

Lourdes Diaz Soto

Explorations of Educational Purpose 14

# Latina/o Hope

 Springer

Latina/o Hope

# EXPLORATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

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Volume 14

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In today's dominant modes of pedagogy, questions about issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, colonialism, religion, and other social dynamics are rarely asked. Questions about the social spaces where pedagogy takes place – in schools, media, and corporate think tanks – are not raised. And they need to be.

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Lourdes Diaz Soto

# Latina/o Hope

 Springer

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*To immigrant children everywhere, you can  
be proud of all of your accomplishments.  
To my beloved children and their families,  
you are the joy of my life!  
In memory of Joe Kincheloe, we miss you  
still.*

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## **About the Author**

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# Abstract

The impact of neoliberal policies and global capitalism has been well documented but the impact on the daily-lived reality for Latino/a immigrants is rarely discussed except as a form of demonization. What constitutes the colonized/oppressed people's reality? . . . This piece integrates research by sharing differing slices of the immigration experience. The reader will gain a stronger background on the issues, always keeping in mind that the goal is to lift the veil of power and move toward a project with ameliorative intentions. My wish is that this "project from the heart" will serve as inspiration for dialogue, praxis, and our imagination to love and serve one another.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction: La Politica

We both recognize how important the contribution  
to our economy the Mexican workers have made;  
that we want people treated with respect;  
that we both have a mutual and shared responsibility to make sure our border is safe,  
and that we enforce the border;  
that I hope to come forward with a program  
that will pass the Congress,  
that deals with guest workers with some sense of normalization.  
And I would like to do that as soon as possible.  
(US President Bush speaking to Mexican President Fox,  
September 6, 2001).

Los políticos tienen muchas opiniones y muchas ideas. The meeting between President Bush and President Fox seemed to signal a cooperative and collaborative spirit. So what happened? On September 11, 2001, the most catastrophic acts of terrorism were perpetrated on the United States mandating immediate attention. According to the American Immigration Law Foundation,<sup>1</sup> the need to address these issues, however, still remains crucial. AILF reviewed government data and shows how Mexican workers impact the US economy:

First, Mexican workers are an integral part of the US economy. The share of Mexican workers has doubled during the past decade. The size of the Mexican population makes its impact on the US economy more quantifiable and essential.

Second, Mexican workers continue to fill needed jobs in additional geographic areas. The southern states, for example, are relying on Mexican workers.

Third, the new jobs being created will not need advanced education. At a time when native-born Americans are completing college degrees in large numbers almost 43% of job openings will require only a minimal education.

America's current immigration policies are antiquated and fail to recognize the importance of Mexican workers to the national economy . . . US immigration law must provide ways for Mexican workers to enter and remain in the US, in both temporary and permanent status, with protections to assure that they have the dignity and respect they deserve, given the important contributions they make to

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<sup>1</sup>American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF). (2002). Washington, DC.

America. The status quo can no longer be accepted if the United States is to remain the world's leading economy.<sup>2</sup>

## Westernized Theories of Immigration

Theories dealing with immigration span multiple fields and multiple lenses. This piece does not attempt to cover all the immigration theories but highlights several salient ones. For the most part, studies on immigration have not dealt with theorizing but have relied to a greater extent on data driven analysis. Most of the research has tended to focus on migrating groups or policy analyses. It will be useful to understand that Westernized theory can represent a valuable tool for viewing the significance of past research as well as a guiding tool for future endeavors.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps one of the earliest theories about immigration is described as the “push–pull factors.” Ernest Ravenstein is regarded as the earliest migration theorist since 1889. Theories that are variants of push–pull theory include the neoclassical economic theory suggesting that international migration is related to the global supply and demand for labor; the segmented labor-market theory maintaining that First World economies are structured to require a certain amount of immigration; and the world-systems theory arguing that international migration is a by-product of global capitalism. Contemporary patterns of international migration tend to be from poor nations to rich nations due to factors associated with industrial development.<sup>4</sup>

The push factor refers to the reason for immigrating from the home country which is primarily attributed to economic needs, while the availability of jobs and education could be referred to as a pull factor. Non-economic reasons can include persecution, oppression, ethnic cleansing, and genocide from war-ridden theaters.<sup>5</sup>

The field of psychology has contributed its lens to our understandings of immigration. The concept of acculturation, for example, became an integral part of cross-cultural psychology, while intergroup relations became important to social psychologists. Acculturation involves contact between two or more groups with consequences for all. Most of the research has focused on minority groups such as immigrants and indigenous people tending to ignore the impact on majority groups. When the resulting cultural diversity leads toward integration the strategy of mutual accommodation is intended to lead toward multiculturalism. Elements of acculturation include contact participation, cultural maintenance, acculturation attitudes, behavioral shifts, and cultural identity. The area of intergroup relations in immigration differs from the general literature (relying on generic or minority

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Portes, A. (1997). Special issue: Immigrant adaptation and native-born responses in the making of Americans. *International Migration Review*, 31(4), 799–825.

<sup>4</sup><http://family.jrank.org/pages/1170/Migration-Theories-Migration.html>

<sup>5</sup>NIDI/Eurostat. (2001). Push and pull factors of international migration. <http://www.nidi.knaw.nl/web/html/pushpull/index.html>

categories) by focusing on culturally defined groups such as language, religion, status, and race. The immigrants are usually less familiar to the resident population and are usually seen in a less-favorable light. Ethnic stereotypes, ethnic attitudes, ethnic prejudice, security, and discrimination are elements of the intergroup relations work. Mutual and reciprocal views can add much to the discussion about such complex relationships.<sup>6</sup>

Viewed from a policy perspective it can be said that immigration policies determine the scope of global migration. There is no doubt that immigration impacts countries in multiple ways including, but not limited to: the economy, cultural influences, housing, job market, education, health, demographic patterns, policies, and politics. In spite of the tremendous weight given to the field of immigration and the expanding literature, it appears that immigration policy theory itself is neither well-defined nor often debated among the various schools of thought. Six major interdisciplinary methods have been identified that may help to shed light on immigration policy including Marxism, realism, liberalism, the “national identity” approach, domestic politics, and institutionalism. These theories help to explain how nations decide how many immigrants to accept, how often, and whether they should be permanent immigrants, temporary migrant workers, or refugees, and of from which ethnic groups. The Marxist approach predicts the relationship between the economy and the immigration policies. It focuses on the policies impacting migrant workers and in illegal immigrants. The “national identity” focuses on past and current immigration policies by viewing historical experiences, language/culture, and social conflicts. The domestic-politics approach relies on economic and social factors and can explain policies on various ethnic origin. The institutional approach focuses the complexity of the immigration policy especially refugees and migrant workers. Realism also helps us to gain understanding of refugee policies, while neoliberal theories of large and international organizations clarify our understanding of immigration and refugee policies.<sup>7</sup>

Drawing connections among immigration, education, and globalization is another way to view the theoretical possibilities regarding immigration. It is understood that there are three pillars in globalization, namely (a) information and communication technologies, (b) the emergence of global markets, and (c) increased levels of immigration and displacement. These three circumstances are anticipated to have a profound impact on various aspects of the immigration experience, the research, and the field of education. The study of education and immigration is considered to be new and holds the possibility for new and alternative research paradigms.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Berry, J. W. (2001). A psychology of immigration. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), 615–631.

<sup>7</sup>Meyers, E. (2000). Theories of international immigration policy—a comparative analysis. *International Migration Review*, 34(4), 1245–1282.

<sup>8</sup>Suarez-Orozco, M. (2001). Globalization, immigration, and education: The research agenda. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(3), 345–365.

Some financial theorists take a different approach claiming that immigration cannot be attributed to globalization because people have been migrating for centuries. They maintain, however, that globalization has indeed created a new form of immigration with communication possibilities attributed to emerging technologies. Included in these writings the suggestion is made that planners should change their methods of analysis because current methods are out dated.<sup>9</sup>

In spite of its contribution to immigration studies, the field of anthropology has often been disregarded when viewing issues of immigration. Yet, this is a field that with recent decolonizing theoretical perspectives can add much to the conversation. Several scholars indicate their willingness to participate, for example, the Society for Applied Anthropology (SFAA) posts several papers under the heading of “Anthropology engages immigration reform.” These papers taken together relate the unique contributions that researchers immersed in local communities can provide to the understandings of the rationale for immigration as well as needed reforms.

In addition, there has been a call for new theories that will reflect contemporary immigration and intergenerational integration. The basic initial model proposed explains structural elements of immigration such as assimilation (as an old and new concept), ethnic differentiation, and ethnic conflicts. The model reflects global generalizations of Robert Ezra Park’s model of race relation. Park was influential in developing the theory of assimilation as it pertained to immigrants in the United States. He argued that there were four steps in the cycle of immigration. The first step was contact then followed by competition. In the third step each group would accommodate each other. Finally, when this failed, the immigrant group would learn to assimilate.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, this book, will move and build toward new theorizing that Anzaldúa (1990) called for: “necesitamos teorías that will rewrite history (xxv).”<sup>11</sup> The need to view immigration from the immigrant’s perspective, from within the experiences of La Frontera, from within the workers’ perspective, seeing from a child’s perception, from the adult ESL working learner will be the challenge.

The importance of these theories lies in the diversity of the views, perspectives, and lenses capable of explaining aspects of immigration, as well as guiding scholarship, research, and application. In the context of this piece while we can build on each of the theories to guide our understandings; inviting the perspective of the persons who are experiencing immigration will help us to gain new awareness and new possibilities. Our goal is to gain a grasp on the complexities of immigration as they relate to education and the continuing impact of globalization.

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<sup>9</sup>University of Iowa’s Center for International Finance and Development. (2010).

<sup>10</sup>Birx, H. J. (Ed.). (2006). *Ezra Parks, Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. London: Sage Publications.

<sup>11</sup>Anzaldúa, G. (Ed.). (1990). *Making face, making soul: Haciendo carás*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

## Latina/o Immigrants

In Robert Redford's film, *The Milagro beanfield war* (1988), Amarante, the oldest man in the town of Milagro states, "Thank you God for letting me have another day!" The film depicts a wealthy corporation's power over local farmers. Although filled with stereotypical moments (e.g., the sombrero skipping sarape wearing angel and the Anglo organizer) the film may reflect more truth than fiction as powerful multinational corporations continue to impact the daily-lived realities of farmers and workers in Mejioco. This chapter is portraying elements of the layers and complexities of the immigration experience for border-crossing children and families.

Not only are Latinos/as the largest minority group in the United States, but we are also the youngest. One out of every five school aged child is Latino/a. This is the first time in the history of the United States that an ethnic minority group makes up such a large part of the youngest population. When you compare the modern wave of immigration annual rate of 4.6 new immigrants per 1,000 population, it falls well below the 7.7 annual rate that prevailed in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and the 8.8 rate at the beginning of the twentieth century. The raw numbers, however, are the largest in US history with nearly 40 million immigrants since 1965.<sup>12</sup>

There is an estimated 48 million Latino/a living in the United States, or almost 16% of the population. Latino/as comprise the nation's largest minority group. The growth of the population this century is due mainly to births in the United States, not immigration, a reversal of the pattern over the past four decades.<sup>13</sup>

Mexicans comprise 32% of the foreign born in the United States which is largest number from a single country since the late nineteenth century. In the same way Irish immigrants represented a third or more of the immigrant population between 1850 and 1870 while Germans comprised 26–30% of the foreign-born population between 1850 and 1900. Russia is the only other country hosting large numbers of immigrants.<sup>14</sup>

The large numbers of Mexicans entering the United States began in the 1970s. By 1980, Mexicans numbered 2.2 million more than twice the number of Germans. While the growth rate of Mexican immigrants has slowed greatly since 2006, Mexicans make up 7.0 million, or 59% of the undocumented population, and 5.7 million, or 21% of the legal and documented population. Not only younger than previous immigrant groups, but also with a higher percentage of males who more likely to be married. Although the group reflects higher job participation rates and

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<sup>12</sup>Pew Research Center Publication. (May 12, 2010). Between two worlds: How young Latino come of age in America. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1438/young-latinos-coming-of-age-in-america>

<sup>13</sup>Passel, J. (March 3, 2010). Census history: counting hispanics. Pew Hispanic Center. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1513/census-counting-hispanics-history-of-difficulties>

<sup>14</sup>Pew Hispanic Center. (2008). Trends in Unauthorized Immigration: Undocumented Inflow Now Trails Legal Inflow.

more likely to be in the labor force they are more likely to work in the lower skilled occupations providing lower incomes and greater unemployment possibilities. The data show that they have lower levels of education, larger households, and higher poverty rates than other groups.<sup>15</sup>

More recently the flow of immigrants from Mexico has declined sharply with little evidence of return migration to Mexico. The data include 11.5 million in 2009 with 11.6 million in 2008 and 11.2 million in 2007. The current economic conditions are blamed for the harsh impact on the unemployment of Latino immigrants and yet data from the United States and Mexico did not show large numbers of Mexican born returning to Mexico.<sup>16</sup>

Data from UC Berkeley<sup>17</sup> shows that 64% of the 45.5 million Latino/as in the United States are of Mexican origin with 40% being first generation immigrants. One-fifth are naturalized citizens and 44% own their own home. Over 1/4 of recent immigrants live below the federal poverty level. Over 1/2 of Mexican-born children under 18 years of age live in poverty. Over 1/5 of the working adults live in poverty. Mexican immigrant men working full-time earn 45% less and women earn 40% less than their native-born counterparts. Sixty percent of all Mexican immigrants live in Texas or California.

Nationally, Mexican immigrant men make up

- 50.3% of sewing machine operators
- 43.4% of agriculture workers
- 41.6% of fence erectors
- 41.4% of drywall installers and plasterers
- 39.1% of dishwashers.

Nationally, Mexican immigrant women make up

- 34.2% of farm workers, graders, and sorters
- 26.3% of meat processing workers
- 25.9% of hand packers and packagers
- 25.4% of packaging machine operators
- 24.9% of dishwashers
- 310,000 Mexican immigrant women work as housekeepers, more than any other occupation.

64,000 work in child-care.

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<sup>15</sup>Pew Hispanic Center. (2008). National Survey of Latinos: Hispanics See Their Situation in US Deteriorating; Oppose Key Immigration Enforcement Measures.

<sup>16</sup>Passel, J., & Cohn, D. (2009). *Portrait of unauthorized immigrants in the United States*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Research Center.

<sup>17</sup>University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health. (2008). Health Initiative of the Americas. <http://hia.berkeley.edu>

- Over two-thirds of Mexican immigrants working in jobs that are heavily reliant on Mexican immigrants have no medical insurance coverage.
- About two-thirds of Mexican immigrant women in jobs that are heavily reliant on Mexican immigrants do not have work-based health insurance.
- Only 5% of employed Mexican immigrants are covered by Medicaid and other public insurance.

This information may be contrary to what the public perception of immigrant workers. For example, only 5% are covered by public insurance and most workers receive any medical insurance coverage.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Migra  
 Migra Migra pinche Migra dejame en pas  
 Migra Migra pinche Migra dejame en pas  
 Malicia veo en tus ojos desprecio en tu corazon  
 Malicia veo en tus ojos desprecio en tu corazon  
 Es hora de reconocer que todos somas una voz  
 Abrasa el concepto venimos de la misma voz  
 lyrics by Santana  
 \*\*\*\*\*

The popular contemporary guitarist/singer’s lyrics (Santana) representing the role of immigration enforcement (la migra) are especially relevant in this climate of inhospitability toward Latino/a immigrants. The immigrant’s voice in these powerful lyrics calls for being left alone (in peace) and describes the contempt that is seen in the migra’s eyes and heart.

The search for equity has been long struggle for Latino/a immigrants. Accounts by numerous scholars and writers<sup>18</sup> have documented daily-lived realities and pertinent scholarship. Activists, grassroots organizations, and “ordinary” cultural workers and scholars have been able to shed light on immigration issues via immigrant marches, protests, strikes, legislative activities, writings in local papers, edited volumes, books, and communications via emerging technologies. The continued daily struggle is played out on a daily basis in local and national media outlets. These are just a few examples of recent headlines.

After Losing Freedom, Some Immigrants Face Loss of Custody<sup>19</sup>

Of the 136 undocumented immigrants detained at a poultry processing plant in Missouri was Carlos’ mother, Encarnacion Bail Romero. A county court terminated her rights to her child on the grounds of “abandonment.” Judge Daily wrote, “The

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<sup>18</sup> Carger (1996), Carrasquillo (1991), Chavez (1992), Cornelius (2001), Darder (1997), DiSipio, de la Garza (1997), Garcia (2001), Gibson, M. and Ogbu, J. (1991), Nieto (2000), Portes, A. (1996), Rumbaut and Cornelius (1995), Suarez-Orozco, C. and Suarez-Orozco, M. (2001), Suarez -Orozco, M. and Paez, M. (2002), Soto (1997), Tashakkori & Ochoa (1999), Valdes (1996), Walsh (1996), Zentella (1997), and many others.

<sup>19</sup> Ginger Thompson, G. (2009). *New York Times*. April 23.



only certainties in the biological mother's future is that she will remain incarcerated until next year, and that she will be deported thereafter." Reporter Ginger Thompson wrote:

It is unclear how many children face Carlos' predicament. But lawyers and advocates for immigrants say that cases like his are popping up across the country as crackdowns against illegal immigrants thrust local courts into transnational custody battles and leave thousands of children in limbo (p. 1).

City of Nebraska Torn as Immigration Vote Nears  
by Monica Davy<sup>20</sup>

The small town of Fremont, Nebraska was assisted by the author of Arizona's new anti-immigration law to require businesses to use federal database, E verify, to check new employee's information, and landlords to rent only to those who get new city occupancy license (for \$5) turning information to the police. Meat-packing plants just outside the city would not be impacted by the new law.

Arizona Enacts Stringent Law on Immigration  
by Randal Archibald<sup>21</sup>

The recent legislation signed into law by Jan Brewer, the Governor of Arizona, has led to protests and brought divisive rhetoric to the national arena. Cardinal Mahoney of California compared the demand for documentation to Nazism.

California lawmakers begin push to boycott Arizona  
by Michael Elseth<sup>22</sup>

State Senator Gil Cedillo along with 45 legislators introduced a resolution to boycott Arizona until that state's new immigration law is repealed.

Students march in D.C. to support DREAM Act  
by Ben Kotopka<sup>23</sup>

The students at Princeton University organized themselves to support the DREAM Act.

The Trail of Dreams Encounters the KKK  
Posted by Ishita<sup>24</sup>

Students from Texas, Georgia, and Florida also supported the DREAM Act by marching from Miami to Washington DC. They were intimidated by the Klu Klux Kan in Nahunta, Georgia. One of the young men described his feelings as "trail of dreams" encountered the Klu Klux Klan:

<sup>20</sup>*New York Times*, June 17, 2010.

<sup>21</sup>Archibald, R. (2010). *Arizona enacts stringent law on immigration*. *The New York Times*. April 23 <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/24/us/politics/24immig.html?pagewanted=print>

<sup>22</sup>*The Washington Times*, June 24, 2010.

<sup>23</sup>The Daily Princetonian, April 2, 2010.

<sup>24</sup>Retrieved March 2, 2010 from <http://restorefairness.org/2010/03/the-trail-of-dreams-encounters-the-kkk/>

It is disappointing that after so many years of social reformation, we still have organizations filled with so much hate convening and gaining the support of communities. (Juan Rodriguez)

The “DREAM Act” is a piece of proposed federal legislation that was introduced on March 26, 2009. This bill will provide certain undocumented immigrant students who graduate from US high schools and have arrived as minors, the opportunity to earn conditional permanent residency. This opens the door to higher education to students who are currently effectively foreclosed from such an opportunity. At the institution where I worked in Northwest Georgia we met capable students who arrived in the United States as babies, wrote and spoke like their Anglo peers, were intelligent and of high moral character but were treated as if they were recent immigrants. The legal draconian mandates of the state were imposed and these talented learners are systematically stripped of any possibilities. It is a loss for the state and the nation.

The late Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy’s brain surgery gained much media attention. Perhaps what is less known is that a one time young immigrant child from Mexico leads the Brain Tumor Center at John’s Hopkins Medical Center. Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa is working diligently on stem cell research that may both cause and cure this type of cancer.

One of the organizations leading some of the research on increasing anti-immigration sentiments and movements is the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). This civil rights organization tracks hate groups in the United States and has found an “astonishing rise” (244% in the past 12 months) in its recent report entitled, “Rage on the Right.” They attribute the right wing extremists and anti-immigrant movement’s growth to rising consumer debt, a waning economy, changing demographics, and the branding of initiates as “socialist.” In addition, politicians and conspirators who have brought their ideas from the fringes to the mainstream include, but are not limited to, former CNN newscaster Lou Dobbs, Fox’s Glenn Beck, and Representative Michelle Backmann.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) documents the increased anti-immigration activism in the United States and has singled out ten groups that continue to demonize immigrants:

- (1) American Immigration Control Foundation (ACIF) Monterey, Va. [www.americanimmigrationcontrol.com](http://www.americanimmigrationcontrol.com). This organization funded by the Pioneer Foundation. The latter group has long-funded studies of eugenics and the alleged links between race and intelligence.
- (2) California Coalition for Immigration Reform (CCIR) Huntington Beach, California, [www.ccir.net](http://www.ccir.net), is headed by Barbara Coe, who has referred to Mexican immigrants as “savages.”
- (3) Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) Washington, DC., [www.fairus.org](http://www.fairus.org), founded in 1978 by John H. Tanton. Dan Stein, the group’s director, warns about “competitive breeding,” and people “defecating and creating garbage and looking for jobs.”

- (4) National Organization for European American Rights (NOEAR) Mandeville, LA. [www.duke.org/nf/index.html](http://www.duke.org/nf/index.html). Founder David Duke has indicated that “Government immigration policies discriminate against Europeans in favor of the Third Worlders who will eventually transform our society into a version of Mexico City, Rio, and Kampala.” “Unless we act . . . we will be helpless to halt the accelerating dispossession of our folk.”
- (5) NumbersUSA Arlington, Va. [www.numbersusa.com/home.html](http://www.numbersusa.com/home.html) directed by Roy Beck, offering information on the relationship between immigration and the environment.
- (6) ProjectUSA Long Island City, NY. [www.ProjectUSA.org](http://www.ProjectUSA.org). Their web site indicates: “Stop immigration! Why anti-racism is turning us into cockroaches.”
- (7) The Social Contract Press (TSCP) Petoskey, Mich. [www.tscpress.com](http://www.tscpress.com). This organization publishes a number of racist works characterizing non-whites as horrific and uncivilized “monsters” who will stop at nothing to greedily and violently seize what rightfully belongs to the white man. “We are the real Americans not the Hmong, not Latinos, not the Siberian-Americans . . .”
- (8) The Stein Report [www.steinreport.com](http://www.steinreport.com) is a web-based daily that has attacked the Catholic church for supporting US immigration.
- (9) V-DARE [www.vdare.com](http://www.vdare.com) is a web site run by a “coalition” that argues that America is historically and predominantly a white nation encouraging it to remain that way.

The panic over immigration continues to create an inhospitable and dangerous environment for Latino/a children and families. The perspectives and the experiences from the northern neighbors (United States) and the southern neighbors (Mejico) are quite varied. In the north the organized militia and fringe groups continue to demonize immigrants. In the south families struggle as their livelihood is replaced by powerful multinational corporations. As a third view we can note that the complexity of the issues is further exacerbated by free trade agreements and the insatiable desire for illegal drugs. The ultimate gain/loss is not just economic but an increasingly dangerous culture of anger.

The biggest concern is that if peaceful resolutions are not reached on this matter and a human face is not recognized by the hate mongers, we will live to see the same insidious pattern described by Goldhagen<sup>25</sup> in his piece. The very same comparisons can be made between the onset of hatred toward the Jews incited in Hitler’s Germany and the United Statian hate mongers/leaders of the Klu Klux Klan, Militia groups, and other fringe groups toward Latino/a immigrants (and other minority groups). Jose Macias<sup>26</sup> in his piece draws a comparison of the rise of ethnic nationalism in both California and Germany and the resulting malevolence. He examines “the

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<sup>25</sup>Goldhagen, D. J. (1997). *Hitler’s willing executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Vintage.

<sup>26</sup>Macias, J. (1996). Resurgence of ethnic nationalism in California and Germany: The impact of recent progress in education. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 27(2), 232–252.

return of open hostility directed by a majority population toward minority ethnic groups” (p. 233).

Documenting the complexity of the Latino/a-immigration experience includes multiple players, multiple legal mandates, and a sociocultural context that is increasingly dehumanizing and steering toward the negative aspects of a capitalist society. What will the lives of immigrant children and families look like if we relied on a human rights framework?

The following myths about immigration<sup>27</sup> may prove helpful in our discussions and quest to gain access to social justice.

Myth #1: Most immigrants come to the United States for economic motives.

Reality: About two-thirds of immigrants come to the United States to be reunited with family members.

Myth #2: Contemporary immigrants to the United States “don’t assimilate” as rapidly as immigrants who came in the 1900s.

Reality: Large percentages of European immigrants who came to the United States in the early 1900s returned home to Europe. Among those who stayed, many did not give up their home language, religion, food, or dress until the third or fourth generation.

Myth #3: Americans do not welcome new immigrants/Americans do welcome new immigrants.

Reality: These statements are *both* true. America takes pride in being a nation of immigrants and accepts more immigrants and refugees than most other countries. However, Americans are divided in their attitudes toward immigrants.

Myth #4: Immigrants are not as healthy native-born Americans.

Reality: Numerous studies have shown that first generation immigrants are actually healthier than US-born residents on a wide variety of measures (fewer disabilities and chronic health conditions and risk behaviors; better birth outcomes; and longer life expectancies). However, these health advantages are lost over time in the United States.

Myth #5: Immigrants are less educated and less skilled than US-born residents.

Reality: In fact, there are higher proportions of immigrants at both extremes: among the highly skilled and educated, and among the lower skilled, less educated.

Myth #6: Immigration hurts the economy.

Reality: To summarize a recent report by the national Council of Economic Advisors, “careful studies of the long-run fiscal effects of immigration conclude that it is likely to have a modest, positive influence? Furthermore, a young, foreign-born workforce is essential in a country that is rapidly aging.”

Myth #7: Immigrants cost more than they contribute.

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<sup>27</sup>The myths are quoted directly from Fennelly, K. (2007). Power point presentation entitled, “Ten myths about immigration”. Immigration History Research Center. University of Minnesota.

Reality: As the National Research Council reminds us, “studies often over-state the cost of immigration by measuring costs before adults reach working age.” Furthermore, many Americans don’t realize that, while immigrants use services, just as US residents do, they also pay taxes—income taxes, property taxes, business taxes, and sales taxes.

Myth #8: Immigrants don’t learn English as rapidly as European immigrants did.

Reality: There is no evidence to support this claim. In fact, it took many generations for some European immigrants to learn English, while today the vast majority of children of immigrants are fluent in English.

Myth #9: Immigrants are “criminals.”

Reality: A number of studies have shown that contemporary immigrants (including undocumented immigrants) are less likely to commit crimes or to be in prison than are US-born residents.

Myth #10: A border fence will solve the problems of undocumented immigrants.

Reality: There are millions of undocumented immigrants in the United States for a simple reason: companies need young workers and recruit immigrants to take many jobs, but the federal government issues almost no visas to low-skilled immigrants. Until this “mismatch” is fixed, the current trend will continue—increases in border spending that coincide with increases in the number of undocumented residents.

The data show the complexity and how everyday we are shown new images and the increasing panic over immigration. On July 14, 2010<sup>28</sup> a list of immigrants was published in the state of Utah calling for immediate deportation of the names on the list. This story grew stranger and stranger as the week went on with a revelation that these were children’s names and the idea was to connect these US child citizens with the names of their parents.

