grave. But I let it out and I was like what the fuck, that was a big mistake....And then I'm just like, oh I should have never done that.

Veronica suffered from shame and recognized that staying in the US hinged on a packet and an immigration judge. Admitting this secret intensified rather than alleviated her struggles. This psychological stress that many undocumented students face was compounded by Veronica's additional status as an incarcerated juvenile (Jacobo & Ochoa, 2011). She divulged the secret with major consequences and had no one to help her face those consequences.

I wondered how compounded psychological stress impacted her behavior and she told me a story about "cheeking her meds," or saving prescription drugs to ingest many at once, allowing the person to feel high.

Veronica: I was cheeking my meds and cheeking other people's meds. Everybody was like, what is wrong with you and I was like, nothing....I was just not paying attention in class and anything. I was blowing everything off. And then, they're like, oh you're cheeking your meds. Cuz one of the other kids said that we were passing meds....And they're like, wow you're just wired in the brain to do criminal things. And I was like I know. It's like that criminal thinking is always on my mind.

SAA: What do you mean by criminal thinking? Where does that language come from?

Veronica: It comes for T4C, Thinking for Change. And it was like, you have to like, criminal thinking is like you always want to do the wrong thing to get away with something or hide something. And what I was doing was like, getting high to hide my feelings because the immigration thing had me all upset...and I was like oh my god, this is going to happen. But I was just assuming the worst. And that's just another thing that I learned in T4C, like I learned a lot. If it happens, it happens. I'm not going to get overwhelmed about things that are out of my power.

Veronica started "cheeking her meds" directly in relation to her fear of deportation without friends or family. The description of her actions as "criminal thinking" was grossly oversimplified. The Thinking for Change curriculum (Bush, Glick & Tymans, 2002) never used the term "criminal thinking" but did discuss "self-centered thinking that leads to criminality" (p. 144). This may indicate that staff, teachers, or students were using this term incorrectly.

Thinking for Change did not address social identities. It was not directed toward children or adults but could be used with both, meaning there were no developmental supports for juveniles. I searched for the terms:

culture, cultural, ethnicity, race, gender, sex, sexuality, orientation, gay, lesbian, bisexual, LGBTQ, immigration, illegal, undocumented, ability and disability and found none were included. The curriculum had no specialized instructions for students with disabilities or English Language Learners. I discussed this with a child psychologist who had experience working within the juvenile incarceration system and she stated, “Cognitive behavioral therapy does not have those identity markers included. However the therapist should be trained in multicultural issues and should integrate them” (Dr. Amanda Bye, personal communication, November 5, 2012). Though Dr. Bye was describing best practice, Thinking for Change stated,

The curriculum has been designed so that any staff person may facilitate groups and teach its content. No special credential or level of education is required.

Trainers should be caring, like to teach, understand group processes and interpersonal interactions, and be able to control an offender group. (Bush et al., 2002, p. 4.)

The curriculum ignored ways that structural racism, sexism, ableism, and xenophobia may affect people’s actions and instead labels “offenders” criminals with self-centered thinking. Bush et al. (2002) stated that Thinking for Change builds upon “strategies and curricula to teach skills to skill deficit individuals.” So, the cognitive behavior therapy in Thinking for Change took a deficit approach to the “offender.” Overall, it allowed a juvenile’s actions to be considered without context.

To describe Veronica’s actions as self-centered implied that Veronica had no reason to take prescription drugs except for the thrill of doing something wrong. On the contrary, Veronica was facing the very real possibility of being deported to a country she had not been to in over 10 years without friends or family to protect or support her. That she was taking drugs because she was self-centered or trying to get away with something seems naïve—simplistic in light of what she was facing. Veronica recognized that self-medicating was linked to her anxiety about the pending immigration hearing. The curriculum used by the juvenile justice system addressed Veronica’s behaviors punitively and without context.

Veronica: Like sometimes I feel like that’s the pressure on me. That’s why I get so irritated. Cuz like whenever staff is doing something to me or like I have a different opinion, I can’t argue with them because they have some kind of power. And I’m like, sometimes I take it out on them...Like I was just mad cuz one time (my teacher) told me to go do something. And I was like I already did it and he was like well it doesn’t matter, do it again. And I was like, I hate when people talk to me like that. Like, I feel like I’m a dog and like I just get weird feelings and I act on it cuz I don’t know how to handle it.

SAA: Does it make you feel disrespected?

Veronica: Yeah and when that happens, you have this whole other thing going on like if I argue right now, how is that going to help or hurt me?...I hear myself thinking, if you do this, you’re going to get into this kind of trouble. This and that. And my head just doesn’t care.

Surveillance of her behavior proved to be a continual stressor for Veronica. She had to consider not only the immediate consequences of her behavior in an institution that continually criminalized her, but also to weigh how it affected her chance to stay in the country. Her statuses as an undocumented student, an English Language Learner, and a female with an emotional disability had been ignored. At times, the juvenile incarceration system even attempted to eradicate those identities (Díaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007). The only label the teachers and staff embraced for Veronica was “criminal.” This limited the support Veronica received and the impact the program had on her.

Fake it to Make it

Socializing practices, defined for the purposes of this study as the rituals and routines of the institution, were meant to teach its inhabitants about the philosophy of the program. Socializing routines “teach both to

and through” institutional practices (Gutiérrez & Larson, 1994). For instance, in one 45-minute class I observed, implementing these routines took 26 minutes. One major socializing practice for a new female inmate was to keep feet together at all times when sitting. When I asked why this practice was necessary, a security staff responded, “They need to learn to behave like young ladies”. This comment reflected an attempt to enforce normative femininity on criminal female bodies, a common effort in female juvenile incarceration (Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004).

In the video data, I noticed that Veronica kept her feet apart, however the rest of her body language indicated attending to the conversation (e.g. eyes on teacher, recording notes). Even after security staff directed her to put her feet together, Veronica would often change her foot position back to open. I asked why Veronica continually moved her feet into a position prohibited by the institution.

I knew like I could get away with it. And I felt like, I get comfortable in the places I am. I don’t care who says no or what, if I’m comfortable with it, I’m going to sit the way I want. And I’ll just do what I do and I never got in trouble for it. And when I did, I would just close them back and spread (my feet) again.

Veronica resisted this expectation though it could have made her more susceptible to punishment. Teachers and staff did not take these socializing practices lightly. In one 45-minute class I observed, class was interrupted 18 times to enforce these rules.

When I asked about the purpose of these socializing routines, one teacher responded, “It’s not that hard to follow the rules here. You follow them and you get more privileges, just like life.” The teacher’s attitude reflected the beliefs of many experienced, well-meaning juvenile justice educators. She thought the small instances of rule breaking were irrational and was irritated by the refusal to follow simple rules.

However, from a youth perspective these small gestures had a different meaning; breaking rules became a resource in a place where the girls had little autonomy. Incarcerated girls were continually monitored for compliance and every part of the girls’ bodies was policed, from how they could wear their hair to what color clothes they wore. For some, breaking the rules seemed to be a response to the sheer quantity of rules, their arbitrary nature, and their irrelevance to “real life.”

Veronica refused to comply with the socializing practices and stated that she is not willing to “fake it to make it.”

Fake it to make it to me means that you put up a front. That everybody likes, like you’re the golden nickel or whatever. That everybody likes and everybody wants. And I feel like I don’t have to be that person. I don’t want to be that person...I feel like if I’m going to get there, I’ll get there the way I am. I’m not gonna change. I’m not willing to change for anyone.

Veronica shared how she struggled to comply with rules without changing her character.

Rios (2011) used the term “striving for dignity” to describe students “demanding the right to be seen ‘as normal’, to be treated as fellow human beings, to have a sense of positive rites and not to feel criminalized” in the community (p. 115). When girls were incarcerated, they still fought to be treated with dignity and this conflicted with the tight regulation and control of their bodies.

Discussion

Veronica shared how being an undocumented Latina with a disability impacted her education experiences in juvenile incarceration. Veronica got tired of holding such a large secret but her impulsive honesty resulted in increased criminalization. Confessing her undocumented status during police questioning reflected how psychological exhaustion that undocumented students experience can actually increase interaction with the Pipeline. Once incarcerated, the juvenile legal system surveilled and punished Veronica’s behavior without consideration of the sociocultural context of her life. Every decision was impacted by her undocumented status, but juvenile justice curriculum and school personnel only focused on her behaviors and alleged self-centered thinking.

Veronica’s responses to efforts to criminalize her thinking and feminize her body were not passive acceptance or impulsive rejection. Instead, Veronica thoughtfully navigated these complex situations, refusing to

conform in order to meet standards. This strategic maneuvering is something students with emotional disabilities are thought unable to do. Veronica was continually forced to follow rules in order to stay in the country, knowing she could be deported if too many minor rule infractions marked her case. At times, Veronica was able to hold this knowledge and found it motivated her to comply with the regulation of her body. Other times, the consequences beat down her will to comply with the rules. Veronica knew that her behavior was constantly being surveilled and would affect whether or not she could stay in the country, but she could not constantly comply without losing her dignity. This is the exact opposite effect that potential consequences should have on anyone. The intersections of race, immigration status, gender and ability left her vulnerable to “stated-operated systems of domination” (Richie, 2012).

Implications

A student who is undocumented already faces the construction of a criminal identity (Abrego, 2008). Once the student becomes part of the Pipeline, that state constructed undocumented identity is further criminalized, surveilled and punished. The major implication from this study is that all behavior in education should be understood within context. Students need to have institutional support, via school and juvenile justice personnel who care enough to listen to why students act in ways not sanctioned by those institutions (Pérez & Rodríguez, 2011). Personnel must be aware of the structural racism, sexism, ableism and xenophobia students face and consider their behaviors within that macro-context. Considering sociocultural factors would reflect authentic care that embraces and affirms Veronica’s culture and community and replaces a false sense of care that is prevalent in juvenile justice, which divorces students from their lives (Valenzuela, 1999). In the small, personal setting that many juvenile justice settings provide, teachers could positively “track” students by knowing enough about them to interpret their behavior in context (Gonzales, 2010). In this way, teachers and juvenile justice personnel can become college-going pedagogues who focus on empowering and teaching undocumented students in the juvenile justice system about their potential to access higher education (Gildersleeve & Romero, 2010). This would replace what school and juvenile justice personnel have become within the School to Prison Pipeline, surveillance pedagogues who focus on identifying and eradicating “problematic” emotions and behaviors from these institutions (Meiners, 2007).

The rising Latin@ presence in the School to Prison Pipeline continues to be problematic in its own right. Veronica’s story illustrates how little understanding is extended to undocumented students in juvenile justice, but it also provides an opportunity to do better. By re-imagining the role of school and juvenile justice personnel within the Pipeline, we can improve futures outcomes for students like Veronica.

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Co-Researching School Spaces of Dispossession: A Story of Survival

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Abstract

Through combining the methodology of portraiture with the epistemological stance of youth participatory action research, this article positions Latino/a youth as experts with their encounters with the school-to-prison pipeline. This article examines what it's like to live within the tight and probational spaces of criminal justice-based school discipline practices. Following the journey of a Black Dominican female high school student, the data from this New York City-based youth participatory action research project find three specific processes of dispossession through which Latin@ youth are profoundly affected by the school-to-prison pipeline: institutional abandonment as disinvestment in young people's personhood, social isolation, and deprivation of agency and self-control.

Introduction

Through traveling to other people's "worlds" we discover that there are "worlds" in which those who are the victims of arrogant perception are really subjects, lively beings, resisters, constructors of visions even though in the mainstream construction they are animated only by the arrogant perceiver and are pliable, foldable, file-awayable, classifiable. (Lugones, 1987, p. 18)

This is a story about survival. It depicts the involvement of Latin@⁴⁵ youth in unequal school discipline practices that determine whether they succeed or fail their schooling. The school-to-prison pipeline lies in wait for any young person facing the circumstances outlined in this article. Literature on the school-to-prison pipeline (hereafter pipeline) parallels U.S. history: unequal social relations in production have placed groups of people on racialized scales of economic vulnerability that are grounded within broader socioeconomic and geographical landscapes. First Nations people and racialized Black communities have been positioned at the frontlines of ongoing structural surveillance. Rarely does social sciences research excavate details to advocate for more restorative justice practices when documenting the pipeline, even at the dawn of significant population changes.

The U.S. Census Bureau's announced in 2009 that Latin@s are now the largest minority group in the United States (16.5% of the total U.S. population and 23.9% of all pre-K-12 student population). Yet, the information about the extent to which Latin@ youth are caught in the spaces of the pipeline remains nebulous, if not very limited (Fry & Lopez, 2012; United States Census Bureau, 2011). The (dominant) non-committal datafication of Latin@s as "Non-White" and/or "Non-Black," the homogenizing label of "Latino" to refer to Spanish-speaking communities, as well as the interchangeable use of "Latino" and "Hispanic" silence racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and nationality diversities in the many communities who through their colonial pasts find themselves speaking Spanish around the world. "Minority" has the same distancing effects. All these vaguely defining identity markers tend to undercount, or underrepresent, the number of Latin@s in any population, and in school suspensions and expulsions, arrests, and incarceration rates generally. Hence the focus of the story is Latin@ youth.

The 1980s War on Drugs introduced numerous state and federal policies that created a similar ideology of discipline and punishment in the educational and criminal justice systems. Several critical elements are involved in the production and maintenance of this "carceral mesh" (Wacquant, 2001) or "a gateway into a much larger system of racial stigmatization and permanent marginalization" (Alexander, 2012, p. 12), including zero tolerance regulations, surveillance technologies, and the criminalization of in-school discipline practices. Wald and Losen (2003) explain the pipeline as "an institutionalized link that places socially unwanted and undesirable youth

45. To avoid the ascribed traditional gender binary in "Latino" or "Latina," "Latin@" is commonly used as a more gender neutral and thus more inclusive noun.

into the criminal justice system, and with it, guarantees the burgeoning of the U.S. prison industrial complex” (p. 11). The past three decades of zero tolerance policies in the United States (U.S.) have successfully applied penal mechanisms that turn schooling into an isolating and criminalized journey for its travelers, especially along lines of race, gender, and able-bodiedness. Systematically, through the overuse of school suspensions/expulsions, criminal justice-based school discipline policies remove students from school grounds for non-violent offenses coded as disruptive (i.e. breaking school rules: not wearing school uniform, talking back at teachers, walking the hallway without a pass) as groundings for identifying potential future violent offenders (Miller et al., 2011). Black students, Latin@, Native American, and Asian American students (and increasingly gender-non-conforming, working class and immigrant youth), carry the burden of these criminalizing school discipline sanctions, as do male students (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2011; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). These data map onto larger national incarceration trends.

Predominantly urban school districts, which are historically underfunded and more racially/ethnically diverse, have been served with an intensified installation of surveillance technologies and police officers; not rural or suburban areas where the gross majority of tragic school shootings take place (Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, 2005). Nonetheless, to this day there is no evidence available to argue that law enforcement-based safety practices are creating safer learning environments in schools. Neither have there been enough studies that document the life-long effects the pipeline has had on Latin@ students’ emotional and physical development.

Few scholars have foregrounded youth as survivors of racialized state-sanctioned “circuits of dispossessions” (Fine & Ruglis, 2009) that run through the inter-institutional constellation of the pipeline. As such, the school-prison nexus inscribes credentials of merit and desirability onto the bodies of most White and elite youth while at the same time it educationally incapacitates low income, non-white and immigrant youth “who either reject or are rejected by the deregulated low-wage labor market” under neoliberal capitalism (Wacquant, 2001, p. 97). Between 1995-1997 and with 17,000 participants, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations ever to apply a whole life perspective to evaluating the relationship between mistreatment experienced during childhood and health status acquired during adult life (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). Ruglis (2011) and Stevens (2013) took the ACE Study’s framework and applied it to the pipeline to argue that the overuse of suspensions and referrals to the criminal justice system needs to be added to the list of traumatic encounters that contribute to a young person’s inability to fashioning good health behaviors and acquiring statuses of school completion and professional success. I have argued elsewhere that punitive school safety mechanisms are increasingly reducing a young person’s post-secondary options to either pursuing higher education or serving time in a correctional facility (Krueger, 2010). The message current educational leaders are sending to young people is disturbing: not every person deserves an education, and worse, not every person is privileged to control the course of his or her life.

This article asserts that more participatory research designs that position Latin@ youth as co-researchers are needed to identify the dispossessing wires that run through the inter-institutional groundings of the pipeline. Using qualitative data collected with youth co-researchers from a participatory action research project in New York City, this article specifically center stages a Latina student amidst the tight and probational spaces of the school-prison nexus. Specifically, the data presented in this article helps to define the pipeline’s processes of dispossession based on manifestations of institutional abandonment as disinvestment in young people’s personhood, social isolation, and deprivation of agency and self-control.

This study contends that social sciences researchers need to depart from deficit-driven discourses because they fail to reconstruct young people as “resistors” and “lively beings” as Maria Lugones’ words poignantly state in the opening lines. Quantified data of Latin@ bodies who are pushed into spaces of the pipeline only offer windows into “after the fact” phenomena; they contribute to an epistemological paralysis that does not dissect the reigning silencing of racialized practices and processes leading to a young person’s removal from his or her school. Involving Latin@ youth in documenting their lived experiences with and inside the spaces of the pipeline is fundamental to piecing together the multi-faceted processes that systematically deprive them of their mental and emotional defenses they need to survive the sorting mechanisms of the pipeline.

The purpose of this article is to make more transparent the fully propelled racialized mechanisms of the pipeline that also pull Latin@ youth at increasing rates into the warehousing spaces of the pipeline and

the prison industrial complex. By following the method of inquiry of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) and the epistemological stance of youth participatory action research, or YPAR (Cammarota & Fine, 2008), this article presents Latin@ youth-centered qualitative data to argue that Latin@ students find themselves at increasing rates in the emotionally and physically isolating spaces of institutional abandonment, personal isolation and dispossession.

Methods and Introduction of the Protagonist: Dimples

Assembling a composite of narratives is also known as “portraiture.” It is a method of inquiry that weaves together individual life circumstances with the ideological structures and social processes of everyday life (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). “The portraitist insists that the only way to interpret people’s actions, perspectives, and talk is to see them in context” (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 11). By combining some of the methodological tenets of portraiture with the epistemological stance of YPAR, Dimples’ story speaks back to one of the main gaps in the current literature: how young Latina women are entangled within the ideological spaces of the pipeline.

The protagonist and hence the expert of her life is Dimples, who at the time of data collection was a seventeen-year-old Black Dominican high school student from the Bronx, NY. The author and narrator of Dimple’s portraiture is a Dominican scholar who is a former social studies high school teacher and youth advocate in New York City. The data presented in this article reconstruct some of Dimples’ experiences with the pipeline. All data were originally collected through a mixed method YPAR project in New York City with 10 high school student from January 2008 until March 2009. Dimples was one of the youth co-researchers, six females and five males. Prior to the group’s first meeting, all youth co-researchers had indicated that each of their schools operated under increased safety measures (i.e. surveillance cameras, metal detectors, search tables, armed police officers). Youth co-researchers fulfilled a double role in that each was a participant and researcher throughout the duration of the study. While each member collected survey data on how other high schools students perceived manifestations of the pipeline and its impact on their schooling experiences, youth co-researchers also created individual visual and written narratives to depict their understanding and summarize their lived experiences with spatialized practices of school safety and security (Krueger, 2009). Co-researchers’ double role of researcher-participant reduced the hierarchized power dynamics that are usually embedded in more traditional and colonizing researcher-researched dichotomies (Smith, 1999).

In the midst of the study, the research collective bore witness to Dimples traveling through the various emotional and physical spaces of the pipeline. Dimples endured a series of encounters with school safety agents, a local police precinct, a regional booking center, and her borough’s criminal and family court. Her confrontations crystallized the dispossessing processes of the pipeline. Details presented about Dimples are a composite of her narratives during our research project, two cognitive maps, and excerpts from research meetings during which she described the details of a life-marking altercation in school that confirmed her journey through the pipeline.

The findings are organized according to the three themes that surfaced throughout her portraiture and offer epistemological definitions of the pipeline as a process a) of institutionalized disinvestment and systemic abandonment of youth who attend urban schools; b) that socially isolates young Latinas into the pipeline’s tight, contradictory spaces while also invisibilizing their presence; c) that denies and deprives Latinas of voice they need to fashion their agency and personhood. Dimples’ composite narrative reveals that once trapped inside the pipeline, access to life saving support services and networks become increasingly inaccessible for youth who are expected to learn and grow within the pipeline. Finally, in her own voice Dimples teaches about how Latinas are struggling with a constricted schooling process during which they are with increasing despair searching for lifelines in order to complete it. Dimples’ story is about her social (educational) survival.

