Journal of Leadership, Equity, and Research

Vol. 7 No. 2, 2021
Special Edition
Latina/o/x PreK-12 Education

ISSN: 2330-6459

JLER | Journal of Leadership, Equity, and Research
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FOREWORD: LATINX VOICES IN FOCUS

Mahmoud Suleiman
Editorial Director

The vision and mission of the Center for Leadership, Equity and Research (CLEAR) continues to provide a formidable platform for education and empowerment, especially for those whose voices have yet to be heard and heeded. As the cycles of intolerance and racism continue to take root around us, the role of CLEAR has become increasingly critical for social activism, anti-racism, and advocacy for the oppressed. In addition to its full agenda, CLEAR engages in various activities and functions to support equity, inclusion, and social justice. Research is also on the top of the Center's agenda.

The *Journal for Leadership, Equity, and Research (JLER)* has become one of the major tools to enhance our efforts as we march towards diversity, equity and inclusion. The solid track record of providing an avenue for researchers, practitioners, educators, leaders, and activists to share their voices and perspective has been a rewarding journey. In addition, the partnerships that have been forged with other various entities and institutions have enriched our agenda and expanded our outreach.

This special edition of the *Journal for Leadership, Equity, and Research (JLER)* is truly a milestone. It grew out of keen collaborative efforts between the Center for Leadership, Equity and Research (CLEAR), Latinx Research Center at Santa Clara University, and Pennsylvania State (Penn State) University along with Penn State's Center for the Study of Higher Education and University of Maryland's College of Education—all of which have intersecting agenda that calls for promoting diversity, equity, and social justice through research and leadership. This edition is truly special in many ways given the rich contributions of the authors and their insights and thought-provoking perspectives. The focus on pressing issues facing Latinx populations in the educational system dominates the overarching themes and frameworks for the edition. This is very timely and critical given that Latinas/os/xs groups, like many others, have long been shrouded with mystery, stereotyping, and misperception as well as being subjected to injustice, prejudice, and oppression. Despite the challenges Latinas/os/xs children and youth face daily, there is always hope given their resilience to overcome the burdens of their identity in a racist society. Their plight will never be in vein as their voices will guide those seeking to be free from the tentacles of the racist juggernauts around them.

Building on various conducive epistemologies, the authors of this special edition engage readers in profound ways that defy didacticism. While setting the stage for the overarching themes in this volume, Conchas, Murillo, Oseguera, and Rodriguez provide a thoughtful introduction that outlines the philosophical underpinnings for understanding the Latina/o/x students in PreK-12 schools. As they highlight key aspects of each piece throughout the issue, they concluded with a pragmatic appeal for policy makers to draw upon on *Listening to Latina/o/x Voices* by taking

necessary action steps to empower these students and provide more responsive and equitable opportunities that are conducive to their experiences and expectations.

Readers will find a variety of articles that involve timely issues and topics that are pertinent to Latinx student populations and their communities. They also gain a greater understanding about this unique group and their experiences that should be cultivated in learning and teaching situations. Like the previous and future editions of the JLER, the current collection of articles in this volume not only contributes to the existing body of literature in the field of equity, social justice and their related domains, but also enhances our engagement for the common vision and mission we are drafted to undertake regardless of our institutional affiliations.

Finally, on behalf of the JLER team, we are grateful to all partners for preparing this special issue as well as the contributors, reviewers, and everyone who assisted in the production of the edition.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL EDITION ON LATINA/O/X PREK-12 EDUCATION

Listening to Latina/o/x Voices: Maximizing Opportunities and Minimizing Obstacles in Distinct Educational Contexts

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The wrath of extreme racism, nativism, xenophobia, sexism, and homophobia in today's America is evident, particularly in PreK–12 schools and higher education institutions. Moreover, these interrelated structures of inequality have become even more palpable during these unprecedented times of the COVID-19 global pandemic where antiBlackness, racial injustice, xenophobia, homophobia, and overall political malaise have been heightened.

Yet it is these most heartrending experiences that can also empower the populace to maintain hope, resist inequality, and access resources to succeed academically. At the center of today's turbulent America are Latina/o/x students and communities, who, with the support of institutional resources, challenge inequity head-on and succeed despite systemic barriers. *Listening to Latina/o/x Voices* is a product of that pain and a pathway to propelling social justice in education forward.