These and other activities continue to put fear in people’s hearts just as Goldhagen and Macias have predicted. The infamous radio talk show host, Glenn Beck, continues to inflame the airways with this comment,

(An illegal immigrant)

“comes across the border in the middle of the night”:

“One, they’re terrorists; two, they’re escaping the law; or three, they’re hungry. They can’t make a living in their own dirtbag country.”<sup>29</sup>

In Shanandoah, Pennsylvania we found the hate mongering leading to the ultimate price, the beating to death of Mexican immigrant. The Schuylkill County prosecutors alleged the beating was racially motivated. The Anglo teenagers, however, were

<sup>28</sup>Johnson, K. (July 14, 2010). *Immigration list sets off fears*. *New York Times*.

<sup>29</sup>Beck, G. (2006, April 27). In *Media matters for America*.

acquitted of murder, aggravated assault, and ethnic intimidation by an all-white jury. The teens, including a former high school football player, were convicted of simple assault stemming from the death of Luis Ramirez, who died of injuries to the head after a fight with the defendants and their friends.<sup>30</sup> This story helps to make the case for how increasing demonization of immigrants is affecting the young people in our nation. The Anglo perpetrators have internalized the narratives they have heard and ultimately contributing to the death of another human being.

This portion completes the introduction to the challenges Latina/o immigrants are facing in a climate of political inhospitality where the more powerful elements of the society are controlling the lives of immigrants. My goal in the following chapters is to share differing slices of the immigration experience with a view from the colonized/oppressed subject. What comprises the daily-lived reality? I will integrate studies and research that will help us to gain a stronger background on the issues. Always keeping in mind that the goal is to lift the veil of power and move toward a project that can provide ameliorative intentions.

[Chapter 2](#) will continue our conversation as we focus on media portrayals of Latino/a immigrants. Detailing how images have helped to stereotype us. [Chapter 3](#) introduces the reader to the disappearance of young women and the global economic connections between the maquiladora workers living in the city of Juarez. The continued violence has been uppermost in the media and in the minds of innocent bystanders. [Chapters 4–6](#) will relate the challenges of students at various stages in their educational journeys. Even though there are similarities in experiences there are dire differences and needs for educators, policy makers, and others to implement. Our students are not faring well. *Podemos mejorar la situación*.

[Chapter 7](#) discusses our ethnically mixed identities in the “fourth world,” relying on a term introduced by Guillermo Gomez-Pena as part of the end of the century topography.<sup>31</sup> [Chapter 8](#) focuses on young children’s perceptions and challenges relating to immigration and [Chapter 9](#) deals with the continued need for English as a second-language instruction because as the critics demand that immigrants learn English, they continue to dismantle needed programs and funding. [Chapter 10](#) continues our journey as we view “las sagradas nuevas mestizas” filled with hope and possibility capable of implementing projects. [Chapter 11](#) continues our discussion of undocumented immigrants while noting the importance of taking time to pause and consider our options for a stronger democracy. How might we follow a hope filled vision with ameliorative intentions?<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Rokus, B. (2009, May 2). No murder convictions in Mexican immigrant’s beating death. CNN.

<sup>31</sup>Gomez-Pena, G. (1996). *The new world border*. San Francisco: City Lights.

<sup>32</sup>The idea of pursuing research projects with “ameliorative intentions” was introduced by Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy within the postmodern*. New York: Routledge; Lather, P. (1993). Fertile obsession: Validity after poststructuralism. *Sociological Quarterly*, 35, 673–694; Lather, P., & Smithies, C. (1997). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

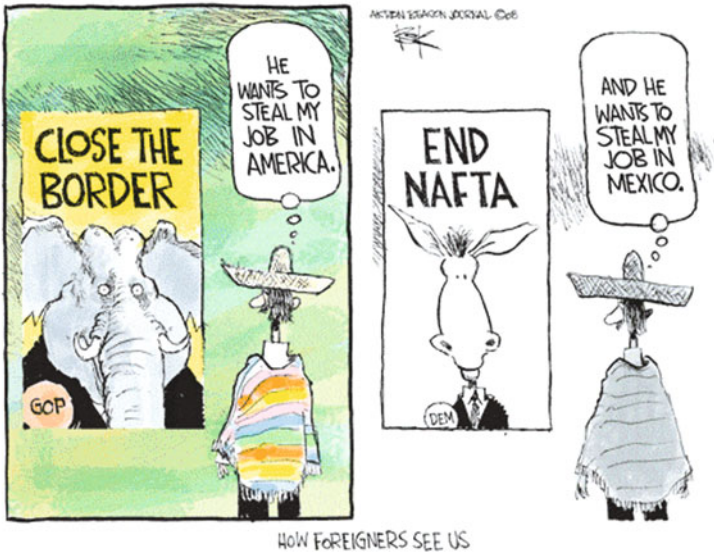
The impact of neoliberal policies and global capitalism has been well documented but the impact on the daily-lived reality for Latino/a immigrants is rarely discussed except as a form of demonization. Patti Lather in her work has embraced the idea that inquiry can have ameliorative intention so that we can contribute to improving people's existing and future lives. My wish is that this "project from the heart"<sup>33</sup> will serve as inspiration for dialog, praxis, and our imagination to love and serve one another.

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<sup>33</sup>Soto, L. S. (2010). Projects from the heart. In G. Cannella & L. D. Soto (Eds.), *Childhoods. A handbook* (pp. 375–379). New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

# Chapter 2

## Media Portrayals



Wizard of Id by Parker and Hart (2010, June 28)



Can you recognize any of the following ads? Have you thought about the stereotyping that is taking place?

Frito-Lay uses the character Frito Bandito implying that Mexicans are sneaky and thieves.

Granny Goose shows a fat Mexican toting guns, ammunition—with the message that Mexicans are overweight, carry deadly weapons.

Liggett & Meyers show a character “Paco,” who never “finishes” anything, not even revolution. The ad implies that Mexicans are too lazy to improve themselves.

A. J. Reynolds depicts a Mexican bandito, with the stereotype of the Mexican bandit.

Camel cigarettes depict a “typical” Mexican village, all sleeping or bored, with the implication that Mexicans are do-nothings, irresponsible.

General Motors has an ad in which a white, rustic man holds three Mexicans at gunpoint, implying that Mexicans should be and can be arrested by a superior white man.

Lark (Liggett & Meyers) shows a Mexican house painter covered with paint, implying that Mexicans are sloppy workers, undependable.

Philco-Ford shows a Mexican sleeping next to TV set, implying Mexicans are always sleeping.

Frigidaire shows Mexican banditos interested in a freezer, implying Mexicans are thieves, seeking Anglo artifacts.

Arrid depicts a Mexican bandito who sprays underarm as a voice over says, “If it works for him, it will work for you.” The ad implies that Mexicans are the ones who stink the most.

This partial listing<sup>1</sup> of ads can help us to question how public perceptions can be impacted by a continual bombardment of images.

The media influences our attitudes and views in a variety of ways. The political views that the various networks depict can have far reaching consequences. One network seems to favor a conservative stance while another a liberal one. They seem to be begging us for our attention as if their philosophy is the “right one.” More often than not it seems as if the talking heads have taken over and it is difficult to sort the news from the propaganda.

Media portrayals that de-humanize people delve into a harmful territory with far-reaching human implications. The “othering” that takes place begins to create a climate of hostility. These images begin to tear away at self-confidence and the self-image. Of special concern is how children view and integrate/disintegrate images that portray themselves and their families in a less-favorable light. Referring back to Marx’s concept of ideology, the group who owns the means of production and producing also distributes society’s ideas.

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<sup>1</sup>Treviño, J. S. (1985, 2005). *Latino portrayals in film and television* (pp. 14–16). Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media.



A report by the National Council of La Raza (NCLR)<sup>2</sup> shows that (a) Hispanics are almost invisible in entertainment and news media and (b) when Hispanics do appear they are portrayed more negatively than other groups. The impact of the underrepresentation and stereotypes (a) is harmful to the public image of Latinos/as; (b) the public's perceptions of Latinos is similar to the stereotypical media portrayals; (c) these negative media portrayals directly contribute to discrimination; (d) media portrayals undermine the ability to gain support for the needs of the group; and (e) the media contributes to negative self-images especially for children.

Cartoons programs, constitute 50% of children's TV viewing and contain cruel stereotypes of minorities.<sup>3</sup> The character Speedy Gonzalez comes to mind. Speedy is a Mexican mouse with a sombrero, Mexican accent, white pajamas, and the ability to run, run, run. Speedy's cousin, Slow-poke Rodriguez, is at the other end of the spectrum, sssllloooww. It would appear that these cartoons might be offensive to some yet "the nation's oldest Hispanic-American rights' organization." Lulac referred to Speedy as a "cultural icon" who showed "admirable pluck." Speedy as a "trickster" cartoon figure has much support from Latino's who view him as outsmarting the "gringo cat Sylvester." In spite of the fact that it may not be politically correct to support Speedy he has become a powerful symbol of racial consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Navarrete, L., & Kamasaki, C. (1994). *Out of the picture Hispanics in the media*. Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza.

<sup>3</sup>Barcus cited in Navarrete (1994).

<sup>4</sup>Francis, S. (2002). The secret of Speedy Gonzales: Hispanic race consciousness. VDARE.Com. Creators Syndicate Inc.

“Television and Children”<sup>5</sup> published by the University of Michigan, shows that with a media message that is positive can have a positive effect on kids’ behavior and programs with positive role models can influence viewers to integrate positive attributes into their life style. The reverse can also be true when children’s behavior and health can be impacted negatively, for example, health problems, violent behaviors, fears, school performance, attitudes, sleep problems, alcohol and cigarette use, and may not be in the very young child’s best interest.

The University of Michigan’s Report<sup>6</sup> documents the impact of TV on children’s attitudes and how children are portrayed. In terms of attitudes: Children learn to accept the stereotypes represented on television; when non-whites are shown on TV, they tend to be stereotyped; gender biased and stereotyped behaviors and attitudes affect children’s perceptions; G-rated movies may not be as innocent as parents may think. For example, do not solve problems peacefully; in G movies, characters of color are underrepresented, and are usually shown as sidekicks, comic relief, or bad guys; and male characters of color are more aggressive and isolated.

In terms of how children are portrayed on TV: Almost half of all stories about children focus on crime; children account for over a quarter of the US population but only 10% of all local news stories; African-American children account for more than half of all stories (61%) involving children of color, followed by Latino children (32%). Asian Pacific-American and native-American children are virtually invisible on local news; African-American boys are more likely than any other group to be portrayed as perpetrators of crime and violence whereas Caucasian girls are most likely to be shown as victims.

The University of Michigan piece helps us to understand how children of color are portrayed by the media and how children are integrating attitudes about themselves and others. It is clear that as adults we need to critically deconstruct the images that children are viewing.

When my children were young I assumed that taking them to see all of the Disney movies available at the time was “good for them,” trusting the Disney corporation for providing a slice of innocence. Henry Giroux<sup>7</sup> in his piece, “Are Disney Movies Good for Your Kids?” deconstructs the stereotypical portrayals that can create not-so-innocent attitudes and images. Giroux paints a complicated scenario of the Disney movies and the Disney empire while teaching us to critically view issues of race, gender, and anti-democratic social relations. As a professor of sociocultural issues, I also ask my students to analyze the teachings of Disney. “First you taught us that what we learned about Christopher Columbus was all wrong. Now you teach us that we have to be careful with Disney movies? These are characters we have loved all of our lives!” (CPT, Fall, 2009) CPT’s reaction was mirrored by her fellow

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<sup>5</sup>Boyse, K. (2010). Television and children. University of Michigan Health System. <http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/tv.htm>

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Giroux, H. (2005). Are Disney movies good for your kids? In L. D. Soto (Ed.), *The politics of early childhood education* (pp. 99–114). New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

undergraduate class showing how years of “Disneyfication” can impact our learners. Giroux’s reminds us,

What is astonishing is that these films produce a host of representations and codes in which children are taught cultural differences that do not bear the imprint of white, middle-class ethnicity are deviant, inferior, ignorant, and a threat to overcome. There is nothing innocent in what kids learn about race as portrayed in the “magical world” of Disney (p. 109).

A study on English-language television and films produced in the United States in 1900 and 1994 was conducted by Clara Rodriguez.<sup>8</sup> Remembering that the Latino population consisted of 10% of the nation’s population at the time (it is currently 15% according to the US Census Bureau), the study showed that Latinos were not only underrepresented in the media but misrepresented. In addition, the study demonstrated that the images in Hollywood films have become more negative with time. The similarities in how Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and other groups were portrayed far outweighed the differences. In addition, the quality of Hollywood’s presentation of Latinos has varied based upon the economic and political relationship with the United States and Latin America. During times of fears there is a tendency to rationalize and stereotype thereby legitimizing and justifying imperialism and domination. Alternative filmmakers have attempted to deconstruct and construct new media images of Latinos.

In the small town where I grew up we did not have television but there was a small movie theater where mostly older films were shown for a modest price especially on Saturday afternoons. The actress I remember and imitated at home was Carmen Miranda. The headdress with all those fruits, the exotic outfits, her sparkling smile, her platform shoes, and her assertiveness captured my imagination.

Berg (1997), relying on a variety of theoretical lenses,<sup>9</sup> singles out six Hollywood stereotypes of Latino/as portrayals by Hollywood:

- (a) El Bandido who originated in the villains of the silent greaser films and continued into Westerns. He is emotional, irrational, and violent. Latin American drug runners are the modern version like Andy Garcia’s portrayal of a sadistic Cuban gangster, still using violence and seeking money, power, and sexual pleasure.
- (b) The Halfbreed Harlot is the female stereotype, she is a secondary character nymphomaniac filled with lust and a hot-temper.
- (c) The Male Buffoon is a secondary comic relief, is simple minded, emotional apt to rely on childish regressions, and fails to master the English language.
- (d) The Female Clown is the female counterpart to the buffon. Exaggeration in dress, mannerisms, and language is a part of the role where the woman becomes an object of humor and stereotype.

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<sup>8</sup>Rodriguez, C. (Ed.). (1997). *Latin looks. Images of Latinas and Latinos in the US media*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

<sup>9</sup>Berg, C. R. (2002). *Latino images in film: Stereotypes, subversion, and resistance*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.



- (e) The Latin Lover was initiated by Rudolph Valentino (an Italian immigrant) creating a consistent figure in the cinema with his eroticism and suave ways.
- (f) The Dark Lady is hyper sexualized, reserved, aloof, and aristocratic and able to arouse the Anglo man unlike any other woman.

Hollywood's attribution of irrational, violent, hyper-sexualized beings, unintelligent, morally decadent continue to be portrayed and endorsed by the media.

Madonna's image<sup>10</sup> depicting her song, "La Isla Bonita"<sup>11</sup> fantasy images since the video was shot in Los Angeles and no one seems to know where is "isla bonita," who is San Pedro? This form of "multiculturalism" is quite lucrative economically where highly explicit and interracial sexuality is introduced.

In her video, "Borderline,"<sup>12</sup> where she sings, "You keep pushing my love over the borderline," she pushes the boundaries of interracial relationships while contrasting the upper class Anglo culture with the Latino barrio culture. In the video we learn that you can enjoy yourself with the Latino culture, and the Anglo photographer who represents wealth, and finally you can even cross over from one culture to another and enjoy multiple liaisons. Who's reality is being portrayed here? Who's world view? Who stands to gain from the fantasies?

Sofia Villenas<sup>13</sup> points to the sad and powerful social commentary of the portrayals of Latina women:

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<sup>10</sup>From *Wikipedia*.

<sup>11</sup>Directed by Mary Lambert (1987).

<sup>12</sup>Reggie Lucas (1987).

<sup>13</sup>Villenas, S. (2006). Mature Latina adults and mothers. Pedagogies of wholeness and resilience. In D. Delgado Bernal, C. A. Elenes, F. E. Godinez, & S. Villenas (Eds.), *Chicana/Latina education in everyday life. Feminista perspectives on pedagogy and epistemology*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Mature Latina women and mothers are most visible in media images about illegal immigration, poverty, family disintegration, and other of society's ills. They are highly visible as childbearers responsible for the reproductive 'invasion' of the United States; they are highly visible as silent maids, nannies, sweatshop laborers, and 'Latin' prostitutes. . . . 'at-risk' and deficit portraits of Latinas so ingrained in the larger society (p. 143).

"Zoot Suit"<sup>14</sup> film began a somewhat tense alliance with Hollywood setting the stage for the integration of Latinos into the creative process. Giving credit to this new possibility does not, however, discount continued stereotypical images, albeit unintentionally, further complicating issues of race and ethnicity.

What ideological needs do stereotypical images serve the more privileged players? Who stands to benefit? These rather simplistic questions may be at the heart of the matter. For one, the continued stereotyping reveals hegemony at work providing powerful self-esteem to a majority who begin to sense that indeed they are more beautiful, more intelligent, cleaner, richer, etc., and this helps you to become empowered. Sensing that your group is less intelligent, prone to violence, lazy, dirtier, greasers, etc., you begin to think that you are the "other," less attractive, less moral, etc. I continue to worry about the children who view these essentializing images.

A brief comparison of two films point to needed directions when attempting to attract Latino/a audiences (for the media gurus wanting to make more money still), "My family/mi familia"<sup>15</sup> and "The Perez family."<sup>16</sup> These two films allow an almost side-by-side comparison demonstrating to Hollywood that perhaps Latina/o audiences are a little more discerning than they thought. In "My family/Mi familia" every single character is a Latino/a, it is filmed with integrity and respect, it was written and directed by a Latino/a, it grossed \$10 billion. The "Perez Family" film was released as a competitive film with non-Latina actors, Marisa Tomei and Angelica Huston (remarkable actors but not Latinas). Tomei relayed to the media that the producers could not find a good-enough talent! So all these non-Latina/os grossed \$2 million plus a rather small profit when compared to \$10 billion!<sup>17</sup>

Did you know that *El Misisipi* (1808), published in New Orleans, was the first Spanish-language press (with English translation) within the US borders that was not founded by Spanish conquerors? Prior publications in the southwest territories were evident while they belonged to Mexico until the 1860s. The first printing press in the Americas was brought from Spain to Mexico in 1535, over four centuries ago. Spanish-language newspapers have been enjoyed by readers in New York, Miami, and Los Angeles for decades including "La Opinion," "El Diario-La Prensa," "Noticias del Mundo," "El Nuevo Herald," "Diario Las Americas."

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<sup>14</sup>Luis Valdez's (1982).

<sup>15</sup>Gregory Nava's (1995).

<sup>16</sup>Mira Nair's (also 1995).

<sup>17</sup>Nieves, S., & Algarin, F. (1997). Two film reviews: My family/mi familia and The Perez family. In C. Rodriguez (Ed.), *Latin looks. Images of Latinas and Latinos in the US media*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Many of these publications have required extra-ordinary efforts. Magazines, electronic media, and radio have been an integral part of Hispanic Media. Univision and Telemundo have grown considerably as television stations. The first Spanish-language television station started in San Antonio in 1955, Channel 41. It is clear that there is an extensive history of Hispanic-oriented media in the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Cultural invasion is the term Freire<sup>19</sup> used to explain the struggle of colonized and oppressed people who face a climate of disregard,

the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disregard of the latter's potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they have invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded curbing their expression (p. 150).

As people learn to not only inhabit, but also to reproduce a subordinate position, they are demoralized and colonized. Sitting in the movie theater or in front of the television set you can watch the figures on the screen like a hypnotized being not knowing what to do or where to find solutions. Better yet you become numb and disregard your feelings because you have seen these images so often and for so long that to become outraged is almost ludicrous.

You may be too young to remember “West Side story.”<sup>20</sup> I am old enough to have sat in that theatre. It seemed like the whole world loved the movie. It won 10 academy awards including best picture. I kept thinking there was something wrong with me because I could neither identify with the story nor the characters yet I lived in the heart of New York City.

It seems that one Latina is the same as the next Latina. Even intelligent college professors have been prone to think this way. Take a professor from a noted New York City institution who told me once, “If we hire you or if we hire the other Latina, what difference does it make?” Or the professor in a Northwest Georgia institution who noted that “oh yes, I had a Hispanic student once . . . what was his name . . . he was Hispanic wasn't he?” Or the white lady at the carwash staffed by all Latino immigrants yesterday—again in Northwest Georgia—“Aren't you afraid they will steal your car?” The media, just like so many Americans, seems to be an equal opportunity offender when it comes to Latino/as. Not only for lumping us together as one group, but also for dehumanizing, demonizing, and demoralizing us just the same.

According to the Pew Hispanic Center<sup>21</sup> Latinos/as switch between English and Spanish to get their news receiving some of their news in both English and Spanish and not just in one language. This demonstrates that we are not dealing with two audiences sharply segmented by language. Even fluent English speakers

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<sup>18</sup>Subervi-Velez, F., Ramirez Ber, C., Constantakis-Valdes, P., Noriega, C., Rios, D., & Wilkinson, K. (1997). In C. Rodriguez (Ed.), *Latin looks. Images of Latinas and Latinos in the US media*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

<sup>19</sup>Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury

<sup>20</sup>Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise's (1961).

<sup>21</sup>Pew Hispanic Center. (2004). *News release: Latinos' choices in news media are shaping their views of their communities*. Washington, DC: The Nation and the World.

rely on Spanish-language media. For Latino/a voters in US elections the reliance on English-language media is 53%, 40% in both languages, and 6% in Spanish-only. The viewers exposed to English-language news are influenced in their views so much so that they have less-favorable views of undocumented immigrants, are more skeptical of government policies, and are less trusting of news organizations. The vast majority of Latinos, including those who only get news in English, view the Spanish-language media as an important institution and are concerned that the English-language media contribute to a negative image of Latinos. In terms of which media outlet is relied on for the news from on an average weekday, 88% of Latinos cited network television, 82% local television, 52% newspapers, 58% radio, and 29% the Internet.

The National Association of Hispanic Journalists<sup>22</sup> distributed findings from a study with both quantitative and qualitative findings. The qualitative findings include media portrayals where: There is use of Salsa and Mexican mariachi music regardless of the seriousness of the story; the use of the term “they” is utilized often in describing Latinos in the United States; Latinos are generally presented as crowds of brown human hordes coming down narrow corridors or streets; visual images that cue the audience of the transient nature of Latinos in the United States; networks emphasize predominate use of Spanish ignoring the fact that most US-born Latinos are either bilingual or do not speak Spanish; “Latino stories continue to be seriously underrepresented in television news and their portrayals are often stereotypical and highly divergent from the true essence of Latino society and culture” (p. 3).

The question becomes, how will media portrayals of Latino/as continue to evolve? Will there be a time when the media begins to understand its role in the education of a nation? From what we are seeing of a capitalist profit-oriented nation . . .? The challenge for the media is to create new possibilities that can enhance the democratic sphere. How can the media educate the public to understand the daily-lived realities of immigrants as opposed to demonization? How can the media contribute to the liberation and emancipation of people?

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<sup>22</sup>Méndez-Méndez, S. and Diane Alverio, D. (2001). *The Portrayal of Latinos in Network Television News, 2000*. Washington, DC: National Association of Hispanic Journalists.



## Chapter 3

# Profit y Femicidio En La Frontera

Y la noche in esa ciudad Juarez  
no tenia ni principio ni fin  
tan solo el miedo  
tan solo la muerte<sup>1</sup>

The documentary “Senorita Extraviada: Missing young woman” by Lourdes Portillo begins with “The desert is full of secrets, some of them buried in the sands.” The piece shows the fate of hundreds of young women from the maquiladora border city of Juarez, Mexico. Juarez is known as the “capital of murdered women.” Young women are been kidnapped, raped, mutilated, and murdered. No agency, no government, or community has been able to stop the ongoing atrocities since 1993 when the young women began to disappear.

This maquiladora (largely US corporation manufacturing factories) city (Juarez) has a population of 1.5 million with one of the highest murder rates in the world. In contrast, El Paso, Texas, the city on the other side of the border, has one of the lowest crime rates in America. The homicide rate for women is three times greater than any other border city of similar size. Some of the wealthiest corporations of the world including GE, Sonic, Alcoa, Dupont, Panasonic arrived when Mexico signed the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). When the factories arrived, women’s bodies began to appear in drains, fields, and the desert called “Lomas de Poleo.” Young women keep arriving from small poor towns for \$55 a week jobs even when Juarez cannot protect them. Some of the women and girls are between 13 and 14 years old.<sup>2</sup>

Iris disappeared on May 2, 2005. Two days later police handed her mother the young girl’s earrings. The police had not bothered to remove the charred pieces of ear still attached to them. It was almost all that was left of the 14-year-old, whose body had literally melted

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<sup>1</sup>And the night in the city of Juarez didn’t have a beginning or an end just fear just death. From Agosin, M. (2003). *Death in the desert: The women of Ciudad Juarez*. In J. Browdy de Hernandez (2003). *Women writing resistance* (pp. 195–196). Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

<sup>2</sup>Nieves, E. (2002) To work and die in Juarez. Mother Jones. Retrieved form <http://motherjones.com/politics/2002/05/work-and-die-juarez>

away after being thrown in a rubbish bin and covered in lime. Iris Hernandez became a statistic in Juarez's bloody profile.<sup>3</sup>

Award-winning documentary maker, Colm McNaughton, related his experiences in Juarez, "This is not a place you walk into lightly," he said. "There are no white people hanging around in these areas." McNaughton borrows a quote from Dante: "The air trembles," he said. "It's a scary place." He asked three people to act as his guide but all refused. He says one person told him: "To be with you is a death sentence."<sup>4</sup>

The estimates of murdered women and young girls is between 350 and 450. Speculations about the murders range from blaming the victims for the way they dressed, to prostitution, to organ selling in the US market, to initiation rites for the drug cartel. "The commonality behind those crimes is the misogyny – the targeting of women because they're women," Mr. Knox of Amnesty International has indicated. He agrees with the use of the term "femicide" because, "The institution of the state is not acting in a way to protect women when they have information available, and that's the key to Juarez's femicide . . . the state is implicated for its negligence."<sup>5</sup>

The women in the region have continued to pursue justice for the young women. They have organized themselves, held vigils, erected crosses, marched requesting investigations, brought pressure on the governments (Mexican and US), worked with the media and human rights groups to continue to shed light on the atrocities. "The killings continue," says Esther Chávez, who is considered a pioneer in Juarez's women's movement. "So not much has changed." The multinational companies have promised to improve security but practices that continue to endanger the young women's lives continue.

Claudia Ivette (like several other women) was turned away for being three minutes late for her shift. She disappeared on her way home. Her mother Josefina González who joined a search with other mothers found her 20-year-old daughter's corpse along with seven other young women.

Amparo was one of five workers who filed an unfair labor practice against the piecework policy that keeps wages low. "I tolerated them for 10 years" she confessed.<sup>6</sup> Amparo was sewing 1,200 pairs of dress slacks for Dimmit in order to obtain \$35/week to support her two teenage boys. She pushed herself to produce more than 1,800 slacks per day. The poor ventilation in the factory meant that Amparo developed coughs as her lungs became more and more affected. Her 10–12 h shift allowed her a half hour lunch break and a 10 min morning break.

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<sup>3</sup>Bell, E. (2010) Inter-American Commission Report. ABC News (10 March) [http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/10/2841822.htm?section=Justin Report](http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/10/2841822.htm?section=Justin+Report) Available at <http://www.cidh.org/annualrep/2002eng/chap.vi.juarez.htm>. The hidden victims of Mexico's femicide

<sup>4</sup>Cited in Bell (2010).

<sup>5</sup>Mr. Knox was interviewed by Bell (2010).

<sup>6</sup>Arriola, E. (2007). Accountability for murder in the maquiladoras: Linking corporal indifference to gender violence at the US Mexico border. *Seattle Journal for Social Justice*.

Maria Elena<sup>7</sup> showed how her feet were covered with dark-scar tissue, scratch marks, from an unexplainable fungus infection that her family would request that she “stay away from them.” The doctors observed that she was about to lose her feet to gangrene. Maria Elena’s illness is only one of many that the maquiladora workers have developed.

My graduate students and I first learned about the women of Juarez when a student walked into our evening class visibly upset. She told us that she was unable to sleep after having viewed the documentary “Senorita Extraviada.” None of us had seen or even known about what was happening to the women of Juarez. We made arrangements to view the video at the next class meeting. We were all quite shocked and upset and took it upon ourselves to contact Amnesty International and the New York Times. We also decided to network and brainstorm with colleagues at other universities.