Institutionalized Disinvestment and Systemic Abandonment of Youth

Throughout the time of working together, Dimples frequently expressed her anger and with how SSAs seem to racially profile Latin@ students throughout the school day for disciplinary action, thus creating unbearable tensions between Latin@ and Black students. For example, Dimples repetitively told the collective

about a particular SSA, officer Johnson, who consistently demanded from Latin@ students, if caught during the school day using their cell phones, to turn their phones in to the school security officer, while Black students were able to maintain their conversations uninterrupted. Throughout the collective research process, Dimples spoke out against her school's overuse of suspensions as defaulted disciplinary practice and officer Johnson's unfair and discretionary school safety practices. It was towards the end of her senior year when Dimples gathered student signatures on a petition she wrote to demand the removal of officer Johnson.

One of her first drawings included her clear conceptual understanding of the pipeline:

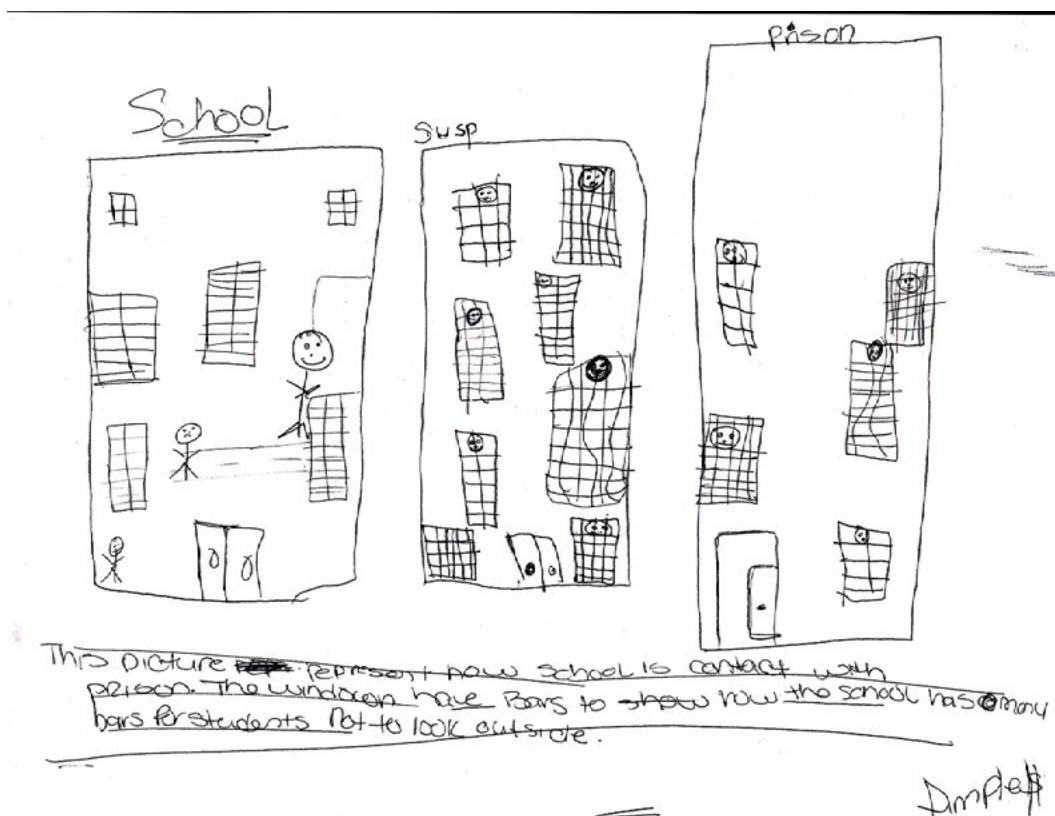


Figure 1. Dimples' conceptual drawing of the pipeline.

Her drawing depicts three large rectangles lined up next to each other. Each of them is labeled. Reading their labels from left to right, the first represents "school," followed by "susp" (for suspension room) in the middle, and "prison" on the right, as the tallest rectangle. She drew "school" with six barred windows, and two smaller-sized stick figures with sad faces in the free spaces between some of the windows. There is one larger sized and smiling stick figure. The middle rectangle, the "suspension room," has eight windows with bars; seven out of eight of them show a face behind window bars. "Prison" consists of five windows with bars, and each window displays one face behind bars. All three "spaces" have a door. Below them, Dimples drew a street with its lines stretching horizontally across the bottom of the paper. She wrote within the road lines, "The picture represent how school is contact with prison. The windows have bars to show how the school has many bars for students not to look outside."

When describing her drawing of the pipeline to her co-researchers, Dimples explained:

You see the guy right here? This is the security guy (pointing at larger smiling stick figure in left rectangle, "school"). And you see this little boy right here? Like he has a sad face cuz he doesn't want to go to class. But that is security in here, and that is the door. And these, the windows, if you see, they have a lot of... you know how they have cages? So people feel like they are in jail. This is supposed to be a suspension room, and this is supposed to be prison. Obviously I didn't finish. And I got the road here, cuz the road, you know, it leads to prison.⁴⁶

46. All qualitative data appears in their original and word-for word compositions to honor Dimples and her co-researchers as authors of their own narratives.

Dimples conceptual drawing of the pipeline is a vivid example of an explosive triad that youth are resisting and reacting to: neoliberalism, policed public education, and the policies of incarceration. Dimples' understanding of the pipeline frames the school suspension room as the intermediary between schools and prisons that facilitates and maintains the road, or the pathway between all three spaces. This is a key insight; according to Citizen's Committee for Children of New York (2010), the suspension room is the last school-based place that suspended youth have access to before they are warehoused inside the Department of Juvenile Justice (via city detention and state facilities).

Her choice of including bars in the windows in all three spaces may be an imagined detail; yet many windows of New York City public schools are equipped with bars to prevent window openings. Dimples' school is one of them. Further, the bars in all three spaces could be interpreted as a reflection of the pipeline's inter-institutional consistency and uniformity to fashion in young people self-managed physical and emotional constrain and containment while in school. This is indicative of what Foucault (1977) had argued; prisons rely on their panoptical and internalized self-regulating mechanisms.

Dimples' choice of not include any visual representations of more "school typical" images, such as books, pencils, teachers, desks, tables, schoolyard, or school bus, for example, illuminates an absence of what is perhaps part of a more conventional imagination of school characteristics that expects schools to be places of teaching and learning. Dimples' picture is stripped off such conventions and depicts schools in the pipeline as disinvested places that abandon youth into the criminalizing spaces of suspension rooms and prisons. After researching some of the pipeline's youth centered reports (Mukherjee, 2007), Dimples concluded:

My opinion of the school to prison pipeline is that school safety agents are ill planned and unfair to students of color in city schools. City schools are over crowded and the money is supposed to be for city schools are used to for other things besides helping students. More than half of people of color are in prison. (Reads directly from report) "High school with permanent metal detectors are over crowded with 18% more students than seats" (p. 1).

This is where institutionalized disinvestment and systemic abandonment of youth as central characteristics of the pipeline become most apparent: instead of equipping urban schools with more teachers and counselors to alleviate them from ongoing fiscal pressures of under-resourcing, the school-prison nexus defaults to safety technology to dispose of urban youth. The racialization of youth and their institutionalized categorization of social disposability is a fundamental outcome of the neoliberal capitalist momentum. According to Henry Giroux (2010), under the regime of market fundamentalism or neoliberalism, the pipeline is a widened inter-institutional regime of surveillance of future fit consumers; those who do not demonstrate obedient and loyal behavior of consumerism must sustain "increasingly powerful modes of biopolitical regulation, pacification, and control" (p. 78). Additionally, "with no adequate role to play as consumers, many youth are now considered disposable, forced to inhabit 'zones of social abandonment' extending from homeless shelters and bad schools to bulging detention centers and prisons" (Giroux, 2013). The fact that Dimples connected school and education not with joy, play, humanity, and common good, but with pain, scars, and with an institution that permanently pushes non-white and low income youth into a permanent precarious state of being is a clear example of the long term impact of neoliberal policies in the lives of racially minoritized youth.

Being Pushed Into A Permanently Precarious State of Being

Youth co-researchers were curious about any physical and emotional effects ongoing photographing, fingerprinting, scanning, and x-raying by metal detectors and school security technology could have on their bodies. They imagined themselves to be in the position of medical professionals from where they could view any potential harm done to another young person from their schools to then offer medical help or practical advice. Dimples sketched the following image with her explanation on the back page:

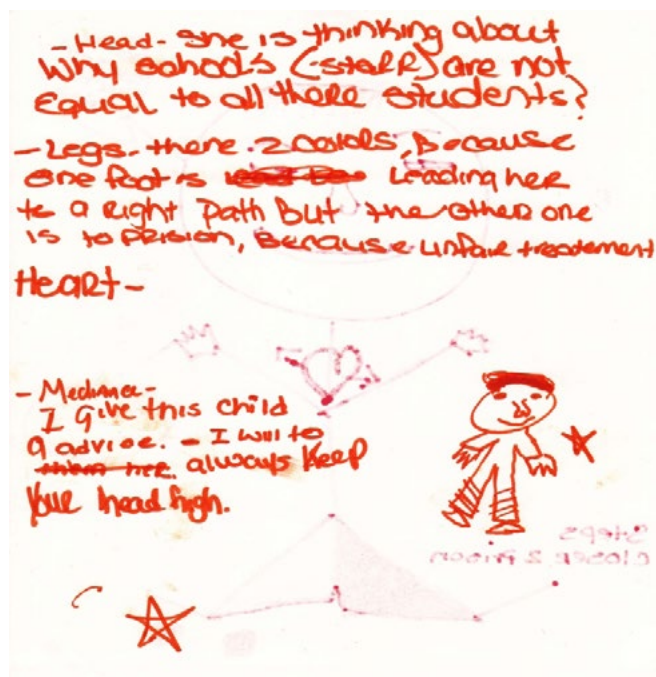


Figure 2: Dimples' map and description of imagined physical inscriptions of the pipeline on a young person's body.

Her picture depicts the body of a female whose forehead is marked by a scar. A thought bubble in the top right corner reads "Dame can school ever be fair?" She left the label for the right hand blank. Her heart is split in the middle by a vertical line, possibly representative of the person's spine. In addition, two arrows pointing in opposite directions emerge from the heart. The person's triangle-shaped feet appear in two colors; the left foot is labeled with "steps closer 2 prison." The right foot is left label-less. The back page provided additional – yet incomplete – insights to her drawing. It reads:

Head-she is thinking about why schools (scarr) are not equal to all there students?

Legs-there 2 colors because one foot is leading her to a right path but the other one is to prison because unfair treatment.

-Heart-

In addition, her medical advice consisted of:

Medical advice-I will give this child advice. I will to (followed by crossing out of "them her") always keep your head high.

These final words of advice are accompanied by a drawing of a smiling individual with a star placed next to the right hand. When sharing her picture with her co-researchers, she explained:

Her head is, it says, she is like, she is wondering why she doesn't have fair treatment in her school. And, you see, the heart, it is split in the middle. And the shoes, there is different colors because, one is like saying, yeah, she should continue in school, and the other one is like, pulling her away and stuff, closer to prison. I don't know her hands, haven't figured out her hands. Her cure is to always keep her head up. Oh yeah, is basically giving her more advice to just always keep her head up and stay in school and stay focused and not care about anybody else.

Dimples' body map of a young person's bodily entanglement in the pipeline speaks back to Wendy Hartcourt's epistemological standpoint towards a body politics that repositions knowledge on bodies as

contested sites amidst colliding economic, political, sexual and intellectual power relations (2009). Harcourt argues, “knowledge on bodies is irreducibly interwoven with other discourses – social, colonial, ethical and economic” (p. 22). Perhaps anchored within her own lived experiences, Dimples identified these dismantling inscriptions of the pipeline on a young person’s body as mental and physical injuries. The scar on the young person’s forehead and the split heart are representative of their manifestations.

Dimples placed young people who learn in spaces of the pipeline at a deadly crossroads that leaves them with only two (and contradictory) destinations: to either stay in school or to go to prison. In other words, Latinas like Dimples must either behave while in school (i.e. subordinate themselves to school authorities), or else they are fast-tracked into the criminal justice system through racialized suspension practices. It is impossible to declare which option is less deadly to their educational survival. With either direction, Latinas remain emotionally and physically stifled and trapped, and thus fully exposed to the inter-institutional violence of the pipeline that wears and tears on their bodies. As identified by Dimples’ advise to students whose bodies “bear the mark of both conscious and unconscious processes” (Krieger, 2005, p. 351) of the pipeline, their survival work entails mental work of imagination. Imagining how the material and social world of systems of dispossession such as the pipeline get incorporated biologically cannot be separated “from how students feel about themselves and others, their bodies, futures, and places in society” (Ruglis, 2011, p. 632). What I call the “permanently precarious state of being” invisibilizes the bodies of Latina students held inside the pipeline. This especially includes the silencing of acknowledgment of the funds of knowledge Latinas may potentially tap into to enable the hard mental work needed around maintaining focus on surviving the pipeline.

Deprivation of Voice and Agency

This last piece of Dimples’ composite narrative comes from excerpts of a transcribed conversation between Dimples and all of us in the research collective. At the beginning of one of our weekly research meetings in March 2008, Dimples told her co-researchers about a fight she had at school with another female student. The details of the fight triggered Dimples’ journey through numerous spaces of the pipeline (local jail, regional booking center, and criminal court) as well as a series of life-marking encounters with authorities within each. Her voice echoed sound waves of panic, anger, and hurt, while simultaneously accentuating underlying feelings of alienation, loneliness and fear. The task is not to privilege the pipeline’s structural violence over Dimples’ deliberate decision to severely injure another female student. This is not a request to forgive Dimples for intentionally endangering another young person. Applying physical violence to redeem herself for a student’s unresponsiveness to requested peer mediation is inexcusable. However, it is through Dimples’ enacted violence that the criminalizing and pathologizing processes of the pipeline become highly visible. Further, placing judgment based on opposite binaries of innocence versus culpability but without taking into account the processes and larger social contexts in which individual acts are grounded only contributes to strengthening the pipeline’s default mechanisms of pathologizing and institutionalizing Dimples and other Latin@ youth. When reading the following exchange between Dimples and her co-researchers, I ask the reader to pay close attention to some of these processes and contexts:

Dimples: Don’t ever go to jail. I am getting tears just talking about it (*emotional, voice shaking, in tears*). First, I have a urine infection. Cuz, I didn’t pee in a day. Second of all, all this stuff happened because of Johnson.¹ Mind you, now they are trying to put me on assault and felony. That’s gonna be on my record forever. Now I have to do 2 weeks either in Rikers Island² or I do rehab for anger management. (*Co-researchers quite down and listen attentively*).

Patricia: What happened?

- Dimples: The girl, Shareen, the girl that jumped me, you know, with her friends 2 years ago, I done harassment reports, I done try to press charges. They say I can't because I attacked her first. Then, while I am in the school, and when they arrested me they didn't give me my rights. They didn't say why I am charged. I said, am I getting arrested? Am I going to jail? They said, no, we are just going to take you to the precinct to talk to you. Little did I know I am there til Thursday. Thursday night, that's when I came out.
- Co-Researcher I: Then don't go with them!
- Dimples: No! I couldn't. They had handcuffs.
- Co-Researcher I: Then you were under arrest.
- Dimples: Yeah. I was arrested, and then he put me to the 42nd precinct. Then they was gonna send me upstate. I wasn't gonna come out til Monday. My bail was \$5000. And they put it to \$750. First, I said, what's my charge? He said, oh, your charge is assault and a felony. I said, damn, ... a felony is what, is 3-7 years. So I am like, damn, I am a be here for a long time. Then, a cop came. I was like, what am I here for? They said, assault with a deadly weapon. Cuz I hit her with a stapler. And she had stitches and bruises. They have it all, the report is right here (*opens it, flips through a few pages*)....
- I am so angry at this girl. You don't understand, 3 years she put me through hell! Bumped me in the hallway in front of principals, in front of everybody (*emphasized*). And nobody was on my side. And I was so angry so when I saw her, I had this stapler and I just kept on hitting her with it.... And then, the fight was not only in the school, the fight took it all the way outside in the streets. The teachers let us fight and the security guards let us fight. They pushed everybody to the sides, is like, let them fight....
- I said, can I get an order protection? And he said, no, cuz you attacked her first. And I said, what happened to all the years of harassment? Where is my reports at? Where are my statements at? Where is witnesses? He is like, the girl has 15 witnesses.... you either do 2 weeks in Rikers Island or you just go to rehab. The rehab that I am gonna go to is not outpatient, it's inpatient. That means that I have to stay there for at least 6 months. They are saying that I have mental health problems, cuz I am bipolar, and I have a therapist and anger problem. They are making a little thing come to nothing cuz I go to therapy so they are trying to use that against me like.... she was in therapy for 5 years, she is crazy. Yeah, I told the judge, I did dirt in my past. I messed up a lot, you understand? I was bad, yeah, I got arrested before and stuff like that. I came to realize that's not me. I want to go to college, I am trying to do better for myself. I got a 80 average, I got more credits than I need to have. I am only there because I failed the regents.³ Teachers let us fight. I fought her since 11:30 to 12. A half an hour fight.
- Patricia: The original incident, 3 years or so back, whatever she did to you, is that on anybody's record?
- Dimples: Yes, they have that. I reported it, I did. At least 6. I went to the principal. I went to the assistant principal. I done had mediation with this girl, and this girl done walked out and said, (*imitating*) I am done having mediation with this bitch! In front of the principal, and they didn't do anything.

Even though her co-researchers' initial silence indicated shock and disturbance about the violence to which Dimples resorted to respond to her female peer, the group also learned about the institutionalizing aftershocks the dispossessing wires of the pipeline had sent through Dimples' body.

The series of events that her fight at school triggered show insights to the varying degrees of how adults in school abandon Latin@ youth. First, the hands-off approach of security guards and teachers to break up the fight between the two girls participated in Dimples' entanglement with structures of the pipeline. Secondly, school staff not acknowledging the multiple and long-term reporting efforts Dimples initiated to document her physical assault by the same young female she fought added to the institutional silencing of her self-chosen method of non-violent self-defense. Thirdly, the disappearance of paper trails that Dimples created during her proactive help seeking is charged with the pipeline's carelessness and inability to properly re/store life-saving evidence. Instead, it appears that institutionalized deliveries of evidence privilege a chronological order of events. As a result, "offenders" are denied access to previously filed reports with viable contextual information about processes or encounters ("They say I can't because I attacked her first"). The inter-institutional composition of the pipeline honors the present and deliberately ignores the past. And finally, Dimples' account suggests that cases of students with mental health issues receive additional scrutinizing attention ("They are saying that I have mental health problems, cuz I am bipolar, and I have a therapist and anger problem"). Dimples does not reveal whether or not she was working with a professional for her mental health care. Her co-researchers did not care; instead they were taken back by the pipeline's quick willingness to use Dimples' mental health status as a primary rationale for throwing her into the pathologizing and demonizing spaces of her regional booking center. Her self-defending voice as well as her willing agency to openly display the extent to which she was institutionally neglected by the staff and officers at her school and the local precinct could not sustain the dismantling ambush on her mental and physical capacities.

Dimples also felt regret, as she understands the serious consequences of her action. But she also reveals an intense level of anger that she directed at the adults of a system whom she perceived as holding positions from where her institutionalization would be supervised, documented, and communicated to her family:

Dimples: Yeah, I was wrong for handling her with a stapler, but no lie (*pauses*) ... I have so much anger in me.... They are making my mother go through hell right now. My mother went to court, my mother did not come out of court til I o'clock in the morning. My name wasn't on the list, somebody kicked me off the list. Then put me back on the list. I was supposed to be out the same day Monday.

Dimples became profoundly aware of how her abandonment implies her disposability within the spaces of the pipeline. Together, the disappearance of her documentation, the disengaged school staff, the silencing of her lived experiences with an unreliable reporting system, and the questioning of her mental health decomposed her personhood and agency to a faceless aggregate of a Latin@ youth inside the pipeline. The significant level of anger she was left with points to the aforementioned unresolvedness of Latin@s' positioning within the pipeline; they remain an open case deserving more attention and caretaking by all of us who are alarmed by the long-term implications the pipeline has for their growing presence in the United States.