The special edition on Latina/o/x education is a fortuitous labor of love between the Latinx Research Center at Santa Clara University, the Center for Leadership, Equity and Research (CLEAR), and the Pennsylvania State (Penn State) University with additional contributions from faculty affiliated with Penn State's Center for the Study of Higher Education and University of Maryland's College of Education. This collaborative vision between Sabrina Zirkel, Dean of the School of Education and Counseling Psychology at Santa Clara University; Ken Magdaleno, Executive Director of CLEAR; and Gilberto Q. Conchas, Wayne K. and Anita Woolfolk Hoy Endowed Professor of Educational Leadership at Penn State, reflects a platform to give voice to the voiceless through core research in educational equity and social justice. This special issue also represents a process of intergenerational mentorship and extends this notion of providing Latina/o/x voice to the manuscript authors included in this special issue as it was with intentionality to support early and mid-career scholars working to give voice to Latinas/os/xs.

Listening to Latina/o/x Voices embraces the overwhelming fact that Latinas/os/xs constitute an important and growing share of the U.S. school-age population (Contreras, 2011; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015; Rodriguez, 2017; Rodriguez, 2021). According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the number of Latina/o/x students in the nation's public schools nearly doubled from 1990 to 2006, accounting for 60% of the total growth in public school enrollment over that period (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). In 2016, approximately 17.8 million Latina/o/x students were enrolled in U.S. public schools, comprising about one in four public school students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The growth in the Latina/o/x student population is expected to continue, increasing 166 percent by 2050 (Fry & Gonzales, 2008); by 2050 there will be more school-age Latina/o/x children in U.S. schools than non-Latino white students.

Nevertheless, Latina/o/x students in the United States face a number of challenges. The persistent lack of access to resources for Latina/o/x students in public schools (Conchas & Acevedo, 2020) contributes to on-going limitations on college and career preparation, including college-level curriculum and college choices (Conchas, 2006; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Oseguera & Del Pilar, 2018). The problem of limited academic resources in schools that serve Latinas/os/xs extends to the availability of counseling services and, nationwide, the schools with the highest concentrations of Students of Color maintain, on average, ratios of one counselor to 1,056 and higher (McDonough, 2005). However, even with access to a counselor, counselors often track Latina/o students into non-college preparation courses (Oakes, 2008; Rodriguez & Oseguera, 2015).

Thus, it is no surprise that four in ten Latina/o/x students drop out by high school (Conchas & Vigil, 2012). Despite maintaining the lowest high school completion rates, about seven in ten Latinx students who complete high school enroll in U.S. colleges (Fry & Taylor, 2013). The 3.6 million Latinx students enrolled in U.S. colleges comprise 20 percent of all undergraduate students (Gramlich, 2017). Despite an increase in college enrollment rates, Latina/o students maintain the lowest four-year completion rates (Conchas, 2016; Fry & Taylor, 2013; Gramlich, 2017).

Although a considerable body of research demonstrates the mediating role of structural factors such as socioeconomic status, education, racism, social capital, and tracking in school success, there remains a tendency—in the private and public perception—to problematize the issue of school failure in terms of "cultural" factors such as beliefs and values (Conchas & Acevedo 2020). For instance, some suggest that Asian students achieve success in school because they work hard and are influenced by home cultures that stress and value education, while Black and Latina/o/x families transmit cultural norms that inhibit success (Conchas, 2006). This special issue on Latina/o/x education develops a more comprehensive understanding of school achievement by exploring *sociocultural* circumstances leading to the potential for the realization of social mobility among Latina/o/x students across the PreK-12 educational pipeline.

There are two aspects of this work that make it a significant contribution to understanding of this topic in the field. First, the articles in the special issue deal with Latina/o/x educational issues across PreK-12 educational contexts inside and outside of schools. Although most educational research has shown that students' educational experiences are interconnected in keys ways throughout the schooling years, most scholarship tends to focus solely on one time period– early childhood, elementary, middle school, or high school. Yet, to understand the challenges faced by Latina/o/x students generally, we must look at the issues holistically, starting in early childhood and examining both in-school and out-of-school processes. This special issue will combine a broad wealth of information across the Latina/o/x educational experience as it includes perspectives from

the young people themselves, the adults who seek to teach them, and school leaders working with Latina/o/x communities.

Second, this work will contextualize that experience within the historical, political, and contextual processes that have influenced and continue to play a role in the educational opportunity structures that Latina/o/x folks experience. Often, educational research tends to look at "what is" without significant consideration of the policy processes and decisions that have led to the status quo. This work includes this level of policy analysis and theoretical sophistication in order to understand not only "what is" but also how we got here. It is our contention that only by understanding the politics and rhetoric underlying the educational system's institutional structures can we begin to address the inequalities that exist within the system.