I taught a feminist course at a university in Texas where I shared the documentary with my students. Two of the students started to cry with one student feeling visibly uncontrollable. I realized immediately the terrible mistake I made and how insensitive I was, since we lived near the border. The students not only knew that this was happening but had experienced it having lived in Juarez. I was able to talk to one of the students after class and she shared her sorrow and how deeply frustrated she felt.

What can I do about all this suffering I have inside? she asked.

It occurred to me that she could write about it and that writing might be a therapeutic way to deal with her emotional pain. Ultimately she decided to turn the writings into her dissertation. Although she has had to reconfigure the work in light of the escalating violence attributed to the drug cartels in Juarez, she is completing the work this year.

Amy Goodman the award winning journalist from “Democracy Now” interviewed Joseph Nevins<sup>8</sup> about his documentary. The piece centers on the life and death of 23-year-old Julio Cesar Gallegos, who died in the California desert in August 1998. Julio had been living and working in ELA since 1993 and was returning from central Mexico after dealing with a family emergency. His wife (a US citizen) waited for him with their son. Initially it was easy to cross the border but the Clinton administration began intensive border enforcement. As a result Julio and six others traveled through hostile topography. His and the corpses of the others were found putrefied and mummified from the desert heat.

his story (Julio Cesar Gallego’s) is just one story of a much larger death toll. Since the mid-1990s, it is estimated that well over 5,000 migrant corpses have been recovered in the US-Mexico borderlands. The reason I use the word “recovered” is because there is certainly

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Nevins, J. Dying to live: A story of US immigration in an age of global apartheid (A Documentary) Interviewed by Amy Goodman, June 20, 2008.

a much larger death toll, in that we don't know exactly how many people have died, because of the vastness of the US-Mexico borderlands . . . . .

He was holding the picture of his two-year-old son . . . .

(yet) the vast majority have just decided to take the risk, because the forces compelling them to migrate are so great . . . the dominant ways of seeing migrants and unauthorized immigration in the United States is to see it within a framework of law and order, in terms of national security, not in terms of human rights, nor in terms of the complex political and economic factors that are driving immigration . . . a team of researchers associated with the Carnegie Endowment . . . found . . . that between the years 1994 and 2002, about 1.3 million Mexican farmers or farm laborers had been displaced by a trade deficit. . . brought about most significantly by NAFTA . . . So that's 1.3 million people and their dependents who have been displaced by NAFTA in the larger process of neoliberalization which it represents (Joseph Nevins).<sup>9</sup>

The most glaring issue here is how the human element is being disregarded, how human rights are being overlooked, and how profit has taken priority over human life.

Even when we are told that the economy is suffering, we find that "deeper cuts" impacting employment, for example, while increasing profits continue for the giant industries. As the profits increase 14 million unemployed keep hoping for a better day. Apparently management uses the idea of higher unemployment to push its workers to work more hours. "In some ways, the ability to raise profits in the face of declining sales is a triumph of productivity that makes United States more globally competitive."<sup>10</sup>

In the meantime . . . what about Maria Elena, Amparo, and the other maquiladora workers, and the immigrants building condo's in Austin's hot punishing heat, or the fruit pickers providing the nutrition for families, or the undocumented women at the sewing machines and any other number of industries, the farmers who cannot grow their traditional crops . . . what about the human element?

No les importa si vivimos o morimos,  
solamente es el amor al dinero.  
(Child construction worker, Austin, TX, 2009)

Tenemos derechos. "The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant workers and members of their families" was adopted by the General Assembly (45/158) on December 18, 1990.

In parts it states that:

No migrant worker or member of his or her family shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. (Article 10)

Migrant workers and members of their family shall have the right to liberty and the security of person. Migrant workers and members of their family shall be entitled to effective protection by the State against violence, physical

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Schwartz, N. Industries find surging profits in deeper cuts. *New York Times* (2010, July 25).

injury, threats, and intimidation, whether by public officials or by private individuals, groups or institutions. (Article 16)

Every migrant worker and member of his or her family shall have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. (Article 24)

Migrant workers shall enjoy treatment not less favorable than that which applies to nationals of the State of employment in respect of remuneration and other conditions of work, that is to say, overtime, hours of work, weekly rest, holidays with pay, safety, health, termination of the employment relationship, and any other conditions of work which, according to national law and practice, are covered by these terms; other terms of employment, that is to say, minimum age of employment, restriction on work, and any other matters which, according to national law and practice, are considered a term of employment. (Article 25)

The right of migrant workers and members of their families:

To take part in meetings and activities of trade unions and of any other associations established in accordance with law, with a view to protecting their economic, social, cultural, and other interests, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned; to join freely any trade union and any such association as aforesaid, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned; to seek the aid and assistance of any trade union and of any such association as aforesaid. (Article 26)

Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to receive any medical care that is urgently required for the preservation of their life or the avoidance of irreparable harm to their health on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Such emergency medical care shall not be refused to them by reason of any irregularity with regard to stay or employment. (Article 28)

Each child of a migrant worker shall have the right to a name, to registration of birth, and to a nationality. (Article 29)

Each child of a migrant worker shall have the basic right of access to education on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Access to public pre-school educational institutions or schools shall not be refused or limited by reason of the irregular situation with respect to stay or employment of either parent or by reason of the irregularity of the child's stay in the State of employment. (Article 30)

Viewing these issues with a human-rights lens tells us that:

we have miles to go before we sleep and miles to go before we sleep (borrowing from the American poet, Robert Frost).

When will we learn about human rights and the notion of viewing workers as human beings who toil in fields, factories, desert heat, and freezing orchards? When we

begin to understand Freire's<sup>11</sup> notion of conscientization (consciousness raising) and how to "read the word and the world" we can begin to critically analyze our own and our brothers' and sisters' situation. Regardless of how we view others and how others view us we are truly in "this together." As the voice of solidarity calls us to care for each other our humanity is being tested.

Members of the Border Patrol have witnessed the human stories, "We're fortunate enough to be a country where there are lots of opportunities. And most of the people who we run into out here want to make that dream happen. Unfortunately, it's our job to stop that dream. That's what we do on an everyday basis." So, on the one hand, the Border Patrol is saying, "We're all about security. We're fighting terrorism." Amy Goodman goes on to say, "On the other hand, when you talk to the actual Border Patrol agents—I mean, some of them buy into that rhetoric of security, but a lot of them understand in a very deep way what they're actually doing, right, and that is, helping to deny people basic human rights, as this Border Patrol agent so eloquently said."<sup>12</sup>

How do we grapple and understand how we find ourselves in this position? What has happened that our humanity is somehow lost in the worshiping of revenues? Who stands to win from all of this?

According to Peter McLaren, "Capitalism's history appears to have written us out of the story, displacing human agency into the cabinet of lost memories . . . Look at the faces of the men and women who line up for food stamps in South Central and East Los Angeles, the slumped shoulders of the workers lining up at the gates of the maquiladores in Juarez, Mexico, and the wounded smiles of children juggling tennis balls, breathing fire, and washing car windows in the midst of a traffic jam in Mexico City, and you will have come face-to-face with the destructive power of neo-liberalism . . . The intensification of international competition among multinational corporations . . . (with) the threatening tendency of colonizing . . . As globalization has dramatically intensified over the last several decades, its lack of an ethical foundation . . . has never been so apparent." Michael Parenti (1998) writes: "Capitalism is a system without a soul, without humanity. It tries to reduce every human activity to market profitability."<sup>13</sup>

The massive super profits by the multinational companies from the maquiladora system is based on saving 75% of the labor costs along huge tax advantages. The US-imposed austerity program has meant long-term gain for US capitalism and mass migration of desperate Mexican workers to the maquiladoras or north of the border. The Mexican government guarantees a "climate of labor peace" by controlling preventing strikes and unions. Working conditions include low wages, long work hours, sexual harassment, on the job pregnancy tests, no workers compensation, health problems attributed to the toxic contamination of the air. Your family

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<sup>11</sup>Freire (1970).

<sup>12</sup>Amy Goodman, democracy now interview with Joseph Nevins (2008, June).

<sup>13</sup>McLaren, P. (1999). Contesting capital: Critical pedagogy and globalism a response to Michael apple. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 1(2), 29–30.

life means coming home to a shack or adobe structure without sewage service, poor health, no child-care, child labor exploitation, family violence. Children left alone at home are easy target for substance abuse and the gang cartels. In addition, there were tremendous loss in agriculture since one-fifth of Mexicans were previously in the farming sector. The cost of living along with the lower wages has risen by 250%. The privileged ruling classes on both sides of the border have taken advantage of working poor on both sides of the border.<sup>14</sup>

The people of Chiapas understood the ramifications of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). They knew that “free trade” is not free since such a policy favors the more powerful. The Declaration of War by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (ZNLA) shows how the indigenous understood Mexico’s history as having been colonized, exploited, and betrayed:

We are the product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain, then to avoid being absorbed by North American Imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French Empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz denied us the just application of the Reform Laws, and the people rebelled and the leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor people just like us. We have been denied the most elemental preparation so that they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don’t care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads: no land, no work, no health care, no food, no education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children . . . (p. 5).<sup>15</sup>

As Mexico continues to grapple with an economic crisis and the conditions resulting from capitalist exploitation, poor Mexicans are “gradually but inexorably reclaiming their birthright in North America” (p. 6).<sup>16</sup>

There are three areas that have sparked the unstoppable mass migrations as follows: (a) maquiladoras’ ability to undermine the Mexican economy, (b) US-imposed economic austerity programs, and (c) NAFTA. “The ongoing Mexican exodus to the US. is erasing the arbitrary line that has divided the American Southwest . . . evert Mexican man, woman, or child who crosses the border, legally or illegally, into the US. to work and build a better life is reclaiming a share of the Mexican birthright in North America denied to his/her people for over a century and a half! Viva Mexico!” (p. 9).<sup>17</sup>

Thinking of the situation as a “birthright” places a completely different lens on how undocumented immigrants are being viewed in this country. Should the lost lands and disregarded treaties be reclaimed? Why is the femicide allowed to continue? Does anyone care about these beautiful young women? Are these lives just

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<sup>14</sup>Vogel, R. D. (2004). *Stolen birthright: The US conquest and exploitation of the Mexican people. The Hispanic experience: Perspective on the frontier.* Houston Institute for Culture.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

not respected? How long will the “sacrificial female body that has been dedicated to the gods of production and profit”<sup>18</sup> have to continue to call for your attention?

. . . to remain silent and indifferent  
is the greatest sin of all . . .  
Elie Wiesel

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<sup>18</sup>Arriola (2007).



## Chapter 4

# High-School Challenges, Exemplary Programs, Solutions

*If an unfriendly power had attempted  
to impose on America the mediocre  
educational performance that exists today,  
we might well have viewed it as  
an act of war*

(National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983).

The high-school years can be challenging for young people. In our nation the students who have the most to overcome are Latino/a (especially undocumented) youth. While this is the case, the nation has the most to gain by strategically placing resources toward our largest- and youngest-minority population.

Latinos/Latinas are the largest- and youngest-minority group in the United States. Twenty percent of all schoolchildren are Latino/a. Twenty-five percent of newborns are Latino/a. The rates of public-school students in several states vary, for example, in California it is 48%; while in Texas it is 46% and in New York State it is 20%.

This is the first time that a minority ethnic group makes up such a large a portion of the youngest population in the United States. How we raise, educate, and care for this youth will determine the type of nation we will become. Academically Latino/a learners are lagging behind prompting scholars to refer to it as an “education crisis” that may be beyond “what schools can do.”<sup>1</sup>

What is the significance between immigration and the “education crisis” that learners and schools are facing? Although the question is complex, some scholars are showing that “Americanization” per se may actually be counterproductive for educational achievement while there is a kind of “optimism” that immigrant learners bring to the school door. What are we doing to the native born Latino/a learners in the educational system that the more recently arriving immigrants can have hope for higher-educational attainment?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gandara, P., & Contreras, F. (2009). *The Latino education crisis. Consequences of failed social policies* (p. 6). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>2</sup>Rumbaut (1995) and Suarez-Orozco (1995).

High-school students in Northwest Georgia may shed some insight into this question as well. Students in this geographic area were predominately Anglo until approximately two decades ago. More recently the demographic shifts have resulted in a community that is almost 50%/50% with some schools showing over 90% Latino mostly immigrant learners. Several high-school students relayed some of their experiences. How Anglo students and Anglo teachers treated them on a daily basis is having long-term effects in their esteem and how they perceive their future. If you were humiliated and faced a hostile environment on a daily basis how do you think you would perform?

There are a few courageous souls who do want to see success in the lives of our youth. However, when a whole community perceives a whole group as “less than,” “the lowest of the lowest”—what can we expect? Families were actively recruited to work when the carpet industry was reaping huge profits; but suddenly the welcome mat is removed because of a weaker economy. So basically the message this community is sending is—“we want you when we need you; but go home when we don’t need you.” The discrimination and racism these students face is evidenced as an integral part of their daily-lived realities.

High-school Latina/o learners also face challenges within cultural familial beliefs based on issues of class and gender. In the Patricia Cardoso’s (2002) film “Real Women have curves,” Ana, played by America Ferrera, is discouraged by her family to continuing schooling. This is just one of the challenges for female Latina students, when cultural elements still exist viewing females as caretakers only, rather than as professional/educated women.

Latinas are dropping out of school in alarming numbers  
a pattern that has serious and damaging repercussions  
for their future prospects and economic security.  
Yet little research has been done on the particular barriers  
that Latinas face or the strategies that might maximize  
their chances for success.<sup>3</sup>

A qualitative study (report) including interviews, surveys, and focus groups was disseminated by National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) and Maldef<sup>4</sup> shows that 41% of Latinas (vs. 22% of Anglo females) fail to graduate from high school. This has life-long negative consequences for Latinas’ health, economic well-being, and the nation’s future. Almost half of Latinas between the ages of 25 and 64 who lack a high-school diploma are unemployed and if working earn \$15,030/year. The report “Listening to Latinas: Barriers to high school education,” documents recurring themes that demonstrate both the challenges.

First, Latinas have high aspirations but there is a disconnect between high aspirations and the daily-lived realities.

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<sup>3</sup>National Women’s Law Center and MALDEF. (2009). *Listening to Latinas: Barriers to high school graduation*. Washington, DC: National Women’s Law Center and MALDEF.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

The following student narratives represent some of the interviews:<sup>5</sup>

“I want to have what my parents didn’t  
I want to be someone in life.”

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“It’s very important to me to graduate—  
it’s one of my goals in life because nobody in my family  
really graduated from middle school or high school so  
I want to do that for myself, so I don’t have to worry about working in fast food places  
or whatever.”

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“My mom’s mom she was a field worker—  
so she was the one who appreciated education—  
and she would say “Mija, get all you can out of education,  
get a college degree,”  
cause I wanted it and I couldn’t get it.”

The challenges affecting the disparity between high expectations and daily-lived reality includes poverty.

When the G-20 world leaders met in Toronto, July, 2010, Maude Barlow indicated, “The world is divided into rich and poor as at not time in history.”<sup>6</sup> Barlow describes the matter in more detail:

The richest 2% own more than half the household wealth in the world. The richest 10% hold 85% of total global assets and the bottom half of humanity owns less than 1% of the wealth in the world. The three richest men in the world have more money than the poorest 48 countries. Fact, while those responsible for the 2008 global financial crisis were bailed out and even rewarded by the G-20 government’s gathering here, the International Labor Organization tells us that in 2009, 34 million people were added to the global unemployed, swelling those ranks to 239 million, the highest ever recorded. Another 200 million are at risk in precarious jobs and the World Bank tells us that at the end of 2010, another 64 million will have lost their jobs. By 2030, more than half the population of the mega cities of the Global South will be slum dwellers with no access to education, health care, water, or sanitation.

In the United States, a first world nation, we are already seeing these depictions of the haves and have-nots. Immigrant families who live in shacks without running water and sanitation are quite familiar with this scenario.

The data show that Latino children are far more likely to live in poverty (28.6%, over 1/4th) to lack health care, vision care, and stable housing.<sup>7</sup> Poverty can have long-lasting effects on children, families, communities, and the future of a nation’s health, education, and well-being. What we are seeing is the more powerful industries, companies, and privileged ones reap huge rewards while (as Barlow notes) “the bottom half of humanity owns less than 1%!”

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>Maude Barlow, Head of Council of Canadians. Democracy Now (July 2, 2010).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

Even though the young women (in the young Latina study) demonstrated high expectations they also doubted their own abilities, as these narratives show:<sup>8</sup>

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I'm trying to make it to the highest level I can make it to, the highest level that there is, but knowing me I'll probably make it a little lower

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Umm, I'm not really sure if I would graduate from a university—because how expensive tuition is right now, but I think that if I had the money and my grades are good and everything, I think I could make it.

\*\*\*\*\*.

The immigration situation creates an environment of uncertainty and stress particularly for undocumented families. There may be additional financial burdens when there are extended family members needing support. Young Latinas shared in their interviews how anxiety and fear pose tremendous difficulties:<sup>9</sup>

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Sometimes kids don't always know that they're undocumented, in middle school they are starting to figure it out, but they don't really understand—it's a hard thing to comprehend [But some kids] are worried about being called by immigration—they are sometimes not allowed to answer the door and stuff in case it's a raid. They are living in fear.

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Oh yeah, like I've seen many of my friends, they're really into school but they had to quit because of their immigration status. They have to work and they don't have the money to keep on going, and the colleges won't accept them—it's more expensive and they don't have the money.

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A lot of kids have a hard time because they feel like what's the point, I work in the field now and I'm going to end up working in the field, because they can't get other, better jobs because they don't have immigration status. These kids are aware, they know exactly what's going on—the problem is that the mainstream community does not understand.

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The list of additional issues faced by young Latinas appears daunting including English-language proficiency; lack of parental understandings about the American-school system or even feeling welcomed in the schools; limited engagement in school; gender stereotyping by family and society; lack educational and career role models; ethnic and gender discrimination in both subtle and blatant ways in schools; highest teen pregnancy rates—do not receive realistic advice from parents or schools; Latinas with children face enormous barriers including financial, logistical, and discrimination/stigmatization by teachers and schools; family caregiving responsibilities for younger siblings or elderly relatives; and lower involvement in school activities.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 12–26.

There are projections of 82% increase of the school- and college-age population (ages 5–4) indicating that education is a “matter of national significance.”<sup>11</sup> Most Latino youths are not immigrants. Two-thirds were born in the United States, many of them are the descendants of the big, ongoing arrival of Latin-American immigrants who began coming to the USA around 1965.<sup>12</sup>

Parents expect so much and it gets...overwhelming.  
 You have to support your family  
 and take care of your brothers and sisters...  
 [and] some people gotta grow up [quick and]  
 basically never really have a childhood.

15-year-old Latino male

Our parents are exhausted every time they come home.  
 They don't have time to be  
 'oh you need help with your homework?'

21-year-old Latino male<sup>13</sup>

## Selected Demographics

Latinos are not only the largest minority population, but are also the youngest.<sup>14</sup> One-quarter of all newborns in the United States are Latino. Two-thirds of Latinos aged 16–25 are native-born Americans. The latter figure may surprise some. A four-decade-old Hispanic immigration flow has resulted in a second generation of US-born children who are preparing for adulthood.

Latino/a immigrant and US-born youth struggle with their identities. US-born children of immigrants identified first as American while youth born overseas show a preference for their family's country of origin. The family setting is placing a strong focus on their home country of origin and is encouraging young people to retain Spanish. Young people note the cultural differences within the Latino community in the United States. Almost two-thirds feel that Latinos from different countries get along well with each other in the United States. Racial identity differs from generation to generation with older Latinos (30%) identifying as white, while only 16% of younger Latinos identify as white.

From these data, collected by Pew, it is interesting to note that 36% over 1/3 of young Latina/os ages 16–25 are English dominant. This is important to note because not every one of this generation may be able to respond in Spanish when only 23% are Spanish dominant. Almost 1/2 (41%) are bilingual.

Immigrant children do not feel the need to abandon Spanish helping to show the resilience of the mother tongue. You can add a language to your repertoire rather

<sup>11</sup>Fry, R. (2002). *Latino high school graduates*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

<sup>12</sup>Pew Hispanic Center. (2009). *Pew Hispanic Center DECEMBER 11, 2009*. Between two worlds: How young Latinos come of age in America.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., see report for full details.

than allow the home language to be erased. Young people are able to switch between English and Spanish easily and mix into a hybrid “Spanglish.”

Latino youth believe in hard work and have high-educational aspirations. Yet, the financial pressure to support their family limits their possibilities. Young Latinos (38%) also share that a relative or close friend has been a target of racial or ethnic discrimination. Latino youths born overseas are much more likely than their native-born counterparts to be employed in lower-skill occupations. The native born are more dispersed across occupations, including in relatively high-skill occupations.

## Explanations for Academic Achievement

Equating the school failure of Chicanos/as with a toothache that never goes away, Valencia<sup>15</sup> describes how this condition is deeply rooted in the history of the United States.

Conducting a review of academic models that explain Latino/a academic achievement, Martha Montero-Seiburth,<sup>16</sup> views the historical evolution from the twentieth century to the present. The explanations offered by social scientists have contributed to the negative perceptions of Latina/o students, their families, and their communities. These are the models proposed by Montero-Seiburth:

First, the segregationist explanations of the 1860s to the 1930s were based on the debates of racial superiority attributing biological superiority to the Anglo-Saxons as the “chosen people.” The founder of the eugenics movement, Sir Francis Galton, advocated for the sterilization of racial minorities and poor white immigrants. Social segregation was increased with the advent of IQ testing and cultural-deprivation theories. Even with legal mandates seeking integration of schools, the opposite has taken place indicating the far-reaching effects of segregationist views.

Second, the cultural deprivation and cultural-differences model evolved from the 1960s. The culture of the home was blamed for “deficiencies” as were the learners. These theories fell into disfavor as they painted global-deficit perspectives disregarding Latino-parental activism, the linguistic and cultural gifts families bring to the home, to name a few.

Third, the language explanations of the 1970s–1990s were an integral part of the fields of sociolinguistics, psychologists, and anthropologists. Although this area has contributed much to our knowledge about Latino/a learners it has become integrated in to the political debates for English-only.

Fourth, have been the cultural and ecological explanations of the 1980s to the present. Much of the work conducted by anthropologists and ethnographers such as John Ogbu while being critiqued have provided understandings of the economic

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<sup>15</sup>Valencia, R. (2002). *Chicano school failure and success*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>16</sup>Montero-Seiburth, M. (2007). Academic models: Explaining achievement. In L. D. Soto (Ed.), *Latino education in the US* (pp. 8–23). New York: Rowan and Littlefield Education.

structures, institutional racism, and oppositional cultures. Montero-Sieburth notes the importance of newer scholars who are relating the importance of social capital.

Fifth, are the psychological explanations of the 1970s to the present. These newer scholars are relying on “a dual frame of reference” and the peer co-existence model.<sup>17</sup>

Sixth, is the current research viewing second-generation Latinos, the effects of transnationalism, and global perspectives. These projects<sup>18</sup> relate how Latinos adapt, are motivated, and demonstrate resilience. Although these studies may present limitations, they in fact provide a deeper and more complex view affording additional understandings about how Latino/a students are succeeding in schools.

## Successful High-School Programs

Data from a study conducted by Lucas, Henze, and Donato<sup>19</sup> showed particular features of high schools that promoted success for Latinos/as. The eight elements include the following: (a) value is placed on the students’ languages and cultures; (b) high expectations for language-minority Latinos are made concrete; (c) school leaders make the education of language-minority learners a priority; (d) staff-development programs specifically help educators to work more effectively with language-minority; (e) a variety of courses and programs for language-minority Latinos/as; (f) counseling program that gives special attention to these learners; (g) parents are encouraged (programs are provided) to participate and become involved; (h) the school staff shares a strong commitment to the language minority students.

El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice<sup>20</sup> is a small, innovative high school that emerged as part of a community project by activists in Brooklyn, NY. Initially designed as an after school program, its founder Luis Garden Acosta, refers to the streets of North Brooklyn at the time, as the “killing fields” when gang violence took the life of one Latina/o per week. The program was founded on guiding principles of peace, justice, and human rights that could respond to deficit perspectives and move toward self-determination. In 1993 El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice was opened in NYC as a public high school with the support of “New Visions for Education,” a not-for-profit. According to Anthony de Jesus, the organizational conditions (for the community and by the community) have led to improved-educational outcomes for Latino/a students.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>19</sup>Lucas, T., Henze, R., & Donato, R. (1997). Promoting the success of Latino-language minority students: An exploratory study of six high schools. In A. Darder., R. Torres., & H. Gutierrez (Eds.), *Latinos and education: A critical reader* (pp. 380–381). New York: Routledge.

<sup>20</sup>de Jesus, A. (2007). El Puente for peace and justice. In L. D. Soto (Ed.), *Latino education in the US* (pp. 141–142). New York: Rowan and Littlefield Education.

The Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS)<sup>21</sup> is an alternative high school founded in 1972 in Chicago. The small high school serves students who have dropped out of Tuley, Wells, Lake View High Schools. PACHS originated in the basement of a Chicago church as “students, parents, and community leaders have long complained that the Chicago public school system is counterproductive and generally apathetic to the real needs of Puerto Rican students.”<sup>22</sup> The school now serves learners of all ethnicities from grades 9 to 12. The most impressive element of the school is the commitment shared by all who are involved with the school. There is a waiting list for this school that tries to keep their classes small and emphasizes issues of language and culture. The educational philosophy relies on the work of Paulo Freire (1970)<sup>23</sup> focusing on education for liberation. The students relayed to Antrop-Gonzalez during his data gathering at the school for his dissertation that they considered the school a sanctuary. The student narratives identify four essential elements for “school as sanctuary” including the following: (a) multiple definitions of caring relations between students and their teachers, (b) the importance of a familial-like school environment, (c) the necessity of psychologically and physically safe school spaces, and (d) allowing students a forum where they are encouraged to affirm their racial/ethnic pride.<sup>24</sup>

## Recommendations/What to Do

There appear to be numerous elements that can be recommended based upon both studies and data gathering reports cited in this chapter to create more “Schools as Sanctuaries:”

- First, meet with the various players involved and find out what is needed. You can conduct participatory-action research meetings, focus groups, individual interviews, whatever makes the most sense in this particular sociocultural community.
- President Obama can make the education of Latina/o learners (including documented and undocumented) a national priority.
- All parties can seek and obtain serious resources for this national priority.
- Congress can fully fund programs that will assist Latino/a learners and in turn the nation, including but not limited to scholarships, enriching early education, multicultural curriculum, civil rights enforcement, and pass legislation that will hold schools accountable for sexual harassment.

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<sup>21</sup>Antrop-Gonzalez, R. (2007). Pedro Albizu Campos High School (Pachs). In D. Soto (Ed.), *Latino Education in the US* (pp. 365–369). New York: Rowan and Littlefield Education.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 365.

<sup>23</sup>Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*.

<sup>24</sup>Antrop-Gonzalez, R. (2006). Toward the “school as sanctuary”: Implications for small high school reform. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 36(2), 273–301.



- Congress can stop funding abstinence-only programs and create a federal program dedicated to providing teens with comprehensive sex education and informed projects.
- Department of Education should enforce civil-rights laws that prevent sex and race discrimination in educational programs and activities.
- Schools can create a curriculum highlighting the “funds of knowledge”<sup>25</sup> families bring to schools.
- Schools can create a school climate emphasizing familial-like/caring relationships between students, teachers, and the learner’s daily-lived reality.
- Schools can design spaces that create safety both physically and emotionally.
- Schools, parents, and mentors, can provide continuous academic enrichment with trips, visits to museums, outdoor environmental projects, the arts, etc.
- Schools can implement a curriculum that emphasizes the cultures and languages of the students.
- Schools can implement a Freirian perspective, “Education for liberation” that creates active players in the democratic sphere.
- Schools can implement a critical pedagogy that can assist learners in learning to “read the word and the world,” as per Freire, so they can become informed-active agents in the democratic sphere.
- Schools can implement intensive guidance counseling projects that will map out a specific path with specific dates, with needed applications, scholarship possibilities, and assistance with paperwork, as well as emotional support, for successful college applications.
- Schools can implement a realistic curriculum that includes age-appropriate sex education. In addition, the curriculum can be extended to include health issues, daily economic knowledge, and vocational options if desired.
- Schools and community organizations can implement mentoring programs that will pair exemplary local-concerned adults (cleared with criminal background checks just like teachers) to work with Latina/o learners.
- Schools and community organizations can design parental involvement programs that will ensure a welcoming environment and can meet the needs of the community.
- Schools can enforce anti-discrimination policies.
- Schools, community, and families can create a “village” to encourage the educational possibilities for Latina/Latino youth.