Conclusion

At the end of her hearing in the criminal court on March 18, 2008, the judge mandated that Dimples completed two days of anger management. Many of her co-researchers considered her lucky; even though she had to submit to the managing, molding and sculpting treatments of anger management, she walked away without a criminal record. Nonetheless, since the completion of the collective's data collection and her high school graduation in the summer of 2009, none of the author's efforts to reconnect, by phone, mobile, or email with Dimples were successful. It remains troublingly unknown if her plan to move to a major city on the East Coast to attend a liberal arts college for which she had earned a scholarship was fulfilled. Without updates from her, the author's hopes and worries alike remain speculative.

The findings from this study – that the pipeline manifests in institutional abandonment as disinvestment in young people's personhood, social isolation, and deprivation of agency and self-control – suggest that social

sciences research must bear witness to the survival work that Latin@ youth are doing at school in order to inform transformative structural change towards equity and justice. More participatory qualitative research studies with youth-centered methodologies and with Latin@ youth as co-researchers are needed to document the deadly effects that dominant (and racialized) power structures have on Latin@s' lived experiences with current schooling processes.

This also involves positioning targeted Latin@s not as damaged research subjects but instead as authors and owners of stories about their dispossessions and the daily violence in their lives. It is the call to "world traveling" that Maria Lugones invited us to be part of and that can bind social justice research to community and communal activism. This includes de-homogenization of research designs to legitimize every body's inscriptions and lived experiences with forms of institutional neglect. Research that privileges survival instead of social death can guide, teach and mentor to do this world-traveling. This humanizing research activates social movements – actual physical movement not just ideological shifting – to embark on journeys that move us away from selective and internalized predispositions about who deserves to be in this world.

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Smoking Guns or Smoke & Mirrors?: Schools and the Policing of Latino Boys

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One October morning in 2009, as one of the authors of this article, Mario Galicia, was driving to a local high school where we were collecting field notes, surveys, and interviews for a larger research project following gang-associated youths across institutional settings,⁴⁷ he received a phone call from Richard,⁴⁸ the gang-intervention program coordinator for the youths whom we were studying. Richard asked Mario to meet him across the street in a supermarket parking lot, instead of the usual meeting place on campus. He exclaimed, “The campus has been placed on lockdown!” Upon arriving, Mario noticed that the shopping center parking lot, adjacent to the high school, was filled with dozens of middle-aged white adults, mostly females in mini-vans and a handful in luxury sedans. Two local television news vehicles were also at the scene. Most of the people in the parking lot looked distraught as they stared towards the school. One of the white women was crying hysterically as she talked on the phone. “I think there is a shooter in the school...I don’t know what to do!” She was the mother of one of the students at the school.

As Mario approached Richard, he overheard another mother addressing a news station reporter. She described witnessing an earlier incident involving a group of boys getting into an altercation outside of the supermarket. “He pulled something out that looked like a gun and pretended to shoot at the other boys, but I did not hear any gunshots. That’s when I decided to tell the school.” Richard explained to Mario that, shortly thereafter, the school was placed on lockdown and a group of about twenty local police and sheriffs scoured the campus for the boy involved in the incident. Richard pointed towards the school where a cluster of about eight SWAT team officers, all dressed in black and wearing helmets, moved in unison along the side of the school, and then went in, combing through hallways and classrooms. An hour into the incident, four sheriffs walked out of the school with a group of four Latino male boys, ages 15-16. The boys all had shaved heads or short buzz haircuts. They wore baggy pants or long shorts with extra-long white socks. Two of them wore Pendleton style dress shirts. All of them wore black and blue. The boys kept their heads down, apparently in shame, as they were escorted into patrol cars. Law enforcement officers cleared the school, allowing parents to pick up their children. As she returned to her vehicle, one of the white mothers blurted out, “I’m so glad they are taking those gangsters away. I hope they rot in jail!” The boys later reported that they were held for six hours, without food or water, when they were interrogated.

After the incident, we interviewed two of the four boys, Ruben and Vince, and then held a focus group with all four boys. After this, we informally interviewed other students that witnessed the event. From this data and media reports, we developed an account of the incident. The four youths, Ruben, Cairo, Mike, and Vince,⁴⁹ had been gathered across the street from their high school at a super market. They had all met up prior to the start of classes to purchase snacks and beverages for school that day. Shortly after purchasing their soft drinks and potato chips, the boys were approached by two young men driving a vehicle.

They told us, “fuck you lames, we’ll get out of the car and beat your asses to the ground.” We all laughed. They got pissed off and then acted like they were gonna’ get out of the car...That’s when we grabbed whatever we could grab.

The white mother that witnessed the boys “grabbing whatever they could grab,” panicked when she saw the boys in a conflict and apparently witnessed seeing a gun. She ran to the school to report the gun sighting to high school administrators. The school immediately reported the incident to local law enforcement and put the school’s students, staff, and administrators on lockdown until the investigation was over. Shortly thereafter, all of the schools’ entrances and exits were blocked by local law enforcement, as were the adjacent traffic

47. Rios, V.M. (Forthcoming) *Missing Fire: Gangs Across Institutional Settings*. University of Chicago Press.

48. The name of the intervention program coordinator has been changed in order to maintain his confidentiality.

49. The names of the youths in this paper have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

intersections. As parents were escorted away from the school to the supermarket parking lot located across the street, they were briefed by other witnesses as to what had occurred to cause the lockdown. Most of the witnesses, who were informing other parents about the events that led to the trouble, had heard the story from someone else. The account escalated into a narrative of gun-slanging, gang-banging thugs who were ready to shoot at each other. Two parents were overheard talking, "...they were gang members, who got in a fight before school, that started this mess..." and the other parent replied, "...they all had guns and then ran towards the school..."

By the end of the day, after extensive investigation and interrogation, police announced to the school, parents, and the media that none of the boys involved in the incident ever displayed a gun. Parents had somehow confused a *water bottle* that one of the boys pulled out as a gun. Ruben explained:

Nah man, it was me. I was scared and I had a water bottle in my pocket. So I pretended to have like a knife on me and reached in my pocket, and as the guys drove off, I pulled it out to make fun of them being scared of something as simple as a stupid water bottle.

This misinformation and hysteria delivered by parents to other parents, the school, media, and social media exemplifies how, in an era of mass incarceration, schools, law enforcement, and community members perceive and interact with young Black and Latino boys as culprits and suspects, even before any concrete evidence arises against them (Rios, 2011). We found, in this particular incident, and, in the larger four-year ethnographic project from which this case study was derived, Latino boys at this school were often labeled, stigmatized, and criminalized. We define criminalization as the process by which individuals are denied the opportunity to prove their innocence and legality, within a context where institutions such as law enforcement and schools exacerbate punishment in an attempt to regulate and control racialized and poor populations (Cacho, 2012; Rios, 2011). Criminalization exists within a process that Diego Vigil (2002) describes as "multiple marginality." Multiple Marginality theory examines the various micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level factors that create and construct youngsters as gang members. Vigil finds that constantly changing political, social, economic, and psychological processes in society must be accounted for in analytical approaches. Who is considered a gang member today might be different than a decade ago, and the social control imposed on gang-associated populations might also differ, depending on larger cultural and political economic forces. The criminalization of Latino boys as gang threats has become exacerbated during the current era of mass incarceration, "school-to-prison pipelines," and the increase of Latino immigrant populations throughout the United States. The xenophobia follows. Multiple marginality can help us explain how the boys in this study became constructed as criminal threats in the multiple contexts and institutions in which these boys navigated.

From Learning to Labor to Preparing for Prison

The United States has now reached a point where an average of 600 juveniles are arrested each day, and where every black boy born in 2001 has a one-in-three chance of going to prison, while a Latino boy, born in the same year, has a one-in-six chance of facing the same fate (Campaign, 2008). Research dating back to the work of David Tyack (1974) argues that mass education ultimately fails to provide working-class students with the credentials necessary to experience upward social mobility, and, instead, operates to reproduce the very class inequalities that it purports to ameliorate (Althusser, 1971; Anyon, 1981; Anyon, 1997; Anyon, 2005; Bourdieu & Nice, 1984; Freire, 2000; Willis, 1981).⁵⁰ Thus, this body of work provides a critical framework for

50. Paul Willis, in *Learning to Labour*, provides a thorough discussion of the literature on mass education. Willis begins his discussion with John Dewey, an American philosopher and an early major proponent of the social reform potential provided by mass education. John Dewey argued that education could serve as a means to provide "members of the underclasses, especially black and Hispanics" access to "better jobs and a higher standard of living" (Willis, 1981:127). However, implicit in Paul Willis's ethnography is his engagement with John Dewey and his vision of upward social mobility delivered through education. Willis duly notes, through his analysis of working-class, young British males, that this is a rhetoric that obfuscates the reality of a class-based society because "the whole nature of Western capitalism is also such that classes are structured and persistent so that even relatively high rates of individual mobility make no difference to the existence or position of the working class... no conceivable number of certificates among the working class will make for a class society" (Willis 1981:127).

understanding the school as a site of stratified social reproduction. Yet, much of this research took for granted the terrain of public education in a redistributive state where manufacturing jobs were the next logical step for many of the youths they studied. However, as the prior bodies of work show, the redistributive state has been largely eradicated, (with public education being one of its remaining vestiges), in the aftermath of post-industrialization and deindustrialization manufacturing jobs, which working-class children were overtly and subtly prepared to do. The jobs no longer exist, and prisons have become the places where people left unemployed by deindustrialization will likely find themselves.

In light of capitalist globalization, many critical-education scholars and youth advocates use the term, “school-to-prison pipeline,” in order to encapsulate the processes that continue to inequitably classify youth along racialized class lines through mass education, and then pipeline them into the growing prison-industrial complex. Literature on the punitive turn in public education helps us to identify watershed moments in history—such as the shifts in funding away from education and toward incarceration that occurred throughout the 1990s (Campaign, 2008; Connolly et al., 1996; Gold, 1995; Taqi-Eddin, Macallair, & Schiraldi, 1998), and the moral panics, through the mid-to-late 1990s, based on a string of violent school shootings at suburban and rural high schools (Binns & Markow, 1999; Brooks, Schiraldi, & Zeidenberg, 2000; Donohue et al., 1998; Dwyer, Osher, & Warger, 1998; Dycus, 2008; Mukherjee & Karpatkin, 2007) that facilitated punitive investments into public education. This research also helps to identify the specific “objective features” of these punitive investments—in the form of zero-tolerance policies, school-resources officers (SROs), surveillance technologies, and information-sharing linkages between the education system and the criminal justice system—as well as the impacts they have had on rising rates of suspensions and expulsions, drop-out (or “force-out”) rates, and school-based arrests.⁵¹

Finally, within academic literature, there has been a debate emerging in recent years over the impacts of these punitive investments into schools, on these institutions themselves, and on the trajectories of students in mass education. The “convergence” camp asserts that the impulse to heavily invest punitive resources into schools has reached not only schools in poor communities but also in middle-class, suburban, and rural schools, so that all schools share the similar contours of a securitized terrain—which includes, for example, cameras; full-time, school-based police officers; zero-tolerance policies; and normalized law enforcement responses to otherwise non-criminal issues (Kupchik, 2009). This camp argues that the dissemination of this institutional surveillance regime will reproduce, on the one hand, a criminalized class that serves to justify the securitization of social trends, and, on the other hand, a compliant class accustomed to surveillance techniques and technologies; the presence of law enforcement personnel in daily life; and a law-enforcement response to non-criminal issues (Kupchik & Monahan, 2006).

Pointing to the class variation in the vehicles through which administrators and teachers manifest these punitive investments, (i.e., in middle-class schools with drug-sniffing dogs and school-based police officers, who see themselves as mentors first, and as officers second, and, in schools largely composed of working-class students of color, all of whom are subjected to humiliating and aggressive metal-detector programs and mandatory pat-downs by condescending police officers), Paul Hirschfield (2008) asserts that there are key differences in how poor schools are securitized, “[I]n short, the gated community may be a more apt metaphor to describe the security transformation of affluent schools, while the prison metaphor better suits that of inner-city schools” (2008b:84). In the latter form of school, administrators, educators, and SROs can label youths of color as “animals,” “inmates,” or “killers,” and they can also project criminal futures onto their students, as well as lead their students to believe that their teachers don’t support them or care about their success (Blum & Woodlee, 2001; Ferguson, 2000; Fine et al., 2004; Noguera, 2003; Nolan & Anyon, 2004).

Policing the (Latino Youth) “Gang Crisis”

Working-class Latino youth commonly experience negative educational encounters, intensified by punitive school policies and adversarial treatment by teachers, which tend to lead some of these youngsters to

51. Allen et al., 2004; Ambrosio and Schiraldi, 1997; Bonczar, 2003; Bowditch, 1993; Brooks et al., 2000; Campaign, 2008; Cantu, 2000; Connolly et al., 1996; Dycus 2008; Ekstrom et al., 1986; Figlio, 2006; Fine, 1986; Harlow, 2003; Mukherjee and Karpatkin, 2007; Noguera, 1995; Noguera, 1994; Sanders, 2000; Skiba, 2000; Skiba and Rausch, 2006; Stoneman, 2002.

being pushed out of school altogether (Conchas & Vigil, 2010). In our study, we found that the school played a significant role in facilitating the criminal-justice-system processing of many of the boys we studied. Many boys, in particular, were identified as gang threats by school officials and, as such, were reported to police officers. Parents were advised about the “gang crisis” by school officials. This, in turn, created paranoia among parents. Parents pushed law enforcement to crack down on (Latino) gang members. Law enforcement focused more of their resources on this targeted population. The ultimate outcome was a state of hyper-surveillance and hyper-criminalization where young Latino boys became scrutinized and punished for common adolescent behavior such as group bonding, loitering, arguing, and experimenting with rule-breaking. Discipline for these kinds of transgressions was now handed over to police by institutions—school, the family, community programs—that, traditionally, would have intervened in these minor offenses. Since schools have the power to package, construct, label, and deem students as troublemakers and offenders, they often become a launching pad from which young people are catapulted into the criminal justice system. Schools have the power to determine the life-course outcomes of marginalized young people. When schools involve law enforcement to compensate for lack of solid discipline strategies, such as restorative approaches, they end up, often unintentionally, contributing to the systematic stripping of dignity, the police mistreatment, and the incarceration of the students whom they serve.

While some young people might commit crime and deviance on the streets, it is in the schools, often for minor infractions, where their deviance and defiance is amplified by officials, who then collaborate with law enforcement to further penalize students perceived to be at-risk or unruly. It is important to develop a framework for understanding how schools not only educate and socialize students, but also how they package and prepare certain students to be handed over to law enforcement. In other words, the school-to-prison pipeline should be understood as a mechanism by which schools are the initiators of the criminalization process. School personnel must acknowledge their participation in this process of criminalization, and take inventory of the school practices that prepare some children for prison.

The fact that the boys, in this particular instance, were already part of a criminalized class, produced hysteria in the school, as well as among police, parents, and the media. Latino boys who are criminalized often encounter a system of ubiquitous punitive social control that begins in school and spills over into the community, with police and adults reading their everyday behavioral practices as criminal. Ruben described his feelings regarding how white adults reacted to him in public:

...If you go with your homies, they stare at you, baggy clothes make you look suspicious around here. If you're walking in a little group, people are all scared of you. If hueros [Spanish slang for whites] are coming towards you, they'll get off the sidewalk so you can pass by, they're scared as fuck. It's like we're gonna' give them a disease.

In his interview, Ruben explained that the only guns he had ever been around were those used when hunting with his family. He appeared perplexed that a water bottle would get him in so much trouble:

I know that the teachers think I am some kind of trouble maker, but I never imagined that they would call the entire SWAT team to come hunt me down!...I've been taught that I should never carry a gun, I don't even know where my dad keeps his guns. I'm scared of guns. So how do you think I felt when those [police] guns got pointed at me?

In the focus group, the boys talked about their morning ritual. They went to the supermarket every morning, before making their way to campus for their first period. The boys talked about how the cafeteria food repulsed them. Some of their teachers encouraged healthy eating habits and even taught them lessons on eating nutritional food. However, the school did not provide them access to these kinds of foods. “It's like now we have a chance to eat a snack without getting into trouble in class, but some of us don't even bring snacks, and some of us don't get no lunch money,” Vince explained. Vince was frustrated that, although they were being taught healthy eating habits, they were unable to partake in the routine because they did not have enough money to eat well. Ruben further explained, “It only makes it more obvious who's got money, because that's who brings snacks and

stuff to school. The rest of us get hungrier just watching them eat.” When we asked if anyone ever shared their snacks with the rest of the classroom, they all looked at each other, and one of the boys answered, “Nah. Why would they give us any of their food? Usually, it’s the homies that offer each other to hook you up with some chips or something.” In their search for affordable food options, the boys became exposed to potential victimization from older youths, who would drive by the school looking for rival gang members or younger people to mess with. According to the boys’ own accounts, if the school had been able to provide them with tasteful snacks, it would have prevented their altercation in the first place.

Soon after the water bottle incident, the boys returned to their classrooms. They quickly forgot about the altercation and moved about their regular school routine.

Ruben: The thing is, we didn’t even know they [the police] were looking for us, we just knew the school had been locked down and the cops were searching for somebody who had a gun. Since I didn’t have a gun, I never even thought they were after us for that argument.

Vince: Yeah, and when they came into the class they came in with guns and dogs. Then they got us, but were all rough with us. One cop tried turning my wrists and when I pulled away, he said he would break my arm, and not even hesitate. I was like, “You’re hurting me. I didn’t even do anything.”

Ruben: Yeah, that was messed up. They had these big ol’ rifles and were pointing them at us until they took us to some rooms. They put us in separate rooms for a long time, too. It was like at least six or seven hours. And, they didn’t even want to tell my mom why I was still at school with the police. She heard the news from other neighbors at her job that there was a gun at the school. She got all worried and left work to see if I had been sent home. Then she found out I was being questioned by the cops. She got all mad and thought I had done something.

Mario: Did you tell her what really happened?

Ruben: Nah, she didn’t care. I guess she was just all worried and stuff ‘cus she thought the same thing that happened last time was going to happen again.

Mario: What happened last time?

Ruben: I was held at the police station like all night, because they thought I was involved with that one stabbing a couple years ago. They’re just always messin’ with me, though.

Vince: Yeah, they always mess with us. Like when they left us in those little rooms for like half the day. I even asked the cops that would check in on me if I was going to get lunch, and no one answered me. They just laughed at me and went away.

Ruben: I asked one of the cops for lunch and he told me to shut up. His partner, or whatever, stepped into the room with an open bag of chips and I thought he was going to be cool and share with me. Next thing I know, the cop throws a chip at me and says, “There’s your food; eat that if you’re hungry. If you’re not hungry, shut up.”

Vince: Yeah, and that wasn’t even the worst part of all. The worst part came when they put us all in the same room.

Mario: So, what happened when you were all put in the same room?

Ruben: They were shady. That’s all I can say.

Vince: They had us in that room together for like half an hour. We were all asking each other what the hell was going on. Plus, we were all like, “did any of you guys get any food?” We weren’t even given food from the cafeteria and that’s where they were getting their chips from.

Ruben: Yeah, then some police officer walks in and grabs one of the empty chairs in the room and puts it next to this cabinet. All of a sudden he stands on the chair and reaches into the box. The cop pulled out this recorder that was inside the box, then he looked at all of us and said, “We got you now. You should have cooperated earlier.”

Many of the youth who participated in our study shared that they had had enough negative experiences to outweigh the few positive ones with police officers, community center workers, and school officials. Most of the boys we interviewed expressed the belief that they were experiencing what we call “a youth control complex...where various institutions were collaborating to form a system that degraded and criminalized them on an everyday basis” (Rios, 2011). The boys felt as though their schools and communities were working towards pipelining them into incarceration, particularly when they were being arrested in their respective schools, and, later, fined by the courts for minor infractions. These violations came in various forms, the most common being possession of small amounts of marijuana, truancy infractions, and other forms of “aggressive” behavior that might be deemed too violent for the classroom. These actions were common practice in our observations, and were even acknowledged by a campus counselor whom we interviewed:

These kids aren’t thugs or killers. I think all kids need some guidance and discipline, but the way the cops treat the students isn’t right either. They talk to the kids with little or no respect. Then they get angry at the students’ response to their maltreatment. Usually, the kids talking back to the police officers, results in the police being extra rough on them physically. Some kids show up with bruises they claim were from being slammed to the floor by the police. For a simple “stop and search?” That ain’t right, man. I think if you treat the students like adults, they’ll begin to act like one.

Ruben had encountered other major negative experiences with police. In early 2007, two groups of youths were involved in a fight that resulted in one of the youths being stabbed, and, eventually, dying. Local law enforcement agents began rounding up many suspected gang members and their relatives, or known affiliates, for questioning. One of the 25 youths brought in for questioning was Ruben. The police knew that Ruben was related to a known gang member. They had gathered this information from the high school when Ruben was a freshman. Upon arriving at school, for his first day of classes, Ruben was asked by the principal if he was related to James, a former student. He told the principal that James was his brother. According to Ruben, the principal relayed the information to the school resource officer who then tracked Ruben down and placed him in a gang database.