This special edition on Latina/o/x PreK-12 education brings together diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives, including empirical qualitative and quantitative manuscripts centering Latina/o/x voices, and concludes with a book review confronting everyday racism. Beginning with the theoretical contributions, **Gamez and Monreal** explore the educational implications of the different ways in which *Latinidad* is constructed in the New Latinx South using Latinx and Black geographies scholarship to analyze their own autoethnographic experiences. Paying particular attention to the academic success of Latino boys and concluding this section on theoretical perspectives, **Davila** proposes a fundamental interrogation and reimagination of educational structures using critical social theory and critical discourse studies.

Transitioning to the empirically driven research articles across the PreK-12 sector, **Bravo and Rodriguez-Mojica's** multiple-case study explores bilingual secondary pre-service teacher practices and the ways in which teachers are able to meet the needs of their Latina/o/x emergent bilingual high school students by delivering content area instruction in Spanish. Using statewide databases, **Balloffet and Téllez** conducted a quantitative study in order to analyze how Latina/o/x students fare in elementary Spanish/English programs offered by California charter schools. **Urrieta and colleagues** center Latina/o/x youth voices as they focus on virtual Latina/o/x youth empowerment, leadership, and activism using qualitative data from a study of Latina/o/x youth who participated in a Texas-based summer youth program. Drawing from a three-year case study at a public high school, **Villavicencio** interrogates the important role of school leadership in applying an advocacy approach and aspects of critical care to better serve Latina/o/x and immigrant students. **Arriaga and Rodriguez's** qualitative case study highlights the voices of undocumented youth with DACA in North Carolina, exploring how they navigate their identity, belonging, and decision-making in the context of community activism.

Finally, this special edition ends with **Velez's** review of Solórzano and Pérez Huber's *Racial Microaggressions: Using Critical Race Theory to Respond to Everyday Racism* which further unpacks the theme of voice in this volume.

Listening to Latina/o/x Voices will appeal to university-based scholars, students, and policy analysts at social research organizations. It is also intended for a broader audience, including those interested in social justice and education, such as school leaders and teachers. Advocates for low-income and minoritized groups will also find the research valuable, since the special issue will focus on the racial equity dimensions of schools and communities. Interest from different organizations and stakeholders underscores the potentially broad appeal of the research presented in the special edition.

We hope this special issue contributes to the much-needed change in education research to give voice to the most marginalized in communities and educational institutions and advance social justice approaches.

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Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

"WE HAVE THAT OPPORTUNITY NOW": BLACK AND LATINX GEOGRAPHIES, (LATINX) RACIALIZATION, AND "NEW LATINX SOUTH"

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ABSTRACT

The "New Latinx South" is a term used by a number of interdisciplinary scholars to describe recent demographic shifts in a region not traditionally home to large Latinx communities. While this scholarship often posits that examining the Latinx experience in regions of the South will shed light on developing processes of racialization, we argue that more specific attention needs to be paid to the construction of *Latinidad* in the "New Latinx South." More specifically, and applied to education, we ask what might be gained by interrogating constructions of *Latinidad* within school spaces in the South. In this conceptual article, we draw on Black and Latinx geographies scholarship to analyze our own (auto)ethnographic layered accounts about living, teaching, and researching in Maryland and South Carolina. We pay particular attention to how the script (and subject) of Latinx is relationally deployed to mark Latinx as both forever outside the South *and* as a tool to perpetuate deficit notions of Black students and communities. We hold that in interrogating these relationally racialized discourses we might highlight opportunities in newer spaces to build emergent infrastructures and systems towards more just educational outcomes for marginalized and minoritized youth while guarding against the tendency to unintentionally reproduce essentializing and marginalizing ideas of ethnoracial categorization.

Keywords: The New Latinx South, racialization, Latinx, anti-Blackness, Latinx education, (auto)ethnography

Introduction

Scholars have forwarded a number of different frameworks and descriptors to describe the changing demographics of Latinxs[1] across the United States, and more specifically the U.S. South. Among these monikers, the "New Latinx South"[2] has emerged as a central descriptor used by a number of interdisciplinary scholars to describe newer Latinx communities in a region not

traditionally home to such (Kochhar et al., 2005; Portes & Salas, 2015; Powell & Carrillo, 2019; Rodriguez, 2021). While recent scholarship often posits that examining the Latinx experience in the "New Latinx South" will shed light on developing processes of racialization and race relations, the focus typically favors temporal description, documentation, and demographics leaving aside more theoretical engagement with the diversity, complexity, and production of racialized Latinxs in daily (schooling) life in Southern spaces (Jones, 2019; Hamann & Harklau, 2015; Winders & Smith, 2012). We argue that more specific attention needs to be paid to the construction of *Latinidad* in the space(s) of the "New Latinx South." In other words, little research in/on the "New Latinx South" has fully grappled with the institutional construction and creation of *Latinidad* and what looking at these processes within the "New Latinx South" might reveal about broader processes of racialization within localized educational contexts. Thus, in this article we ask what might be gained by interrogating constructions of *Latinidad* within school spaces in the South.