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<sup>25</sup>González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

## Chapter 5

# Drop-Out/Push-Out Learners: Driving Youth from School to Prison

*Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive.*

Dalai Lama<sup>1</sup>

It has been documented that schools are creating the circumstances for students to be “pushed out” of high school and right into the hands of prison guards.<sup>2</sup> As states begin to push for stricter standards, educators are beginning to fear that an increasing number of students will drop out of schools. It is being noted that “some schools may be deliberately driving them out.” Students may not be aware that legally they have a right to a regular high school until they are 21 years of age. Schools are counseling/“discharging” students to attend private schools with alternative programs or into General Educational Diplomas (GED). Younger students are being encouraged to pursue other avenues that they may never complete, while the schools are told that these students do not need to be counted in the “drop-outs” ranks providing a disguised version of the actual number of learners who have indeed “dropped out” or in this case “pushed out.” “Advocates for the Children of New York” have filed a lawsuit against the New York Department of Education charging that Franklin K. Lane High School in Brooklyn illegally discharged hundreds of students over the past 3 years.<sup>3</sup>

Latino students are more likely than white students to leave school before completing their high-school program. At 21%, the national high school drop-out rate for Latinos/as is more than twice the national average of 10%.<sup>4</sup> A recent report<sup>5</sup> documents the largest minority in the nation, Latinas/os makes up 47 million, or

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<sup>1</sup>Dalai Lama. (1989). Nobel Peace Prize.

<sup>2</sup>Advancement Project. (2010). *Test, punish, and push out. How “zero tolerance” and high stakes testing funnel youth into the school-to-prison pipeline.* Los Angeles and Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup>Wolf, J. (2003). *High school push outs* Gotham Gazette. <http://www.gothamgazette.com/article/education/20030808/6/487>

<sup>4</sup>Pew Hispanic Center. (2004, January). *Latino teens staying in high school: A challenge for all generations.* Washington, DC: University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication.

<sup>5</sup>Fry, R. (2010, May 13). *Hispanics, high school drop outs and the GED.* Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.

15%, of the population of the United States. As of 2008, there were 29 million Hispanics ages 20 and older; of this group, 41% are native born and 59% are born overseas. The report also documents that:

- (a) 52% of adult Latino immigrants are considered high-school drop-outs.
- (b) The comparison with the native born Latino adults is 25%.
- (c) General Educational Development (GED) credential, widely regarded as the best “second chance” pathway to college, vocational training, and military service for adults who have not graduated from high school is only obtained by 1 out of 10 Latino/a “drop outs.”
- (d) Latina/o full-time, full-year workers with a GED had about the same mean annual earnings (\$33,504) as Latina/o full-time, full-year workers with a high-school diploma (\$32,972).

Over the last decade there has been an educational/political assault on Latina/os that has restricted options and created a “chilly climate” for Latino/a students. The assault began with attempts to deny schooling, reduce access to higher education, the implementation of English-only sink or swim projects (which were outlawed by the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision of 1974), and high stakes testing with English-only provisions. In addition, US schools have implemented “failed policies” including but not limited to providing little guidance for health education, not providing early childhood programs, providing inadequate facilities, providing less access to computers, inadequate instructional offerings, tracking that has deprived learners of high-advanced placement and gifted programs, stereotyping and lower expectations, provided with less-prepared teachers, unsafe environments, school segregation within and between schools, less access to extra-curricular activities, and less access to needed educational social capital.<sup>6</sup>

Several in depth ethnographic studies in various states and communities<sup>7</sup> help to make the case for the insurmountable challenges faced by Latino/a immigrant learners. Perhaps the most concerning one is that Latino student drop-outs/push-outs often report feeling that no one cared about them.

In west side Chicago, Chris Carger,<sup>8</sup> a teacher, professor, and scholar conducted an ethnographic study with Alejandro and his family. The study revolves around a young boy and his family as they struggle to succeed in an environment that doesn’t value their language or their culture. Chris Carger’s relationship with the family grew as her compassion for Alejandro grew. She became an advocate, interpreter, liaison, teacher, and family friend. She describes the complexity faced by Alejandro

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<sup>6</sup>Gandara, P., & Contreras, C. (2009). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed school policies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>7</sup>Carger (1996), Hamann (2006), Soto (1997), Valenzuela (1999), and others.

<sup>8</sup>Carger, C. (1996). *Of borders and dreams: A Mexican–American experience of urban education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

and his family within the social context of schooling and the accompanying relationships with teachers and administrators. We begin to understand why the term “push-out” may be more relevant than “drop-out.”

Chris Carger met Alejandro at a parochial school when he was a fifth grader. Carger has maintained contact with Alejandro and his family until the present day. She often found herself intervening on his behalf at the bequest of his mother, Alma. Chris was also the local university professor interested in literacy and English as a second language (ESL) instruction. Chris arranged for educational testing for Alejandro which was not available at his school. The testing indicated that he was a learning disabled reader. She took it upon herself to tutor Alejandro for 2 years in order to improve his reading. When Alejandro was about to enter the eighth grade the family made a decision to move to a “better” area.

The new school seemed to create additional barriers for Alejandro and his family. The latter refused to admit Alejandro but did admit his younger siblings. Alma (Alejandro’s mother) pleaded with the principal with Carger’s help.

The principal snapped,

I’m sure you know what a controlled enrollment means. We’re an overcrowded school; I can’t fit one more eighth grader in the class. Absolutely not.

Carger persisted,

But his four siblings have been accepted here; isn’t it the policy to keep a family together?

Pointing to Alma the principal responded,

Look, you can tell her that I don’t have to take any of her children. If she wants to put four here and have the oldest bused to another school, she can. Or she can have all five bused. I don’t care. I don’t have to take any of them (p. 3).

The principal was referring them to their previous neighborhood riddled with violence and gang activity. Carger continues to describe numerous incidents that Alejandro encountered including a brutal beating at the hands of gang members. She continued to advocate for his need for ESL and learning disabilities help, in spite of the barriers constructed by school policies. The school refused to accept the testing results from the university experts for learning disability placement, they insisted that placement for ESL include native language classes at a time when Alejandro could not understand academic Spanish, and they changed his program several times in 1 month.

Carger reflected,

No wonder dropout figures among Latino students are so high, I thought. This system is incredibly insensitive and frustrating, and I speak English and have an advanced degree behind me. Imagine how overwhelmed the Almas of the city feel trying to contend with it (p. 128).

Carger’s piece is filled with insights that continue to be disregarded by schools and the bureaucratic rules that sustain them. While certainly not all schools can be faulted since there are “islands of success” within school districts, yet there are too many learners falling through the cracks to make it acceptable for schools to

continue to function within deficit perspectives. Faulting children, faulting parents are no longer acceptable. Carger's piece continues to challenge us as she relates, a child born in this country to Mexican parents, who have clawed their way out of abject poverty; whose native language is Spanish; who despite textual illiteracy and racism, tenaciously hold on to deep religious convictions and cultural values; whose lives center around their family and dreams of a better life . . . *llena de ilusiones* (full of hopes). . . truly is not the problem. The problem is educational systems which have not adapted successfully to such diversity . . . . The problem. . . the education of the Alejandros of this country . . . begs resolution (p. 7).

In Steeltown, Pennsylvania, Soto's<sup>9</sup> study emphasizes relations of power. In this piece, the community becomes divided over an award winning 20-year-old bilingual-education program where Latino/a learners appear to be outperforming their counterparts. The elimination of the program, the family stories of struggle for a just and equitable education for their children, the community leaders' attempt to help the families form the backdrop of coercive and collaborative power relations. There are at least several incidents that I will never forget while conducting research in Steeltown.

I was driving my car in the community when I heard about how local business owners were going to post a "blue e" on their storefronts. The "blue e" meant that they were taking it upon themselves to determine your English language skills (or your grandmother's) and charge you more money than the next customer. Never mind that if you tested their own language speaking and writing skills they would be far below the norm.

The Latino/a parents at a school-board meeting at the local high-school auditorium were impressive in their willingness to testify and support good-educational programs. The all non-Latino school board feared the Latinos and had police security by their side—I don't think anyone was expecting what followed. A group of parents were led by their pastor and knelt and prayed in front of the board. It was to no avail because that evening the board voted to dismantle the very program the parents were trying to preserve. The more powerful non-Latino folks won that night.

My family and I moved to this community because of this study and the opportunity a local university offered me. My eldest son a high-school senior graduated from one of the Steeltown high schools. He reflected on his experience at this school and our former community by sharing,

In a way, it was a wake up call to the real world. I felt as if I had transferred from Disney World to no-man's world . . . The teachers in Steel Town have scarce resources and few materials-like the art teacher. I'll be honest with you I felt hurt a lot of the time . . . especially when they asked for my pass in the hallway, but they never asked the white kids . . . . The Puerto Rican kids are treated differently . . . badly . . . . and even the white kids should be receiving

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<sup>9</sup>Soto, L. D. (1997). *Language, culture, and power: Bilingual families and the struggle for quality education*. New York: State University of New York Press.

more encouragement . . . I suffered a lot, Mom, more than I have ever told you (p. xviii).

At his graduation, one of the high-school counselors cornered me and expressed her astonishment. She was incredulous that one of the Latino students had done so well, won awards, and was at the top of his class. The expectation was clear, Latino/as do not make it to the highest-academic ranks. I thank Daniel for sharing his insights of how different schools can treat the very same child. I am saddened when I think of how he suffered. I am also saddened to know first hand how so many Latino/a high-school students are continually mistreated in the very institutions where they should be protected, inspired, and encouraged.

I will also never forget how one mother held the published study to her heart and told me, “You told our story. You spoke for us.” It is my hope that Latino/a learners and families can increase their political power in order to reach a more equitable space for our children’s/grandchildren’s education. This new space of possibilities will reveal how social justice and equity can be the norm.

In Houston, Texas, Angela Valenzuela’s<sup>10</sup> ethnographic account of an inner city high school argues that schools subtract resources eroding learners’ social capital. In the introduction to her book she writes, “I would be struck by how often the words ‘care’ ‘caring’ and ‘caring for’ seemed to leap off the pages, demanding my attention” (p. 7). Valenzuela calls for schools to become truly caring institutions for US–Mexican youth. She continues by indicating, “An authentically caring pedagogy considers the strengths that youth bring with them to school” (p. 115). One of the students Valenzuela interviewed states”

It’s like all of our teachers have given up and they don’t want to teach us no more. If the school doesn’t care about my learning why should I care? (E. T. in Valenzuela, 1999, p. 88)

Making a case against subtractive schooling (that erases students’ language, culture, identity) toward an additive perspective (one that increases learners’ knowledge) Valenzuela concludes,

An authentically caring pedagogy  
would not only cease subtracting student’s  
cultural identities,  
it would also reverse its effects.  
It would build bridges wherever there are divisions  
and it would privilege biculturalism out of respect for the cultural  
integrity of their students (p. 266).

In Dalton, Georgia, Hamann<sup>11</sup> describes “The Georgia Project,” an educational “solution” that one community attempted to plan in response to the high number

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<sup>10</sup>Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: US Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. New York: State University of New York Press.

<sup>11</sup>Hamann, E. T. (2003). *The educational welcome of Latinos in the new south*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

of Latino/a immigrants recruited by the carpet industry. This was the first majority Latino school district in Georgia with six leaders attempting to implement a bi-national-agreement program in response to the newly arriving Mexican population. Hamann's study helps to demonstrate how educational policy can be complex, dynamic, and inherently political process that is informed by beliefs about race, class, and culture. In this English-only state where assessments must also be in English-only, it may have been impossible to create the kind of change that the selected leaders envisioned.

Erwin Mitchell<sup>12</sup> was a local attorney and former congressman who was affected by the number of Latino/a learners in his daughter's (a teacher's aide) classroom. He noticed that the children were not able to communicate in English while the teachers were unable to communicate with the children. Mr. Mitchell with the recommendation of Shaw Industries gained access to educators in Monterrey, Mexico. An agreement was drawn that brought Mexican teachers (hired as instructors) to Dalton. The schools reported positive outcomes and the local Dalton city government paid summer stipends for Dalton teachers to visit Monterrey. All of the participants seemed to find the exchange beneficial.

In Hamann's study a complex picture emerges where the state of Georgia has the distinction of affording Latino/a learners the lowest graduation rate in the country, 4.2%!<sup>13</sup> The power issues that evolved around educational policy for learners was masked under the disguise of neutrality. By using scientific idioms and claims of research validity, both proponents of the bilingual curriculum (University of Monterrey) and the competing framework of English-monolingual phonics based direct instruction relied on their interpretations of "science." Hamann engaged himself in writing a Title 7 grant proposal where he designed a vision of schooling with community participation including teacher education and a two-way bilingual program. None of this vision was implemented.

Hamann traces 125 years of race, class, and corporate paternalism in Dalton, GA including its formal settlement as the town of Cross Plains less than a decade after the forced removal of the Cherokees in the Trail of Tears. The initial distinction in the population was Appalachian/southern, privileged white, and African-American. Dalton hosted a segregated African-American-only school more than a decade after the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. African-Americans were excluded from most of the prosperity of the region. With the influx of Latino/a laborers for the carpet industry, the face of Dalton, GA changed significantly. In Dalton you are referred to as "you are one of ours" or "you are not one of ours" (I can't begin to tell you how many times I was informed of the latter by "colleagues.") The school board struggled with identity issues when one of the schools became 83.2% Latino/a (several are over 90% at this writing). "I don't think it's fair to classify them as Hispanic", one board member stated, "They're born in Dalton, GA." This

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Hamman, pp. 11–56.

was an attempt to resolve the problem that “you are not one of ours” by not identifying the children as Hispanic! Described in the narrative are the community’s hostile anti-immigration sentiments where the local newspaper had to call for a moratorium on letters to the editor that mentioned Latinos.

At this writing, the local carpet industry’s waning economy has also meant the loss of Latino/a families. I can also add that at Dalton State College the number of Latino/a students is 10% the highest in all of the university systems in Georgia.

Eastern High School, Triviss, Florida is the setting for Rosario Diaz Greenberg’s<sup>14</sup> qualitative study of 18 high-school Latino/a students. The researcher found it frightening that the high-school students and the educators appeared to exist in two separate worlds. The educators were addressing issues that did not take into account the learners’ perspectives or their needs. One of the students stated:

My advice to teachers is to give students time to think and reflect about topics that connect the curriculum to their daily lives. Education should not be based on lectures and memorization, it should be based on topics that are typical of the lives of teenagers today (such as racism and discrimination) Natalia. (p. 88)

The study recommends inclusion of dialog with learners as well as caring as empowerment within a long-term commitment. Diaz Greenberg notes that there is a need to create a more inclusive environment that fosters mutual respect and understanding in light of the oppressive conditions faced by children of color. The learners’ language, culture, and home-based experiences along with the lived histories of the community are essential elements of the school’s curriculum.

These studies taken together reflect the daily-lived struggles that push learners out of the American high school. The elements include the failed policies of the schools, unwelcoming hostile communities and schools, family and student economic/social/cultural challenges, and legal mandates effectively closing opportunities.

The Advancement Project,<sup>15</sup> is emphasizing two very specific policies that are “pushing out” high-school students and sending them into the prison population. This study makes the case for the high-stakes testing and zero-tolerance policies. Although it may seem as if these two policies are unrelated, the report states:

In fact, zero tolerance and high-stakes testing both share the same ideological roots, and together they have combined to seriously damage the relationships between schools and the communities they serve throughout the country.

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<sup>14</sup>Diaz-Greenberg, R. (2003). *The emergence of voice in Latino/a high school students*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

<sup>15</sup>Advancement Project. (2010). *Test, punish, and push out. How “zero tolerance” and high stakes testing funnel youth into the school-to-prison pipeline*. Los Angeles and Washington, DC.



Together, zero tolerance and high-stakes testing have turned schools into hostile and alienating environments for many of our youth, effectively treating them as drop-outs-in-waiting. The devastating end result of these intertwined punitive policies is a “school-to-prison pipeline,” in which huge numbers of students throughout the country are treated as if they are disposable, and are being routinely pushed out of school and toward the juvenile and criminal justice systems.<sup>16</sup>

The ideological roots shared by high stakes testing and “zero tolerance” are very similar to the punitive policies being invented for immigrants (e.g., Arizona SB 1070) reminiscent of Goldhagen’s<sup>17</sup> warning. Singling out and punishing learners or immigrants appear to have similar devastating effects in the long run—we are all heading for the jailhouse door. How similar or how different are the institutions of schooling and incarceration in our nation for brown/poor children? “Get tough” policies have resulted in police guards at the doors, hallways, and entry to schools. Schools are using “airport technology” used to prevent terrorists’ activities. The lines between the criminal justice system and the schooling of our youth are being blurred. After all, this is the America that recently tasered a 10-year-old child in a day care center;<sup>18</sup> and allowed a police officer to taser 50,000 V of electricity to subdue a 6-year-old in Miami.<sup>19</sup>

The No Child Left Behind (NLCB) 2002 legislation has only continued to raise the high-stakes testing standards leading to less opportunities for learners since these are measures that act as gatekeepers. If your language and culture do not match the test you are faced with insurmountable odds. I use the example of my teaching in Puerto Rico when my students were given academic tests with snowmen—My students had never seen snow, they live in tropical heaven! Another example, if I were to give you a test in Mandarin Chinese (assuming that you do not speak the language) how well do you think you would fare? Issues of language and culture are crucial in the testing domain.

So much testing has meant that hours and hours of school time is spent on senseless drills and memorization—hardly an emancipatory or liberating curriculum. If we want all human beings to be robots, let’s just build a bunch of robots—and let people have the freedom to learn information that will truly improve their lives. Let’s create schools that will truly reflect the joy of learning with projects, the arts, drama, experiments, creativity, socialization, etc., until we can create compassionate human beings.

As schools continue to use severe punishment they are criminalizing our students, for example.

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>17</sup>Goldhagen.

<sup>18</sup>Kotz, P. (2010). Indiana cops taser unruly 10 year old boy at day care. True Crime Report.

<sup>19</sup>Miami Herald. (2004). Police use Taser gun to subdue 6 year old student wielding a piece of glass. November 12. Jones’ Prison Planet.com

In Florida, there were over 21,000 arrests and referrals of students to the state's Department of Juvenile Justice in 2007–2008, and 69% of them were for misdemeanor offenses.

Arrests in school represent the most direct route into the school-to-prison pipeline, but out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to alternative schools also push students out of school and closer to a future in the juvenile and criminal-justice systems. The use of these punitive disciplinary measures has risen over time at the national level, and has increased dramatically in many communities. Not coincidentally, that rise has coincided with the passage of NCLB and other test-driven policies.

At the local and state levels, the dramatic expansion of the zero-tolerance approach is even more apparent. For example:

In Chicago public schools, under the leadership of then chief executive officer and current US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, the number of out-of-school suspensions district-wide nearly quadrupled in just 6 years.

In Texas, over a 5-year-period, the number of expulsions increased by 23% and the number of out-of-school suspensions increased by 43%. In just one school year, 2007–2008, there were over 128,000 referrals of students to alternative disciplinary schools.

“While zero tolerance is affecting a greater diversity of communities than ever before, due to continuing biases, disparate treatment, and systemic inequities, students of color are particularly harmed by these policies and practices. In fact, racial disparities in school discipline are getting worse, as the use of suspensions and expulsions for students of color has increased since the passage of NCLB, while it has decreased for white students.”<sup>20</sup>

This report goes on to provide recommendations that are similar to what was recommended by reports viewing high-school graduation (see previous chapter) but with more specificity for this alarming challenge.

- (1) “create more caring and supportive learning environments for students by eliminating policies and practices that unnecessarily push students out of school through the use of suspensions, expulsions, referrals to alternative schools, referrals to law enforcement, and school-based arrests;
- (2) Limit the involvement of law enforcement and security personnel in schools to conduct that poses a serious, ongoing threat to the safety of students or staff;
- (3) Replace high-stakes testing with policies that will encourage schools to keep students in the learning environment and develop enriched curricula that are engaging and intellectually challenging, ensure deep understanding of content, and are focused on authentic achievement; and
- (4) Ensure that every student is provided a high-quality pre-K-12 education that includes a full and equal opportunity to fulfill their potential, achieve their goals,

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<sup>20</sup>Advancement Project, pp. 4–5.

improve the quality of their lives, become thoughtful and engaged democratic citizens, and become life-long learners.”<sup>21</sup>

This report brought up the issue of ideology that educators have been struggling with for the past several decades when a reactionary veil has dropped on our schools, communities, and political systems. The amount of mandates that are harming our children is not based on the “best interest of the child,” but rather political ideologies that do not afford voice to children, families, or communities. For Latinas/os this is particularly harmful and for immigrants this is devastating.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., See the original report for specific and detailed explanations (p. 7).

## Chapter 6

# Undocumented College Students

*I am playing with my Self,  
I am playing with the world's soul,  
I am the dialogue between my Self  
and el espiritu del mundo.  
I change myself, I change the world.*

—Gloria Anzaldua

The research about undocumented Latina/o students is limited, although there is literature to support the work from multiple fields including legal scholarship on activism. The undocumented Latina/o students in higher education are resilient determined, and inspirational having dealt with a plethora of challenges. Contreras's<sup>1</sup> study is based in the state of Washington where the DREAM Act was passed in 2003 affording students, who have been in the state for 3 years and have graduated from high school, to pay in-state tuition. Conducting semi-structured interviews with undocumented Latina/o students, Contreras found five emerging themes.

Living in fear—was a predominant theme experienced by Patricio who has lived in rural Washington for 20 years and faced his father's deportation. His father was a 10-year farm worker supervisor who had an accident that left him stranded in a winter storm. When he could not produce the needed documentation for the police, he was sent to ICE and ultimately deported. This fear is experienced on a daily basis coupled with mistrust.

Financial barriers were mentioned by all of the students. Undocumented students do not qualify for state or federal financial aid. The students found jobs ranging from cleaning offices, nannies, construction, restaurants, bill collector. One of the students worked 40–45 h/week.

Campus experiences, the legal status of the students fueled higher levels of isolation, discouragement, and incidents of discrimination by anti-immigrant supporters. For Latina/o students perceptions of prejudice and discrimination will negatively affect aspirations and increase withdrawal. Finding an individual who will provide a

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<sup>1</sup>Contreras, F. (2009). Sin papeles y rompiendo barreras: Latino students and the challenge of persisting in college. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(4), 610–631.

welcoming environment is important. Finding needed can be a problem. One student shared with Contreras:

I spent hours online just going to like different Web sites figuring out what I needed to do and I found out I just needed to fill out a little piece of paper. . . .saying that I qualified for HB1070.<sup>2</sup>

The students who asked professional staff for assistance found that these people were not always helpful. One student encountered the head of a program who discouraged her from even applying. Another student seeking financial aid was told, “You are lucky that you have not been deported.”

“Ganas” was a term all of the students shared—the will to achieve. You need to have a tremendous work ethic to be able to attend school while earning money for yourself and your family. Lydia described how she was able to accomplish it:

The first years in college, I slept four hours every day for two years. We would work—I had classes from eight to twelve, then I came back home, took a shower and went to work from 2:00–11:00 pm in the restaurant. Then I would go with my husband to clean offices at night until 2:00 in the morning. It was here in Bellevue; we worked until 2:30–3:00 in the morning, and would do it every day all over again. . . .to save money for school. Four hours for two years<sup>3</sup>

A subsequent theme with concerns about the future—the students interviewed by Contreras, documented their commitment to their families and communities were willing to work hard as an integral part of an optimistic belief in the “American dream.” They persisted in thinking that they could succeed, support their families, and provide leadership to their community.

By relying on the lens of critical-race theory,<sup>4</sup> Yosso et al.<sup>5</sup> further elaborate on the effects of racist insults on Latina/o students. In the previous study we learned that one of the themes dealt with was campus climate. This study will help us to understand what Latina/o students experience on campuses with regard to racial micro-aggressions—those stunning, ambiguous assaults on the dignity and self-regard of people of color. Most young people are not expecting to have to deal with racist/sexist incidents in the academy.

These are subtle, innocuous, preconscious or unconscious degradations, and putdowns, often kinetic but capable of being verbal and/or kinetic. In and of itself microaggressions can seem harmless, but cumulative burden of a lifetime of

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 622.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 624.

<sup>4</sup>Learning to look critically at race relations is a key part of critical race theory. Examining everyday interactions, and finding the racial component in them, can help move the racial equality cause forward perhaps more than a sometimes simplistic “color blind” approach. Looking carefully at what sociologists call micro-aggressions can help to see the true extent of racism in the United States, and through critical analysis, it is hoped people can begin to work past it. <wisegeek.com/what is critical race theory> See also Yosso et al. (pp. 662–663).

<sup>5</sup>Yosso, T., Smith, W., Ceja, M., & Solorzano, D. (2009). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions and campus climate for Latina/o undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(4), 659–690.

microaggressions can theoretically contribute to mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence.<sup>6</sup>

Chester Pierce (1995), psychiatry professor at Harvard, introduced the stressful elements of micro-aggressions that can expend energies having to defend degradations and erosion of the self-confidence. A crucial debilitating factor, according to Pierce (1989), is, “the inability to decipher critical micromessages.”<sup>7</sup>

According to Yosso et al., very little qualitative research has been conducted on how micro-aggressions create a negative campus climate. Yosso et al. study builds on the work of Daniel Solazano (1998)<sup>8</sup> who documented the micro-aggressions endured by Chicana/o scholars including acts of disregard, nonverbal gestures, stereotypical assumptions, lowered expectations, and racially assaultive remarks such as:

You're not like the rest of them. You're different.  
I don't think of you as a Mexican.  
You speak such good English.  
But you speak without an accent.<sup>9</sup>

Yosso et al., conducted focus groups where they wanted to understand how racial micro-aggressions shaped their experiences and how they succeeded in spite of negative campus climates. The scholars identified three main types of micro-aggressions:

Interpersonal micro-aggressions—these verbal and nonverbal attacks create awareness and stress of being the “Other.” There is a feeling that your intelligence is being questioned. These incidents reinforce the sense that White students are superior. These incidents also lead to self-doubt and constantly asking yourself if that really happened or was it a figment of your imagination?

Racial jokes—intentional compulsive racial joke—telling appears to be persistent on white campuses with offensive verbal remarks and questionable humor. It was often difficult for the students to understand the intentions of the teller. Students shared their anxiety that white students would continue their aggressive behavior if not stopped. These jokes created tremendous stress and frustration hindering their participation with campus activities. These “words that wound” reflect the troubling stereotypes and remind the students of their subordinate status on campus.

Institutional micro-aggressions—Latina/o students find themselves in a space of “cultural starvation” because of their small numbers, their inability to use their home language, their culture is not reflected on campus, their dress may differ, the institutions “apartheid knowledge”. The latter make it difficult for students to identify with the classroom material. Practices that are collectively approved and promoted by the university power structure.

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<sup>6</sup>Pierce (1995, p. 281). In Yosso et al. (p. 660).

<sup>7</sup>Pierce (1989, p. 125). In Yosso et al. (p. 661).