Ruben was friends with the boy who was killed, and was in shock upon hearing of his friend’s death:

It was difficult to process what was going on. One minute I thought I was getting messed with for no reason, again. Then, all of a sudden, I found out this guy I knew was dead. They [the police] didn’t even let me tell them where I was [when the killing happened]. They were all like in my face and yelling at me, telling me they knew I wasn’t telling them what I knew.

According to Ruben, he had been across town when the stabbing occurred, and he had explained to the officers that he had no prior knowledge of who could have been involved in the altercation or stabbing of the other youth. Ruben told me that after they interrogated him for several hours, they left him alone in a room for another couple of hours before they came back for him. When they confirmed Ruben’s alibi, the police released him without an apology or an explanation as to why they believed he was involved.

Juvenile Incarceration

While conducting our observations at this school, we observed dozens of citations and arrests of Latino boys. Most of the citing and arrests occurred outside of school, and were primarily for minor infractions. Some of the youth would hang out all day on street corners and parks during their school vacations, generally because many were too young for employment. However, while hanging out in their neighborhoods, especially in front of local establishments, the boys would receive police charges for loitering or disturbing the peace. Many times, the youths were trying to get out of the sun and cool off, because they didn't have air-conditioning at home. Other times, the youth shared with us, they were just quickly rushed through their purchases, and not allowed to "shop around" by merchants. The minor negative treatment and citations imposed on the boys, nearly on a daily basis, would later play a bigger role in further criminalizing them. One such example came a couple of years into this study, when the efforts of the local police department were directed towards having conversations with local civic and community leaders about creating a gang injunction. Twelve of the boys in our study were named in the injunction.

In addition to facing a continuum of school discipline, school-referrals to police, police harassment, gang injunctions, and labeling by adults in the community, some of the boys also faced being questioned by immigration enforcement officers about their citizenship status in the United States. Many of the boys' early memories are of their relatives being arrested and deported. Seven students remembered hiding from "immigration" even though they were born in California. They had to hide because their parents were undocumented or they had relatives from México living with them. One youth, Julio, was undocumented. He remembered hiding in bushes, behind trees, flat on the ground, or in the bed of a pickup. He remembered hearing his parents speaking to him, in Spanish, and telling him, "*Mijo, escondete. Por que si te ve la policia van a encontrar a ti y a tu tio y se los van a llevar a Mexico. Calladito, ok?*" ("Son, hide. If the cops see you, they'll find you and your uncle, and then they're going to send both of you back to Mexico. Quiet, ok?"). This young man had been detained before by border patrol for looking suspicious and undocumented, and when Julio was nine, and he lived in Los Angeles, his home was raided by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. Julio felt that it was harder for him, as an undocumented immigrant, to stay under the radar, even if he "followed all the rules," because he would always have to worry about both local law enforcement agencies and federal customs enforcement officials. Some young Latinos face layers of illegality, when the system has deemed them to be a criminal suspect group because of their racial and class status. Layers of illegality include being questioned and degraded for dressing in baggy clothes, being asked for citizenship status because they are brown, or being placed in a gang database because their friends or relatives are involved in gang activity.

Julio recalled being told by a school vice principal, "We know you are illegal and we want to help you, but don't push your luck, because we will start letting people know who you really are, and they will come here and take you away." The school officials made the boys feel as if they had the power to garner police and immigration resources on call. All four boys who were involved in the water bottle incident believed that the school had called the police about them to teach them a lesson, to discipline them for being the "bad guys" at the school.

Community Segregation and Marginalization

On another occasion, when we started conducting a focus group with all four of these boys, three pointed at their friend, Marcos. One of them instructed him to tell us his story. Marcos told us about an altercation that had occurred earlier in the day. There were several youth gathered at a local Boys and Girls Club, playing basketball and tossing a football around. Marcos and his friends decided it was too hot to stick around, and, instead, walked over to one of their houses to hang out, watching music videos in the air-conditioning.

After a few hours of hanging out at their friend's house, the boys became bored, and began walking back to the Boys and Girls Club, where they had been hanging out earlier in the day. This time, however, they were stopped at the entrance of the facility and were told that they were no longer allowed to be there because of the fight they had caused earlier in the day. Community center workers then threatened to call the police on these boys if they did not leave the premises immediately. The staff told the boys that the vice principal had told them of the trouble they were causing at school. "They told us that the vice principal said we were instigating fights,

and that they should not let us hang out at the center.” Here, again, the school, the police, and the community center collaborated to criminalize and punish young Latinos deemed as threats. This in turn created a system of exclusion from institutions originally intended for nurturing—such as schools and community centers—and inclusion in institutions intended for punishment and control—such as probation, juvenile facilities, and jails.

Negative encounters with police, schools, and community centers led the boys into the streets to seek out older boys, with whom they would feel that they were affirmed and protected. Vince reported being told by an older gang member in the neighborhood that if he ever wanted to get the cops off his back, all he had to do was start hanging with the gang. We asked Vince, “Did any of your homeboys decide to take the older guys up on their offer?” Vince looked around for a little bit, and finally answered, “Yea, some of them decided to kick it with the older homies. I hardly see them anymore, though.” In this instance, public humiliation by the authorities did not serve as a deterrent for the future, but rather added “street cred,” or street celebrity, to these youth (Vigil, 2007). Being labeled or marked for minor transgressions would place the boys at the risk of being granted additional, more serious labels. In this case, the boys’ risk factors were hanging out with the *veterano* homeboys from the neighborhood, and, possibly, turning into one of the “shot callers”⁵² of the gang. In turn, some of the boys would eventually be coerced or compelled by older boys to prove themselves by committing a crime. These negative interactions with authority figures strain young peoples’ ability to trust the system. In turn, the boys find an alternative institution to put their faith in, the gang, and, in particular, the older boys in the gang. Marcos explains, “I trust them [older boys]. Guys I trust and like, whenever I need anything, they are there. They are older guys, so when I need something, they are there.”

We also noticed heavier policing in the boys’ neighborhoods over the next few weeks after the water bottle incident. An example of heavier policing included the police driving up to where the youths were, getting out of their car, and then slamming the boys against walls, or against curbs. Some police officers would even go as far as handcuffing the youths in order to search them. The boys said they were embarrassed and humiliated by the cops and by the people from the community center. Some of their neighbors began calling the police about them. According to another youth, people in his neighborhood also began acting differently around him. The public humiliation brought on by the police officers and community center management was beginning to label the boys in new ways.

Historically, gang prevention or street-based programs have been organized by, or in conjunction with, churches and local organizations for youth delinquents. In this case, despite the youths’ attempts to enter the community center, they were turned away. The community center staff members were unwilling to assist boys who had been labeled gang members, and the staff’s actions created additional barriers for the boys to overcome.

Teacher and Administration Discrimination

Teachers were observed to be intolerant to any type of “attitude” from the boys involved in the incident. Students were constantly compared to their “well-mannered” peer counterparts, and were asked to invoke their “good-spirited nature” in order to succeed in life and in their academic studies. Ruben described his very first interaction with a teacher, shortly after the school had been locked down:

Ruben: “Hey.”

Teacher: “Hey? Is that all you have to say for yourself?”

Ruben: “What do you mean, is that all I have to say?”

Teacher: “Yeah, I didn’t think you had it in you. None of you ever apologize for the damage you cause. The school is the real victim here, not you.”

The teacher was referring to the school being the victim of Ruben’s and his friends’ actions the previous

52. “Shot callers” is urban vernacular that refers to the gangs’ leadership.

day, which resulted in the high school being locked down. The teacher told Ruben that she was bothered that he was allowed back on campus without a suspension or alternative punishment. Ruben told us that the teacher made similar comments out loud in front of the class. When Ruben asked the teacher to “back off” and “leave him alone,” the teacher replied, “...if the school or local police can’t change you, I will.” As Ruben told us this story, his lips began to quiver and his eyes were slightly lubricated with what appeared to be rigidly held-back tears. We asked him, “Are you ok?”

Ruben: “Nah, I’m cool. Just tripping on how teachers don’t really care about you.”

Victor: “Why do you say that they don’t care about you?”

Ruben: “It’s like they never really liked me because they knew my family [his older brother and cousins had dropped out of school] and were just waiting for me to slip.”

Victor: “What makes you think they were waiting for you to slip?”

Ruben: “Like, the minute they find any little thing on you, they want to call the pigs to come and arrest you. I mean, that’s messed up. I’m not even from nowhere and they want to treat me like I’m a criminal.”

Conclusion

Schools have tremendous positive power over the lives of students—the power to teach them academics; the power to socialize them to be engaged citizens; the power to transform their lives in positive ways—but schools also have negative power: the power to mark a student with a discipline record; the power to force a student out of school; and the power to catapult students into the school-to-prison pipeline. The multiple marginality that many working-class Latino students face in hyper-criminalized schools stems from a societal, racialized fear of immigrant populations, and a macro-economic transformation in which de-industrialization and post-industrialization have created the conditions for education systems to restructure themselves more punitively. Ergo, some marginalized Latino youths are no longer “learning to labor” but rather “preparing for prison” in their school settings. The multiple marginality that young working-class Latinos face today is one of a punitive society that treats and manages them, across institutional settings, as a suspect criminal class which is immersed in layers of illegality.

One key instrument for reversing the school-to-prison pipeline could be the implementation of restorative-justice approaches. Richard has assisted the school studied here to implement a restorative-justice process by facilitating conversations with students who are finding it difficult to learn conflict resolution skills and to share issues at home and at school with each other. Often, in this process, the youths address each other and discuss how they could treat each other on and off campus. Sometimes Richard guides the conversations, and, at other times, professionals from the local community take hold of the lessons. The youth find common ground, and, eventually, learn to respect each other and socialize in less confrontational and aggressive manners.

In addition to culturally-competent outreach workers, culturally-responsive teachers might help to ameliorate this school-to-prison pipeline. When educators fear young people because of the way they dress, where they come from, or where they live, they have little capacity to educate them, and, instead, have to rely on discipline as the key system for managing their pupils. There is a greater opportunity for equitable schools when classrooms are “responsive to the social and cultural diversity of the communities that they serve” (Cairney, 2000, p.10). Cairney cites researcher Jim Cummins’ work that “identified four structural elements of schooling,” which, Cummins argued, “influence the extent to which students from minority backgrounds are empowered or disadvantaged.” These elements include: incorporating minority students’ culture and language; including minority communities in the education of their children, pedagogical practices operating in the classroom, and the assessment of minority students (Cairney, 2000, p. 6).

In addition, culturally-responsive teaching recognizes certain cultural features of Latinos, and incorporates

those aspects into the curriculum (Waxman & Pardon, 2002). For example, a teacher who understands that Latinos place great importance on family and community would incorporate those aspects into their lessons (Waxman & Pardon, 2002). Teachers can also create a cooperative-learning environment where students work in small groups, which has been found to decrease student anxiety and improve English proficiency and social, academic, and communication skills (Calderon, 1991; Chrisitan, 1995; Rivera & Zehler, 1991). Also, teachers who provide opportunities for extended dialogue are especially effective in teaching Latino students, because students are able to develop language skills and higher-level thinking skills (Tharp, 1995; August & Hakuta, 1998; Duran, Dugan, & Weffer, 1997).

While school officials can claim to have their hands tied due to larger economic, political, or policy forces, there are some pragmatic steps that educators may take to begin to reverse at least some of the effects of the school-to-prison pipeline on Latino youths. Schools have the potential to change the pipeline because factors within schools may be controlled and transformed, such as improving relationships with teachers and implementing restorative-justice practices and policies. As such, school factors may influence student engagement as well as their personal characteristics, and these may play a role in providing protective factors that rival the protective factors provided by the gang (Sharkey, 2011). When high schools adopt a more empathic role with at-risk youth, and provide services like counseling, mentoring, and tutoring, research shows that violence and gang membership reports decrease. While educators don't have the resources to reverse the effects of structural forces that impact their students' lives, they do have the ability to change their interactional practices with students, become more culturally relevant, and implement restorative approaches. These minor changes might help to begin the process of eliminating the school-to-prison pipeline and create a cradle-to-college staircase instead.

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“‘Whisper to a Scream’: The Collateral Consequences of Parental Incarceration”⁵³

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“We have seen that, in penal justice, the prison transformed the punitive procedure into a penitentiary technique; the carceral archipelago transported this technique from the penal institution to the entire social body.” Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish* (1977: 198)

Introduction

My father died two weeks before my college graduation. Two weeks before I was to see him in a suit and tie for the first time in my life, he died from a massive heart attack in the agricultural fields of the Imperial Valley where he’d spent almost his entire life working. I remember going to class the day that my father died to inform my professors that I would be missing the final week of the semester so that I can attend my father’s funeral. I promised I would be back for finals. It was too soon to realize that any children I would have in the future would grow up never having met their grandfather. I evolved a sixth sense that allowed me to absorb life’s jolts by sidestepping past emotional highs and lows. I had grown accustomed to uncertainty. In a way, I was too slow to realize that, this time, this goodbye would be a permanent exit. On the morning of May 6, 1998, I received the phone call from my oldest sister breaking the news that my father had passed away from a severe heart attack only a couple hours earlier. Everything was fine. We shared a very ordinary conversation. We talked like rational adults. We spoke of death now, reassured each that everything would turn out okay, with a reminder that the obligatory funeral would be later in the week. It was a very matter-of-fact conversation. Minutes later, the phone rings. This time my mother is on the other line. This time emotions poured over tears in the barely decipherable words of our native tongue. To hell with the English-speaking world is what we cried.

The story of my father’s death goes back to a common passage my mother and I had traveled through seven years earlier. Together, my mother and I confronted my father’s arrest, visited him in jail, and attended his trial hearings. We shared a carceral bond. In a way, we had been through this ceremony of death before. The last time we went through this, however, life was too busy for a pause, we missed the opportunity to cry. We experienced my father’s *social death* together; as a family unit, we were witness to and participants in a *successful degradation ceremony*. Social death is the symbolic process describing the condition of exclusion whereby one’s identity is replaced by a dehumanizing official government label, in this case, the felon. While there is emerging research literature on the school-to-prison pipeline understood as the process by which the zero tolerance discipline in the school precedes and prepares minority youth for punishment in the criminal justice system, what I write about here is something slightly different (see Children’s Defense Fund 2013). I’ve written in other places about how zero tolerance policies and support for community policing strategies function as mechanisms reinforcing the structures of hyperincarceration (Nuño 2013). In what follows, I narrate a mirroring extra-penal process: how parental incarceration is a secondary prisonization for the families of convicted men. The “pains of imprisonment” extend beyond the prison walls.

This essay is composed in three sections. First, I describe the ordinariness of social suffering in a household with an incarcerated family member. Next, I apply sociological and criminological theory to the circumstances surrounding the extension of carceral detention beyond the physical architecture of the modern penitentiary. Last, I review the literature on reentry in light of my family’s role in reintegration following my father’s release from prison. In an effort to shed light upon an angle of the cradle-to-prison pipeline, this essay offers examples from my own life navigating the free world in the shadows of an invasive hyperincarceration social order.

53. “Whisper to a Scream” is the title of a song by the Icicle Works, “(Birds Fly) Whisper to a Scream” (1983).

Confronting a new ordinary

“Children who are present for an arrest at the very least experience an abrupt removal of a parent, most likely with no explanation beyond the general assertion that their mother or father has done something wrong.” (Comfort 2007: 276)

It was a normal October evening in 1991. “They’re here for my dad. Do you know where his shoes are? He needs some shoes.” These are the words my younger sister uttered through my bedroom door. Sure enough, as walk out to the living room I see my father standing outside the front door, in handcuffs, with police officer standing on either side. He wasn’t wearing any shoes. The plain white t-shirt was thrown on after his hands were shackled behind his back leaving it draping over his neck. The police explained that my father asked if he could at least put on some shoes. The officers advised that we should meet with an attorney.

What were the immediate day-to-day consequences of having a parent arrested, detained in jail awaiting trial? In the weeks following my father’s arrest, I visited as many attorneys’ offices as I could. Really, I only visited those that offered free advice. Most of these trips resulted in recognizing that our family was unable to afford a private attorney. We learned immediately that bail was not an option. Bail was set at one hundred thousand dollars. There was no way we could come up with that amount of money, or even the ten percent bail amount that we could post if we had one hundred thousand dollars of property as collateral. We were too poor to defend ourselves and too weak to confront the humbling power of the state.

It was left up to me to relay to my father’s employer the news of our situation. Then we had to figure out how we’d handle work, making money to pay the bills from that point forward. What were my mother, younger sister and I going to do now? I had just dropped out of community college. The bills never stopped coming. I kept my job as a day laborer in the agricultural fields of the Imperial Valley. Within a month I turned to delivering pizzas. These jobs served as a temporary reprieve from the ordinary, everyday world shattering all around. When I wasn’t at work, I had to confront the obvious suffering my mother was experiencing. Moreover, since my mother never learned to drive, it fell upon me to drive her to visit the county jail to visit my father. Nonetheless, the doubly low status and low pay worlds of agricultural labor and pizza delivery offered sanctuary from the insecurity of the world crumbling all around our family.

Trips to the country jail were never easy, either on our souls or within our own daily schedules. Megan Comfort vividly describes the secondary prisonization extended to visitors of incarcerated men at San Quentin prison in California (2008). Although local county jails hold detainees awaiting trial or serving short sentences, these spaces also function as domains of “contested personhood, an intermediary zone where visitors continually define and defend their social and physical integrity against the degradation of self (Garfinkel, 1956) required by the prison as a routine condition for visiting” (Comfort, 2008, p. 22). Those of us visiting the detainees had to sign up for visitations a full two hours prior to the visitation hour. Nobody was allowed to sign up for visits in the hour before visiting hour began. If the visitation list filled up before the one-hour cutoff time for visitation, visitors would be turned away. This means that we would sit in a cold bland room of the county jail alongside other lost souls waiting for two hours to be shuttled down a long corridor with many twists and turns en route to the visitation room with the plexiglass and phones on either side and jail guard eavesdropping on our conversations.

Beyond the immediate, day-to-day issues that my family had to confront at the time of my father’s detention at the county jail, there were also the long-term realities that were not going to go away. Where would we sleep when we inevitably lost our home? Where would we live? How much longer could we withstand the daily anguish of not only struggling with finances, but the enormous emotional burden of trying to stand up to the criminal justice system? Alas, the present was merely a placeholder for the inescapable future that would be, unlike the past, a future where I would forever be the son of a convicted felon. The present was simply a turning point marking the transition towards the new segregation of the hyperincarceration social order. Oftentimes my mother would ask out loud if maybe the shock of a sudden death was preferable to the slow, daily torture of confronting the unknown in the months after my father’s arrest. Approximately three months after my father’s arrest, following countless trips to criminal defense attorneys’ offices, the public defender’s office, and visits to the county jail, my father pled no contest to the charges before him. He was sentenced to seven-years incarceration in a California state prison.

On Degradation Ceremonies, Social Death, and Secondary Prisonization

My father immigrated to the United States as part of the *bracero* program in 1954. His education level was minimal, having gone to school only as far as the third grade. A consistent finding in hyperincarceration literature is that low level of formal schooling is a strong predictor of the lifetime likelihood of incarceration (Western, 2006). In the years since his migration to the U.S., he learned to speak, read, and write English. One of the lasting words forever burned in my memory was this advice he offered as I shared with him my anxiety at moving away to a four-year university after transferring out of community college, “At least you know the language.” In these few words, I was reminded of my privileged status in American society prior to my father’s prison sentence. The transformation of my public life from the privileged-American-born-son-of-Mexican-immigrants to the dishonored-son-of-a-convicted-felon shook my core essence, forced me to replace my private identity with a new state-sanctified soiled identity. In the sections that follow, I summarize theoretical works that bear upon the post-release condition of incarcerated men and their families.

The meaning of ritual destruction. Garfinkel’s (1956) essay on status degradation ceremonies painstakingly encapsulates the process and functions of our law courts, as well as the essence of what it means to transform personal, private lives into formal, public inanimate labels. There are three concepts in the classic sociology on imprisonment that apply to the secondary prisonization of the families of incarcerated men. Below I discuss the concept of rituals, mortified self, and status degradation to shed light on the consequence of hyperincarceration to penalize families of incarcerated men.