Drawing on vignettes from our (auto)ethnographic material about living, teaching, and researching about *Latinidad* in Maryland and South Carolina, we posit the "New Latinx South" as a case to examine how national discourses, particularly regarding the category of Latinx as (always) immigrant, get laminated onto (extra)local contexts. Moreover, we pay particular attention to how the script (and subject) of Latinx as immigrant is relationally deployed to mark Latinx as both forever outside the South *and* as a tool to perpetuate deficit notions of Black students and communities. Recognizing that autoethnography often refers to a systematic approach to research and writing that "seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand the cultural experience" (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 1), we use the term *(auto)*ethnography here to highlight a crucial distinction. While we do focus on personal experiences grounded in particular cultural settings, we use these to primarily create "layered accounts" (Charmaz, 1983), where we analyze our experiences alongside our ethnographic data and critical texts to interrogate Latinx racialization in the "New Latinx South."

Given the explicitly spatialized descriptor of the "New Latinx South," and responding to calls from scholars who study the interplay between race and geography, we utilize these (auto)ethnographic layered accounts to examine how place, in particular localized educational contexts in the "New Latinx South," intersect with broader racial structures and discourses. We apply a Black and Latinx geographies lens to our reading and analysis of our experiences and ethnographic material in an effort to further nuance, complicate, and "(un/re)knot" the production of Latinx as a relationally made racial category. Through this exercise, we demonstrate how a twin focus on both the creative construction of *Latinidad* in reaction to often hostile Southern spaces *and* the deployment of racialized discourses that position *Latinidad* in relation to Blackness allow us to further explore questions about the borders between Black and Latinx and the creation of safe spaces for Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx youth. We hold that in interrogating these discourses and scripts through the lens of Latinx and Black geographies, we might highlight invisibilized opportunities and absences in the "New Latinx South" to build emergent infrastructures and systems, or "spaces of co-operation, stewardship, and social justice" (McKittrick & Woods, 2007, p. 6). These spaces of "co-operation, stewardship, and social justice" help us work towards more just educational outcomes for minoritized and marginalized students while guarding against the tendency to unintentionally reproduce essentializing and marginalizing ideas of ethnoracial categorization.

To achieve the following argument, we outline the conceptual article as follows. After this preceding introduction, rationale, and purpose, we describe our theoretical framework, rooted in Black and Latinx geographies. Not only does this theoretical framework offer a novel window into

educational scholarship in the "New Latinx South," it also provides a conceptual frame to examine tendencies to erase Black experience and space-making across literature that focuses on the so-called "Latinization" of Southern school spaces (Salas & Portes, 2017). To interrogate our argument empirically, we then turn to our ethnographic material and critical reflections about living, teaching, researching, and working in Southern public schools. In our analysis, we pay particular attention to moments in our work when *Latinidad* is relationally deployed by a variety of actors within the microspaces of Southern schools as both exception(al) to the South and also exemplar to perpetuate deficit notions of Black students, communities, and spaces.

This article concludes with a discussion of implications of our work on the "New Latinx South," principally that scholarship about *Latinidad* move away from broad, overarching, implicit, and relatively under examined descriptions of Latinxs. Additionally, this article begins a conversation about how teachers and teacher education scholars in the U.S. South can engage in generative dialogues that expose the destructive, spatialized (re)construction of race and racism *and* advance future spaces of possibility *where Latinidad* is not constructed vis-à-vis Blackness. As such, this paper is significant because, as indicated above, most scholarship about the "New Latinx South," especially in the interdisciplinary field of education, deploys broad, relatively uncomplicated descriptions of Latinx as a racial category. Furthermore, we suggest that such a move is significant because educational scholarship on the "New Latinx South" largely overlooks questions about anti-Blackness in relation to the construction of *Latinidad* in educational Southern spaces.