<sup>8</sup>Daniel Solarzano (1998) Cited in Yosso et al. (p. 661).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

The Latina/o students did not consider themselves helpless victims. They responded to the rejections by building communities that reflected their home community. The students were able to foster skills of “critical navigation between multiple worlds of home and school, academia and community.”<sup>10</sup>

The undocumented undergraduate students face multiple and complex gate-keeping avenues. With comments such as, “you are lucky you haven’t been deported;” “don’t bother to apply to this program,” etc. Among the challenges students encounter are state and federal mandates, privileged institutions who desire to admit people like themselves and legislative and state mandates that continue to ensure that students with Western-centered social capital grace the ivy walls. In northwestern Georgia, I have met undocumented Latina/o students with bachelors degrees in hand and prepared for teacher certification who cannot apply for teaching jobs. The graduates have taken odd jobs in the community but they could be working with children and teaching. They are effectively foreclosed based upon current immigration mandates. One of the students arrived in the community when he was 3 years old. He is what the locals refer to as “home-grown.”

The newspaper headlines read, “With Diplomas in Hand, but Without Legal Status,”<sup>11</sup> Sen. Stavinsky urged the graduates to “move forward and write history.” Sen. Schumer said, “Figure out what your dreams are now and go for them.” Mr. Schumer is chairman of a Senate subcommittee on immigration. His subcommittee can have influence over the DREAM Act, which would confer legal status on illegal immigrant students who were brought to the United States as children.

The legislation has stalled in Congress. After a graduation speech, although he acknowledged that passage of the legislation could help at least some of the people whom he had just addressed, Mr. Schumer declined to say whether he thought it might see any movement this election year. “That’s what I don’t want, to mix that up with the graduation,” he said.

The question becomes, how can our children/grandchildren “move forward and write history” (or herstory) or “follow their dreams” when you are effectively foreclosing opportunities?

In a subsequent legal case an exception was made by Harvard University. This was the headline, “Harvard student from Texas won’t be deported – for now.”<sup>12</sup> San Antonio’s 19-year-old Eric Balderas, an undocumented immigrant from Mexico was placed in the national spotlight, after completing his first year at Harvard. He was stopped at the San Antonio airport on his way to back to Boston. Two weeks after he was stopped the immigration officials indicated that they would not pursue deportation at this time. Balderas expressed relief in a public Facebook message: “I am rejoicing in my heart.” His attorney, Deborah Anker stated,

“We were delighted to hear that the DHS granted Eric deferred action status,” Anker said, “DHS can grant this relief in deserving cases and we are gratified that

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 680.

<sup>11</sup>Santos, F. (2010, June 4). *New York Times*.

<sup>12</sup>Davila, V. (2010). San Antonio Express-NEWS June 20.

it recognized Eric's extraordinary talent and his enormous potential to contribute to our country. Along with co-counsel, we will work with Eric to help secure his future in our community."

Eric Balderas revealed that he contemplated suicide as he sat in the San Antonio offices of the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. ICE spokesperson Cori Bassett indicated, "These cases illustrate the need for comprehensive immigration reform. ICE is focused on smart, effective immigration enforcement that focuses first on criminal aliens who pose a threat to our communities while we continue to work with Congress to enact reform. ICE uses its discretion on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate, and has the authority to grant a deferral of a removal action based upon the merits of an individual's case and a review of specific facts."

Balderas was 4 years old when his family moved from Mexico to the United States. He was the valedictorian of his high school and is on a full scholarship at Harvard, where he is studying molecular biology.

It is obvious that legislation is needed to assist students like Balderas, and students in Northwest Georgia.

Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., who proposed the latest version of the DREAM Act<sup>13</sup> in March stated, "Our immigration laws prevent thousands of young people from fully contributing to our nation's future," the senator said in a statement. "These young people have lived in this country for most of their lives. It is the only home they know. They are American in every sense except their technical legal status."<sup>14</sup>

In 2005, only 7% of bachelor's degrees were granted to Latino/as so that even those who are able to attend college are less likely to complete a 4-year degree. The students who have "beat the odds" are in a very special category of high achievers. Multiple factors provide the context for achievement and engagement in school and serve as the foundation for motivation, persistence, and resilience. Studies show that the students who are equipped to complete a 4-year degree are more likely to come from families that have more resources and are better educated although many still come from low-income immigrant families. Most are the very first from their family to attend college. To "beat the odds" these students have had to enter the English-only world, have higher grade point averages, have taken more honors classes, have participated in extra-curricular activities, and have felt the support of families and their peers. They were exposed to early literacy even if their parents did not have much schooling. They are also more likely to have participated in intervention efforts at school or in the community. The high-achieving Latino/a students who "have beat the odds" also demonstrate less confidence in themselves, have greater and significant financial needs, have less knowledge about how to obtain financial assistance, and are more likely to work which can slow their progress. The passion for helping their families and the community is based upon their own

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<sup>13</sup><http://dreamact.info/>

<sup>14</sup>Davila, V. (2010).



experiences with inequitable situations toward themselves or their family. In addition to traditional school activities, these learners are more likely to participate in community-service activities.<sup>15</sup>

The Latino/a students who do enter the university need to be viewed as a “protected” category who deserve needed resources. Included in the resources is knowledge about financial assistance, counseling to gain knowledge about the system, encouragement to realize that they can be confident in their educational pursuits, access to a climate of hospitality, and the feeling that the halls of ivy do care for them. It will take the university “village” to implement programs that are understanding of the needs of our Latino/a students.

Those of us who are in the academy can attest to the challenges our students face including insensitive fellow non-Latino faculty. “I don’t want any of your students in my courses,” one colleague warned. “They are just too quiet!” I responded with, “It’s interesting that I have a hard time keeping them ‘quiet’ in my classes!” Wood et al.<sup>16</sup> refer to Latina/os as “desirable public investments” when explicating the need for raising college participation levels so that we “can increase contributions to social security programs, tax revenues and intergenerational strengthening of the nations fabric.” While we can certainly deconstruct the latter with a self-serving lens, it also helps to highlight the urgent educational need, the DREAM Act.<sup>17</sup>

The DREAM Act (the Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act) is symptomatic of the political complexity of the education of university undocumented immigrants as it relates to legislative power.

the whole country hates us  
Iliana  
(Mexican immigrant who arrived  
in Georgia at age 2, 3/2010)

While it is true that educators, families, and communities have much to contribute to the education of Latino/a university/college students; it may be that the legal minds will need to initiate and enforce issues of social justice and equity.

Students across the nation have marched on behalf of the DREAM Act. The ramifications of the act and the process that Congress has traveled for this act demonstrate political wills and the lack of understanding. The very students that the Rand Report referred to as “desirable public investments;” the very high achieving students that Gandara and Contreras describe as “beating the odds” are the very students who are asking for relief. Whether the DREAM Act or some other piece of legislation—it is clear that legal support is needed on behalf of talented, motivated learners.

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<sup>15</sup>Gandara, P., & Contreras, C. (2009). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed school policies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>16</sup>Wood, D., Sherbourne, C. D., Halfon, N., Tucker, M. B., Ortiz, V., Hamlin, J. S., Duan, N., Mazel, R. M., Grabowsky, M., Brunell, P., & Freeman, H. (1995). Factors related to immunization status among inner-city Latino and African-American preschoolers. *Pediatrics*, 96(2), 295–301.

<sup>17</sup><http://dreamact.info/>

The evolution of the DREAM Act<sup>18</sup> in Congress clearly disregards the daily-lived reality of our precious and resilient youth. Even the wording in the Act itself is somewhat disconcerting, for example, “alien minors” as if undocumented students have come from outer space. The debate taking place in the halls of Congress reflects the continued complexity of domestic policies and the concern for “comprehensive immigration reform.”

Immigrant minors can only obtain permanent status through their parent or by virtue of being born a citizen. The DREAM Act would provide immigrant students who graduate from US high school, are considered to be of “good moral character” (aspects of immigration law that contain a description of criminal activities), arrived in the United States as minors and have lived here for 5 years prior to the act being approved. Qualified students could obtain temporary residency for a 6-year-period, in which they must have “acquired a degree from an institution of higher education in the United States or completed at least 2 years, in good standing, in a program for a bachelor’s degree or higher degree in the United States,” or have “served in the uniformed services for at least 2 years and, if discharged-with an honorable discharge.” The number of undocumented college students is really quite modest.

Considering how small this undocumented college student population is in the larger scheme of things, never more than 50,000 or 60,000 by any estimates, this extensive state and national legislative history reveals a surprising degree of attention in the polity and within U.S. legislative arenas.

Nonetheless, it has not been able to stand on its own legs, and the odds have grown longer against its eventual enactment as a separate legislative program.<sup>19</sup>

*Plyler v. Doe* (1982), the Supreme Court decision disallowed restrictive Texas laws and allowed undocumented learners to participate in American schools. Although *Plyler* does not extend to high-school graduates and their admission to college, these learners were, however, graduating from high schools and applying to colleges. The rising graduation rates appeared to stir controversy. Public higher-education institutions and various states began to impose residency restrictions and tuition rates charged to international students. In 1995, a Republican-controlled Congress passed two laws restricting immigration and the status of immigrants: the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (“PRWORA”) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (“IIRIRA”). These laws affected health care and welfare, and requirements for states who wanted to charge resident tuition to pass a state law.

Texas passed the very first law allowing in-state tuition in 2001. New Mexico followed the Texas example in 2005. In 2006, Utah issued an opinion that granting state tuition was constitutional. Massachusetts voted against in-state tuition for the

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Olivas, M. (2010). *The political economy of the dream act and the legislative process: A case study of comprehensive immigration reform* (pp. 2–3). Houston, TX: University of Houston, Law Center.

undocumented. In 2007, Minnesota passed a law that allows anyone access to in-state tuition. In Colorado, the attorney general held that the Colorado Commission on Higher Education did not have the authority to make such a decision. Nebraska over-rode its governor's veto to allow undocumented immigrants in-state tuition. In Spring 2006, we began to see the immigrant marches in various states. California's a governor vetoed a bill that would have allowed undocumented students to access financial aid programs. The Governor of Connecticut vetoed a bill and added,

I understand these students are not responsible for their undocumented status, having come to the United States with their parents. The fact remains, however, that these students and their parents are here illegally and neither sympathy nor good intentions can ameliorate that fact.<sup>20</sup>

Additional states struggled with restrictionist provisions including Arizona, Georgia, Virginia, Missouri, North Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas. In 2008, South Carolina became the first state to enact state legislation that banned undocumented students from even attending public colleges.<sup>21</sup>

Alejandra Rincon,<sup>22</sup> notes how the denial of in-state tuition rates to undocumented students is similar to Jim Crow. Jim Crow methods were systematic earmarked at denying access to equal opportunities.

While this is all taking place in the states the federal DREAM Act underwent changes, committee votes, formal hearings, and discussions. The bill was first introduced in 2001, in a bi-partisan way by Sen. Hatch (R-UT) and Sen. Durbin (D-IL). Sen. Harry Reid pulled it from the floor and attached it to a military bill in light of the provisions requiring military service as an option toward citizenship. In 2007, the stand-alone DREAM Act was voted down, especially since four of the supporters of the bill did not vote (Sen. Kennedy, in poor health; Sen. McCain was campaigning for president; Sen. Boxer was dealing with fires in her state; Sen. Dodd was not available). Sen. Specter voted against the bill and the White House maintained that there was a need for larger legislation for immigration reform. Additional political players added their unsympathetic anti-immigration views including the presidential candidates.<sup>23</sup>

Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Janet Napolitano incorporating the undocumented "shadow" population stated,

Let me be clear: when I talk about "immigration reform," I'm referring to what I call the "three-legged stool" that includes a commitment to serious and effective enforcement, improved legal flows for families and workers, and a firm but fair way to deal with those who are already here. That's the way that this problem has to be solved, because we need all three aspects to build a successful system. This approach has at its heart the conviction that we must demand responsibility and

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Rincon, A. (2008). *Undocumented immigrants and higher education*. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

accountability from everyone involved in the system: immigrants, employers and government. And that begins with fair, reliable enforcement.<sup>24</sup>

Additional senators, the president, and states have continued to weigh in on the immigration issue.

What is the fate of the DREAM Act? Professor Olivas offers,

Despite my own personal preference that the DREAM Act, once enacted, would clear the decks and would show that bipartisan differences could be resolved, leading to the larger, more comprehensive overhaul, this is likely not how the wheel has turned. There was a brief window in time, in 2007, when this might have occurred, and the narrative recounted here shows that a little luck might have helped turn the corner: had Senator Kennedy been well, had Senator Specter not backed away, had the fires not broken out in California, had Senator Dodd voted, had there not been a presidential election looming, all for want of a nail. But all legislation, not just that affecting immigration, has to face the cards in play on the table at the time of its consideration (p. 71).

Alejandra Rincon<sup>25</sup> has been comparing the student-led immigration marches in 2006 and the youth-led movements of the Chicano civil rights movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. This is a hope filled idea since the non-violent immigrant marchers have used slogans such as “no human being is illegal,” “Si Se Puede!” It may be helpful to continue to show the similarities between current efforts with those of past civil-rights struggles in order to support young people’s courage.

As mentioned previously, Governor Brewer, from Arizona, signed a law in April that takes effect July 29. This law (SB1070)<sup>26</sup>—makes it a state crime to be an illegal immigrant there. It also requires police officers to determine the immigration status of people they stop for other offenses if there is a “reasonable suspicion” that they might be illegal immigrants. This law has created a great deal of controversy. Politicians are offering their thoughts. *De nuevo los políticos tienen sus opiniones.*

The political reality for governors,

Governors voice grave concerns on immigration<sup>27</sup>

Governors are concerned that the focus on immigration can cost them their jobs. They have expressed their fear about the Obama administration’s suit against Arizona’s new immigration law (SB1070). “Universally the governors are saying, ‘We’ve got to talk about jobs,’” the governor of Tennessee, Phil Bredesen said in an interview. “And all of a sudden we have immigration going on. It is such a toxic subject, such an important time for Democrats.”

I might have chosen both a different tack and a different time,” said Gov. Bill Ritter Jr. of Colorado, a Democrat who was facing a tough fight for re-election and pulled out of the race earlier this year. “This is an issue that divides us politically, and I’m hopeful that their

<sup>24</sup>Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano@CAP

<sup>25</sup>Rincon, A. (2008).

<sup>26</sup><http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/49leg/2r/bills/sb1070s.pdf>

<sup>27</sup>Goodnough, A. *New York Times*, July 11.

strategy doesn't do that in a way that makes it more difficult for candidates to get elected, particularly in the West.<sup>28</sup>

At this writing (July 29, 2010), dear reader, non-violent demonstrators (against Governor Brewer's SB1070 immigration law) are gathering in Phoenix at the office of Sheriff Joe Arpaio who has defended the legislation. The demonstrators are chanting "racists go home." Federal Judge Susan Bolton passed an injunction that disallows most of the measures in the bill; after listening to seven groups calling for a stop to this bill. But, today is the day parts of the law go into effect. The protestors are daring officials to ask them about their immigration status. The demonstrators are locking arms and are being pulled into vans by the police. This is history/herstory in the making as community groups, church groups, families, and supporters gather to show the world a slice of the democratic process. We are dealing with what is here now and what we will face in the future.

Dialogue cannot exist, however,  
in the absence of a profound love  
for the world and its people.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*.

## Chapter 7

# Identities in “The Fourth World”

*I understood right away that I was being accused  
of kidnapping my own child*

Guillermo Gomez-Pena<sup>1</sup>

Performance artist and writer, Gomez-Pena, describes himself as “the proud father of a 4 year old boy, Guillermo Emiliano Gomez-Hicks, who happens to be half-Mexican, perfectly bilingual, and blond.”<sup>2</sup> The incident he describes took place in San Diego where two Anglo women at a restaurant accused him to the police of kidnapping his own son.

I strongly believe in the moral power of an apology to partially restore our damaged dignity. I won't stop writing, talking, and lecturing about 'the incident' until the San Diego police and the two women who invented this surreal plot decide to publicly apologize to us, in both English and Spanish. A bilingual public apology will also remind the thousands of civilian vigilantes, amateur Charles Bronsons, Texas Ranters wannabes, and racist cops roaming around the city that the next time they see a 'suspicious-looking' Latino, he might be able to defend himself intelligently.<sup>3</sup>

The mere existence of interracial Latina/o young people continues to raise issues about how our nation welcomes/unwelcomes racially/ethnically diverse people. The existing and future ways of viewing/accepting diverse identities will determine various issues. It will determine child-rearing practices that strengthen children's self-esteem; the education of teachers and communities who need to gain critical multicultural understandings; and how members of this nation will interact within and outside of our borders. In many ways it involves a two-way mirror, how we are viewed and how we view.

My grandchildren, Jose, Juan, Antonio, Maya Isabella, Shaan Miguel Bruce David will also be taught to handle their sociocultural world with bilingual, bicultural, biethnic, biracial identities. Their ability to function as fluid-border crossers

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<sup>1</sup>Gomez-Pena, G. (1996). *The new world border* (p. 51). San Francisco: City Lights.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

within a hyphenated multicultural nation will not only provide them with linguistic and cultural advantages, but also the painful experiences of living in a racist context.

How can we educate and protect our children from the multiple and complex experiences they will face in what Guillermo Gomez-Pena refers to as the “fourth world.” He goes on to define “an end of the century topography:”

“first world:” a tiny and shrinking conceptual archipelago controlling and administering 80% of the resources;

“second world:” geo-political limbo, including Greenland, Antartica, the oceans, the mineral world, and the dismembered Soviet Bloc;

“third world:” the ex-underdeveloped countries, and the communities of color within the ex-first world;

“fourth world:” a conceptual place where the indigenous inhabitants of Americas meet with the deterritorialized peoples, the immigrants, and the exiles, it occupies all the previous worlds; and the

“fifth world:” a virtual space, mass media, the US suburbs, art schools, malls, Disneyland, the White House, and La (profanity).<sup>4</sup>

For Latino/as, the complexity of identities includes growing up “mixed” with the inheritance of indigenous knowledge, ethnic traditions, and racial ways of knowing. This is a problem for a nation that continues to demonize immigrants and people of color. This is a problem for anyone who is socialized as a racist in an increasingly intercultural/globalized context.

Luis Urrieta’s<sup>5</sup> piece entitled “Las identidades tambien lloran” captures the complexity of identities including Mexican, Mexican–American, Indigenous, Chicana, etc. The history of his family from San Miguel de Pazcuaro, Mexico testifies to tragic consequences with the heartbreaking stoning of his grandmother. Her only desire was to bring the community together.

The reality is that identities are painful, contradictory, emotional, re/colonizing, endlessly searching in seas of everything and nothingness simultaneously. Identities sometimes do not have a word to describe them; sometimes identities cannot be explained, and in the attempt at explanation, identities also cry.<sup>6</sup>

I was honored to visit Luis and Rosa’s family and their young children in the Spring of 2010 and tour the local church (built in the 1500s) in Pazcuaro. The local village with its many traditions and struggles is still in tact. The Urrieta children are learning about “the fourth world” including life in San Miguel, Austin, and Los Angeles.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>5</sup>Urrieta, L. (2003). *Las identidades tambien lloran*. *Educational Studies*, 34(2), 147–168.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

Professors Charise Pimentel<sup>7</sup> and Octavio Pimentel<sup>8</sup> have shared their own and their children’s border-crossing experiences in a recent publication. Charise describes herself as perhaps resembling Barbie (blond and tall) but whose lived experience is more like Maria la del Barrio, having grown up with recently arriving Mexican immigrants. She feels more comfortable around brown people and along with her husband has decided to raise her children to speak Spanish only. Charise goes on to describe how she is questioned in public spaces (supermarkets, schools) and the assumptions that are made about her and her children.

Octavio relates the school’s inability to understand Quetzin’s placement needs (their eldest son) because he was identified as white instead of as bilingual/bicultural. The schools’ inability to understand the needs of bilingual/bicultural children mirrors the society. Octavio states, “the American institution of education is embedded with racist ideology and practice.”<sup>9</sup>

Ruben Rumbaut<sup>10</sup> conducted an extensive quantitative study with 5,000 young adolescents (3,033 being of Latin American origin and all were eighth and ninth graders) who along with their immigrants parents resided in Miami and San Diego. Half of the youth were born in Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean, and half in the United States. The study found “segmented paths” to identity formation. With this new generation of immigrants,

questions are raised about the assimilability of the newcomers-because of their race, language, culture, or supposed unwillingness to speak English. Procrustean, one-size-fits-all panethnic labels . . . are imposed willy nilly by the society. . . Their children, especially adolescents in the process of constructing and crystallizing a social identity, are challenged to incorporate what is ‘out there’ into what is ‘in here’ often in dissonant social contexts.<sup>11</sup>

Determining where to place the youth into their respective ethnic group became an initial challenge for Rumbaut’s study because of the fluidity of ethnicity and the increasing patterns of intermarriage. There were many interesting findings in this study among them were as follows:

- Four types of ethnic self-identities: (a) national-origin identity; (b) hyphenated identity; (c) American national identity; and (d) pan-ethnic identity. The first two

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<sup>7</sup>Pimentel, C. (2010). Color-coded bilingualism. In L. D. Soto & H. Kharem (Eds.), *Teaching bilingual/bicultural children: Teachers talk about language and learning*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

<sup>8</sup>Pimentel, O. (2010). Mi pobre guerito. In L. D. Soto & H. Kharem (Eds.), *Teaching bilingual/bicultural children: Teachers talk about language and learning*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>10</sup>Rumbaut, R. (1994). The crucible within: Ethnic identity, self-esteem, and segmented assimilation among children of immigrants. *International Migration Review*, 28(4), Special Issue: The New Second Generation (Winter), pp. 748–794.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 279.



identify with the immigrant experience/“homeland” while the second two are “made in the USA.”

- Mexican youth showed significantly higher scores on the familism scale, demonstrating that the familism measure demonstrates a deeply ingrained sense of obligation and orientation to the family.
- Youth who felt discriminated against had a tendency to identify more with the immigrant experience and less as American. Having been discriminated elevates depressive symptoms but not self-esteem. Black identity was positively associated with higher self-esteem.
- US-born males with a US-born parents self-identified as American were more likely to live in a smaller household with higher social status family. These learners reflected a form of assimilation much like the white middle class.
- Females, in this study, were more likely to choose a hyphenated identity with more fluid boundaries; lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression; with the lower self-esteem being associated with US birth; and were more likely to be involved in parent–child conflicts which may be attributed parental restrictive.
- Youth who prefer English and lack home language proficiency are more likely to have conflicts at home due to communication problems.
- Youths perception that their family’s socioeconomic status has worsened was associated with decreased self-esteem, increased depression, and parent–child conflicts.

Rumbaut concludes by adding, ‘Becoming American’ takes different forms, has different meanings, and is reached by different paths . . . the process . . . defining identity for themselves . . . is complex, conflictual, and stressful, and profoundly affects the consciousness of immigrant parents and children alike. The process is also shaped within a much larger historical context of which the participants may be more conscious than fish are of water, and in an American crucible that has been shaping identities since the origins for the nation.

In the final analysis, “it is the crucible without that shapes the crucible within.”<sup>12</sup>

In my own sense as a parent and grandmother I humbly hope that my children and grandchildren will have their own sense of healthy identity development that ensures their own strength of their convictions.

In a recent qualitative study viewing social identities, Aurora Chang-Ross,<sup>13</sup> takes on the idea that multiracial identity has become more “visible and acceptable.”<sup>14</sup> In the narrative she indicates that 2.4% of the population classifies itself as multiracial at this time while by 2050, 21% of Americans will claim mixed ancestry (including 45% Latinos). The intent of her inquiry (critical ethnography) was to find out how multiracial college students constructed and negotiated their identities.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 790.

<sup>13</sup>Chang-Ross, A. (2010). *Racial queer: Multiracial college students at the intersection of identity, education and agency*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, TX.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

Dr. Chang-Ross conducted 25 semi-structured interviews, five case studies, and three focus group interviews. She uncovered the complexity of social identities for the university students she interviewed. There were five overall themes that emerged including issues of positionality, power, privilege, phenotype, and status translating into the participants’ own words of:

Racial rubric—since there is no dualistic/fundamental guide, the discussion centered on not having a “racial rubric.” Students were setting new markers for racial legitimacy, often improvise, and navigate the borderlands.

I don’t have a racial rubric to follow so  
I’ve just been sort of creative  
as far as how I am going to be as a person (Dee Dee).<sup>15</sup>

Racial disclosure—students who “passed” as white have the option of keeping their racial identity hidden in light of their ambiguous or unidentifiable phenotypical traits. They are often presumed to be white unless they disclose their background. For some students this can be quite complex and difficult.

I couldn’t be passive about it.  
And I just told this girl,  
No! I am Hispanic!  
(Solomon).<sup>16</sup>

The racial floating— takes on the image of fluctuating from community to community. Melissa relayed that she

“could racially float” between the white community and communities of color. This “floating” meant that she “had the automatic respect of the minority community but if I were having an argument with someone who was a minority, I became white.”<sup>17</sup>

Identity fusion—an interconnectedness of socially constructed categories, balanced dimensions of identity, a dynamic relationship with other salient identifications. Betty Gutierrez, explored the ways in which gender and race fused for her.

One of the main reasons I majored in Women and Gender Studies is because I feel it would be more acceptable for me to talk about or question gender issues rather than racial issues. I can’t pinpoint why. I just feel that it is more acceptable for guys to talk to race and not to gender and women to talk about gender and exclude race. I know that there are intersections but for me it’s so complicated and confusing what it means to be a Multiracial woman. It’s something I’m trying to work out.<sup>18</sup>

A person’s belief that he or she is entitled to claim multiracial identity as a result of a distinct daily-lived experiences can be both positive and negative. Multiracial identity can also represent the American ideal of a so-called “melting pot” and emblem of universality and broad diversity.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 328.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 355.

Once in a college class, we had to do our final project on identity. My friend, Tara, told me she was Multiracial too because she found some distant French relative. I was angry because she didn't go through what I went through. I don't know if it's bad that I want to close off the Multiracial category but I don't consider her Multiracial at all (May).<sup>19</sup>

The social identity wheel that is shared in this piece includes multiple elements including ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, race, religious or spiritual affiliation, sexual orientation, age, national origin, first language, and physical, emotional, developmental ability.

This study helps to document the complexity of identity formation for university students who have “grown up mixed” in the “fourth world” if you will. The students described their self-perceptions of their identities as the latter related to their daily-lived reality.

Janet Helms<sup>20</sup> developed a theory of the white racial identity process in order to promote better psychotherapy relations. Dr. Helms relied on laboratory discussions. She defined white people as “those Americans who self-identify or are commonly identified as belonging exclusively to the White racial group regardless of the continental source of that racial ancestry” (p. 188). Helms describes how growing up and being socialized in a privileged situation relative to other groups means that in order for this group to develop a healthy identity they need to abandon what are considered normative strategies. A final maturation for a white person will have a capacity to strive for non-racist and humanistic racial self-definition and social interactions. The “central racial identity developmental theme for people of color is to recognize and overcome the psychological manifestations of internalized racism” (p. 189).

I bring this latter work to you because in our nation the identity of “dominant” groups is often hidden or taken for granted helping large groups to maintain their privilege (e.g., the recent Arizona anti-immigration legislation).

Historically scientists have tried to prove that whites were biologically superior. Kincheloe, Steinberg, and Gresson<sup>21</sup> are a group of scholars who debunk this myth once and for all. The “invisibility” of whiteness, however, creates a tendency to focus on people of color and deny the existence of white privilege.

Dominant constructions of whiteness prevail, and this is true no matter how cognizant we are in the fact that Chicanas/os and other people of color have rendered a counter discourse that turns a dominant construction of whiteness on its head and is spoken with the end of re narrativizing hidden her/histories from another ‘standpoint’.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>p. 357.

<sup>20</sup>Helms, J. (1995). An update of Helms's White and People of color racial identity models. In J. G. Ponterotto (Ed.), *Handbook of multicultural counselling* (pp. 181–198). London: Sage Publications.