For Durkheim, “a society is to its members what god is to its faithful” (Durkheim, 1912, p. 208). Society reproduces itself through the minds of the individuals that make up society. Like all religious life, one of the fundamental means by which society stamps the values of the moral community is through the ritual. The courts and the rule of law are a passage through which we can witness the values of the moral community at work. What are these values? Who is the moral community expressed in the discourse of America’s courts?

Growing up a child of Mexican immigrants in the borderlands of the Southwestern United States shaped my distinctive orientation to American life. Our family was one divided by an international border. Uncles, aunts, cousins, and grandparents all still lived in Mexico. The Anglo-world was the world we lived in, but not the moral community that shaped the core of our collective identity. Social outcasts from Mexican life, not fully integrated into American society; neither good enough for Mexico nor accepted in the United States. Through ritual of my father’s arrest to his detention, sentencing and incarceration we found our legal and quasi-legal status in American society. The prison transformed the identity of my father from agricultural laborer to ex-felon, “mortified self” (Goffman, 1961), as well as my mother’s and my new public label as quasi-convicts.

Degradation ceremonies are rituals concerned with “the alteration of total identities” (Garfinkel, 1956, p. 420). The public denunciation of our family from the neighborhood to the individual, private transformation of our social selves, the sociology of moral indignation captures the feelings of shame, guilt, and identity transformation in a family traveling through the police, courts, and prisons in a hyperincarceration social order. Garfinkel lays out three conditions to a successful degradation ceremony. First is the necessity of a total identity transformation in a total institution. Second is the function of shame that results from the public denunciation of the accused. Third, the new identity shapes the future new normal, which must be seen in light of a social calculus that represents “the former identity as accidental: the new identity is the ‘basic reality.’ What he is now is what, ‘after all,’ he was all along” (Garfinkel, 1956, p. 422). In short, the successful degradation ceremony marked our baptism into American society. We learned how to *be American* by accepting our new soiled identity as markers of our status in the social hierarchy. We are forever wedded to the modern prison. Wacquant (2000) and Alexander (2010) describe this hyperincarceration social order as America’s new ‘peculiar institution’ or the new *Jim Crow*.

Social death and the pains of imprisonment.

“The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an ideological representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called ‘discipline’. . . In fact, power produces; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this process.” (Foucault, 1977, p. 194)

Two concepts extend upon Garfinkel’s “degradation ceremony” for making sense of the transformation of public self. First, the idea of social death communicates the mechanism by which persons are deprived of their full humanity in the existing social and legal order. Slavery is the clearest illustration whereby people are denied their essential humanness. I argue that, as an extension of the peculiar institution, hyperincarceration functions as a symbol of social death for those touched by the professionals in the law, courts, and prisons. The society of captives is now no longer exclusively that population of men warehoused in America’s prisons. Today, the society of captives extends to the partners and children of the incarcerated population. Gresham Sykes summarizes “the pains of imprisonment” in his book, *The Society of Captives* (2007 [1958]), outlining the conditions flowing from the loss of freedom inside the prison walls. Below, I explain how these pains of imprisonment reach out and extend to the families of people doing time in America’s prisons.

Rios shows us how social death results from the criminalization and punishment of black and Latino boys in the streets of Oakland, California in the contemporary hyperincarceration era. He argues that

Social incapacitation is the process by which punitive social control becomes an instrument which prevents marginalized populations from functioning, thriving, and feeling a sense of dignity and humanity in their daily interactions with institutional forces (Rios, 2011, p. 160).

Similarly, parental incarceration greets children of men doing time as little more, not-quite-fully-human beings trapped in a penal web of social suffering. “The impact of incarceration on families ranges from lost income and help with child care to diminished relationships and social isolation” (Braman, 2002, p. 117-118). Having an incarcerated parent creates what Braman refers to as *prison worries* (p. 119-120). Prison worries range from the day-to-day dynamics of trying to figure out how to provide for loved ones behind the prison walls in the form of money for the commissary and planning for trips to the prison for visits to the daily anxiety and emotional toil of handwritten correspondence. Social death is the process of social negation. Here the concept applies to families of incarcerated men as a way of describing a life that is marked by the paradox of nonbeing, a life filled with constant struggle to only be marked as indelibly defective (Patterson, 1982, p. 38).

Gresham Sykes examination of the society of captives penetrates the walls of a New Jersey maximum security state prison to relay the pains of imprisonment. The pains of imprisonment, for Sykes (2007), are “the punishments which the free community deliberately inflicts on the offender for violating the law” (p. 64). Sykes describes the deprivations of liberty, goods and services, heterosexual relationships, autonomy, and security as only the official pains of imprisonment. The suffering that attacks the prisoner’s psyche are the more profound pains of imprisonment. The individuals caught up in the penal archipelago of the hyperincarceration social order retreat into the world of fantasy as a strategy to confront state power. Prison letters can be a means by which incarcerated men and their loved one withdraw “into a fantasy based on fondled memories of the past or imaginary dreams of life after release” (Sykes, 2007, p. 80). For those on the outside, confronting the pains of imprisonment can mean a withdrawal into the realm of fantasy through abusing recreational drugs or falling into a forlorn depression. The pains of imprisonments then become a vicious cycle of punishment, degradation, and depression, followed by escape into the world of recreational drugs. Recreational drug use is often a symptom and not the cause of social isolation, structural dislocation, and angst. Yet, the war on drugs grants the police license to target recreational drug users, whereby the criminal justice system captures the loved ones of people doing time, processing entire communities through the penal state. The tragedy of hyperincarceration becomes a farce through the persistent war on drugs

Secondary prisonization. Data on parental incarceration is scant. The clearest estimates suggest that as many as 2.3 million children have a parent in prison, and for 90% of these children the incarcerated parents are fathers (Comfort, 2007, p. 274). In *Doing Time Together* (2008), Comfort meticulously describes the secondary prisonization of women whose partners are doing time in San Quentin prison in California. She shows us that “women with incarcerated partners undergo a secondary prisonization,” (Comfort, 2008, p. 15) understood as developing a subcultural worldview that mimics that of incarcerated men; in essence the women in Comfort’s study become “quasi-inmates.” Below, I use my family’s experience to argue that children, as well as the female partners of incarcerated men undergo a secondary prisonization.

In her study of prisoner reentry, Petersilia (2003) observes that “male prisoners who maintain strong family relationships during imprisonment have higher rates of post-release success” (p. 41). Yet, not much is made in *When Prisoners Come Home* of the emotional, financial, and overall social strains that are required of families to maintain strong relationships during imprisonment. Petersilia points out that “prison phone calls are very expensive” (p. 45). Since these calls must be collect calls, the costs falls on the backs of families whose primary breadwinner is the one serving his prison sentence. In my own experience, collect calls from the state prison resulted in my phone service being shut off. I worked the graveyard shift earning a little over minimum wage. My telephone service was an expense that I could no longer afford. Letter writing became the only means of communication between my father and I during his incarceration. The pictures below are Christmas cards my father sent from prison.



In his description of the typical pattern of daily life inside a modern American prison, Norval Morris recounts the nonsensical boredom that is prison life. “Day in, day out, life is the same, unless there is a ‘lockdown.’ And during lockdown is even more the same” (Morris, 1998, p. 202). Television shows and news media all-too-often fail to capture the “deadening sameness” that is prison life. Our letters to each other were our best effort to escape the daily pattern of socially wasting life away in the modern panopticon, one of us inside the prison, the other in the free society.

Although I was not old enough to buy alcohol, I always managed to secure booze when I craved it. In the years during my father’s incarceration, my life became more reclusive and detached from mainstream society. Working on the graveyard shift I was exposed to a wide variety of stimulants. Cocaine and methamphetamine were a part of life in the graveyard shift. Work and recreation would lapse into one. Those of us in the graveyard shift become accustomed to rarely ever seeing the normal world. Co-workers would stop coming in. Rumors were that they’d turned toward rehab or tested positive during a random drug test or been arrested. Work turnover was high.

One of my closest friends during the period of my father’s incarceration was a fellow co-worker who had recently completed his prison sentence. We can call him Dave. He was the only one of my co-workers who’d stay away from drugs and would drink alcohol only in moderation. While in prison he had tattooed his kids’ names around his neck. He was quite a bit older. I was only twenty years old then, living in a world among fathers whose children were only about five years younger than me. Maybe Dave symbolized a deeper understanding of penal degradation than I had known up to that point. Dave would silently offer commentary about the drugs and excessive drinking in the world around us. He’d often point out that I had to find a new group of friends, that the work on the graveyard shift was a road to nowhere, that my life was still ahead of me. As I wallowed in my own self-pity, the only voice that offered useful advice was that of an ex-felon. Perhaps Dave saw the tentacles of the penal state wrapping itself around me. Perhaps Dave saw me in need of personal guide through the maze of obscurity in the suburbs of hyperincarceration Los Angeles.

Post-incarceration/reentry

My father was released from prison early, after serving half of his seven-year sentence. My sisters and I helped to find a place for my mother and father to live upon his release. Since he’d be out on parole, there would be restrictions on his movement, as well as residency restrictions upon his reentry to society. My oldest sister and her husband purchased a lawnmower and other equipment so that my father could work mowing lawns for business office complexes that had sprung up around the eastern suburbs of Los Angeles. For a few months, I held on to my job working the graveyard shift at night and helping mow lawns in the mornings. I’d then go home around noon to sleep about seven hours before returning to work at eleven at night to start the process all over again.

While working with my father, we talked about what my future would be like. I was twenty-one years of age now. Soon after my father’s release, I would spend weekends at the home my parents were renting. It was nice being able to spend some time with my family after all we’d been through. My parents would try to talk me into going to school to learn how to become a truck driver. They’d talk to me about joining the army or navy. We all felt that where I was at the time needed to change. In their eyes, I was still *doing time*.

It wasn’t long after my father’s release that I quit my job working the graveyard shift. My parents invited me to live with them on the condition that I give community college another try and help my father with his lawn mowing when I wasn’t in school. For the next two years, I attended community college. Being back at school after nearly four years of life in the shadow of the penitentiary, I felt at ease. My mother and father were living under one roof again. My father had to meet with his parole officer at first every week, then eventually once a month. He’d always come home a little on the edge. He was having trouble accepting his “stigmatized self” in a free society. All these years his penal habitus had been confined, hidden behind prison walls. Now, among free society where souls were ranked in a hierarchy of value, the ex-felon label didn’t come easy.

Prisoner reentry is often examined as if it’s a process only ex-felons go through. This criminological focus is too narrow. Most successful reentry is predicated upon strong or stable connections to family. Family members

reenter mainstream society together with the ex-felon, although in the private sphere of the family home. Of course, I did not know that these years would be our last together. These final two years together were spent with me commuting to the community college, helping my father mow lawns when I wasn't in the classroom, and mending relationships that were broken through my father's incarceration. In some respects, these may have been the greatest years of our lives.

Concluding Remarks

The last time I saw my father alive was the day before I left to live in the dorms at the University of California at Berkeley. Not even two years after I left for college, I received that morbid phone call we all know is bound to happen, but never fully accept. It seems reasonable to look back and conclude that the prison has been an unfortunate, yet “happy accident” in my Mexican life. Growing up, my parents always threatened to move the family back to Mexico if their children became too American. I never knew what to make of that threat, beyond understanding that it was, in fact, possible for my parents to move us back to Mexico. As first generation immigrants, our home was neither in Mexico nor in the United States. The trappings of the penal archipelago changed that. There was no turning back. We were here to stay.

Merton describes serendipity as a process of self-discovery, as kind of a “happy accident.” In the introduction to *The Travels and Adventures of Serendipity*, we are told “serendipity can be about finding something of value while seeking something entirely different” (Merton & Barber, 2004, p. xiv). It's been nearly twenty years since my father's release from prison. It's been almost fifteen years since his passing. In the time since, all or most of my energies have been directed at drawing light upon this dark era in American history. In their study of lives of delinquent boys at age seventy, Laub & Sampson (2003) point out that desistance is always marked by turning points in life – “changes in situational and structural life circumstances like a good marriage and a stable job” (p. 278). They found that men who desisted from crime were men who were embedded in healthy structures of informal social control. Men that were able to disentangle themselves from the webs of the criminal justice system were the men who had wives and children who loved them, employers who cared about them, and neighbors who counted on them. Something as simple as a meaningful social bond is what Laub and Sampson (2003) found to be missing from the men who were lifetime persisters (p. 278-282). Our hyperincarceration social order is historically unprecedented, as well as unusually harsh. At the same time, the carceral archipelago connects all the souls who share in the suffering of the contemporary penal state. The social solidarity among community activists, engaged scholars, and others who recognize the failings of the harsh discipline and penal suffering inflicted upon our current generation offers hope for a future social movement wedded to chipping away at the hyperincarceration social order.

We are in the depths of a hyperincarceration society. There are three prisons within ten miles from my home. Friends that I went to high school with have found steady careers either in law enforcement or as corrections officers in one of California's prisons. Many small towns throughout the state depend on the presence of the prison in their backyard. Our schools' harsh discipline policies are mimicking the culture of policing predicated on the war on drugs where a militarized language sees the world in stark binaries of good and evil. Such is the current state of the world we have come to inherit in the post-segregation era United States. Yet, there is reason to be hopeful. There are spaces to resist the pressures of conforming to the logic of the penal state in our everyday life. Teachers, principals, counselors, and educators must be granted discretion to weigh the influence of intervening variables contributing to kids' misbehavior. Schools must resist the pornography of law and order; police officers belong out in public space not in school hallways. Administrators need to continue the education, or, at minimum, be open to the idea that they've succumbed to the perversion of the law and order pornography, which fetishizes zero tolerance discipline at the expense of healthy social interaction built on negotiation and peace-making conflict resolution. We must all work together to resist the temptation of punishment for punishment's sake.

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White Innocence and Mexican Americans as Perpetrators in the School-to-Prison Pipeline

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Abstract

This essay discusses white innocence as a mechanism that may contribute to perceptions of Mexican Americans as perpetrators. These perceptions are crucial to ways teachers and administrators respond to student actions as the initial steps in the school-to-prison pipeline. Specifically, this work reviews the rhetoric of white innocence in a high school U.S. History curriculum map and outlines how this rhetoric constructs Mexican Americans, and other people of color, as threats or perpetrators to the innocence of whiteness. The consequence of perceiving Mexican Americans as perpetrators may mediate teacher and administrator reactions to student behaviors and ultimately to initiation of the school-to-prison pipeline.

Introduction

Mexican Americans are often immersed in the school-to-prison pipeline. Evidence indicates Latina/o incarceration rates beyond those of their white peers (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011) exacerbated by evidence that race/ethnicity mediates sentencing (Bontrager, Bales, & Chiricos, 2005), and supported by a penal system that, as Wacquant (2002) describes, is steeped in “frenetic development of a private industry of imprisonment” (p. 20, author’s italics) operating for profit and reliant upon the commodification of crime, criminality, and criminals. These indices investigate phenomena occurring in the formal justice system’s contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline. However, the school-to-prison pipeline is a conduit that includes the schooling system where Latinas/os are disproportionately represented in school discipline (Skiba, Horner, Chung, Rausch, May, & Tobin, 2011; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). While critical, the above cited studies focus on disciplinary actions resulting from student behavior. Germane to this investigation, Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2010) write, “[a]nother crucial area of research needs to test mechanisms and develop theory regarding the conscious and unconscious processes that result in differential treatment of some racial and ethnic groups” (p. 64). This work attempts to do precisely this by examining how curriculum maps may participate in criminalization projects and ultimately the school-to-prison pipeline.

Below, I describe white innocence and person of color perpetration as foundational to my analysis and critical whiteness studies as a theoretical frame. Then, given that school discipline occurs at the front end of the school-to-prison pipeline, and that teachers are largely responsible for disciplinary consequences (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002), I review literature focusing on teacher views of school discipline. After sharing my methods, I describe and analyze data from a high school U.S. History curriculum map to exemplify how white innocence and person of color perpetration are constructed, then discuss its implications vis-à-vis the school-to-prison pipeline for Mexican Americans.

White Innocence and Person of Color Perpetration

Examination of court opinions reveals a discourse that avoids racial accountability. Ross (1990a) indicts the *rhetoric of innocence* in promoting unconscious racism because according to this rhetoric, a person who has not committed a racist act is innocent. However, Ross suggests that individual innocence moves beyond repudiation of one’s racism and considers ill-gotten privileges. He argues that this rhetoric, “avoids the argument that white people generally have benefited from the oppression of people of color, that white people have been advantaged by this oppression in a myriad of obvious and less obvious ways” (Ross, 1990a, p. 301).

Extremely important is that juxtaposed to white innocence is person of color perpetration. Ross

explains that any discursive move of white innocence situates the person of color as “the defiled taker” (p. 310), a perpetrator of threat to white innocence. Ross (1990b) also describes how in the rhetoric of innocence advances this notion. To do so, he analyzes rhetorical themes of white innocence and black abstraction in historical and contemporary legal opinions. Defining white innocence as “the insistence on the innocence or absence of responsibility of the contemporary white person” (p. 3), he attempts to demonstrate how the Courts’ opinions positioned white absolution since, “the horrific circumstances of the blacks were, after all, not the white person’s fault” (p. 6). Ross describes buttressing of this absolution through corresponding utilization of black abstraction. Conceptualized as, “the rhetorical depiction of the black person” (p. 6), black abstraction works to “obscure the humanness of black persons” (p. 6). Framing blacks as lesser humans allows for denial of empathy in social situations. In concert, white innocence and black abstraction work to “obscure the degradation of blacks and to absolve the contemporary whites of responsibility for any images of degradation that might have passed through the filter of black abstraction” (pp. 6-7).

These works are involved in the project of bringing transparency to a common-sense, naturalized milieu that cultivates unequal and inequitable social outcomes. The present study seeks to further this project. In the following, I outline critical whiteness studies as a theoretical frame within which the discourse of white innocence and Latina/o perpetration in curriculum can be understood.

Critical Whiteness Studies

During the 1990s, examinations of whiteness appeared within the “intellectual genealogy of critical race theory” (Yosso, 2005, p. 71). This intellectual genealogy includes roots in critical legal studies (CLS) and radical feminism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). With its CLS roots, critical race theory (CRT) shared a rejection of “the prevailing orthodoxy that scholarship should be or could be ‘neutral’ and ‘objective’” (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995, p. xiii). With radical feminism, CRT shares a call for critical examination of the “relationship between power and the construction of social roles, as well as ... habits that make up ... types of domination” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 5). To “ensure that a focus on whiteness doesn’t become one more excuse to recenter dominant voices” (Apple, 1998, p. xi), Leonardo (2009) reminds that in whiteness studies, “whiteness becomes the center of critique and transformation” (p. 91). Vital to examination is understanding the difference between whiteness and white people. Making this distinction, Leonardo (2002) clarifies, “‘Whiteness’ is a racial discourse, whereas the category ‘white people’ represents a socially constructed identity” (p. 31).

Driven by ideologies that proclaim whiteness as “nothing but oppressive and false” (Roediger, 1991, p. 13), some CWS scholars posit that only through eradication can unearned privilege and oppression of whiteness be terminated. Ignatiev and Garvey (1996) refer to whites who engage in abolition of whiteness as *race traitors* who reject white privilege participation. In this abolitionist frame, the existence of racism continues as long as there are races. Thus, to achieve the goal of transforming inequitable systems, the extinction of race, including the white race as whiteness, must precede the end of racism since “whiteness is the center of the ‘race problem’” (Leonardo, 2009, p. 92).

In the following, I discuss research attempts to address the discipline gap between students of color and their white peers by focusing on teacher perceptions. While the school-to-prison pipeline certainly includes elements found beyond teachers’ views of school discipline, this literature is relevant to the current examination.

Teachers’ Views of School Discipline

Overrepresentation of students of color in exclusionary discipline was chronicled in the 1970s (Children’s Defense Fund, 1975). Still to date, studies have not offered any definitive explanation for racial/ethnic gaps in school discipline. Likewise, investigations attempting to explain discipline gaps by assessing behavioral differences have shown no supporting evidence (McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992; Skiba, et al., 2002). Germane to this investigation is scant literature regarding the role of schooling agents’ (teachers, administrators) beliefs in assignment of discipline.

Johnson, Whittington, and Oswald (1994) surveyed over 3,500 teachers in Australia for their views regarding

school discipline. Their findings indicated that teachers' beliefs reflected social and ideological considerations about the charge of school discipline and how discipline issues should be approached. Significantly, the authors found that 1) most teachers' lacked engaged assessment of socio-ideological constructions of varying school disciplinary approaches, 2) did not consider school discipline as actions that attended to divergent racial group interests, and 3) most teachers believed discipline issues were the product of problem students.