Conceptual Framework

Thinking through processes of the racialization of Latinxs with/in the "New Latinx South," we put particular emphasis on the construction of *Latinidad* in places and spaces across the U.S. South. More specifically, we examine how national discourses, particularly regarding Latinx and different categories of immigrant/ion, get laminated onto and relationally deployed into (extra)local Southern educational contexts like schools and classrooms. We are interested not only in understanding and complicating why, where, and by whom certain discourses about *Latinidad* gain prominence, but also how various constructions of *Latinidad* in Southern schools are used in relation to other racialized groups. For example, in writing and reflecting on our layered accounts, we began to question how student, teacher, and scholar calls for Latinx educational spaces, crucial to help counter restrictive and racist Southern (educational) spaces (Castillo-González, 2011; Powell & Carrillo, 2019; Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017; Monreal & McCorkle, 2020), may also call upon certain scripts and subjects of *Latinidad* to unintentionally perpetuate deficit notions of Black students and communities (Gamez, 2020a; 2020c).

Thus, important efforts aimed toward Latinx spatial inclusion in the "New Latinx South" benefit from attention to both the legacy, influence, and opportunities of Black and Latinx geographies. As such, our vignettes led us to draw upon scholarship that theorizes the relational production and process of space grounded in a critical, open, and imaginative understanding of the geographies of race as informed by both Latinx and Black geographies (Allen et al., 2019; Cahuas, 2019; McKittrick, 2006, 2011; McKittrick & Woods, 2007). Hence, we engage with theoretical literature that leans into the intersections and spaces of encounter between Black and Latinx geographies revealing both the "racialized workings of spatial violence" and the "refusal of commonsense codes that underwrite discrete racial and spatial categories" (McKittrick, 2011, p. 756, 758).

Turning first to Latinx geographies, the sub-discipline not only engages directly with the spaces and places of Latinx peoples, cultures, practices, and histories, but also applies a spatial reading to Latinx theorists and epistemologies. Towards the latter, Latinx geographers along with those interested in spatial thinking found, "Latinx studies offered intellectual nourishment to scholars hungering for an attention to the agency of Latinx communities alongside recognition of the violence they face" (Muñoz & Ybarra, 2019, para.1). In this move to spatialize Latinx thinking, Anzaldúa's (2012) conceptualization of borderlands has emerged as a leading source of Latinx geographic theorizing (Cahuas, 2019; Ramírez, 2019; Soja, 1996). Although a vast and malleable idea, Anzladúa (2012) describes borderlands as a "thin edge of barbwire" that splits, wounds, and produces home–they are "the lifeblood of two worlds merging...an undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants" (p. 25). As such, borderlands as a concept escapes the purely locational markers that divide U.S./Mexico by extending the border to meeting points where "physical, social, cultural and psychic boundaries are created that mark some as less than others" (Cahuas, 2019, para. 12).

Given the broader demographic and population shifts we outlined in the introduction, Latinx borderlands are always already being remade and extend deep into the United States (Gallo & Link, 2016). Reflecting on our own regional focus, Powell and Carrillo (2019) link an Anzaldúian understanding of borderlands to analyze the challenges and opportunities of Latinx growth in Southern school spaces. The researchers suggest a critical border pedagogy informed by teacher and student practices of straddling, translanguaging, and *testimonio* to create collective and geographic spaces that counter (present) histories of deleterious and racialized boundary making. Yet, while such spatialization of Latinx theory adds important insights into place-making in regions like the South by complexifying the notion of borderlands and problematizing ephemeral notions of Latinxs' "arrival/settling," we were struck by a relative "absence of Black life, thought and history" (Cahuas, 2019, para 25) across such engagements, especially when applied to the U.S. South. Thus, in line with Southern geographer Jamie Winders' (2005) words that, "the South has been *unthinkable* without its complement of 'race' (p. 686, emphasis original) and heeding Cahuas' (2019) challenge to "think more deeply about how engagement with Black studies and Black geographies in particular could enrich [our] analysis" (para. 4), we consider Black geographies as a crucial and missing link for a critical examination of the construction and/un(knotting) in the "New Latinx South."

Black geographies emerged as a field of inquiry for responding to geography's troubling history with regards to questions around race and Blackness (Hawthorne, 2019). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a thorough treatment of Black Geographies scholarship, three key themes cut across this work. First, Black Geographies scholarship centers the spatial knowledges and practices of Black diasporic communities in the production of space and place to counter analyses that render Black people as lacking geography. As McKittrick (2006) explains, "The relationship between black populations and geography...allows us to engage with a narrative that locates and draws on black histories and black subjects in order to make visible social lives which are often displaced, rendered ungeographic" (p. 29). Second, and related to the first theme, a Black Geographies framework foregrounds how Black subjects and Black life are not simply reducible to racism, violence, and death but are active agents in the production of space (McKittrick, 2006; McKittrick & Woods, 2007).