<sup>21</sup>Kincheloe, J., Steinberg, S., & Gresson, A. (Eds.). (1996). *Measured lies: The bell curve examined*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>22</sup>Chambram-Denersesian, A. (1997). In R. Frankenberg. *Displacing whiteness* (p. 110). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

When Ruth Frankenberg<sup>23</sup> asked the difficult questions about entering into this discussion in the first place. She felt, however, that not entering into the critical analysis of whiteness posed a much greater risk. She indicated, “. . . whiteness is a construct or identity almost impossible to separate from racial dominance. For the term whiteness, expressing the idea that there is a category of people identified and self-identifying as ‘white’, is situated within this simultaneous operation of race and racism. White, then, corresponds to one place in racism as a system of categorization and subject formation, just as the terms race privileged and race dominant name particular place within racism as a system of domination.”<sup>24</sup>

Peggy McIntosh<sup>25</sup> in her work tries to make the invisible visible by posing a set of questions that have often intrigued my students. I realize this work is dated but nevertheless I have found it useful. These are some of the questions in the “invisible knapsack include but are not limited to,

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well-assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.

For Urrieta,<sup>26</sup> “identities are not static, sterilized notions of who people are. All human beings share an essence as people.”<sup>27</sup> It is the sociocultural experiences

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<sup>23</sup>Frankenberg, R. (1997). *Displacing whiteness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>25</sup>McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack*. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women.

<sup>26</sup>Urrieta, L. (2009). *Working from within: Chicana and Chicano activist educators in Whitestream schools*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 173.

and the daily-lived realities that help us to have differing identities. Luis uses the example of “la raza,” where people reflect similar experiences with oppression, colonization, and the struggle toward liberation. The term does not connote superiority, but rather equality within a system that has inflicted oppression. The *mestizaje* (mixture) reflects the common experienced within a colonized context. According to Urrieta, recent immigrants along with Latina/Latino students should learn about the Chicana and Chicano struggle for social justice.

The youth of the “fourth world” can explore the space for social justice and equity. Not just as a dreamspace, but also as a daily-lived reality. Freire<sup>28</sup> taught us a about conscientization (consciousness raising) and learning to “read the word and the world . . .” Freire stated, “without a sense of identity, there can be no real struggle.”

I have often heard Einstein’s quote, “If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants.”<sup>29</sup> As the youth of the “fourth world” continue to face challenges they can also be assured that there are signs of hope, because so many “giants” have come before us to help lead the way. Our own family members who came before us prepared the way for us with their struggles, their activism, their work in factories to sew the clothes they could never hope to wear, overcoming the hot sun while picking fruits and vegetables for the “American table,” with their compassion and altruism, and their hope in our future and the future generations filled with love.

Anzaldua’s<sup>30</sup> felt that people of color should allow whites to be our allies. “We need to say to white society”:

We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different,  
to acknowledge your rejection and negation of us.  
We need you to own the fact that you looked upon us a less than human,  
that you stole our lands,  
our personhood, our self-respect.  
We need you to make public restitution. . .  
By taking back your collective shadow  
the intracultural split will heal.  
And finally, tell us what you need from us.

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<sup>28</sup>Freire, P. (2006). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Revised version. New York: Continuum.

<sup>29</sup>Einstein, A. in quote gallery.com

<sup>30</sup>Anzaldua, A. (1999). *Borderlands. La Frontera* (2nd edn., pp. 107–108). San Francisco: Aunt Lute.

# Chapter 8

## Young Children/Los Mas Pequeños

- Latina/o children are less likely than their peers to participate in early childhood education.
- Latino students may be “tracked” in lower levels throughout primary school and into secondary school.
- Latino children are far more likely to live in poverty.
- Latina/o children lack adequate health care, vision care, and stable and secure housing.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the grim picture that is often portrayed about immigrant Latina/o children, a recent study<sup>2</sup> breaks the stereotype that immigrant or Latina/o low-income parents produce children with problems. Young latina/o children showed strong classroom skills, despite having grown up in poverty. Among the findings, child rearing no-nonsense parenting practices—especially Latino traditions of strict discipline, respect for adults, and strong family bonds—shaped children’s social and cognitive growth and their assimilation into mainstream culture. Immigrant Latinos/as parents raise socially agile children, but these early gains are likely to be eroded by mediocre schools and peer pressure in poor neighborhoods.

Immigrant kids begin school with surprisingly good social skills, eager to engage teachers and classroom tasks, even though many are raised in poor households . . . This stems from tight families and tough-headed parenting . . . Culture and language growth play a huge role in boosting achievement, which we now see benefit many Latino children<sup>3</sup>

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These children benefit from a strong foundation against outside negative forces, which contributes to their early school achievement but fades over time, especially during adolescence

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<sup>1</sup>NWLC/MALDEF. (2008). *Listening to Latinas: Barriers to high school graduation*. Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup>Fuller, B., & Garcia, C., et al. (2010, May 3). Latino children and families: Development in cultural context. *Developmental Psychology*, 46(3).

<sup>3</sup>Fuller, B. (Co-editor). (2010, May 3). Latino children and families: Development in cultural context. *Developmental Psychology*, 46(3).

... Assimilation places many children at risk of losing tight bonds to family and [therefore experiencing] school failure.<sup>4</sup>

Immigrant children constitute a large portion of America's population. The data show that immigrant children are the fastest growing sector of the child population. Almost one-fourth of the children in US are either immigrants or children of immigrants.

A large number of immigrant children are citizens.  
 93% of children under 6 years old are US citizens.  
 77% of children aged 6–17 years old are US citizens.

These young American children are entitled and yet less likely to receive public services because of public agencies' lack of understanding or because of the families' fears. Poverty rates are generally higher among young immigrant children. Over a quarter of young immigrant children are poor. Young immigrant children are less likely to have health insurance and lack entry into preventive health services.<sup>5</sup>

Children of undocumented immigrants are a growing share of students in kindergarten through grade 12. The Pew Research Center,<sup>6</sup> analyzing this group for the first time, estimates that 6.8% of K-12 students had at least one parent who was undocumented in 2008. In five states, about 10% or more of students are children of undocumented immigrant parents. Most of these children having been born in the United States and thus are US citizens. Immigrant children (unauthorized immigrants or US citizens) constitute 6.8% of the students enrolled in the nation's elementary and secondary schools. We have noted how in the USA strong opinions about immigration are voiced in the media and by politicians on a daily basis. To the best of my knowledge children had not been asked their opinion on the matter.

...we have a right  
 to walk on these streets and live here.  
 Our teacher told us that the Mexicans  
 were here before anyone  
 and it was Christopher Columbus'  
 who changed the story.  
 Christopher Columbus thinks he invented the country!  
 (Maribel, age 11)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>García Coll, C. (Co-editor). (2010, May 3). Latino children and families: Development in cultural context. *Developmental Psychology*, 46(3).

<sup>5</sup>Lincroft, Y., & Resner, J. (2006). *Undercounted. Underserved. Immigrant and refugee families in the child welfare system*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

<sup>6</sup>Passel, J., & Cohn, D. (2009). *A portrait of unauthorized immigrants in the United States*. Pew Hispanic Research Center

<sup>7</sup>Soto, L. D., & Garza, I. (2011). Immigrant children's pictures and narratives. *Contemporary Issues in Early Education*, January Maribel, 5, 2007.

Children's experiences, perceptions, and voices are often disregarded in the study of immigration. Maribel (above) reminds us of the historical implications of the relations between Mexico and the United States of America while pointing to the history of colonization. The southern states were an integral part of Mexico.

Today's borders were not decided  
by some border deity,  
but were part of the spoils of war.<sup>8</sup>

Viewing a map of 1830 and the land lost by Mexico<sup>9</sup> clarifies the extent of the land Mexico lost to the USA. The land includes California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and parts of Colorado and Kansas. The treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo<sup>10</sup> was signed in 1848 ceding the latter states for \$15 million with the guaranteed provision that Mexicans living in these areas would be able to experience

the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States according to the principles of the constitution; and in the meantime would be protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty and property, and secured free exercise of their religion without restriction.<sup>11</sup>

Mexicans expected a provision banning slavery but it was refused by the chief US negotiator.

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The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo looms larger in the history of Mexico than in that of the United States. Partly because of the loss of valuable territory, the treaty ensured that Mexico would remain an underdeveloped country well into the twentieth century. Mexican historians and politicians view this treaty as a bitter lesson in U.S. aggression. As a result of the humiliation of the war and the loss of more than half of the national territory, young Mexicans embraced a reform movement, headed by Benito Juarez, governor of Oaxaca, who had opposed the treaty. In the 1850s the reformers came to power in Mexico vowing to strengthen the country's political system so that never again would they be victims of U.S. aggression. Benito Juarez's La Reforma was the start of a political and economic modernization process that continues to this day in Mexico.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo has had implications not only for relations between the two countries but also for international law. Interpretations of the provisions of the treaty have been important in disputes over international boundaries, water and mineral rights, and the civil and property rights of the descendants of the Mexicans in the ceded territories. Since 1848 there have been hundreds of court cases citing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as a basis for land claims, but few Mexican claimants were successful in retaining their land.

Since 1848 Native Americans and Mexican Americans have struggled to achieve political and social equality within the United States, often citing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as a document that promised civil and property rights. Although the treaty promised U.S. citizenship to former Mexican citizens, the Native Americans in the ceded territories, who in fact were Mexican citizens, were not given full U.S. citizenship until the 1930s. Former Mexican citizens were almost universally considered foreigners by the U.S. settlers

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<sup>8</sup>Bigelow, B. (2006). *The line between us. Teaching about the border and Mexican immigration* (p. 13). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools Publication.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>10</sup>Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. [www.mexica.net/guadhida.php](http://www.mexica.net/guadhida.php)

<sup>11</sup>Bigelow (2006).



who moved into the new territories. In the first half century after ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, hundreds of state, territorial, and federal legal bodies produced a complex tapestry of conflicting opinions and decisions bearing on the meaning of the treaty. The property rights seemingly guaranteed in Articles VIII and IX of the treaty (and in the Protocol of Queretaro) were not all they seemed. In U.S. courts, the property rights of former Mexican citizens in California, New Mexico, and Texas proved to be fragile. Within a generation the Mexican-Americans became a disenfranchised, poverty-stricken minority.<sup>12</sup>

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In a special issue on immigration and education,<sup>13</sup> the editors of the *Harvard Educational Review* note how the contributing scholars emphasized the need to pay more attention to the stories of immigrant children. In the same volume one scholar attributes the increased number of immigrant children to globalization while at the same time explicating globalization's interrelated phenomena's connection to the study of immigration and education.<sup>14</sup>

Why should children's voices and children's wisdom be an integral part of the study of immigration? What contributions can children bring to the discussions and policy-making about immigration?

Our ability to visualize children's voice, children's wisdom, and children's theory can be an integral part of participatory democracy. Children's representations, voices, and wisdom can guide our democratic dreams as we listen for what children intend to say.<sup>15</sup>

Studies<sup>16</sup> conducted over the years have convinced me that Latino/a children can serve as role models for altruism. When I initiated this research I was not looking for elements of altruism. I was interested in finding children's perceptions of their own bilingualism and biliteracy. In a small study with 13 bilingual Spanish-speaking children I examined their perceptions of their bilingualism and biliteracy through conversations, collages, and drawings. The children felt the usefulness of becoming biliterate to be embedded in altruistic helping relations with family members and other monolingual speakers especially their non-bilingual peers. Identity issues also surfaced for all the children.<sup>17</sup>

The children I met in "Steeltown" were the first to share their altruistic feelings as these related to their "gift of bilingualism." Their drawings indicated how

<sup>12</sup>Griswold del Castillo, R. (ND). War's End. Treaty of Guadalupe. PBS.org.

<sup>13</sup>Baolian, D., Qin-Hilliard, Feinauer, E., & Quiroz, B. (2001). Introduction. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(3), ix.

<sup>14</sup>Suarez-Orozco, M. (2001). Globalization, immigration, and education: The research agenda. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(3), 345-365.

<sup>15</sup>Soto, L. D., & Lasta, J. (2005). Bilingual Border crossing children's ideological becoming. In L. D. Soto., & B. B. Swadener (Eds.), *Power and voice in research with children* (pp. 153-164). New York: Peter Lang.

<sup>16</sup>Soto, L. D. (2002). Young bilingual children's perceptions of bilingualism and biliteracy: Altruistic possibilities. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 23(3), 599-610. Soto, L. D., & Lasta, J. (2005). Bilingual border crossing children's ideological becoming. Soto, L. D., & Garza, I. (2011, January). Immigrant children's pictures and narratives. *Contemporary issues in early education*.

<sup>17</sup>Soto, L. D. (2002).

they used their bilingualism to help family members and “the others.” One illustration has stayed with me all these years is Christia’s depiction. The local hospital waiting room was the backdrop for her story, sharing how she actually saved her grandmother’s life, by translating for her. Other children shared how they taught their peers Spanish in patient ways and how they translated for their parents. In my mind the children of Steeltown became sensitive philosophers who demonstrated pro-social altruistic behaviors.

As I explored the research I found the important close family relationships, where parents model caring behavior and communicate caring values, in shaping children’s dispositions. The following studies help to make the latter point. In Oliner’s<sup>18</sup> study with 406 rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust we learn about the importance of parental modeling behavior. Rosenham,<sup>19</sup> who conducted interviews with “freedom riders” from the civil rights movement in the USA, demonstrated how the participants viewed their parents as demonstrating pro-social behavior and concern for the welfare of others. Mussen & Eisenberg<sup>20</sup> demonstrated how children will adapt to either cooperative or competitive environments. Pinheiro’s<sup>21</sup> study found that protective factors against violence included stable family units, good parenting, strong attachment between parents and children, and non-violent discipline. These studies, taken together, provide insights into what is possible.

Soon after the catastrophic rupture of 9/11 one of my students and I had the opportunity to interview children in New York City.<sup>22</sup> We gathered drawings and conversations with young children living in the metropolis. These 4–5-year-old kindergartners bore Alfie Kohn’s<sup>23</sup> idea of the “brighter side of human nature,” when asked about the value of their bilingualism. The major benefit and theme that emerged was the desire to help the other(s). Several children shared “gifts of bilingualism” with their siblings, peers, family members, and friends. Tracy was the youngest child in the group (4 years old) and she told us:

It feels nice [to help someone] . . . sometimes it feels a little cold in the inside and hot in the outside . . . It’s like when somebody helps you and you get embarrassed that you don’t know them, so then you meet them and then you come friends and then you help each other . . . that is what being friends is all about, helping each other . . . that way you make them feel better . . . I found it all by myself.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Oliner, S., & Oliner, P. (1988). *The altruistic personality: Rescuers of the Jews in Nazi Europe*. New York: Free Press.

<sup>19</sup>Rosenham, D. (1970). The natural socialization of altruistic autonomy. In J. Macauley, & L. Berkowitz (Eds.), *Altruism and helping behavior*. New York: Academic Press.

<sup>20</sup>Mussen, P., & Eisenberg, N. (1989). *The roots of prosocial behavior in children*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Press.

<sup>21</sup>Pinheiro, P. S. (2006). Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children. General Assembly, Sixty-first sessions, 23 August, A/61/299.

<sup>22</sup>Soto & Lasta (2005).

<sup>23</sup>Kohn, A. (1990). *The brighter side of human nature*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>24</sup>Soto & Lasta. (2005, p. 162).

A more recent slice of research interviewing young immigrant children was gathered in South Texas with my graduate student.<sup>25</sup> In this study we asked children to share drawings and conversations about their perceptions of immigration. In the latter piece we stressed our support for Lather's<sup>26</sup> position that social and educational inquiry can have ameliorative intention. The children we interviewed demonstrated insights about the dangers of immigration as well as about issues of power and resistance. We have shared children's voices with the hope that we can help to inform teachers and policy-makers about how to satisfy the needs of increasing numbers of young immigrant children.

Relying on Lather's idea of ameliorative intention takes us further in our pursuit of social justice and equity. The idea is to contribute to improving people's existing and future lives within the complexities of the democratic sphere and an increased globalized context.

May 1, 2006, has been referred to as "The day without immigrants" because almost one million Latino/a immigrants boycotted farms, factories, and restaurants in many states. Marchers held US flags and sang the national anthem in Los Angeles. In Arizona marchers carried Mexican flags and shouted, "We are America, today we march, tomorrow we vote."<sup>27</sup> Beatriz joined a more modest immigrant march a year later in Texas and shared her feelings with us.

When we went to the march it was weird . . . when people were looking at us my Dad said, "Que vivan los inmigrantes". That day I felt really good because of all the people that we saw and everything they said was true . . . and sometimes kind of scary. . . We are fighting for our rights . . . being in a march is like being in a battle but we knew we had to go and fight for our families and friends. People might think it's a joke but they need to know what it feels like to be away from your family for a long time. It is hard seeing little kids being separated . . . and how would you feel losing someone that you love or care a lot about?<sup>28</sup>

Beatriz's comment refers to the march as well as to family separation. The issue of separation means that when ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids occur in the parent's place of employment, children will be separated from their families. In New Bedford, Massachusetts at the Marco Bianco factory,<sup>29</sup> a military contractor south of Boston, 360 workers were taken into custody. Among them were Marta Escoto and other mothers who were separated from their children who were in day cares, schools, or a sitter's home. A day after the raid a 7-year-old called a hotline asking for her mother while a breast-feeding child was hospitalized for dehydration. The Governor Patrick of Massachusetts called the post-raid situation a "humanitarian crisis." Mexican immigrant workers have played an increasingly

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<sup>25</sup>Soto & Garza (2011).

<sup>26</sup>Lather (1991).

<sup>27</sup><http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12573992/>

<sup>28</sup>Soto, L. D. & Garza, I. (2011).

<sup>29</sup>Shulman, R. (2007, March 18). Illegal workers in Massachusetts separated from children. *Washington Post*.

vital role in the USA economy.<sup>30</sup> Yet, the public narrative does not seem to respect this fact.

Miguel commented on the movie, “A day without a Mexican.”<sup>31</sup> In this film, California Latinos disappear leading to chaos, tragedy, and comedy.

I saw the movie, ‘A day without a Mexican’ . . . Food starts lowering because there are no Mexicans to pick the food. No more houses are being built and there is nothing to eat . . . Immigration is not only messed up, but also screwed up . . . Sure mess with the people that do most of the work . . . to make matters worse they cross a river, walk through a desert and risk their lives just to get here . . . in a free country.<sup>32</sup>

Miguel notes the contribution of the Mexican worker to the food industry and construction. He also notes the sacrifices that families have made to including risking their lives to live “in a free country.”

The contributions to the construction industry can be seen in many cities across the nation. How much more would you have paid for your home if it were not for the immigrant day laborers? In the hot Texas sun you can witness this as an everyday occurrence. Marco reminded us of the matter.

Almost everything in Music Town was made by Mexicans . . . so do you think it’s worth it just crossing all of that so the immigration will just be waiting, and take them back?<sup>33</sup>

The Bureau of Labor Statistics noted that New York City (NYC) has one of the largest day immigrant labor markets. Sixty-seven percent of workers who have died on the job in NYC were immigrants including underage workers.<sup>34</sup> It is clear that employers turn their gaze away from legal mandates in order to increase their profit.

Workers and immigrants are perceived by the miseducated/misinformed majority with disdain. Latino/a immigrants face resentment. Alicia noticed this in her narrative.

My Mom told me that white people want us to leave because they (think) Mexican people try to take over but that is not true. Mexican people try to work here . . . trying to get the money and give it to their families. I went to a march and I saw billions of people and my daddy told me that he was glad. I was supporting Mexican people. My parents are all from Mexico. I am a Chicana!<sup>35</sup>

Alicia relays how she felt as she participated in the immigrant march in Texas. She also shares her ability to strongly identify herself as a Chicana.

Identity issues faced by Latino/a children can be complex. In Alicia’s case she is clear that she is Chicana. Other children we have visited can feel confused. Some families would like to erase their ethnicity in a climate that has disregard for their

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<sup>30</sup>AILF (2002).

<sup>31</sup>Directed by Sergio Arau. (2004).

<sup>32</sup>Soto, L. D. & Garza, I. (2011). (MZ 5/07).

<sup>33</sup>Soto, L. D. & Garza, I. (2011). (MD 5/07).

<sup>34</sup>Berkey-Gerard, M. (2001, November 6). Immigrant construction workers. Retrieved from [http://www.gothamgazette.com/iotw/immigrant\\_construction/](http://www.gothamgazette.com/iotw/immigrant_construction/)

<sup>35</sup>Soto, L. D. & Garza, I. (2011). (AG 5/07).

culture and language. Children are told by teachers and even parents to forget their home language and to focus on English. Families and children think they will be more acceptable to the larger society if they appear more acculturated or appear to agree with the Western stance. The amount of acculturation by the children has often meant that grandchildren of successive generations lose their home language and have a difficult time communicating with their abuelitos and abuelitas.

The immigration police  
can't take us from our land.  
We love this place.  
Mexicans only come over here  
because they need a job to feed their family.<sup>36</sup>

Mexican–American, Chicano/a, Xicana, Anglo poor adults that I have met can still recall what it was like growing up as an immigrant or migrant child in California, moving from community to community to pick the crops of the area. “One day you were living in a mobile home but in just a couple of days you were trying to put up your mother’s thread bare curtains in a wooden shack.” One of my dearest friends recalls her mother’s rebozo (shawl) and how ashamed she felt when her mother visited the school. Years later, tears stained her eyes because she misses her mother so much and realizes the significance of that rebozo. She now wears shawls proudly as a symbol of the struggle that her family and so many other migrant/immigrant agricultural workers have endured. The legal system has not been kind to these families when we notice that their wages are meager and the working conditions are inhospitable.

The children in these studies surprised us with their knowledge about immigration, including having participated in demonstrations that supported the plight of immigrant workers. The children demonstrated that they are aware of the dangers associated with border crossing in South Texas. They are aware of border politics, they understand how families have participated in heroic efforts to cross the border, they are conscious of deportations, they were able to depict issues of power and authority, and they questioned elements of historical freedom. They shared the hope, filled possibility of sharing power. They understood the sociocultural and historical elements of colonization.

Recent studies in the field of psychology<sup>37</sup> have shown that even very young children (12–14 months) show instrumental helping and pro-social motivations. Warneken and Tomasello<sup>38</sup> developed scenarios for young children and found that

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<sup>36</sup>Soto, L. D. & Garza, I. (2011). (MA 5/07).

<sup>37</sup>Bischof-Köhler, D. (1988). On the connection between empathy and the ability to recognize one self in the mirror. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, 47, 147–159. Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2006). Altruistic helping in human infants and young chimpanzees. *Science*, 311, 1301–1303. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.1121448> Zann-Waxler, C., Radke-Yarro, M., & Chapman, M. (1992). Development of concern for others. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 126–136.

<sup>38</sup>Warneken, F., & Tomasello, M. (2006). Altruistic helping in human infants and young chimpanzees. *Science*, 311, 1301–1303. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.1121448>

“even very young children without much socialization are willing and able to help spontaneously.”<sup>39</sup> What this recent work tells us is that we can learn from the children about working toward models of altruism and compassion.

In the documentary “The Least of these”<sup>40</sup> we view a scene where a child is holding hands with an adult dressed in a green scrub uniform. The location of this scene is the Hutto Detention Center in Hutto, Texas.

The University of Texas, Austin Law School (Barbara Hines), and the ACLU (Vanita Gupta) stepped in to protect the rights of the children being incarcerated in this facility. The children were not allowed to play, received 1 h of schoolwork, and were told that if they did not behave their parents would be deported.

What undocumented families face in these jails is unimaginable to most of us. In northwest Georgia, for example, an incarcerated undocumented mother was not allowed to breast feed her child. Local activists struggled to solve this problem by bringing the mother’s milk to the child each day. In addition, women were not allowed to wear underwear as they were stripped of their clothing. Activists in the community brought common underwear from the local department store to solve this dilemma.

There is also the issue of unaccompanied children. The majority of these children are males between the ages of 15–17 and primarily from Central and South America. Sonia Nazario<sup>41</sup> documents how children as young as 7 years old join “El tren de la muerte” (the train of death) traveling from central America in an attempt to join their mothers in the USA who are raising other people’s children, maids, factory workers, etc. Children undertake difficult journeys, often across numerous international borders, and often alone. An increasing number of children become victims of traffickers and smugglers. Adolescent girls in particular are highly susceptible to rape and assault along the way. The children can be of both genders and some as young as infants. Children come to the United States to reunite with family members or fleeing war, violence, abuse, or natural disasters.

Unaccompanied children are among the most vulnerable, crossing borders, and in need of special protections. Since 1997, the Women’s Refugee Commission has worked to improve conditions of confinement for unaccompanied children seeking asylum and other forms of immigration relief. Even after surviving difficult journeys they must face additional obstacles. The children are held in custody while their cases proceed through the courts usually without the help of a lawyer or guardian. A primary focus of the Women’s Refugee Commission’s Detention and Asylum Program has been to monitor the treatment of the children and to advocate for humane and appropriate policies.

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 1301.

<sup>40</sup>Lyda, C. & Lyda, J. (2010). *The least of these* (documentary). Retrieved from <http://theleastofthese-film.com>

<sup>41</sup>Nazario, S. (2006). *Enrique’s journey*. New York: Random House.

In the report, “Prison guard or parent?”<sup>42</sup> the inappropriate conditions children faced at the hands of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) are documented. Immigrant children were held in INS custody often in juvenile detention with youth offenders. Children were handcuffed and shackled, forced to wear prison uniforms, and locked in prison cells. Many were denied access to legal and social services.<sup>43</sup>

On August 27, 2007 the ACLU<sup>44</sup> announced a landmark settlement with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that improved conditions for immigrant children and their families in the T. Don Hutto detention center in Taylor, Texas. The settlement was the result of lawsuits on behalf of 26 immigrant children detained with their parents at Hutto. The lawsuits contended that the conditions inside the detention center violate numerous provisions of *Flores v. Meese*, a 1997 court ruling establishing standards and conditions for minors in federal immigration custody. Since the original lawsuits were filed, all 26 children represented by the ACLU have been released. Conditions at Hutto have gradually improved as a result of the groundbreaking litigation. Children are no longer required to wear prison uniforms and are allowed much more time outdoors. Educational programming has expanded and guards have been instructed not to discipline children by threatening to separate them from their parents.

In addition to making those improvements permanent, the settlement requires ICE to allow:

1. children over the age of 12 to move freely about the facility
2. a full-time, on-site pediatrician
3. for the elimination of the “count system” which forces families to stay in their cells 12 h a day
4. privacy curtains around toilets
5. field trip opportunities to children
6. more toys and age- and language-appropriate books
7. for the improvement of the nutritional value of food

ICE must also allow regular legal orientation presentations by local immigrants’ rights organizations; allow family and friends to visit Hutto detainees 7 days a week; and allow children to keep paper and pens in their rooms. ICE’s compliance with each of these reforms is subject to external oversight. Despite the tremendous improvements at Hutto, it remains a medium-security prison managed a for-profit adult corrections company. The ACLU remains adamant that detaining immigrant

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<sup>42</sup>WFC. (2002). *Prison guard or parent? INS treatment of unaccompanied refugee children*. Washington, DC: Women’s Refugee Commission.

<sup>43</sup>Herrington, & Sutcliffe LLP. (2009). *Halfway home: Unaccompanied children in immigration custody*. Washington, DC: Women’s Refugee Commission.

<sup>44</sup>A.L.C.L.U. (2009, August 6). Family detention at Hutto to End. Retrieved from <http://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights-racial-justice/aclu-challenges-prison-conditions-hutto-detention-center>

children at Hutto is inappropriate and calls on Congress to compel DHS to find humane alternatives for managing families whose immigration status is in limbo.

The ICE has published a letter<sup>45</sup> on March 24, 2010, describing the Hutto Facility. It begins with, “The T. Don Hutto Residential Center (TDHRC) represents a unique and pioneering setting, offering the least restrictive environment permissible to manage persons in administrative ICE custody.”

The Obama administration announced on August 6, 2009 that it will overhaul the nation’s immigrant detention system. One immediate change: the government will stop sending families to the T. Don Hutto Residential Center, the former medium-security prison near Austin, TX that is the subject of a documentary entitled “The Least of These.” Family detention continues at the Berks facility in Pennsylvania, and ICE is still considering the future of family detention policy overall. In February of 2010 the Detention Watch Network launched its national campaign “*Dignity, Not Detention: Preserving Human Rights & Restoring Justice*” to halt expansion of the US immigration detention system and demand that immigrants are treated with respect and dignity for their human rights.