The finding that teachers perceive students as problems duplicated Guttman's (1982) quantitative study. Guttman found that Israeli elementary school teachers cited students' "need for attention ... psychological problems" and "parents' level of education" (p. 18) as among reasons for student disciplinary issues. Conversely, these teachers discounted "ethnic discrimination" (p. 18) as contributors to behavioral problems. Importantly, Guttman noted that teachers directed "the responsibility for behavioral problems onto the child, and away from themselves" (p. 18).

Missing from investigations was the role of race in teachers' perceptions. However, Gregory and Mosely (2004) addressed this gap. Their qualitative study examined theoretical foundations upon which teachers explained disciplinary issues. This inquiry, conducted in a large, urban high school, "sought to examine the connection between race and teachers' views about students in the discipline system" (p. 18). In this work, most teachers disregarded race in their explanations of disciplinary issues. These researchers described that, "teachers did not raise issues of racial profiling, unconscious racism, or differential treatment as forces that contribute to discipline problems" (p. 25). The authors held that "teachers' beliefs about race can ... impact their participation in the definition and creation of discipline moments," (p. 18), and concluded that their study "set the groundwork for future studies to examine the causal relationship between the type of implicit theory about race and discipline held by a teacher" (p. 28).

The current essay builds on this groundwork by positing a theoretical basis for examination of the discipline gap and postulates how racialization may be informed. That is, white innocence is not constructed neutrally. It is rhetoric that contributes to misrecognition of perceptions that "helps smooth over the apparent inconsistency between" (Ross, 1990b, p. 20) longstanding discipline inequities and school disciplinary approaches and applications by teachers and administrators that are assumed to be unbiased. In the pages that follow, I present examples of the construction of white innocence and Mexican American (and other people of color) perpetration found in a U.S. History curriculum map (hereafter, the curriculum map). Before doing so, I share methods used to analyze the curriculum map.

Methods

I requested the curriculum map for high school United States History from a school district in the southwest. Written for the 2011-2012 school year, the curriculum map was a district-generated document used as a resource guide for teacher unit and lesson planning. It was a 15-page document formatted with topic titles at the top and several sections below (Figure 1). Employing document analysis, I performed a detailed examination of this curriculum map. During the course of the inquiry, I engaged in continuous data-theory evaluation. I utilized 'Hutchins' (1977) work to direct my document analysis due to its capacity to discern the of documents. Hutchins suggests, "(t)he ability to say what a text is about must be regarded as one facet of our ability to understand a text" (p. 17). Central to document analysis is text comprehension; specifically, the relationship of extant macro-level social structures to narrower micro-level structures as transmitted in a document. As Hutchins comments, "we may envisage the already established macro-structure as providing the context for the interpretation of a particular episode" (p. 27). Thus, document analysis was performed to discern the curriculum map's connection as a micro-level artifact to larger macro-level descriptions of the rhetoric of innocence as described by Ross (1990a, 1990b). In multiple readings of the curriculum map, I conducted line-by-line analyses of content discourse for conceptual connections to descriptions of the rhetoric of innocence. A priori categories I established to analyze the curriculum included the concepts of white innocence and person of color abstraction as described by Ross (1990a, 1990b), as well as omission. Thus, in three separate readings I wrote memos on printed copies of the curriculum that aligned the text of the curriculum map to these categories in establishing a rhetoric of innocence.

Figure 1.

Figure 1. Curriculum Map

Topic - State Standard(s)		Common Core Standards		
Themes/ Big Ideas	Essential Question(s)	Knowledge	Skills	Key Vocabulary
Assessment Tools		Resource Materials		

Important to the continuous data-theory evaluation employed in this work is van Dijk's (1992) suggestion that in examination of text and talk there exists "a double strategy of positive self-presentation, on the one hand, and ... subtle ... forms of negative other-presentation, on the other hand. Indeed ... out group derogation seldom takes place without expressions of ... social face-keeping" (p. 89). Thus, throughout the data collection process, I concentrated on two evaluations: 1) how the discursive content of the curriculum at hand (a micro-social analysis) related to analyses of white innocence and person of color abstraction in legal rhetoric described above (a more macro-social analysis), and 2) how discourse utilized in the curriculum engaged in the double "strategy of positive self-presentation" and social face-keeping" for whites through innocence, and "subtle ... negative other-presentation" of people of color.

White Innocence and Person of Color Abstraction

While white innocence and person of color abstraction work concurrently and in collaboration to veil racial subordination and benefits of white innocence (Gotanda, 2004), I highlight each separately in this section to bring clarity to how the present curriculum engages in such constructions.

White innocence. The curriculum map succeeds at posting white innocence through “misrecognition and deniability” (Dick & Wirtz, 2011, p. E5) of white culpability by employing a grammatical and discursive device referred to as *mitigating agency* (Duranti, 2004). Mediation (mitigation) of agency is achieved through “grammatical and discourse strategies, including omission (i.e. no mention of agent at all) and alternative grammatical framings (e.g., variation in the expressed connection between an event and the entity that might have caused it)” (p. 460). The curriculum map applies both strategies.

Mitigation through grammatical framing. White innocence is achieved via grammatical framing and mitigation of responsibility of historical activities through the use of *accounts* and *techniques of neutralization* described originally by Scott and Lyman (1968), and Sykes and Matza (1957/2003), respectively. An account is “a statement made by a social actor to explain ... untoward behavior – whether that behavior is his own or that of others” (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p. 46). When such acts occur, they “may obligate the actor to give an account to correct impressions ... or to save face” (Buttny, 1985, p. 58). In the present curriculum, saving face (white innocence) is obtained through *justification* by way of techniques of neutralization (McGraw, 1990) of historical proceedings. Justification techniques of neutralization invoked in the curriculum map include, 1) denial of injury (to people) (Buttny, 1985), and 2) denial of victim (as objects), acknowledgment that actions occurred but were acceptable since “there are objects that have a neutral or ambiguous identity with respect to ownership” (Scott & Lyman, 1968, p. 51).

Neutralizing effects are produced through invocation of white innocence and carried out by grammatical framing through use of modally weak nouns, verbs, and verb phrases where whites are involved. This is possible because, as Bybee (1985) describes, utilization of modally weak nouns and verbs serves the purpose of mitigating agency. The curriculum map illustrates this in the employment of the modally weak verb *contact* and the noun *relations* in passages that mitigate injury to Native Americans:

- When Worlds Collide: Early American Civilizations and European Contact.
- Identify the reciprocal impact from early European contact with indigenous peoples.
- How did contact with new cultures change both the old and new world?
- Early relations with Native Americans ...

These statements offer modally weak grammar that contributes to frames that neutralize injurious experiences of Native Americans occasioned by the arrival and actions of white Europeans. Use of modally weak grammar suggests a reciprocal initiation and interest in social matters. The implication of interest at once palliates injury while indicting, at least in part, Native Americans for their own injurious experiences with white Europeans.

When a modally stronger verb is used, mitigation of responsibility can still be maintained. The curriculum map exemplifies this move in the following:

- Describe the reasons for colonization of America (e.g., religious freedom, desire for land, economic opportunities, and a new life).

Despite utilization of a grammatically stronger modality by way of admission of colonization, justification of colonization is created by offering leads that frame colonization in terms of only the victimless activities of white Europeans. The move, through omission, neutralizes ill-treatment of Native Americans in two domains: 1) the denial of injury as a result of violence perpetrated upon Native American people in the name of reasons offered, and 2) denial of victims specifically in regard to the lead, “desire for land,” wherein no acknowledgment is made with respect to any previous ownership of land.

Ross (1990b) writes that “[w]hite innocence is the insistence on the ... absence of responsibility of the contemporary white person” (p. 3). Modally weak grammar in passages of the curriculum map cited here serves

this resolve by neutralizing narratives of the subjugation of Indigenous populations, diminishing responsibility, and preserving the innocence of whites. Any relative privilege of modern-day whites to that of Indigenous peoples as a legacy of white oppression is obscured through use of historical accounts that utilize dual techniques of neutralization: denial of injury and denial of victim.

In all, the above examples support van Dijk's (1992) notion of the *double strategy* of white social face-keeping and negative other presentation. These reciprocating effects occur as the result of inherent framing that is produced in the rhetoric of white innocence (Ross, 1990a). Mitigating agency by way of *accounts* and *techniques of neutralization* serves to frame whites as innocent through social face-keeping with concurrent negative framing of Native Americans as threats to white innocence.

Omission. The discourse strategy of omission can be used simultaneously to, 1) perform the hegemonic act of normalizing whites while rejecting person of color voice as a matter of investigation (San Juan, 1991), and 2) augment mitigation of agency that is fundamental to white innocence (Duranti, 2004). Thus, omission of perspectives of people of color valorizes "the self-evident truths" (San Juan, 1991, p. 467) of whiteness as "the existing social order" (Sleeter, 2002, p. 18) without agent performance, while omissions of explicit identification of agents of activities contribute to misrecognition of agent culpability (Dick & Wirtz, 2011). The curriculum map here practices such omissions.

Similar to Sleeter's (2002) findings of exclusion in social studies curriculum, there is omission of people of color in this curriculum map. By counting the number of people appearing in the curriculum map, the group central to study can be determined. Results reveal a total of 49 names, 45 (92%) are white people, and 4 (8%) are Black people. No person from any other racial/ethnic group is represented in the curriculum map. These omissions contribute to hegemonic acts of normalizing whites as Americans while simultaneously dismissing narratives of people of color. Such marginalization contributes to white innocence as a technique of neutralization (Sykes & Matza, 1957/2003) whereby once rendered as absent, construction of the denial of victim (Scott & Lyman, 1968) of people of color can be achieved with seemingly more ingenuousness. Ultimately, omissions aid in production of abstractions that work to "obscure the humanness" (Ross, 1990b, p. 6) of people of color. This uncompassionate condition allows for denial of empathy with minimal resistance to oppressive activity and absolved responsibility.

Abstractions through omissions also serve to mitigate agency for activities. The following moves in the curriculum map exemplify this:

- Explain the motives for the colonization of America.
- Describe the impact of expansion on people in the west.
- Assess how the following social developments influenced American society ... a. Civil Rights issues

Juxtaposed to omission of people of color that constructs denial of victim and empathy, the above omissions buttress the structure of a denial of perpetrator. They do so by omitting explicit identification of agents of activities (colonization, expansion, issues) and, in turn, culpability for objectionable consequences suffered by those upon whom actions were conducted (Ross, 1990b). These omissions assist in assembling frames that yield a "misrecognition and deniability" (Dick & Wirtz, 2011, p. E5) of white responsibility. In this denial, the innocence of whiteness as agent of unbecoming activity is maintained.

Person of Color abstraction. The curriculum map regularly represents people of color abstractly by using notions of time and geography as proxies. The map's first topic, *When Worlds Collide: Early American Civilizations and European Contact*, references Native Americans by using a notion of time, *early*. Similarly, later in the curriculum, Native Americans are abstracted by reference to time through use of *prehistoric*. Two instances where this takes place are found in the following passages:

- Describe prehistoric cultures of the North American continent.
- How did pre-historic cultures of the North American continent differ from the Europeans whom they encountered?

These abstractions, representing Native Americans as historical moments, serve the purpose of cloaking natural (native) claims to land. This rhetorical move supports white innocence by substantiating “white privilege through a system of property rights in land in which the ‘race’ of the Native Americans rendered their first possession rights invisible and justified conquest” (Harris, 1993, p. 1721).

Geography is likewise invoked to abstract Native Americans and Mexican ethnics:

- How did the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo affect the people of the American Southwest?
- Evaluate the outcome of westward expansion on people in the west.

Abstractions such as these position people as locations. The abstractions condition denials of victims (Scott & Lyman, 1968) since, according to this curriculum map, specific groups of people are not involved.

Each of the above abstractions serves the purpose of dehumanization for reduction of consideration (Ross, 1990b) while simultaneously maintaining the presentation of a desirable white social identity (Douglas & McGarty, 2001). In the case of the former passages above, Native Americans are represented as historical moments, while they and Mexican ethnics are signified as regional objects in the latter. This dehumanization along with maintenance of an exculpated white social identity is part of the project of white innocence. Ross (1990b) explains clearly this project vis-à-vis Blacks:

[t]he power of black abstraction is that it obscures the humanness of black persons. We can more easily think of black persons as not fully human so long as we do not see them in a familiar social context ... As soon as we begin to imagine the actual circumstances of black persons ... the pain and humiliation ... the rhetoric ... starts to unravel. The great power of ... abstraction is its power to blunt the possible empathetic response (p. 6).

Thus, abstraction of people of color can contribute to social absolution of oppressions by whites and to a nullification of empathy for people of color (Ross, 1990a).

Innocence and Perpetration

The curriculum map exemplifies how, by way of mitigation of agency (Duranti, 2004), the project of white innocence can be engaged. Strategic use of omissions and “alternative grammatical framings” (p. 460) are interspersed throughout the curriculum and perform work that scaffolds white innocence. Grammatical frames that mitigate agency are shaped by accounts (Scott & Lyman, 1968) and techniques of neutralization (Sykes & Matza, 1957/2003). Together with abstractions and omissions that dehumanize people of color and reject their narratives while normalizing whites as American and maintaining a desirable white social identity, white innocence is sustained through “misrecognition and deniability” (Dick & Wirtz, 2011, p. E5) of white culpability.

White innocence in the curriculum map, the result of interplay of the mechanisms of alternative grammatical framings, is conversely paralleled. Ross (1990a) conceptualizes this parallel as follows, “The idea of the innocent victim always conjures the one who takes away her innocence and who thereby himself becomes ... the ‘defiler’ ... the invocation of innocence is also the invocation of sin, guilt, and defilement” (p. 309-310). Discursive moves that (re)construct white innocence, therefore, simultaneously (re)constructs the person of color as an antagonist to this innocence. The person of color becomes a perpetrator through understanding of the perpetrator or defiler as a “natural opposite” (p. 310) to white innocence. This frame is a portal through which issues in the schooling end of the school-to-prison pipeline may be addressed.

Mexican Americans as Perpetrators and the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Several studies find evidence of the influence of race in sentencing (Bontrager et al., 2005; Johnson, 2006; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2001). In their examination of *penology of racial innocence*, Murakawa and Beckett (2010) write, “racial power is ... a systemic institutional phenomenon that reproduces racial inequality and the *presumption of black and brown criminality*” (my emphasis, p. 701). Thus, at the back end of the school-to-

prison pipeline, Mexican American youth may become victims of presumptions that work against them. I posit that contributing to the construction of frames to which Murakawa and Beckett refer is the rhetoric of white innocence and its simultaneous opposite, Mexican American perpetration.

Whenever rhetoric of white innocence is presented, whether in school settings or larger social discourse, groundwork is reinforced upon which presumptions of Mexican Americans, and other people of color, as the “defiled taker” of white innocence are established (Ross, 1990b). Teachers and school administrators are not isolated from this rhetoric at the social level. Likewise, as the examples here indicate, teachers are exposed to this rhetoric in curricula. While most teachers might be able to reject negative, stereotypical frames of Mexican Americans at the conscious level (Ross, 1990b), unconscious racism upon which rhetoric of white innocence contributes remains. In the case of the classroom teacher, the ever-present frame is used to make sense of student actions (Tannen, 1993). Gregory and colleagues (2010) state, “despite relatively similar rates of disruption, Black, Latino, or American Indian students may be more likely to be differentially selected for discipline consequences” (authors italics, p. 62). Thus, perception of Mexican Americans as perpetrators may adversely mediate assessments of the students’ actions and consequences. When acted upon by teachers, student behaviors assessed negatively may result in consequences that would have uneven distributions. Wallace and associates (2008) found these discrepancies and noted that when considering consequences, Latina/o students are more likely than whites to be subject to the most punitive discipline (i.e. suspension, expulsion). These consequences set in motion initiation of the school-to-prison pipeline by casting further the frame of Mexican American perpetration. Hirschfield (2008) speaks to this point,

Expanded school exclusion is a symbolic form of criminalization ... Education agencies that increase their use of exclusionary punishments endorse the prevailing rationale of contemporary criminal justice practice – deterrence and incapacitation. (p. 82)

Ultimately, teachers and administrators can be much more than intermediaries between a student’s conduct and deserved consequences; they can become active participants in the initiation and perpetuation of school-to-prison pipelines (Nolan & Anyon, 2004).

Conclusion

While the US History curriculum map presented above engages in the rhetoric of white innocence and person of color perpetration, it is only one example of how and where this rhetoric takes place. Critical race theorists are informative to the prevalence of the rhetoric of white innocence when they proclaim that “racism is ordinary, not aberrational ... the usual way society does business” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7). Meanwhile, standpoint theory (Smith, 1990) informs connections between white innocence in curricula, reactions to student behaviors, and the school-to-prison pipeline as a mode of production in the capitalist system, as leveraged by privileged accounts of assumed “universal and objective knowledge” (Grimes, 2001, p. 134) in curricula (a standpoint) that have as its project (Weeks, 1996) the marking people of color as defiled takers. Thus, addressing formation of Mexican Americans as perpetrators through framing of white innocence will not be interrupted by merely addressing such rhetoric in curricula or school settings. Much larger transformations in social discourse must also occur. That being said, schools and their agents cannot abdicate responsibility for critically reflecting on the rhetoric of white innocence, its mediation of racial formation of Mexican Americans and other people of color, and its potential contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline. Interventions in the form of assessments of written and spoken text can become part of evaluations of curriculum and practice that can be undertaken in attempts to disrupt such discourse. This would, of course, need to be preceded by professional development that assists teachers and administrators in identifying the rhetoric of whiteness.

For researchers, future work should explicitly investigate mediations and contributions of white innocence to racial formation of Mexican Americans. Without a doubt, attempts to introduce white innocence and its rhetoric to educators would be met with some (perhaps much) denial and resistance. Still, attempts must be made if there are to be interventions that seek to get to the schooling root of the school-to-prison pipeline.

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Alternatives to the School-to-Prison Pipeline: The Role of Educational Leaders in Developing a College-Going Culture

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Abstract

As the largest and fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the country, Latin@ educational success is a national priority. In the Los Angeles Unified School district, the country's largest, high school graduation rates for Latin@s hover at near 40%. Examining this institutional and societal tragedy through the school-to-prison pipeline has yielded crucial insights. Less understood are alternatives to the school-to-prison pipeline and the vital role of educational leaders. This qualitative study of principals and counselors in Southeast Los Angeles schools asks: What is the relationship between the 'school-to-prison pipeline' and the lacking of a 'college going culture' in underserved communities? How do educational leaders perceive their role in creating a "college-going culture" in largely underserved, under-resourced communities? Among the findings is the continued existence of deficit explanations of school failure and the need for school-community partnerships to move toward more asset-based frameworks.

Introduction

The school-to-prison pipeline is the collection of education and public safety policies and practices that push our nation's school children out of the classroom and into the streets, the juvenile justice system, or the criminal justice system (Archer, 2009, p. 868). As our public education system continues to be under intense scrutiny, pressure to increase graduation rates becomes a focal point. Nationwide, 68% of students who enter the 9th grade make it to graduation four years later (Orfield, Losen, & Wald, 2004). In urban areas with high concentrations of low-income and communities of color, the rates are substantially lower. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest in the country, the four-year graduation rate is 46.4%. Within this rate, 48% of African Americans and 40% of Latin@s graduate (Orfield, Losen, & Wald, 2004).

When juxtaposed against this failure to educate our youth, examination of our juvenile and criminal justice system reveal alarming data. In a 2006-07 study of incarcerated 16-24 year olds, those who dropped out (or stopped out) of high school were 63 times more likely to be institutionalized than those with four-year college degrees (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Palma, 2009). It is this linkage between those who are not making it through our educational system and ending up incarcerated by the state that has drawn attention as the "school-to-prison pipeline".

Increasingly prevalent is research about the relationship between schools and prisons as social institutions that contribute to societal inequities (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Palma, 2009). This includes studies of media-driven, fear-based responses that result in stricter disciplinary policies and practices that have had disproportionate punitive effect on low-income Black and Brown students (Fowler, 2011). Studies have also looked at schools that have been successful in providing alternatives to "over-policing" (New York Civil Liberties Union, 2009).

A report entitled "Safety with Dignity" looked at over 100 schools in New York City serving students with similar demographics. The New York Civil Liberties Union (2009) examined these schools based on twelve indicators of success. These criteria included high school graduation rates; level and types of crimes committed in school; average daily attendance; and suspension and expulsion rates. Also among success indicators were the percentages of students planning to attend 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities. The results categorized schools into "successful schools", "permanent metal detector schools", and "impact schools." (The latter were

schools with high crime rates targeted for increased policing by the NYPD).