Yet, at the same time, and as the third theme highlights, Black Geographies scholarship tethers a focus on Black life and agency to the "sedimentations of racist histories in contemporary

landscapes" (Hawthorne, 2019, p. 7). Rooted in the Black Studies tradition, the plantation emerges as a central organizing principle and "provides the future through which contemporary racial geographies and violences make themselves known" (McKittrick, 2011, p. 950). Geographically, the slave plantation exists as a *spatial* and historical link that connects legalized Black servitude, gratuitous violence, and Black dispossession to present-day forms of capital accumulation, spatial organization, and racialization. In other words, Black Geographies scholarship rejects analyses that analytically separate racism, racialization, or race-making from place and space and from the production of past and future place and space. Linked to the plantation, space and place both reflects and (re)produces racial violence, racisms, and reifies anti-Blackness by, for example, positioning Blackness as perpetually "out of place" and placeless (Domosh, 2017; Hawthorne, 2019; Lipsitz, 2011). Given this latter point on the relationship between the plantation and a continued logic of racial-spatial violence, the South emerges as an important geographical site where questions about race and space, racial violence, and anti-Blackness acquire particular significance. Indeed, while acknowledging that depictions of the South are often exoticized and that narratives often juxtapose the region to the rest of the country, where a certain "racial progress' is imagined (Robinson, 2014), Black Geographies scholars also point to the importance of exploring Black experiences, and in particular, anti-Blackness and racial violence in Southern spaces specifically (Eaves, 2017; Williams, 2017).

However, and important to our understanding of anti-Blackness and its relation to the "New Latinx South" specifically, McKittrick (2011) argues that while past spatial and racial violence "has produced untidy historically present geographies," Black Geographies allow scholars to move away from deficit narratives and questions that replicate such racialized violence (p. 950). For in calling forth and upon the invisible and absent–the imaginative, open, resistant, and decolonial practices rooted in Black Geographies–we might "move away from territoriality, the normative practice of staking a claim to place...and [toward] place as the location of cooperation, stewardship, and social justice" (McKittrick & Woods, 2007, p. 6). In other words, a Black Geographies framework insists on conceptualizing present practices of racialized and spatialized exclusion and anti-Black violence without succumbing to a *fait accompli* determinism. Rather, the framework asks us to identify and expose the destructive (re)construction of race and racism *and* advance futures of possibility where geographies of inequality are challenged. As described above, a Latinx geographies framework insists on a similar challenge but, crucial to our own analysis, we are concerned with what is sacrificed and/or invisibilized in such a process--principally the tendency to erase Black experience and particular forms of rather covert anti-Black violence. Thus, as Cahuas (2019) argues, Latinx geographical thought must pay attention to the "*absences* of Black experiences and geographies" (para 25, emphasis ours). In the next section we apply these overlapping but interconnected frameworks of Black and Latinx geographies to our ethnographic vignettes and critical reflections about our experiences as researchers in the "New Latinx South."

(Auto)Ethnographic Layered Accounts

Our intention in this conceptual paper is to interrogate constructions and deployments of *Latinidad* in school spaces of the U.S. South in order to extend the conversation on racialization within educational studies of the "New Latinx South." We argue that entangling Black geographies into conceptualizations of *Latinidad* and Latinx spaces in the "New Latinx South" is a way to counter the risks of relationally outlining the Latinx subject vis-à-vis anti-Black discourse while also leaning into the transformative potentialities of Black spatial imaginations. As a way of both highlighting the need for such examinations of *Latinidad* and emphasizing the problematic

potential of rooting the creation of *Latinidad* in relational opposition to Blackness, we purposely draw from our own experiences in the form of (auto)ethnographic layered accounts. We situate our vignettes as *(auto)*ethnographic to highlight the fact we are reflecting on our individual, broadly ethnographic research projects in the South, and also our experiences living, teaching, researching, and working in Southern public schools.

In sum, our conceptual project draws on our collective layered accounts that use "vignettes, reflexivity, multiple voices, and introspection" and places them in conversation with Black and Latinx geographies scholarship (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 5). Through this process, we pay particular attention to how the script (and subject) of Latinx as immigrant is relationally deployed to mark Latinx as both forever outside Southern educational spaces *and* as a tool to perpetuate deficit notions of Black students, communities, and spaces. Thus, these layered accounts demonstrate the need for more nuanced conversations and conceptualization about *Latinidad* in the South.