I asked my Mom why she immigrated to Texas. My Mom was pregnant at 18 my real Dad started to hit my Mom in the belly so I won’t be born. I thought for a while and said, I am sorry for all the pain you took for me.<sup>46</sup>

What did we learn from the immigrant Latino/a children?

Children see the possibilities in altruistic behaviors within and outside their family environment with people like and unlike themselves. Imagine a country filled with compassion and altruism . . . .

We learned that the children are aware of dangers associated with border crossing and border-crossing politics. The children understand the heroic efforts made by their families and friends to cross the border. They understand what it means to be deported. The children drew illustrations that showed issues of power and authority. They were also able to question elements of historical freedom. While participating in the immigrant marches they shared their hope for sharing power. We also learned that the children are informed about the sociocultural and historical elements of colonization.

As state/local authorities continue to implement draconian measures and aggressive raids we can ask ourselves—What about the children? Are the children immersed in a nation of compassion, caring, and love?

Senator L. Graham,<sup>47</sup> a non-Latino republican from South Carolina, has suggested adding a new amendment to the US constitution that would not allow children of “cross the border” to obtain American citizenship by virtue of birth. This cruel position would single out “border crossing” families and their innocent children from the rest of the nation.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.ice.gov/pi/news/factsheets/huttofactsheet.htm>

<sup>46</sup> Soto, L. D. & Garza, I. (2011). (BC 5/08).

<sup>47</sup> Klein, E. (2010). *Washington Post*, July 30.



In Arizona a measure was also introduced to deny US citizenship to children born in the United States to undocumented immigrant parents.<sup>48</sup> There is a tremendous amount of controversy in Arizona.<sup>49</sup>

These radical right wing policy-makers are going against the Constitution of the US:

All persons, born or naturalized in the United States, are citizens of the United States. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States (14th amendment of the US Constitution).

In addition to the 14th amendment, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1959)<sup>50</sup> emphasizes that children have specific human rights separate from adults. The treaty guarantees children the right to be free from discrimination, to be protected in armed conflicts, to be protected from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, to be free from arbitrary deprivation of liberty, to receive age-appropriate treatment in the justice system, and to be free from economic exploitation and other abuses, among other rights. Achieving these rights remains a challenge.<sup>51</sup> Somalia and the USA are the only two countries that have not approved the Convention.<sup>52</sup>

Human rights are moral/legal entitlements that are essential to live as human beings. They are basic standards which people need to survive and to develop in dignity. They are essential, inalienable, and universal. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that children's rights include civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The convention applies to all children with special protection for vulnerable groups such as ethnic minority children. The document emphasizes the need for every human being to develop to their full potential as well as to ensure the survival and development of children to the best of their ability. The document also recognizes the need to protect children from neglect, exploitation, and abuse. The special concern relates to children who are being separated from their families and children who are incarcerated with or without their families. Amelia Guzman Molina shared the following:

I know firsthand the struggle and heartbreak immigrant families experience when loved ones are incarcerated. My experience in a U.S. immigration jail led me to dedicate my life to advocating on behalf of this often marginalized community. And while it's no secret that the U.S. has both the highest number of people in prison and the highest rate of arrests in the world, very little attention is paid to the high number of children who end up alone as a result—and even less to the children of incarcerated immigrants. Without parental guidance and emotional support, children with imprisoned parents struggle to survive on their own and face heightened risks of poverty, gang involvement, substance abuse and school delinquency. These are real threats for any child whose parent is in custody, whether they are

<sup>48</sup> <http://campbellbrown.blogs.cnn.com/2010/06/16/targeting-children-of-illegal-immigrants/>

<sup>49</sup> Archibold, R. (2010, April 23). Arizona enacts stringent law on immigration. *New York Times*.

<sup>50</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child. (1959). UNICEF. Retrieved from <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

<sup>51</sup> see: <http://www.hrw.org/children/>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.globalissues.org/HumanRights/Abuses/Child.asp>

incarcerated within the criminal justice system or are detained because of an immigration violation.<sup>53</sup>

All of the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are important, however, the following brief descriptions focus on the most salient ones for immigrant children and their families. (Please see the full document for a full description of each article.<sup>54</sup>) Article 3 “The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children.”

Article 4, governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children’s rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled. Included in these measures are social services, legal, health, and education.

Article 8, children have the right to an identity—an official record of who they are. Governments should respect children’s right to a name, a nationality, and family ties.

Article 9, children have the right to live with their parent(s), unless it could hurt the child.

Article 10, families should be allowed to move between countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

Article 12, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

Article 16, children have a right to privacy. They should be protected from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families, and their homes.

Article 20, children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly, by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture, and language.

Article 25, children who are looked after by their local authorities, rather than their parents, have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate. Their care and treatment should always be based on “the best interests of the child.”

Article 26, children have the right to help from the government if they are poor or in need.

Article 27, children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs.

Article 28, all children have the right to a free primary education.

Article 29, children’s education should develop each child’s personality, talents, and abilities to the fullest. It should help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment, and respect other people.

Article 30, minority or indigenous children have the right to learn about and practice their own culture, language, and religion.

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<sup>53</sup><http://womensrefugeecommission.org/blog/968-amalia-guzman>

<sup>54</sup>[http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights\\_overview.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf)

Article 31, children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic, and other recreational activities.

Article 32, the government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education.

Article 33, governments should use all means possible to protect children from the use of harmful drugs and from being used in the drug trade.

Article 34, governments should protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Article 35, the government should take all measures possible to make sure that children are not abducted, sold, or trafficked.

Article 37, no one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way. They should not be put in prison with adults, should be able to keep in contact with their families, and should not be sentenced to death or life imprisonment without possibility of release.

Article 39, children who have been neglected, abused, or exploited should receive special help to recover with special attention to restoring the health, self-respect, and dignity of the child.

The USA needs to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is a first step that the president and the government can make indicating their willingness to protect the very children who will be contributing to the nation's future. Taking a human-rights framework may help to educate the miseducated and misinformed members of the nation.

As 4-year-old Tracy from New York City taught us:

It feels nice to (to help someone)...  
 some times it feels a little cold on the inside  
 and hot in the inside...  
 that is what being friends is all about,  
 helping each other.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Soto, L. D. & Lasta, J. (2005, p. 164).

## Chapter 9

# Adult ESL Immigrant Learners . . .

*El Anglo con cara de inocente nos arranco la lengua*<sup>1</sup>

Adult English as a second language (ESL) education and immigration have been historically linked. Understanding the history of immigration can help us to gain insights into the current and future needs of immigrants. What were the immigrants of a century ago like? The majority of these immigrants were 20 years old or older, at least 2.6 million could not speak English, the majority were joining family or friends, many sent money back home, they exhibited low literacy rates, and almost 30% were not literate. The so called “new immigrants” from Southern and Eastern Europe were considered to be inferior.<sup>2</sup>

Legislation restricting immigration is not new to our country. In 1875, the first federal law restricting immigration was passed. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed. In 1885, the Alien Contract Labor Act prohibited employers from importing foreign laborers. In 1903, additional restrictive laws were passed.

In 1906 the first English language ability for citizenship was required. With increasing numbers of immigrants additional restrictive laws were passed in 1907. In 1917 (and World War I), literacy-test legislation for new immigrants passed over a presidential veto. In 1921, the Immigration Quota Act limited numbers of immigrants based on nationality.<sup>3</sup>

The education of newly arriving immigrants was taken up by community-based and private organizations, federal agencies, ethnic organizations, factories and industry, public schools and local education agencies, Hull House, and other settlements.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands. La Frontera. The new mestiza* (p. 76).

<sup>2</sup>Alexander (2007). Jenks and Lauck (1922) cited in Young, S. (2008). A brief history of adult ESL instruction. Keynote power point presentation at Sacramento California. Center for Applied Linguistics.

<sup>3</sup>Young, S. (2008).

<sup>4</sup>Young, S. (2008).

A member of the “Polish University” of Chicago<sup>5</sup>: stated, “Some Americans think . . . that we immigrants can comprehend only such thoughts as ‘I see a cat; the cat is black; – as the teachers in the evening schools make grown men repeat. But the minds of most immigrants are not so feeble as that. For the poor man, America is all work-work-work. We believe in work, all right, but we want thought and education to go along with it. So we took up questions about the beginning of things – the creation of the world, the theory of evolution, primitive man, the development of language . . . All the lectures were in Polish. . . Gradually we came to subjects connected with America and with civic problems. But here we do more than have lectures. We go and see for ourselves how civic agencies work . . . We Socialists have not tried particularly to spread our propaganda . . . We haven’t preached ‘Americanization,’ either . . . [but] if what America wants is people who think and act for themselves, then we’re doing Americanization.”<sup>6</sup>

Chicago’s Yiddish-language Daily Courier was against the trends toward “Americanization” of immigrants: “it is not at all necessary for the liberty, security, and prosperity of America to fuse all the nationalities here to a point where they will lose their identity completely . . . It is much better that they should treasure dearly the inheritance which they brought with them from the old world.”<sup>7</sup>

Viewing elements of the historical evolution of adult ESL and immigration, we can begin to gather glimpses that hateful, demonizing rhetoric, legislative mandates, and immigration as controversy are not totally new to this nation. The questions of quotas, the singling out of groups as inferior, retaining or not languages and cultures, etc.

The contemporary complexity of immigration continues to be controversial and includes some of the very same issues. You may have heard non-recently arriving immigrants ask, “Why don’t these people speak English?”

Maria Morales a hotel housekeeper was interviewed by NPR’s, Jennifer Ludden<sup>8</sup> in a classroom trailer at Prince George’s Community College in Maryland. All of Maria’s fellow workers are Latina/o while her supervisors speak English only. Maria Morales and Adolfo Anton (a factory worker) shared with Ms. Ludden just how much these classes mean to them while at the same time indicating the challenges. The immigrant landscapers also find it challenging when their schedules are changed. All of the workers have schedules with long hours and some work two jobs plus have families.

Ludden: Educators say a lack of transportation and child-care are common barriers. Despite that, there are many more immigrants who want to sign up than slots available. A study last year by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials found that over half of publicly funded classes had wait lists, some up to 3 years. Then, once in the program, Prince George’s Adult Education

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<sup>5</sup>Cited in Young, S. (2008).

<sup>6</sup>Seller (1978) cited in Young, S. (2008).

<sup>7</sup>McClymer (1982, pp. 110–111) cited in Young (2008).

<sup>8</sup>Ludden, J. (2007, September 11). Barriers abound for immigrants learning English. National Public Radio.

director Barbara Denman says keeping immigrants at class can be a problem. Take landscapers.

Ms. Barbara Denman (Director, Prince George’s County Adult Education Program): In the spring semester when the schedules change, particularly after daylight savings time kicks in, we’ll lose those students because their employment requires them now to work much longer hours, and they can be very long hours.

Ludden: Housekeeper Maria Morales admits she hasn’t had much time to study these past 6 years. She’s been holding down two jobs. Another student, 38-year-old Adolfo Anton(ph) said he found it impossible to take English while he was working two shifts at a cement block factory from 12 noon until 3:00 in the morning. When he got a new schedule a year ago, Anton signed up for English two mornings a week.

Mr. Adolfo Anton (factory worker): Because it’s important in my job. My supervisor does not speak Spanish, and it’s difficult for me understand English.

Interview continues and Ludden concludes:

Ludden: Prince George’s program director Barbara Denman says it takes years to master a foreign language, and the key part is gaining the courage to make mistakes. If Americans want immigrants to improve their English, Denman says there’s a way everyone can help them, be patient and listen. Jennifer Ludden, NPR News.

Adults (25.5 million) were estimated to be participating in adult ESL classes.<sup>9</sup> Most of those who speak languages other than English at home are immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries. ESL is the fastest growing area of instruction in the field of adult education.

Several studies highlight the challenges faced by Maria Morales and Adolfo Anton. A study<sup>10</sup> conducted with 184 ESL providers showed the need for adult ESL is substantial and increasing so much so that it is the fastest growing area of adult education. This study cites figures from the 2000 census showing 21.3 million people in the United States speak English “less than very well,” while approximately 11.9 million people are “linguistically isolated.” This study also found (just as the NPR interview above) that these adult immigrant learners have tremendous motivation to learn English, but they face serious obstacles. These Adult students must also sacrifice precious time to attend since many hold two jobs to support their families. The study found an enormous, unmet need for ESL classes. A summary of the findings shows in part that:

- A majority of ESL programs have waiting lists.
- The increasing demands and funding losses have reduced the availability and caliber of adult ESL services.
- Few classes are available to intermediate and more advanced English learners.
- Nearly all providers stated that at least 10% of their students spoke Spanish.

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<sup>9</sup>Forrest, P. (1989). *Jump start: The federal role in adult literacy: Final report on the project on adult literacy*. Southport, CT: Southport Institute for Policy Analysis, p. 47. (ED 302 675); US Department of Education (2004–2005). *Adult education. Annual report to Congress*.

<sup>10</sup>Tucker, J. (2006) *Waiting times for adult ESL classes and the impact on English learners*. National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO).

The continued complication of inadequate resources for adult ESL instruction continues to grow in its seriousness as greater expectations are placed on workers. As local economies continue to grapple in increasingly challenging contexts, providing immigrants with ESL/literacy instruction, coupled with workforce development may begin to alleviate economic distress. More providers would like to pair literacy instruction with vocational training since this has shown positive results.<sup>11</sup>

The study conducted by Wang/AAJC<sup>12</sup> made several recommendations. Two in particular appear the most salient: First, “Using an education, rather than an immigration frame with which to build support for improving the US adult education system;”<sup>13</sup> and second, “The effective provision of ESOL and literacy programs to newcomers is critical to this nation’s future.”<sup>14</sup>

The first suggestion may seem rather mild to some readers, but in fact may be helpful because it tries to move away from the volatility we are experiencing to a space where praxis may take place. The second suggestion while certainly having been made by other studies with supportive demographic data; it may help to continue to emphasize our need for a hope-filled future in times of uncertainty.

Wang’s/AAJC’s study brought together more than 50 ESOL practitioners and experts to discuss challenges and opportunities facing the field.

One of the findings included the following:

- Growing needs, but lack of funding

The factors having contributed to the current shortage of ESOL programs include but are not limited to:

- (a) Increasing immigration from non-English speaking countries,
- (b) Doubling of the growth in the US-born population with limited English speaking skills,
- (c) Dispersion of the immigrant population with declining in funding sources, and
- (d) Public misperceptions about immigrants and policymakers’ lack of familiarity with ESOL issues.

In addition, this study offers details on promising practices, ten priorities, and needed research that may help to improve the current situation. Another contribution of the piece is its ability to note attitudinal issues of the majority population as well as the need for policy makers’ to learn about adult ESL immigrant instruction.

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<sup>11</sup>Colton, T. (2006). *Lost in translation*. NYC: Schuyler Center [www.nycfuture.org](http://www.nycfuture.org) [www.scaany.org](http://www.scaany.org)

<sup>12</sup>Wang, T. (2007). *Adult literacy education in immigrant communities: Identifying policy and program priorities for helping newcomers learn English*. Washington, DC: Asian American Justice Center.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

Historically, issues of language and culture are also an integral part of the immigration discussion. Ethnolinguistic democracy, which appears crucial at a time when we are facing multiple complexities, is rarely a part of the dialog. The imposition of the language of the majority constitutes power issues. If you can impose your language only as a means of communication then you can silence whole groups of people in your backyard, you (the more powerful/privileged colonizer) breath as a superior being, you establish your history as a “superior” history, and establish “otherness” as you begin to tear away at the sociocultural fabric of families and children. Schools and states who impose English-only mandates are clearly promoting more than they bargained for as they prohibit their very own children from learning a second language.

It is interesting to note how English around the world is not only at the “heart of colonialism,” but also deeply embedded with the discourses of colonialism. Language can bestow civilization, knowledge, and wealth while at the same time being racially defined.<sup>15</sup> The idea that a people can communicate on more than one language seems controversial in the United States. The popular joke, “what do you call someone who speaks two languages (bilingual), what do you call someone who speaks three languages (trilingual), and what do you call someone who speaks only one language (American)?” helps to illustrate this problem.

The notion of ‘progress’ for western civilizations echoes Columbus’s most salient question “Where is the gold?” Perhaps the more contemporary question is “Where is the oil?” The notion of “progress” is toward the economic with little regard for human dignity and freedom.<sup>16</sup> As privileged economic power holders become entrenched with cultural notions of consumption, the possibilities for democracy become more and more fragile.<sup>17</sup> The colonizer inhabits our classrooms and our homes; he (she) also invades our minds, our thinking, and our human spirit. This “new-age/neo-liberal/post-colonizer” continues to invade the private and the public. In this post-modern era of the “post-colonial” the newly argued rationale for denying minority linguistic and cultural rights is based upon notions of “economic relevancy.” Yet, what is the economic relevancy now post the World Trade Center tragedy? “It is a myth to argue that English-only mono-cultural education is desirable or necessary for economic well being.”<sup>18</sup>

The issue of power is evidenced in multiple ways and in various sociocultural contexts. When the NAFTA trade agreement was signed the question of English only for Mexican children was viewed as an integral part of modernization. Why would we ever expect Mexican children to give up their home language? Wouldn’t their northern neighbors benefit from learning a second language?

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<sup>15</sup>Pennycook (1998).

<sup>16</sup>Zinn (2005).

<sup>17</sup>Bigelow and Peterson (2002).

<sup>18</sup>Soto, L. D., & Kharem, H. (2007). *A post-monolingual education. International Journal of Educational Policy, Research and Practice* (p. 10).



“Is English the killer language?” asks the respected linguist Joshua Fishman. Nearly 1/3 of the world’s population will use English in some form. The discussion centers on whether the spread of English is a benign globalization or a form of linguistic imperialism. Fishman believes that the English language will eventually wane in influence since English is utilized by the privileged; while what globalization has encouraged is a regionalization of languages (e.g. the spread of Arabic, Chinese, Hausa, Spanish). What will become of English? According to Fishman it will gravitate toward the higher social classes to such an extent that it might become widely disliked as a linguistic bully. There is no reason to believe that English will always be necessary for technology, higher education, and social mobility since “ultimately democracy, international trade and economic development can flourish in any tongue”<sup>19</sup>

A recent article in the NY Times documents how as far away as Indonesia there is a concern and fear for the home language, Bahasa Indonesia. Paulina Sugiarto relays the issue facing her as a parent of three children who are struggling to maintain the home language.<sup>20</sup>

There are a variety of reasons for maintaining the home language, first, in order for families’ to be able to communicate the needed wisdom to children, second, it encourages higher-reading ability and academic achievement, and third, helping children to establish health sense of identity. These seem to be rather important reasons since how we socialize our youth will determine our country’s future. We can add ESL as a new repertoire rather than thinking we have to subtract the home language. The idea is to socialize healthy, active bilingual/bicultural people.

The imposition of English only can be compared to what Freire (1985) referred to as cultural invasion:

invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter’s potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing expression.<sup>21</sup>

Blaut<sup>22</sup> documents how colonized people are ultimately perceived as children via concepts adopted from Piaget, Marx, Freud, and Jung. Take time to observe how immigrants are treated and you will see how often they are viewed as incompetent and child-like.

The area of linguistic human rights (LHRs) was introduced by Swedish researchers.<sup>23</sup> A distinction is drawn between individual human rights and collective human rights. At the individual LHRs, children have to learn their mother

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<sup>19</sup>Cited in Soto and Kharem (2007, p. 11).

<sup>20</sup>Onishi, N. (2010, June 25). As English spreads, Indonesians fear for their language. *New York Times*.

<sup>21</sup>Freire, P. (1985, Reprint). *The politics of education* (p. 170). South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey Publishers.

<sup>22</sup>Blaut, J. M. (1993). *The colonizer’s model of the world*. New York: The Guilford Press. Center for Applied Linguists (CAL).

<sup>23</sup>Phillipson, R, Rannut, M, & Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1995). Introduction. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas, T. *Linguistic human rights: Overcoming linguistic discrimination*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter. Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1989). *Bilingualism or not: The education of minorities*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, Ltd.

tongue (the first language you learn and identify with) and at least one of the official languages of the nation. At the collective human rights level, LHR's implies the following: (a) the right to establish and maintain schools that include home language, home culture, and second-language learning; (b) the guarantees of representation in political affairs, and (c) that there is autonomy with regard to issues of culture, religion, education, information, and social affairs.

Often individuals and groups are treated unjustly and suppressed by means of language. People who are deprived of LHRs may thereby be prevented from enjoying other human rights, including fair political representation, a fair trial, access to education, access to information, freedom of speech, and maintenance of cultural heritage (1995, p. 2).

The importance of ESL instruction for adult immigrants is evidenced in a variety of sociocultural contexts, for example, in order to succeed in the workforce, to gain education, to learn about international/national news, to communicate in the new environment to name a few. As a complement to an adult ESL education for immigrants is the understanding that the home language and culture is crucial for their own healthy development and the beneficial development of our nation. Our interest in an increasingly global communication/education means that we need to immerse learners in diverse languages and cultures.

So if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity. I am my language<sup>24</sup>

Linguistic terrorism has been experienced by many Latino/a adults and children as the idea that being "Americanized" means that you must speak English only. You are somehow more "patriotic" if you speak English only. This is a limited perspective that our nation is beginning to realize as the global continues to impact the local. When our country has engaged in wars (and I am not a proponent of war), leaders have had to scramble to gain knowledge about cultures and languages that are so readily dismissed in our classroom. Families and children bring linguistic and cultural gifts that can be helpful for socialization and learning about differing cultures and perspectives. We need to understand that we are not the only country in the world. The more our children and families learn from one another, the more socialization that takes place, the more empathy and understanding of human rights will lead us into a better more equitable space for all of us.

Anzaldua describes the many languages that a complex heterogeneous people speak, including but not limited to: standard English, working class and slang English, standard Spanish, standard Mexican-Spanish, North American Spanish dialect, Chicano Spanish (Texas, New Mexico, California with regional variations), Tex-Mex, and Pachuco (called calo).<sup>25</sup> In spite of the gift of so many languages and dialects,

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<sup>24</sup>Anzaldua, G. (1999). *Borderlands La Frontera The new mestiza* (2nd edn., p. 81). San Francisco: Aunt Lute.

<sup>25</sup>Anzaldua (1999, p. 77).

Somos los del español deficiente. We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic mestizaje, the subject of your burla. Because we speak with many tongues of fire we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally and linguistically somos huerfanos—we speak and orphan tongue.<sup>26</sup>

The critical need to fund adult ESL programs has been made by various reports cited in this chapter. In addition even the immigrants from the last century understood that in order for adult ESL programs to be effective they need to connect to the daily-lived reality of the person. Teaching isolated vocabulary will not benefit the navigation of a person's world.

The pedagogy needs to be critical, understandable, and relatable. Paulo Freire<sup>27</sup> understood all of this and cautioned against the “banking model” of education as if lecture, drill, and depositing information would make a difference in anyone's life. (How bored were you during talking heads lectures and boring power point presentations?) Freire called for problem posing. Freire called for conscientization (consciousness raising) so that learners can both “read the word and the world.” The adult learner is quite motivated so the teacher needs to include active participation and infuse the material with the needs of the learner. The student can be the teacher and the teacher can be the student. This liberatory pedagogy will differ if your students are migrant farmers, city dwellers, have families, etc. What needs to be learned? Do you know how to shop at the supermarket? Do you know how to defend your legal rights? Can you explain to the landlord your very specific needs? How will you deal with a parent–teacher school meetings? How will you present yourself for a job interview? How can you prepare yourself to lead the group? What kinds of paperwork do you need to understand? How do you access help when you need to? What should you do if you are in danger—what are your fears?

Taking time to know each other as human beings is important. My students brought pictures of their families/their childhoods/or special memories. We created a temporary collage on the table as we viewed the images and talked to each other. You begin to learn about others and about yourself. The mirror turns in both directions. Ultimately we can turn the mirror on the community and the nation. The revelations of childhood poverty were staggering and almost universal. The closely knit Latina/o family with responsible feelings for your family and the community were quite evident as well. Siblings caring for each other in loving, compassionate ways. Accepting each other and gaining deeper understanding was a beautiful gift.

Finding out what your group needs is crucial. Gaining trust will be upper most on everyone's mind. Be genuine, be real, be professional. Respect, dialog, listen, design projects, implement projects, review, write and read together, turn into the most dynamic love filled pedagogue/learner/group you know!

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<sup>26</sup>Anzaldúa (1999, p. 80).

<sup>27</sup>Freire, P. (1985).

## Chapter 10

# El Espacio Sagrado/Las Mestizas

*I didn't cross the border, the border crossed me.*<sup>1</sup>

My Latina/o students and I are seated at a cafe in Austin discussing our reading of the historically significant work by Gloria Anzaldua (1999) entitled, “Borderlands La Frontera: The new meztiza.” We have read and re-read this work because it paints a feminist theoretical lens that my students and I have found revealing, fascinating, instructive, and relatable in our dialogic work. The piece does not limit itself to the geographic location of the US–Mexico border (“an unnatural border”) as it describes a genealogy of a hybrid peoples with multiple identities, “the new mestiza.”

To live in the Borderlands means you  
are neither hispana india negra espanola  
ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half breed  
caught in the crossfire between camps  
while carrying all five races on your back  
not knowing which side to turn to, run from;

....

To survive in the Borderlands  
you must live sin fronteras  
be a crossroads<sup>2</sup>

Like Leslie Mormon Silko,<sup>3</sup> Anzaldua’s work takes on a circular/serpentine narrative. In Anzaldua’s section on “autohistoria” she reconfigures the affinity toward La Virgen de Guadalupe to the Aztec divine mother, Coatlicue.<sup>4</sup>

My chicana identity is grounded in the Indian woman’s history of resistance. . . .

I am a turtle, wherever I go I carry ‘home’ on my  
Back. . . .

I abhor some of my culture’s ways, how it cripples its women  
. . . lowly burras bearing humility with dignity. . . .

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<sup>1</sup>From song “Somos Mas Americanos” by Los Tigres del Norte.

<sup>2</sup>Anzaldua, B. (1999). *Borderlands. La Frontera. The new mestiza* (pp. 216–217). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

<sup>3</sup>Silko, L. M. (1993). *Yellow woman*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

<sup>4</sup>Coatlicue image from [www.jaguarmovement.org](http://www.jaguarmovement.org)



makes macho caricatures of its men.<sup>5</sup>  
 What I want is... is a new culture-una cultura mestiza<sup>6</sup>

Anzaldúa goes on to describe how the most potent religious and cultural figure of la Virgen de Guadalupe has become an integral part of the ethnic identity, has also encouraged docility, shame, and long-suffering attitudes. Coatlicue is the goddess of life and death, is the incarnation of the cosmic processes, and she represents a third perspective.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

I first saw the statue. . . headless ‘monster’. . . twin rattlesnakes . . . symbolizing earth-bound character of human life. . . . Hanging from her neck is a necklace of open hands alternating with human hearts. The hands symbolize the act of giving life; the hearts, the pain of Mother Earth giving birth to all her children, as well as the pain that humans suffer through out life in their hard struggle for existence. . . the skulls symbolize life and death together as parts of one process.<sup>7</sup>

The contradictory nature and strength of the goddess helped Anzaldua to explore the inner spiritual elements of herself as she came to feel “completa.” The symbolism takes on new meanings for those who have been taught to be ever so docile that there is an Aztec inheritance symbolizing dynamic activity, a godmother greater power, and a collective tearing at the colonized self.