The “successful schools” scored highest on the twelve success indicators, and had developed alternatives to zero-tolerance, increased policing procedures. These alternatives included peer-mediated student conflicts; students involved in establishing and enforcing school rules; and individualized attention to issues that students faced.

This NYCLU (2009) report showed that when the seven “successful schools” that used no metal detectors were compared to the 89 “permanent metal detector schools” and the 12 “impact schools”, “successful schools” rated higher in nearly all indicators, including students planning to attend college. Seventy percent of students from “successful schools” had college aspirations; compared to 58% of students from “permanent metal detector schools,” and 45% of the students in “impact schools” (NYCLU, 2009, p. 22).

The premise behind the present study is: developing a college-going culture can interrupt the school to prison pipeline that has engulfed so many school systems. And, as reaffirmed by the NYCLU (2009) findings, there are few, if any, more important factors in interrupting this pipeline, than the role of school leaders. The findings support not only the notion that the development of a college-going culture is a core component of a successful school and interrupting the school to prison pipeline, but that leadership is one of the most important factors in influencing a school’s culture and climate.

In this context, this research attempts to extend our understanding of these questions: What is the relationship between the ‘school-to-prison pipeline’ and the lacking of a ‘college going culture’ in underserved communities? Is the development of a college-going culture a legitimate alternative to interrupting the ‘school-to-prison pipeline’ in urban communities of color? Through the eyes of school leaders in the largest school district in the country, Los Angeles Unified School District, this qualitative study of 8 school principals and 3 counselors hopes to answer these questions:

1. What is the role of educational leaders in moving toward a college-going culture?
2. How do educational leaders perceive their role in creating a college-going culture in largely underserved, under-resourced communities?

What follows is an explanation of the theoretical foundation for this study; a literature review; the methods used to collect the data; the results of our interviews; and a discussion and analysis of the findings.

Theoretical Framework

Rooted in critical legal studies, Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in response to the historical inability of our system of jurisprudence to effectively understand and adjudicate cases of racial inequality (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). Branching to other fields, including education (Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 2012), CRT is a vital analytical tool in examining educational inequalities. Particularly relevant for this study, is the CRT tenet that institutional racism is a “normal” and embedded aspect of everyday life in the U.S. While supported both historically and in the current day, this study presumes that the school-to-prison pipeline is but another manifestation of this racial reality. Moreover, CRT introduces us to important concepts that help explain how we have arrived at and continue to maintain systems of inequality, both individually and on an institutional level. One of these concepts is essentialism, which is used to create a story or idea about an entire group of people based on experiences of a few (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). As a result of these socializations, any successful attempts to interrupt this racial inequality must be intentional and systemic (Harro, 2012).

Along with CRT, a critique of the genetic and cultural deficit explanations for the academic failure of low-income students of color (Valencia, 1997) is part of the analysis used in this study. This critique has increased understanding of the ways in which schools have historically and systematically attempted to “deculturalize” students of color through educational processes (Spring, 2010). Freire (1973) contends that communities in the margins of society are not only perceived as deficient but receive “deposits” of dominant ideologies, which they are expected to accept and model without question. Moreover, this “banking” method of education establishes norms based on a dominant culture, which then deepens the gulf between educational institutions and the low-

income, communities of color they purport to serve. “Funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), for example, is evidence of the ignored history of “cultural and cognitive resources” (p. 134) present in Latin@ homes. Subsequently, the need to effectively bridge the chasm between schools and communities has taken on increasing importance.

Yosso (2005) proceeded to utilize Critical Race Theory and the work of Freire to identify forms of “community cultural wealth”. Guided by CRT, Yosso (2005; 2006) reframes common, deficit-based misperceptions of communities of color, while introducing alternative forms of capital, such as linguistic, resistant, and navigational capital, that are often rooted in urban communities, but remain ignored or denied by dominant cultural norms and ideologies (Yosso, 2005). This asset-based approach to marginalized communities is of particular importance as we engage the participants of this study in conversations about their community’s cultural wealth. Using an analytical framework based on community cultural wealth allows us to understand these communities as sites of cultural richness and potential and at the same time uncovering how “ordinary” and institutionalized racism and dominant ideologies can distract us from seeing the assets each community possesses (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Literature Review

The school-to-prison pipeline grew out of public concerns regarding juvenile delinquency. Characterizations were fed by popular media through terms such as “youth predators” and claims of out-of-control crime in schools (Fowler, 2011). According to Fowler (2011), these often unwarranted concerns continued through widespread publicity centering on relatively few isolated incidents of extreme school violence, such as the mass shooting in Columbine, Chardon, and Taft Union High School. This perpetuated growing fears that ultimately led to zero-tolerance discipline policies (Turner & Goodner, 2010).

Criminalization of Youth of Color

Many states have shifted policies and practices toward criminalizing student behavior (Fowler, 2011). Student discipline is moving from the principal’s office to the courts (Turner & Goodner, 2010). Such disciplinary practices can remove students from the educational environment and prematurely introduce them to the criminal justice system. Archer (2009) examined student experiences with the criminal justice system and found the following: children who are removed from the academic environment are more likely to have future experiences with the criminal justice system; this directs children on a path that often ends in incarceration; and the school-to-prison pipeline disproportionately impacts schools with high percentages of low-socioeconomic and underrepresented student populations.

Another trend that demonstrates the shift toward criminalization of youth of color is that most states have created policies that move juveniles to adult courts (Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2005). Heitzeg (2009) maintains that the juvenile justice system has moved rehabilitative reform to an institution that has created a “second-class criminal court” absent of therapy or justice. New policies have dismantled the original belief that courts were to protect youth from adult justice systems (Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2005). In essence, juveniles are less likely to have access to the rehabilitation that is needed to escape the prison pathway. Also noted is that youth from urban communities of color are feeling the effects of such policy changes at disproportionately higher rates (Archer, 2009; Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2005). Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera (2005) noted that between 1985 and 1990 the number of minority youth incarcerated under age 18 increased by almost 10% while the incarceration rates for White youth declined by 11%.

More recent data shows continued disparities in treatment based on race, as “Black and Hispanic juveniles represented about one-half of California’s juvenile population age 10 through 17 in 2005, but they accounted for almost two-thirds of juvenile arrests” (Legislative Analysts Office, 2007). The effect of these practices has resulted in large numbers of Latin@s serving prison time. In 2010, 345,900 Latin@s were serving sentences in both state and federal prisons. In the same year, the California Attorney General’s Office (2010) reported 22,273 Latin@ juveniles in detention. This is equivalent to 51% of the total youth housed in detention facilities in California.

Data compiled in the fastest emerging Latin@ immigrant communities displayed a trend of low-achievement and high dropout rates among Latin@ students (Wainer, 2004). Garcia-Reid (2007) notes that Latina females in particular, are disproportionately dropping out at greater rates than their non-Latina counterparts. According to Heitzeg (2009), elevated dropout rates impact the school-to-prison pipeline coinciding with Wald and Losen's (2003) findings on the educational attainment of those in the correctional system. These findings include that the largest predictor for females in the criminal justice system was disciplinary action during middle school.

Some educational decision-makers make the assumption that zero-tolerance policies should control and contain youth to preserve the general public safety (Polakow-Suransky, 2000). Even as youth crime declines, public fear of urban youth has contributed to harsher youth policies (Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2005), and less attention to the creation of a college-going culture. More research is needed on how educational decision makers see their role in providing needed alternatives such as a focus on higher education for all youth.

Methods

Twenty-four educational and community leaders were interviewed during spring 2011. For this study, we focused on 11 educational leaders, including principals and academic counselors of both public and private local elementary, middle and high schools. Schools were selected based on their proximity to the predominantly Latin@ communities in Southeast Los Angeles. Interviewees responded to an inquiry for leaders to participate in this study. The 13 remaining participants were elected officials, clergy members and community members. Only educational leader interviews were used for this analysis as researchers believe educators' work and perceptions of their educational leadership are directly relevant to the interruption of the school-to-prison pipeline. Participants consisted of 6 males and 5 females. In regard to their ethnic background, individuals identified as Latin@ or Hispanic ($n = 5$), Mexican or Mexican-American ($n = 4$), and multi-ethnic ($n = 2$).

Interviews were conducted by faculty and research assistants using a semi-structured interview protocol. The questions focused on: leader's perceptions of the issues impinging upon their students' academic success; influences on their students' likelihood to attend college; and recommendations toward the establishment of a college-going culture. For example, participants were asked, "What do you believe guides and contribute to students' academic success in your community? What is your responsibility in this process?" and "How do you define success? How do youth in your community define success? How important do you think college degree attainment is for youth?"

All participants were recruited via emails and phone calls. Consents were obtained in-person at the start of the interview and verbal consent was given for audio recording. One participant declined consent to be audio-recorded. For this interview, analysis was completed using contemporaneous notes that were taken during discussion. All audio-recorded interviews were then professionally transcribed. Notes and transcriptions were analyzed using an open-coding software, ATLAS.ti. Two faculty members and one research assistant coded interviews and established an inter-coder agreement which allowed for control of inter-rater reliability (Creswell, 2007). The major codes emerged as reflected in the Results section. Thereafter, member checks were completed as transcripts were sent to participant in order to ensure data accuracy (Creswell, 2007). Participants noted minor changes.

Results

Educational leaders in this study were asked about their role in creating a college-going culture within the low-income, Latina/o communities in which they worked. Their responses are presented here in four thematic areas: 1) The immediate needs in the schools; 2) Expectations of students and possibilities; 3) The relationship between the educational leaders and the community; and 4) Being stakeholders versus change agents.

Need to Focus on Immediate Needs

When asked about their roles as educational leaders, several of the principals focused on the immediate

student needs that make up a significant part of their responsibilities. These student needs ranged from the basic, physical human needs of food and clothing to the emotional needs of family trauma and death, to students helping their families pay the monthly bills. Yvette, a principal at an elementary school reported:

[I]t's really hard to. . . talk to a child about college when they don't even have a backpack and crayons, and so it's really difficult for us here at the elementary level to—to have kids look so far into the future. It's so hard because it's about today. I'm more worried about today and next week. Look, I've got boxes of shoes over there because I have kids that don't have shoes. I can't talk to them about college that's in eight years when I don't have a pair of shoes to wear. So, we really focus on today, (laughs) the next two weeks and—getting kids—when they're in the fifth grade we—we even talk about getting through middle school.

The low socioeconomic levels of the families in the area are clearly evident here. The challenge in creating a college-going mindset when basic needs are unmet is obviously complex. And this type of problem is not just physical needs, but helping children and families get through emotional hardships as well. Monica, another elementary school principal, grew up and still lives close to the community she serves. She relates strongly to the children and community, and has become known as “the savior of all”. She shares one of her experiences:

One of the kids that's coming today, his father passed away. He's in third grade... They're owners. . .of this Mexican restaurant. He hasn't been . . . doing his homework and Mom's working a lot. Today I told her that this was unacceptable. I have the referral on my desk. The teacher has been working with her, and he's still forgetting the homework. . . I told her, 'I have this (referral), but if you need help I'm here for you. . . . Don't feel guilty that you're not there. If he knows that he's going to be here with me until he's done, I bet you he's going to get it done. So feel free to use me.

For other principals, the present issues become even more pressing because of the lack of staff to support their efforts. Shawna, a former assistant principal for eight years recently became the principal of the same school. A promotion for Shawna has become a mixed blessing, as the assistant principal position was eliminated. This leaves her and three coordinators in charge of everything from instruction to everyday operations. Shawna says she “has the energy” to play a more active role in creating a college-going culture, but does not have the resources. This leaves her spending most of her time on “operations” or “safety” issues.

The educational leaders also related the issues of high school students and their immediate needs. All of the leaders affirmed that financial issues are a primary obstacle for students attending college. This takes various forms. One is the more obvious inability to pay for rising tuition costs. Principal Lucia says:

Parents come to us and say, 'Well, how in the world can I pay for college if my child is supposed to go to college? There is no money for college.' I think people actually see it that way. That [a college education is for the] privileged because it depends on what your economic status is.

Another perception shared by the leaders is the students who see their role as contributing to the family income. In the immediate, this is perceived to be an obstacle to a college-going culture, as many students consider getting a job out of high school as the priority. Christian, a college and school career counselor, shared his view of who the students are that are unlikely to make it to college:

[B]asically a student that is living for the here and now and is not really thinking about the future... there's probably a lot of community or home issues that are affecting—when he comes to school . . . upset and not really ready to learn and his mind is probably concerned about something else, . . .—I think that would be your at-risk student. When you have teenage moms, when you have teenage boys that the girlfriend is expecting—these are some of the things that are affecting what happens to them here at school.

Principal Charlie shared similar sentiments when he stated:

[T]he family, the Hispanic community a lot of times, they're hurting for their support and some of their parents want their kids to, soon as they graduate from high school, get a job to help support the family.

These perceptions by educational leaders are evidence that their work is in many ways determined by a sense of immediacy and the prioritization of meeting current needs as they arise. The perception that under-achieving students and their families are psychologically and situationally prone to the need for more immediate gratification can also affect the leaders' level of student expectation and limit what may be deemed possible from the students and the school from their positions as leaders.

Expectations and Possibilities

For some educational leaders, consistently being faced with the need to respond to immediate needs and at times crisis situations of their students appears to have resulted in lowered expectations of the students. For example, Principal Alex, defines success for his students as a high school diploma. Merna, a high school counselor, defined success for her students to becoming "productive members of society" and that for students who do not choose college, "just helping them, whether it be a trade school or application . . . something that they want to learn that's going to help them get a better job."

Two of the principals discussed the influence of materialism and how youth define success by making money and purchasing a particular lifestyle. Often this is not connected to educational goals. A number of the leaders talked about the goal of "survival" for the students and families who are struggling financially.

Interestingly, in spite of the immediate needs of the students and families they serve, a number of the leaders in this study displayed a remarkable ability to continue to express the belief that all students can learn, and all students have the potential to be college graduates. Monica states:

So success is, number one, instilling the belief that you can learn, that you can do, and that you have – it's about what you put in it. You come in having all those tools. Use them. So as teachers and as personnel, we're just helping them grow and blossom because they have it.

There is an important level of optimism expressed here, with the caution to not fall into a level of "hokey hope" (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) that fails to recognize real societal limitations based on race and class. Richard, a principal at one of the largest middle schools in the country and a former principal at a large local high school, appeared able to maintain a more "critical" level of hope. While he acknowledged that two-thirds of the students in his school were not on track to attend college, he expressed belief that all of his students had the potential and ability to be college graduates. When he was asked if the large percentage of those not planning to attend college was based in cultural factors, he responded:

I think it's more a social thing because I ask the kids all the time, "Where are your parents from?" and a vast majority of the parents were not born here, so they were laborers...and a lot of the mothers are at home. So the experience of higher education for the majority of the kids isn't the parents' background, so they don't know exactly how to push or when to push the kids in that direction.

Richard believed that these two-thirds of the students were largely helping their families to survive. And his recognition of the levels of poverty, issues of social and cultural capital, and societally-based limitations is important.

Walking this fine line between recognizing the significant social, racial and economic barriers that their students face, while maintaining a sense of "critical hope" (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) is no easy task. (The limitations that this can place on the potential for leaders to move to a place of possibility will be discussed in the Conclusion section.) How do these expectations and sense of possibility for their students that are tempered by a dose of

reality, effect the leaders relationship with the community they serve?

Relationship Between Leaders and Community

Educational leaders had mixed information about available resources in the community. They also expressed a lack of clarity about their relationship and the school's relationship with the community. There appears to be a perceived barrier between the community and the schools. Principal Lucia stated in response to a question regarding the schools-community relationship:

We just had . . . three . . . days of professional development with different groups of teachers. And we actually thought...because we sometimes... can't control what's beyond these walls, we can only control what's inside these walls. So we have been working together as...a professional learning community so that together we can... look... at academic success...So, we're looking at how do we get as many children to learn as possible given their different backgrounds? And so we can't control those things that are outside of our school. Some of those things are good and some of those things are not so good. And even the things that aren't good, we still have to work to try and get every child to learn.

This perceived barrier of what is "inside these walls" and what is in the community is an important perception to understand vis a vis the student and family experience. While there is a commonly held perception that many parents lack adequate knowledge or awareness about college, parents and the rest of the community are not often invited to engage in events or activities that foster a college-going culture. Merna emphasizes the point:

[U]nfortunately, a lot of the parents ... don't have, a high level of education, so even though they—know that education is important, they don't understand, what SAT's or ACT scores are—what financial aid is--- . . . [Another] obstacle we face with those—and it may be a few parents, but, because they're very family oriented they want the students—they're like, okay, 'I'm fine with you going to college, attending college, but why don't you go and commute?' And so, I think it's important for students to really, spend their first year on campus just so that they have that college experience, and if they choose to, move out, after and move back home, that's fine. But, it's very important—but it's very hard to—to get parents to accept that, that—and with the meeting, we did have some parents, you know, say, 'Okay.'"

Christian explains the problem from his view:

I think there is (sic) a variety of different programs available for the kids. It's just a matter of them participating in the various programs.

Monica states:

For those boys and girls that are not successful, with my experience at my school, the parents are absent. I'm not saying physically absent, but absent from giving education that importance that is needed.

The most commonly stated activities by educational leaders that could foster a college-going culture were college fairs and visits to campuses. Some mentioned a desire to be sponsored by a university, which would bring resources to assist the students in attending college. Others mentioned individual efforts by teachers to focus on college and school efforts to have all teachers wear their college shirts on a college day to show students where they attended school. One principal recommended the development of a college fair with a collaboration between educational leaders and community members. This was one of the few activities mentioned that would appear to cross the barrier between school and community. This raised questions about the degree to which the leaders were invested in the development of the community. To what degree do the leaders see themselves as stakeholders in the educational effort?

Stakeholders Versus Change Agents

The educational leaders were asked who the stakeholders were in the goal of creating a college-going culture. Many articulated students, parents, teachers and administrators as stakeholders. The degree of their investment likely varied depending on a variety of circumstances. The fact that 10 of the 11 leaders were of Latino or Mexican-origin is not insignificant. The investment to serve those with which you feel a connection is an important factor. However, the diversity within the Latina/o population also plays a role. Diversity based on class, gender, citizenship status, language, culture, generation in the U.S., are key factors in the ability to understand and relate to the population being served. Additionally, proximity of the location of residence likely plays a role in the degree of investment as well.

For example, Monica grew up in the local area of her school, and continues to live in a nearby community. This connection would imply a strong investment in the success of the students and the community. Shawna lived for 20 years in the community in which she now works, but moved to a city 20 miles away. Her investment is likely still significant, but tempered by her home and family being a distance away. Richard, although obviously invested in the students and his role as a leader, resides in a beach community in commuting distance to his school. The degree of his investment is likely influenced by his residing in another community as well.

An indicator of the sense of common mission and goals for both community and school can come from an analysis of the use of language by the educational leaders. Several of the leaders consistently used the term “they” or “them” when referring to the community. For example, Shawna stated:

Well, one way would be to have college fairs and invite the parents and the community. And in planning it, *they* could plan with the educational leaders as well for the elementary schools in the community, the middle schools, the high schools (emphasis added).

In other settings of a collaborative nature, the more common pronoun would be “we” when referring to a joint effort. The use of “they” is also evident in a number of the quotes used earlier in the Results section.

While there is clear indication of the leaders claiming themselves as stakeholders in the creation of a college-going culture, largely absent is the notion of seeing themselves as “change agents.” While the populations served by the schools represented in our study continue to struggle to adequately serve the low-income, Latin@ community, the current state of education in the area remains at a crises level. Further analysis of the findings in this study and the potential for change agents to create meaningful change in collaboration with community will be elaborated on in the Discussion section.

Discussion

There is no doubt that educational leaders in urban schools are often faced with monumental tasks. The needs are many and resources provided are few. Consistent with the findings in this study, it is predictable that the immediate needs of students can take precedence over visioning or even long-range planning. In that sense, the leaders interviewed in this study are, in many cases, doing heroic work. At the same time, the focus on the immediate can lead to reductionist views of educational inequality. The researchers attempted to remain cognizant of this, while understanding the limitations of personal agency in the context of systemic, institutional, and societal problems.

One of the limitations of such “heroic” work is to engage in a “savior” mentality. This allows leaders to focus on those students who are seen as being of greatest need who are capable of being helped, whether this means providing a pair of shoes, or a place to study. While admirable in many ways, the savior model can lead to lowered expectations for some, and for those that do go on to college, fosters a myth of “exceptionalism.” This means that those who do succeed are doing so due to their exceptional character, innate ability, or work ethic; which then can lead to individualized, deficit explanations for those that end up dropping out or being incarcerated.