Tim: Positionality Reflection

I moved from Los Angeles, California to Columbia, South Carolina in the summer of 2015. For the next four years I worked as a full-time middle school social studies teacher and took doctoral classes in Foundations of Education. Thus, I spent the vast majority of time working in, or at least thinking about, Southern educational spaces. Looking back, I wish I would have written a journal or notes about my perceptions about the South prior to my arrival as I had relatively little experience with the region outside textbooks and a few, short vacation-oriented trips. As such, I very much pictured spaces defined in stark binaries, White[3] and Black. While my time in the South provided many opportunities to evidence such an image, my own sixth-grade social studies classes eluded such dichotomies. My students were quite diverse, both in terms of socio-economic status and racial/ethnic identification. For example, my students included the children of visiting university faculty members from Asian and Latin American countries, wealthy White families with lake residences, and White, Black, and Latinx students living in subsidized housing. To the later point, I admit I was shocked that Latinx students were a growing population in my school and school district. Even as someone who took many Chicanx Studies courses in college, I simply had no prior knowledge of the growth and history of Latinx in the South (Guerrero, 2017; Monreal & Tirado, forthcoming; Weise, 2015).

Moreover, my arrival to South Carolina also coincided with the presidential campaign and eventual election of Donald Trump. Not only did I viscerally feel a palpable anger emanating from his discourse, I learned from Latinx communities and students about the material impact of local anti-Latinx policy and politicians (Arriaga, 2017; McCorkle & Cian, 2018; Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017 Rodriguez, 2020). At a micro level, I witnessed first-hand how district officials and coworkers advanced deficit notions, stereotypes, and inaccuracies about Latinx individuals and communities. Some examples included an administrator who continually, and purposely, addressed me in mock Spanish (Hill, 1993), numerous teachers who insisted that students needed citizen status to attend our school, and a policy that made guardians present driver's licenses to come to the school. Thus, I felt compelled to work against such injustices aimed at the larger Latinx community by trying to build accepting Latinx spaces for my students at school that focused on developing pride in being Latinx, in seeing the strengths of their families, communities, and cultures (Monreal, 2017, 2019; Rodriguez, Monreal, & Howard, 2018).

Ofrendas and Bóvedas

I begin with one particular instance when my social studies class built an *ofrenda (offering/altar)* for *Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)*. The goal was to publicly assert my own image of *Latinidad* so students felt safe in claiming ownership in the class and school (see Monreal, 2019). Somewhat surprising, the *ofrenda* seemed to resonate with my Black students at levels equal to or even higher than my Latinx students.

My Black students excitedly brought pictures of deceased aunties, close family members, and other important figures in their lives. As we placed their pictures on the *ofrenda*, my Black students proudly took pictures of the altar and eagerly shared stories of their loved ones. However, it wasn't until I read an article about the *Lukumí* practice of constructing *bóvedas*, or altars to the dead, (Brooks, 2020) that I connected Cahuas (2019) and McKittrick's (2006, 2011) theorizations of space to my own classroom project. *Lukumí*, or as many call it *santeria*, emerged from communities of enslaved West Africans in Cuba and Caribbean and the *bóveda* fuses Catholic and Latin American religiosity with West African ancestor worship (Brooks, 2020). Brooks (2020) writes, "Many black folks keep bóvedas and don't even recognize it...Connecting to the elders and the passed-on has strengthened black folks through the oppressions of enslavement and Jim Crow" (paras. 6,10). While I have no idea whether my own Black students connected the *ofrenda* with a *bóveda* (or even knew what one was), they had a keen sense that the class altar was a significant political act, a way to foreground Black communities in space-making processes.

In sharing their stories and producing space, my students disclosed a central component of Black geographies, one that I undoubtedly was trying to develop with my Latinx students–that "the racialized production of space is made possible in the explicit demarcations of the spaces of *les damnés* [their relatives and loved ones] as invisible/forgettable at the same time as the invisible/forgettable is producing space" (McKittrick & Woods, 2007, p. 4, emphasis original). Moreover, entangling the *ofrenda* with the *bóveda*–weaving Latinx and Black geographies–might have opened up the overlapping yet concealed geographies of enslavement and labor exploitation, the violent spatial projects that brought, and continue to bring, racialized bodies to the South along with their continual spatial struggles to imagine and make different spaces (McKittrick, 2006). In short, my own quest for developing the Latinx identity of my students and corresponding Latinx safe spaces for them left such opportunities unexplained as my practice "was devoid of Black spatial knowledges and struggles" (Cahuas, 2019, para. 18). I had failed to "directly grapple with Blackness, or Black worldviews and geographies" (Cahuas, 2019, para. 18), and thus, reflecting on the *ofrenda*, with the conceptual frame of Black Geographies, I see how my construction of *Latinidad* closed off potentialities and possibilities, how my attempts at constructing *Latinidad* in Southern spaces resulted in the creation of a site to be "dominated, enclosed, commodified, and segregated" (McKittrick & Woods, 2007, p. 6). Moving to my own research with Latinx teachers in South Carolina, I noticed a similar trend of invisibilizing the entanglement of Black and Latinx geographies in order to construct a certain categorization of *Latinidad* in opposition to Blackness.