As my students and I, continue our conversation at the cafe, the proprietor notices us and what we are reading. She joins us at our table and asks if she can relate her experiences with Anzaldua since she knew her when she was a student at the nearby university. This was truly a gift for us. What she shared, however, was not what we were envisioning. She told us how Gloria struggled at the university and struggled to survive on a daily basis. Finding food was part of the daily-lived reality. According to her narrative, the “cabrones” (expletive) at the “nearby institution” refused to accept her doctoral work. So she never completed her final degree. I wonder if Gloria is smiling or outraged since the University of Texas, Austin holds most of her manuscripts in their library. Perhaps a post-humous degree is in order with a written bilingual apology to her and to the local community from the “nearby institution?”

We returned to our class meetings, readings, dialog, discussion, arguments, etc. We never forgot our time together and realized that we needed to begin to offer a Chicana course. Our university offered Chicano studies but the women are often left out of the equation (historically this is the same as during the early Chicano movement). The students asked me to propose such a course which I did and was honored to teach with some of the same and new students.

Our Chicana course involved two semesters of learning, reading, working, meeting outside of class, working on community projects, and searching for a new theory. We wrote a piece that was published.<sup>8</sup>

We were guided by Anzaldua’s call for new theories,

Necesitamos teorías  
that will rewrite history using race, class, gender  
and ethnicity as categories of analysis,  
theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries-  
new kinds of theories  
with new theorizing methods.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>8</sup>Soto, L. D., Cervantes-Soon, C., Villarreal, E., & Campos, E. (2009). Harvard Educational Review, entitled The Xicana Sacred Space: A communal circle of compromise for educational researchers (pp. 755–779).

<sup>9</sup>Anzaldua (1999, p. xxv).

Our initial search was for a participatory action project that would allow us to involve ourselves with the local community. We had many choices but we began to realize that we needed a feminist lens for our project. Eventually, we realized that our identities and perceptions were leading us directly to a Chicana lens. We explored several scholars that related to our “cause.” Freire’s<sup>10</sup> work helped us by viewing his concepts of concientization (consciousness raising). The ability to “read the word and the world” helped us to understand that we needed a non-Western, non-European perspective, and a third space. We then began to pursue what we could identify with our own daily-lived realities. Our decision was to rely on a Xicana participatory action project that would include elements of Anzaldua’s “facultad,” Delgado Bernal’s “intuition,” Harding’s “standpoint epistemology,” and Sandoval’s “oppositional consciousness.”<sup>11</sup> In our search through dialog and testimonies we realized that we had in fact become our own project. The identity discussions became heart felt since they called into question gender issues and individual inclusion/exclusion issues. Our group seemed to be falling apart as questions (that I can recall) arose: Should males be allowed to be Xicanas? Should our Puerto Rican professor be teaching this course on Xicanas? I am not a Chicana and never will be because I am pure Mexican. I am a male but I support feminist issues, my wife is Latina. My whole life is based upon working with my people. You can imagine the hurt, the political posturing, the soothing rhetoric, and the total emotionality!

Several times we met outside of class so that a social environment seemed to sharpen our focus (or perhaps was it the great snacks?). Faculty asked me, “You have students who want to meet outside of class?” Actually it was not so simple. At least two students were so angered that they barely participated even inside our class. I remember meeting separately with one student who turned in dirty crumpled pieces of paper with very little writing on them as her assignments. She did not act like a graduate student. When I met with her at the cafeteria she broke down, cried, and I know that she hates me to this day. What I tried to impress upon her was the importance of having been chosen for this unique program that only admits a few students. I only hope my *consejo* made some positive difference in her life.

Most of our group began to design a *bricolage* and a third space where we were seeing each others’ humanity and becoming allies. We were discussing at a deeper level viewing all kinds of ramifications and possibilities. I think it was one of our male colleagues (Emmet was it you?) who brought up the idea of a “sacred space” to the table. We seemed to breath in the term “sacred space” as we began to realize what we created and the possibilities it could have for other scholars. We felt we had answered Anzaldua’s call on a variety of levels. I can tell you that we will never forget each other and our unique experience. We have presented our ideas at both a state and national research conference. In many ways we came closer to our dreams pace of social justice and equity.

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<sup>10</sup>Freire, P. (1985).

<sup>11</sup>Soto et al. (2009).

Anzaldúa's<sup>12</sup> work is not only historically significant, but also has inspired scholars in various fields and from various theoretical lenses. Her work is calling for a new consciousness. Jose Vasconcelos, the Mexican philosopher who proposed an inclusive cosmic race (la raza cosmica), a fifth race that embraces the four races of the world (vs. the pure Aryan views), seems to have influenced Gloria's poem entitled,

Una lucha de fronteras/A struggle of borders  
Because I, a mestiza,  
continually walk out of one culture  
and into another,  
because I am in all cultures at the same time,  
alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,  
me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.  
Estoy norteadada por todas las voces que me hablan  
simultaneamente.<sup>13</sup>

Anzaldúa felt that the work of the mestiza consciousness was to "heal the split" of races, gender, culture, languages, and thoughts by calling for a massive uprooting of dualistic thinking and collective consciousness leading us to a space of "hope, that will bring us to the end of rape, violence and war."<sup>14</sup>

Gloria also called for allies from the white sector of our nation. Asking for understanding since we have been looked upon as less than human, that lands have been stolen, as has self-respect. She called for public restitution and referred to "the mask of contempt." She added, "the dominant white culture is killing us slowly with its ignorance . . . . Ignorance splits people . . . . A misinformed people is a subjugated people."<sup>15</sup>

The healing that she calls for is far reaching and includes race, gender, culture, and languages. Her message is filled with hope.

A mapping of consciousness that offers an alternative view of the "dominant social order" which may or may not be specifically feminist is offered by Chela Sandoval (1991). In her theory and method of oppositional consciousness in the post-modern world, she charts a topography of consciousness that "demonstrates hegemonic feminist political strategies to be expressions of the forms of oppositional consciousness that were utilized also by profoundly varying subordinated constituencies under earlier modes of capitalist production . . . . This theory and method can gather up modes of ideology-praxis represented within previous liberation movements into a fifth, differential, and post-modern paradigm."<sup>16</sup>

The five ideological forms presented by Sandoval include the following:

<sup>12</sup>Anzaldúa, G. (1999).

<sup>13</sup>Anzaldúa, G. (1999, p. 99).

<sup>14</sup>Anzaldúa, G. (1999, p. 102).

<sup>15</sup>Anzaldúa, G. (1999, p. 108).

<sup>16</sup>Sandoval, C. (1991). *Methodology of the oppressed* (pp. 54–59). Minneapolis, MN. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.



- (a) The equal-rights form constitutes a call for civil rights on the philosophy that all humans are created equal, for example, Lulac, Martin Luther King, NOW, “liberal feminism.”
- (b) The revolutionary form calls for a radical transformation that moves beyond all domination/subordination power models, for example, American Indian Movement, Brown Berets, Black Panther Party, US–Marxists, and social feminists.
- (c) The supremacist form asserts their differences and claim a higher-evolutionary level, for example, Klu Klux Klan, Nazis.
- (d) The separatist form seeks complete separation from the dominant social order, for example, Azlatan and Amazon Nation.
- (e) The fifth mode is the differential form of consciousness and social movement—this what Anzaldua called “weaving between and among” oppositional ideologies. Sandoval compares this mode to the “clutch” in an automobile (non-automatic) that allows the driver to choose, engage, disengage gears for the transmission of power. This form depends on the agency that is self-consciously mobilized in order to secure influence.

Sandoval goes on to explain that the US third-world feminist movement (1970s–1980s) shattered the construction of any one ideology by demanding new subjectivity, and political revisions by posting a tactical subjectivity with a capacity to re-center, decenter forms of power. Barbara Smith indicated that this would “alter life as we know it” Merle Woo noted that US third-world feminism “does not support repression, hatred, exploitation, and isolation . . . (is a) human and beautiful framework . . . created in community, bonded not of color, sex, class, but by love and the common goal for the liberation of the mind, heart and spirit.”<sup>17</sup>

Sandoval’s differential consciousness calls for the end of domination with a praxis that understands the technology of power that ensures a commitment to egalitarian social relations. She views the transnational capitalist multinational interests as providing an opportunity for a call for a new decolonizing global terrain and a psychic terrain that can unite across borders into new post-empire alliances. She envisions the “methodology of the oppressed” to be able to interest the social imagination for the equal distribution of power by calling on the “physics of love.”

Love as a social movement is enacted by revolutionary, mobile, and global coalitions of citizen-activists who are allied through the apparatus of emancipation.<sup>18</sup>

El espacio sagrado/the sacred space will take as many shapes as there are groups. This is a decolonizing opportunity where you can Share testimonios in safe space where trust and honesty prevail. You can create honest feminist action research projects where you act as a facilitator and allow the organic process to unfold so

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<sup>17</sup>Cited in Sandoval (pp. 60–61).

<sup>18</sup>p. 183.

that healing can begin. You can initiate and implement liberatory and emancipatory projects to better the conditions around you. You can rely on a dialogic space of respect. In our case<sup>19</sup> we became our own project as we realized that there was so much that we needed to learn, to heal, to discuss, to share. Future projects can build a solid base of trust, honesty, and respect and find what needs to evolve? What needs to improve? What needs to be addressed? What needs to change? Who stands to benefit? Think in terms of community, solidarity, decolonization of the mind, and healing.

Decolonization of our own minds is a huge project all by itself. This can take a lifetime. Healing the many wounds from colonizers who have made us feel as if we are in their own private cage. For too long the colonizer has imposed their view of the world. They have convinced us that their inventions, their ideas of superiority, their dualistic way of thinking, their willingness to disclaim our humanity, their willingness to perpetuate extreme forms of poverty, their willingness to impose repressive regimes, their disregard for our cultural and linguistic gifts, their willingness to mistreat us with both macro- and micro-aggressions, their ability to mistreat our children and our grandchildren with miseducation, and their willingness to marginalize us regardless of our station in life. There is nothing to admire about the colonizers' mean spirited culture. Their imperializing, capitalist, patriarchal, arrogant ways are not for us.

We are suggesting a new vision, a sacred vision, a vision filled with hope and possibility. Our children and grandchildren can grow up confident and healthy understanding the ways of their home language and home culture. They can learn from their peers about their home languages and cultures. We can create las nuevas mestizas within our sacred spaces filled with love and compassion. We can ensure that we do everything possible to maintain children's best interest because we love them so. We already know that our child-rearing practices far surpass the colonizer's cold, distant, mean spirited, objectifying, abusive, punishing culture. The love we have for our children and our families is untouchable and sacred.

Remember that you are not alone now, you have your Xicana allies. Your community and you can reach the space for social justice and healing. It will take time . . . but we will get there. We can enhance this democratic sphere so that all of our children will live in a world filled with peace, hope, and love and possibility. If immigrant Latina/o children can teach us about altruism and compassion . . . then we need to internalize that lesson. We need to be better than the colonizer. It is time to assume our agency. As sensitive and compassionate beings we have to say, *Basta!Basta ya!*

Dr. Martin Luther King<sup>20</sup> as you know, my dear reader, advocated non-violence. He has inspired me many times and I would like to share part of a sermon he wrote, entitled, "Loving your enemy" . . . .

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<sup>19</sup>Soto et al.

<sup>20</sup>King, M. L., Jr. (1957). *Loving your enemies*. Written from the Birmingham jail and delivered at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

To our most bitter opponents we say:

We will match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We shall meet your physical force with soul force. Do us what you will and we will continue to love you. We cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws, because noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. Throw us in jail, and shall still love you. Bomb our homes and threaten our children, and we shall still love you. Send you hooded perpetrators of violence into our community at the midnight hour and beat us and leave us half dead, and we shall still love you. But be ye assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer. One day we shall win freedom, but not only for ourselves. We shall so appeal to your heart and conscience that we shall win you in the process, and our victory will be a double victory.

Love is the most durable power in the world.

# Chapter 11

## Pedagogy of the Immigrant/Conclusions

*You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt<sup>1</sup>*

President Obama seems to be gaining evangelical allies at a time when immigration reforms seem almost impossible.<sup>2</sup> Pastors are predicting that a key to the growth of evangelical churches and conservative groups is the Latino/a population.

Reverend Land indicated,

...you don't get a lot of Hispanics in your coalition by engaging in anti-Hispanic anti-immigration rhetoric.



<sup>1</sup><http://dwellinthewordpress.com> (2009).

<sup>2</sup>Goldstein, L. (2010, July 18). Obama gains evangelical allies on immigration. *New York Times*.

The political daily-lived reality for immigrants has consisted of being stereotyped, demonized, and undervalued by communities who have often placed a welcome mat at a time of economic gain and then taken up the mat as if these are just disposable people.<sup>3</sup> As the global economic barons wave their political powers they are also blinded to the very people who support the economy on their backs. Have you seen the economic winners working these jobs as housekeepers, in the factories, in the fields, on the construction sites . . . or are they the ones asking for the taxpayer bail outs? How privileged industries disregard ethics is evidenced not only in the maquiladoras of Mexico, but in the farms in Iowa that cannot grow their own food due to the Monsanto's of the world.

Imagine living with so much poverty and hunger that you take your life in your own hands over dangerous desert land thinking about the welfare of your family. I don't want to say that all are innocent, in light of the escalating drug violence, but we can see (even the border patrol) how most desire jobs, desire survival, want to help their families. Imagine being so destitute that you apply for a job in a Juarez maquiladora knowing that violence is an everyday occurrence.

The learners and children continue to be a concern when draconian measures are perpetrated such as incarceration and separation of families. When did we become so dehumanized that we disregard even international human rights laws?

Within capitalist patriarchal ideology, there is no place for the sensitive human being who is willing to transform the world . . . each member of the collective taking responsibility for her/his contradictions within the collective, willing to grapple with the question, "Who am I exploiting?"<sup>4</sup>

I have asked my students to reveal a time when they were oppressed and a time when they oppressed someone else. It is usually easy to remember the injustices that you have experienced but it seems to take more time to reflect and look inside ourselves to our own behaviors. For some of us this can be a life-long process but it may be this self-examination that will lead us to a greater understanding.

Crossers of la frontera occupy differing discursive and social positions but have their destinies linked and shared. Los Aztecas del norte<sup>5</sup> is considered the largest nation/tribe in the United States today. In linking and sharing destinies, Anzaldua<sup>6</sup> speaks to la mujer indocumentada (the undocumented woman) and shares,

I walk through the hole in the fence  
to the other side.  
Under the fingers I feel the gritty wire  
rusted by 139 years  
of the salty breath of the sea.

. . .

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<sup>3</sup>Hamman, E. (2003). *The educational welcome of Latinos in the new south*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

<sup>4</sup>Perez, E. (1991). Sexuality and discourse. Notes from a Chicana survivor. In C. Trujillo (Ed.), *Chicana lesbians: The girls our mothers warned us about* (p. 173). Barkley, CA: Third Woman Press.

<sup>5</sup>Cited in Anzaldua, G. (1999). *Borderlands la frontera* (p. 23). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

1,950 mile-long open wound  
 dividing a pueblo, a culture,  
 running down the length of my body,  
 staking fence rods in my flesh,  
     splits me  
     me raja me raja  
     ...  
 This land was Mexican once,  
     was Indian always  
     and is  
 And will be again.

The notion of a wound, *una herida abierta*, is a bleeding, crying, devastated land creating a third space, a third culture, the borderlands. The social herstory/history has demonstrated a daily-lived oppression and a new woundology where working women and working men bear the burden of a schizophrenic capitalist system that at once wants your labor and at once rejects you as a human being.

Armando Rendon's, "Chicano Manifesto"<sup>7</sup> includes the "minority and dominant white group" as victims of this "culture" when he states, "... America has yet to develop a culture worth emulating and passing on to posterity ... The North American culture is not worth copying; it is destructive of personal dignity; is callous, vindictive, arrogant, militaristic, self-deceiving, and greedy ... it is a cultural cesspool and a social and spiritual vacuum for the Chicano."

Coco Fusco<sup>8</sup> along with her colleague Guillermo Gomez-Pena<sup>9</sup> put together a performance entitled the "Couple in the Cage." They traveled to several museums and countries around the world with their display of an "undiscovered Ameridian culture" as a reverse ethnography. I have viewed this film several times with my students and it always reminds me of colonization. People of color seemed to identify with the situation while young children's reactions were the most humane. Skinheads in London attacked Gomez-Pena while teenagers in Madrid taunted the "Ameridians" and offered them beer cans filled with urine. In Madrid also children informed their teacher that the Ameridians looked just like the Arawak Indian figures in the wax museum across the street. In Sydney, the cage was placed very close to giant mechanized insects.

A few children yelled, "Mommy, Mommy, I don't want to see the bugs. I want to stay with the Mexicans!" while a Pueblo elder from Arizona stated with tears in his eyes, "I see the faces of my grandchildren in that cage."<sup>10</sup>

The fascination that the colonizer has with otherness is evidenced in Museums all over the world. Thousands of Native American ancestral bones including decapitated heads and other body parts are kept in the Smithsonian. In Barcelona, a stuffed

<sup>7</sup>Rendon, A. (1971). *Chicano Manifesto* (p. 177). New York: Collier Books.

<sup>8</sup>Fusco, C. (1995). *English is broken here. Notes on the cultural fusion in the Americas*. New York City: The New Press.

<sup>9</sup>Heredia, P. Director. (1997). *Couple in the Cage*.

<sup>10</sup>Fusco (1995, p. 52).

Pygmy man called the attention of a visiting delegation who filed a formal complaint but the Catalonian people indicated that they had a right to “their own black man.” Julia Pastrana, a Mexican woman with a beard was exhibited in Europe until she died but her body is still available for scientific research.<sup>11</sup> More recently in our country we have learned about the “Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks,”<sup>12</sup> a woman who’s cells were taken without her consent and has created a multi-million dollar medical industry.

Why are we so surprised when this is the country where a judge can find a woman to be an unfit parent for speaking a language other than English to her child.<sup>13</sup> The judge ascribing to an English-only policy for termination of parental rights did not understand that the mother spoke neither English nor Spanish but Misteco, a dialect spoken in parts of Mexico. Judge Tatum (Tennessee) has ordered similar English-only mandates in three to five other cases.

In the Mississippi Gulf, a mother from southern Oaxaca (a poverty prevalent area) found work at a Chinese restaurant in order to send money back to her family. Her language, Chatino, was discovered when she was giving birth. The hospital called the Department of Human Services and insisted that she was an “unfit mother.” The hospital claimed that she “placed her unborn child in danger and will place the baby in danger in the future.”<sup>14</sup>

There are certainly lots of ways to view immigration and its complexities. The children we interviewed referred us to Christopher Columbus as the responsible one for all of our contemporary immigration challenges.

Eduardo Galeano has his take on the matter,

The invaders called the original Americans idolaters because they believed that nature is sacred and that we are the brothers and sisters of all those with feet, paws, wings, or roots.

And they called them savages. But they were not wrong about this. The Indians were such savages that they ignored the fact that they had to obtain a visa, a certificate of good behavior, and a work permit from Columbus, Cabral, Cortés, Alvarado, Pizarro, and the pilgrims of the Mayflower<sup>15</sup>

We are calling for decolonizing of our minds. We are ridding ourselves of the colonizers’ ways. We are ridding ourselves of cognitive imperialism. We are calling for a return of our lands, our cultures, and our languages. Providing amnesty to immigrants. We are calling for restitution.

“No se raje mi prietita,  
aprietese la faja aguantese,

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<sup>11</sup>Fusco (p. 49).

<sup>12</sup>Skloot, R. (2009). *The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks*. New York: Random House.

<sup>13</sup>Mielczarek, N. (2005). Judge insists Mexican mother must learn English, Child Custody Case. Retrieved from <http://www.commongroundcommonsense.org>

<sup>14</sup>Padgett, T. (2009). Can a mother lose her child because she doesn’t speak English? Time in partnership with CNN.

<sup>15</sup>Galeano, E. (2007). The curse of Columbus. The progressive. Retrieved from <http://www.progressive.org>

Su linaje es antguisimo,  
sus raices como las de los mesquites,  
bien plantados, horadando bajo tierra  
a esa corriente, el alma de tierra madre-  
tu origen.<sup>16</sup>

We are traveling toward concientization, resistance, educational equity, and transformative praxis. A new vision of education needs to include our version of the world, our peoples' version of the world, a Xicana critical pedagogy embedded in the curriculum, schools, and teacher education.

Don't give up mi prietita  
tighten your belt, endure  
Your lineage is ancient,  
your roots like those of mesquite  
firmly planted, digging underground  
toward the current, the soul of tierra madre-  
your origin.<sup>17</sup>

We are implementing a healing of the herida. The wound left by the colonizers ability to steal lands and turn the original peoples into a minority. The imaginary border created by the colonizer needs to be healed to restore our brothers and our sisters to their rightful birthright. We are healing the pain, el dolor of separation.

As we create sacred spaces we understand that there are no fixed templates. We will need to explore our decolonized world with a humanitarian perspective. Our goals will include affording human beings compassion, education, health, descent housing, peaceful environments. We will prevail. We will be honest and forthright. The earth will respond to a brave new mestiza-world with anti-racist children. We will respond with kindness and respect.

A transformative education will include liberation and emancipation where diversity is the norm. In solidarity we will build our new world in the fourth world filled with las nuevas mestizas y los nuevos mestizos.

We will ask for the reparations leading to self-determination. We will create a third space for our border herida as an estado libre. This fourth world border will include freedom and human rights. Our new flag will honor los aztecas, los indigenos, los mejicanos-americanos, los Puerto Riquenos, los Cubanos, los chicanos, las Xicanas, los Dominicanos, los africanos-americanos, las nuevas mestizas y mestizos, y todas las minorias que quieren estar con nosotras/os.

Las escuelas will teach the herstories/histories of our ancestors. We will implement pro-active projects. The schools will focus on our languages and our cultures. We are creating a new philosophy reflecting our vision based upon our family traditions, or responsibilities for each other, and our ability to liberate our children and grandchildren from the oppressor.

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<sup>16</sup>Anzaldúa, G. (1999, pp. 222–225).

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.



This will take time as Poka Laenui<sup>18</sup> has written. The process of decolonization has phases that do not necessarily have clear demarcations. The first phase:

Rediscovery and recovery—This is the time to set the foundation. We have suffered and struggled for so long under the colonizers gaze that we have internalized concepts of inferiority. Our recovery and rediscovery will vary from person to person and group to group. I can share my own experience with you, dear reader as a Xicana, Puertorriquena, Nuyorica, Abuelita.

“The history of the Puerto Rican people reveals a legacy of colonization, exploitation, and oppression both on the island and the mainland.”<sup>19</sup> Jesus Colon taught us how to respond, “. . . when one of those 200% Americans ask us why Puerto Ricans have to come to New York? We can answer: We come to take back our bells.”<sup>20</sup> The bells she refers to are the bells of the San Juan Cathedral that were stolen from Puerto Rico and later sold to New York City.

My own experience relates to the poet’s words,

Being Puertorriquena  
Americana  
Born in the Bronx, not really jibara  
Not really hablando bien..  
But yet, not gringa either.<sup>21</sup>

The indigenous Taino population in Puerto Rico was effectively killed with genocidal brutality by the Spanish conquistadores. Spaniards then imported African slaves and agricultural laborers from the Canary Islands.<sup>22</sup> What is also hard to forget was the massive and most effective campaign of mass female sterilization of Puerto Rican women. The program was initiated by the United States government, the medical community, the local government, and others. By 1965 1/3 of the island’s women were sterilized as this became a form of birth control.<sup>23</sup>

Women were visited at home or at the work place to make sure they were following the “suggestion” to sterilize. Many did not understand what “la operacion” meant.<sup>24</sup> These were women working at the factories, caring for their children, barely making a living, yet the greediness, insatiability of the capitalist system captured these humble women into its web. What reparation can you make for that?

<sup>18</sup>Laenui, P. (2000). The process of decolonization. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming indigenous voice and vision*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

<sup>19</sup>Soto, L. D. (1997). Boricuas in America: The struggle for identity, language and power. *The review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies*, 19(4), 349–365.

<sup>20</sup>Colon, J. (1995). How to know the Puerto Ricans. In R. Santiago (Ed.), *Boricuas: Influential Puerto Rican writings-an anthology*. New York: Ballentine Books.

<sup>21</sup>Esteves, S. M. (1980). *Yerba Buena*. New York: Greenfield Review.

<sup>22</sup>Gonzales, J. L., & Guinnes, G. (1993). *Puerto Rico the four storey country*. Princeton, NJ: Marcus Weiner Publishing Inc.

<sup>23</sup>Presser, H. B. (1980). Puerto Rico: Recent trends in fertility and sterilization. *Family Planning Perspectives* (March–April: v. 12 #2).

<sup>24</sup>Film-La Operacion. L. A. (1985). Film project.

Americans like to believe, that Americans are the ultimate humanitarians and concerned with human rights violations and equal rights for women across the globe, concerned for the 'less fortunate' people. This is simply not true. The U.S. is not concerned for the welfare of impoverished people, or their rights, health or economic status. They are concerned about their own monetary interests, political well being, and "safeguarding the superior white civilization from the crude and inferior..U.S. profits from Puerto Rico grew 500% . . .Oppression and exploitation of the Puerto Rican people has been common practice and the eugenic program has been the most serious extension of US policy toward Puerto Rico."<sup>25</sup>

Para los que no sabian.

Para los Puertorriquenos another lasting pain has also been the recovery of the island language and heritage. Having traveled through genocide via sterilization and educational colonization as a result of the disrobing and mutilation have endured imperialistic rule. The raja/the wound that we face is the idea of "los de aqui" y "los the alla." The result of a migratory process and colonial exploitation has meant that mapping an authentic identity and the "borderization of identity" is especially crucial for our children and grandchildren.

A border identity is not simply an identity that is  
anticapitalist and counterhegemonic,  
but is also critically utopian.

It is an identity that transforms the burden of knowledge into a  
scandal of hope.<sup>26</sup>

Mourning is an outgrowth of the first phase as we begin to lament our victimization. A time for mourning is a time for reflection where anger and frustration begin to bubble up inside your veins. You feel a justified sense of violation. We will not remain stuck in this victimization attitude because we need to move on. Let's leave the pain behind (without forgetting) but in order to envision our new world.

Dreaming is crucial for decolonization. We will explore all of the possibilities. We will brainstorm, we will share our vision, we will dialog, and we will come up with our daring plan. What elements of our culture are crucial? This is an incubation period which needs the gift of time to develop. For decolonization to occur we will need to reevaluate the political, social, economic, judicial, educational, health, etc., policies. We do not want to mimic the colonizer but rather integrate all of our aspirations, or own vision. Patience will need to be the order of the day if we want to seriously proceed toward sovereignty. But we have allies that have come before us, for example, the Maori of New Zealand and Hawaiians; who can provide consejos for this journey.

Commitment is the phase where the voices come together. This may appear impossible after all the dreaming we have been doing, but it is necessary. We can call for the voices. The Hawaii peoples called for a convention to create a founding

<sup>25</sup>Big Mama Rag. (1975, p. 3) cited in Hoerlein, S. Female Sterilization in Puerto Rico. clem.msdu.edu

<sup>26</sup>McLaren, P. (1994). White terror and oppositional agency: Towards a critical multiculturalism. In D. T. Goldberg (Ed.), *Multiculturalism: A critical reader*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

document.<sup>27</sup> The legislature and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs helped with funding in order to conduct the vote.

Action-reaching consensus is the goal. Laenui,<sup>28</sup> describing the Hawaii situation calls for action beyond what has historically been done to achieve independence. The “new weapons” or methods for executing commitment include technological ones such as the fax machine, the computer, television, radio, newspaper. In addition, speaking before a national congress and the United Nations may be the modern way of reaching our goals. She states, “The process of colonization and decolonization deserves closer consideration in attempting to refashion societies. Otherwise, we may find that we are merely entrenching ourselves deeper in the systems, values, and controls put in place by the colonizer.”<sup>29</sup>

As we consider the ideas of liberation, restitution, amnesty, reclaiming, transformative pedagogy, and action we will find that a new generation will emerge. We will share the cultural elements that represent our ways of knowing, our ways of respecting, our ways of forgiving, our ways of loving.

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<sup>27</sup>Laenui, P. (2000). *The process of decolonization* (p. 157).

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

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