The lowered educational expectations were evident in leader’s responses that defined success as a “high school diploma”, getting a “better job”, while explaining that college is not for everyone. This lowered educational expectation is often seen as being reinforced by parental pressure to “get a job to help support the family,” even

though research indicates a high level of educational aspiration for Latina/o families overall (Auerbach, 2004).

Although some leaders continued to display confidence that all students could go to college, many appeared influenced by their perception that students' and their families lack educational ambition. This tended to influence leaders toward having lowered student expectations as well. For example, the leader who believed students should move onto a college campus to have the full "college experience" and go against family wishes that he/she might choose a local commuter campus might consider reframing this situation by recognizing the "familial capital" (Yosso, 2005) that can fuel a positive college experience.

From School-to-Prisons Pipeline to College-Going-Culture

In order to move from the school-to-prison pipeline dynamic to a college-going culture, educators and policymakers need to engage students with alternative approaches. Understanding that 95% of all children of immigrants and 91% of all children considered to be of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) attend urban schools, and that disproportionately these populations are low-income, and racially and ethnically segregated (Fix & Capps, 2005), the real and potential relationship with the school-to-prison pipeline becomes clear. The complex dynamics of the school-to-prison pipeline requires a shift in thinking and understanding of the cultural dynamics between communities and schools and how particular groups fail and succeed.

It is from this perspective that educational leaders and policy makers need to understand the "community cultural wealth" (Yosso, 2005) of such groups in order to inform policy and practice. The generally unrecognized educational knowledge and values in the homes of communities of color (Delgado-Bernal, 2001; Villenas, 2001) calls for schools to transform policies and practices and increase their involvement with the communities they serve. This transformation may include theoretical expansions that re-examine the K-12 pipeline to higher education that recognizes community-based forms of social and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005). Other areas of research may provide evidence that K-16 schools must re-examine and recognize the community context in which they serve. In this sense, efforts in school policy, practice and curricular reform that are separated from its community will likely have minimal impact on academic success (Warren, 2005) and only exacerbate the school-to-prison pipeline problem. Urban communities are in need of effective school-community collaborations that build upon the diversity and assets that currently exist, but are often overlooked and underutilized.

While the gap between schools and communities remains large, partnerships with the government, colleges, and universities are gaining importance within the K-16 pipeline. In some areas, city officials are making noticeable efforts to improve education for youth as they act as supporters for educational issues and encourage city services such as afterschool programs (Kirst & Edelstein, 2006). Furthermore, schools also collaborate with colleges and universities to help develop college pipelines. K-12 administrators work with college personnel to receive professional development and strategies on how to successfully prepare students for college (Nunez & Olivia, 2009). The State Departments of Education have also provided financial support for state and local activities, projects, and programs that enable access to higher education for students of color (Hawthorne & Zusman, 1992). Lastly, collective programs work with colleges and universities to pave a pathway to college for disadvantaged students (Hawthorne & Zusman, 1992).

While not all of these efforts have adopted the asset-based approach advocated for here, they remain evidence that urban school leaders such as the ones in this study are pivotal figures in transforming a school-to-prison pipeline model, to a school-to-college culture, where community assets become the dominant form of capital.

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BOOK REVIEW

Victor M. Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*, New York, NY: New York University Press, 2011, 218 pages, ISBN 978-0-8147-7638-4, \$21.00 (Paperback).

Sandra Quiñones
Duquesne University

Victor M. Rios's *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys* is a timely and worthy book for readers interested in gaining a multiple-layered understanding of the lives of policed young people in Oakland, California. It is also instrumental for readers examining issues relevant to the school-to-prison pipeline in the United States. But more importantly, *Punished* is a book that can be purposefully used in education courses as part of efforts to critically examine interactions between youth, schools, and their communities.

In *Punished*, Rios (2011) uses ethnographic research methods to study interrelated questions about the process of criminalization with a purposeful sample of forty Black and Latino boys (ages 14-18) in Oakland. All of the participants had been arrested, were on probation, or were socially linked with other young men who had been arrested. The purpose of the study was "to gain a deeper understanding of how surveillance, punishment, and criminal justice practices affected the lives of the participants; what patterns of punishment the participants encountered in their neighborhoods; what effects patterns of punishment had on their daily lives; and how punitive encounters with police, probation officers, teachers and administrators, and other authority figures shaped the meanings that the boys created about themselves and about their obstacles, opportunities and future aspirations" (pp. 7-8). To explore this line of inquiry, Rios collected data from 2002 to 2005 by conducting extensive participant observations, interviews, focus groups, and fieldwork across multiple settings, including schools, neighborhoods, community centers, businesses, and homes.

A notable contribution that Rios makes as a scholar is to utilize a strategic blend of critical criminology and urban ethnography to better understand complex, power-laden processes from the perspective of marginalized youth. From this lens, he illustrates the interactive and catalytic role of agency and structure in the lives of Black and Latino boys in Oakland. For instance, his findings speak to daily, institutionalized practices of "punitive social control" aimed at "regulating deviant behavior and maintaining social order" (p. 21). By examining the consequences of such hypercriminalization practices, Rios unveils several potentially transformative forms of defiance and resistance—a kind of resilience—that the youth enacted. That is, the boys engaged in resistance practices not only for coping with what is imposed on them, but also for reclaiming *dignidad* (dignity) within an inherently crooked, raced and gendered system. The possibility for alternative forms of social control, as Rios notes in his conclusion, lies in garnering the youth's resilience, and using it to cultivate a more positive landscape toward adulthood.

Cultivating a more positive landscape toward adulthood is where critical teacher education comes into play. In my position as a researcher and teacher educator, I have access to many resources and materials to use in the preparation of future teachers and the ongoing professional development of practicing teachers in schools. Just recently, I was previewing video clips of teachers that were included in a DVD about 'effective' reading instruction (PreK-4) in light of Common Core Learning Standards. To my dismay, the very first video clip that I previewed was that of a white female teacher encouraging African American students to use the term *juvenile delinquents*, rather than troublemakers, to describe the characters in a story they were reading. Although the authors position the video clip as a model of a text-based discussion which supports the development of strong reading comprehension skills in a third grade classroom, it is also important to consider how the teacher-student interactions in this video clip exemplify the phenomenon of criminalization. More specifically, how it supports one of the central problems that Victor M. Rios vividly surfaces in *Punished*, namely, the "labeling hype" (p. 45) that continuously surrounds the lives of Black and Latino boys in the era of mass incarceration.

Rios uses the term *labeling hype* to discuss how labels serve to hypercriminalize and marginalize the

youth. Thus, the bigger picture that needs to be interrogated is the ways that teachers and schools serve to reinforce the labeling hype problem and what Rios refers to as the *youth control complex* (systemic, ubiquitous punishment practices). In other words, how might labeling characters in a story as juvenile delinquents generate criminality and perpetuate criminalization, particularly in an inner-city school community? How might teacher-student interactions of this nature shape the decisions students will make, how they view themselves, their obstacles, opportunities and future aspirations?

Such questions point to the interplay between teacher education, schooling practices, and the school-to-prison pipeline. As critical educators, part of our responsibility is to develop teacher-conduits to what Rios calls a *youth support complex*. That is, teachers who find creative ways to educate “young people when they have made mistakes” (Rios, 162). Teachers that strive to connect with otherwise marginalized youth in meaningful and nurturing ways that support their reintegration and restore their dignity as young people.

One area that Rios could develop further is an analysis of the sociocultural and linguistic differences between the Black and Latino boys, particularly in relation to their understandings of masculinity, *dignidad*/dignity, and the production of hypermasculinity resulting from “heavily-gendered” (p.130) interactions between the boys and the youth control complex. Nevertheless, *Punished* represents a methodologically sound research text written in a narrative style and intimate tone that engages the reader from start to finish. For education courses examining the social context of teaching and learning, *Punished* is a welcome companion to Erica Meiner’s (2007) *Right to be Hostile: Schools, Prisons, and the Making of Public Enemies* or Sabrina Jones and Marc Mauer’s (2013) *Race to Incarcerate: A Graphic Retelling*.

To close, Victor M. Rios provides the reader with a formidable account of the patterns of punishment for Black and Latino youth in Oakland. In other words, Rios is what I call an “intellectual badass” scholar who knows how to effectively weave theory and research in a sophisticated, yet accessible manner that is provoking and memorable.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Subini Annamma is an Assistant Professor in Special Education Indiana University-Indianapolis. Her pedagogy and research focuses on increasing access to equitable education for historically marginalized students and communities, particularly children identified with disabilities. Her equity commitments emphasize an interdisciplinary approach to examining the social construction of race and ability, how the two are interdependent and how they are complicated by intersections with other identity markers. She centers this research in urban, culturally diverse settings and focuses on how student voice can identify exemplary educational practices.

Lilia I. Bartolomé is Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. She previously taught at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, San Diego State University and worked as an elementary school bilingual teacher and bilingual reading specialist before entering the academy. As a teacher educator, Bartolomé's research interests include the preparation of effective teachers of linguistic minority students in multicultural contexts as well as working with immigrant parents around the acquisition of English and learning about US public schools in order to better assist their children. She has published the following books: *Ideologies in Education: Unmasking the Trap of Teacher Neutrality*; *The Misteaching of Academic Discourses*; *Immigrant Voices: In Search of Pedagogical Equity* (with Henry Trueba), and *Dancing with Bigotry: The Poisoning of Cultural Identity* (with Donaldo Macedo).

Jesus Cortez is a 33 year old writer, student of life and student of the streets of Anaheim, Orange County, California. He was raised by his single mother among eight brothers and sisters—he being the youngest—during the violent 1990's. As an undocumented immigrant, he has seen the struggle of his people on many fronts. He hopes that his writing will challenge the status quo as well as bring comfort to those who are the most neglected members of society. Jesus believes that “people power” is stronger than any political system and hopes his words and work will help people realize that power.

Eugene Oropeza Fujimoto is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at California State University Fullerton, where he teaches in both the Ed.D and Masters programs in higher education leadership. His Ph.D. is from the University of Wisconsin Madison. His areas of research include higher education leadership, and issues of equity, diversity, and access.

Yvonne Garcia completed a sociology undergraduate degree with an emphasis in education. She is currently working toward her graduate degree in higher education at California State University Fullerton. For the past three years she has worked at the Center for Research on Educational Access and Leadership where she has led and assisted on various research projects that focus on understanding the experiences of undocumented students and assessing efforts to develop college-going cultures in Latina/Latino communities.

Noemy Medina is an Outreach Coordinator in the Office of Student Equity and Diversity at The University of Utah. She received her Master's of Science in Education with a concentration in Higher Education at California State University Fullerton. Her prior work at the Center for Research on Educational Access and Leadership informs her research and scholarship. Her interests include historically underrepresented student populations in higher education regarding issues of access and equity, under representation of minority males in higher education, and cognitive development of students of color.

Eduardo Perez works as an adjunct professor of Sociology at Riverside Community College and Fullerton Community College. After a 6-year hiatus from academia, he earned a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Sociology, and is working to complete his dissertation towards his Doctorate in Education degree (Ed.D). His research interests include the role of coaching and mentoring in college student success.

Mario Galicia Jr. is a graduate student in the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, at the University

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Henry A. Giroux currently holds the Global TV Network Chair Professorship at McMaster University, Ontario, Canada. He has published numerous books and articles. His most recent books include: *The Terror of Neoliberalism; Against the New Authoritarianism; Take Back Higher Education* (co-authored with Susan Giroux); *America on the Edge: Henry Giroux on Politics, Culture and Education*; and *Beyond the Spectacle of Terrorism*. His primary research areas are: cultural studies, youth studies, critical pedagogy, popular culture, media studies, social theory, and the politics of higher and public education.

Patricia Krueger-Henney is an Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts at Boston in the Leadership in Urban Schools Doctoral Program. Her participatory action research includes visual methodologies to document how young people perceive and experience social injustices produced and reproduced by current purposes of education. Prior to joining the University of Massachusetts, Patricia was a faculty member of various teacher education programs and also taught social studies in New York City public high schools.

Donaldo Macedo is a Cape Verdean-American critical theorist, linguist, and expert on literacy and education studies. Macedo is professor of English and a Distinguished Professor of Liberal Arts and Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He is the founder and former Chair of the Applied Linguistics Master of Arts Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Donaldo Macedo has been a central figure and an early animator along with Henry Giroux, Stanley Aronowitz, among others in the development what is now known as critical pedagogy. His work with Paulo Freire broke new theoretical ground in its attempt to develop a critical understanding of the ways in which language, power, and culture contribute to the positioning and formation of human experience and learning. He is known as Freire's chief translator and interpreter in English. Macedo's published dialogues with Paulo Freire are considered classic work for their elucidation not only of Freire's own theories of literacy but also for the way in which they have added a more critical and theoretically advanced dimension to the study of literacy and critical pedagogy. His coauthored book with Paulo Freire, *Literacy: Reading the World and the Word*, is central to critical literacy in that it redefines the very nature and terrain of literacy and critical pedagogy. In addition to his seminal work with Freire, Macedo has played a central role in constructing a literacy of power for use in critical pedagogy. He has published extensively in the areas of linguistics, critical literacy, and bilingual and multicultural education. His publications include: *Literacies of Power: What Americans Are Not Allowed to Know* (1994), *Dancing With Bigotry* (with Lilia Bartolomé, 1999), *Critical Education in the New Information Age* (with Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and Paul Willis, 1999), and *Chomsky on Miseducation* (with Noam Chomsky, 2000), *Howard Zinn on democratic Education* (with Howard Zinn, 2005), and *Imposed Democracy: Dialogues with Noam Chomsky and Paulo Freire* (2012).

Luis F. Nuño was formerly Assistant Professor of Sociology at William Paterson University of New Jersey. He now lives in Chino Hills, CA. His research explores prisoner reentry and societal integration, examining the processes by which rehabilitation and prison education programs function to reduce recidivism and promote happier, safer communities.

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Alicia Pantoja is a doctoral student in Reading, Writing and Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Alicia's research is informed by ten years of organizing for immigrant rights and teaching

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Anthony A. Peguero is an assistant professor of Sociology and research affiliate of the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention at Virginia Tech. His research interests involve youth violence, socialization and marginalization, schools, and the adaptation of the children immigrants. He serves as a consultant on the Cartoon Network's campaign against bullying, and the editorial board for the journal of *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, and *Sociology Compass*, Crime and Deviance Section. He is also a National Institute Justice W.E.B. Du Bois Fellow and member of the Racial Democracy, Crime, and Justice Network which holds the dual goals of advancing research on the intersection of race, crime and justice and of promoting racial democracy within the study of these issues by supporting junior scholars from under-represented groups.

Sandra Quiñones is an Assistant Professor of Literacy Education in the Department of Instruction and Leadership in Education at Duquesne University. Her qualitative scholarship focuses on Latino education and family-community engagement issues, with an emphasis on bicultural-bilingual elementary teachers' experiences and perspectives around *ser bien educada/o* and being well educated.

Victor Rios is a Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He conducts research on Juvenile Justice; Youth Resilience and Educational Equity. Professor Rios' book, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys* (NYU Press 2011), analyzes how juvenile crime policies and criminalization affect the everyday lives of urban male youth. *Punished* is Winner of the Oliver Cromwell Cox Book Award, American Sociological Association, Section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities; Honorable Mention for Outstanding Book Award, American Sociological Association, Section on Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility; C. Wright Mills Book Award Finalist, Society for the Study of Social Problems; and Distinguished Book Award, American Sociological Association, Section on Latina/o Sociology. Professor Rios has published articles on juvenile justice, masculinity, and race and crime in scholarly journals such as *The Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, *Latino Studies*, and *Critical Criminology*. Rios is currently completing a book titled, *Missing Fire: Gangs Across Institutional Settings* (forthcoming University of Chicago Press), that examines the quality of interactions between gang associated youths and authority figures across institutional settings.

2014 AMAE THEME ISSUE CALL FOR PAPERS
Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE) Journal Special Issue (<https://amaejournal.asu.edu>)

Critical Issues in Teacher Education: Building a Bridge Between Teacher Education and Latino English Language Learners in K-12 schools (Due April 1st 2014)

Guest Editors: Christian J. Faltis, Ester J. de Jong, Pablo C. Ramírez, and Irina S. Okhremtchouk

According to the United States Census, Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. By 2050 the population of school-age Latinos will soar to 28 million and surpass the number of non-Latino White students. As a result, this demographic shift will considerably alter population trends in the K-12 educational system. Despite the fact that Latino students enter schools with rich cultural, linguistic and schooling backgrounds as well as, comprise a significantly large segment of the English Language Learner (ELL) population in the K-12 public school system, Latino youth continue to be underserved in the U.S. Research reports reveal that in the past 10 years Latino ELLs continue to underachieve in literacy and mathematics as compared to their monolingual White counterparts. Moreover, Latino ELLs represent the group with the highest high school drop out rates in the public school system. Much of the concern in the K-12 school system has been the preparation of teachers and consequently, teachers' readiness to effectively address the needs of Latino ELL populations.

This special issue aims to highlight and examine the various ways teachers are prepared through teacher education and professional development for meeting the sociocultural, linguistic, and academic needs of Latino ELL students in K-12. There are cases where teacher education programs and school communities are developing intelligent and caring teachers committed to providing the best education for Latino/a youth. This issue seeks to document the manner in which teacher education and professional development programs guide teachers to engage in culturally and linguistically diverse academic contexts in K-12 and conversely, shed light on ways to draw from diverse theoretical frameworks to inform teaching practices that benefit Latino ELLs academically.

We expect this call for papers to continue to build collective knowledge on the operational practices enacted by teacher education programs to prepare teachers for teaching and servicing Latino ELL students within the constraints of standardization and new education reforms. It is also our hope for this issue to provide a forum for scholarship that addresses the current role teacher education programs have on cultivating caring and committed teachers whom are needed to prepare a future generation of Latino ELL students.

We welcome manuscripts that offer theoretical perspectives; research findings; innovative methodologies; pedagogical reflections; and implications related to (but not limited to) the following areas:

- Preparing and advancing teachers' and educators' knowledge about multiple teaching approaches needed in diverse language and literacy contexts;
- Issues concerning Latinos/ ELLs' L1 and L2 and how to incorporate these within teacher education practices (coursework and fieldwork)
- The role of family, culture and community in Latino/ ELL learning contexts and teacher education;
- Teacher education and school community partnerships;
- The intersectionality of teacher education and social justice education;
- Teacher praxis: Discussing and examining ways in which teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers to reflect and dialogue about issues concerning Latino/ELL student populations;
- Preparing educators for dual language/bilingual school settings (i.e., best practices; the need for this type of preparation);
- Supporting pre-service and in-service teachers for working in constraining times as it relates to high stakes testing, standardization (i.e., Common Core Standards), and current education reform
- Issues of translanguaging and language diversity within Spanish-speaking communities and their impact on and/or role in teacher education and preparation

Submissions suitable for publication in this special issue include empirical papers, theoretical/conceptual papers, essays, book reviews, and poems. It is important to note that the special issue is interested in the broader Latina/o experience and not solely

focused on the experiences of Mexican Americans (per the title of the journal).

The selection of manuscripts will be conducted as follows:

1. Manuscripts will be judged on strength and relevance to the theme of the special issue.
2. Manuscripts should not have been previously published in another journal, nor should they be under consideration by another journal at the time of submission.
3. Each manuscript will be subjected to a blind review by a panel of reviewers with expertise in the area treated by the manuscript. Those manuscripts recommended by the panel of experts will then be considered by the AMAE guest editors and editorial board, which will make the final selections.

Manuscripts should be submitted as follows:

1. Submit via email both a cover letter and copy of the manuscript in Microsoft Word to Pablo C. Ramírez (pablo.c.ramirez@asu.edu).
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 3. Manuscripts should be less than 6,000 words (including references). The standard format of the American Psychological Association (APA) should be followed.
- All illustrations, charts, and graphs should be included within the text. Manuscripts may also be submitted in Spanish.

Deadline for submissions is **April 1, 2014**. Please address questions to Pablo C. Ramirez (pablo.c.ramirez@asu.edu) and Irina Okhremtchouk (iokhremt@asu.edu). This special issue is due to be published in December 2014. Consequently, authors will be asked to address revisions to their manuscripts during the summer months of 2014.

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The mission of the Association of Mexican American Educators, Inc., is to ensure equal access to financial resources for a quality education for Mexican American/Latino students at all levels, validate and affirm cultural and linguistic diversity, advise local/state boards, legislators, administrators, and faculty on educational and financial policy, work in partnership with parents and communities for the benefit of our students, and advocate for ongoing recruitment, retention, support, and development of Mexican American/ Latino educators and all others committed to a top quality education in the 21st Century for our students.