Research with Latinx Teachers in South Carolina: "Good" Immigrants and Spatial (Re)Imaginations

Next, I reflect on my own research with Latinx teachers in South Carolina. Interested in understanding K-12 Latinx teacher experiences and subject formation within the spaces of the South, I completed a mixture of semi-structured interviews, photovoice, and ecomaps with 25 Latinx teachers in South Carolina from August 2019-January 2020. I also analyzed school

websites, teacher staff pages, and district publications like blogs and press releases to better understand how Latinx teachers constructed themselves vis-à-vis, and sometimes in concert with, how they were expected to be(come). Among many findings (see Monreal, 2020, 2021), in this vignette I highlight how teachers felt pressures to be a certain type of role model for their Latinx students and perform the role of a certain categorization of Latinx, that of cultural ambassador, for their non-Latinx students. In many cases, teachers found these roles to be a point of pride and of central importance to establishing safer spaces for Latinx students in their schools/classes. However, even as these teachers were steadfast in their desire to improve the daily lives of their Latinx students, it was clear that such actions were often tied up with deployments of *Latinidad* that relied on "good" immigrant scripts (Nagel & Ehrkamp, 2016; Patel, 2015; Patler & Gonzales, 2015; Rodriguez, 2018; Yukich, 2013), sometimes as a direct foil to their Black students.

In some cases, teachers in my research used their own family immigrant experiences to forward a "good immigrant" narrative where they hoped a specific deployment of *Latinidad* would connect with racially minoritized students and prove an example of hard working, upwardly mobile merit. For example, Kim, a high school business teacher, sought to use her grandfather's immigrant story from Cuba as a way to motivate, build solidarity, and show a positive example of "an American success story." Kim explained how, when, and where she claimed *Latinidad*:

> My school was 99.9% African-American...and so, to get through to the kids and get them to give me a chance...identifying as a Cuban instead of as a White Hispanic benefited me tremendously...I bring up that I am Hispanic and they seem to find some common ground...especially given what my family went through when they first came to the country and discrimination against Hispanics. It [family story] helps me drive home the importance of overcoming obstacles and of working hard if you don't like the position you are in then you gotta be the one to change it. (Interview, October, 2019)

At first glance, we see Kim use a *Latinidad* subjectivity to build "common ground" with her Black students and to create spaces of shared struggle and mutual respect. However, her discourse, couched in normative, individualistic, and exceptional logic, inadvertently forwards *Latinidad* vis-à-vis Blackness in her classroom space. In setting up her family as an exemplar, she contrasts *Latinidad* to Blackness; to be Latinx is to be a hard-working immigrant who takes advantage of opportunities, something her Black students can learn from. However, without attention to the historical legacies of racialized spatial organization, violence, and resistance, her use of *Latinidad* to create space is devoid of the potentialities of her Black student's geographies.

Somewhat similarly, Jenny, a high school Spanish teacher born in Colombia placed her own father as a model in contrast to her own Black students. In explaining her own family's journey to South Carolina, she said:

> My dad [born and educated in Colombia] was poor, but he cared about his education...and eventually became a physical therapist. And a lot of people tell me, "Jenny most people don't think like your dad. People think education sucks, I'm just going to go to work. College is nothing I can afford." So, the cycle keeps going, and I tried to break, I've tried to break it...I try to do pep talks with them [Black students]. I try to show them the world. Nothing. (Interview, September, 2019)

Although Jenny heeds implicit attention to larger spatial structural factors that influence the difficulty of completing, and even the efficacy of, a school education, she explicitly calls out individual effort as cause. Jenny not only holds her father as a model of individual perseverance,

but also sees herself as an individual intervener in their lives. The later point is especially important in thinking through *Latinidad* and space. Jenny's comment that she "tries to show them the world" works to (re)create her *Latinidad* by bringing her family's migration story into the local context of her classroom and community. Jenny sees herself as *the* space-maker even as her use of Latinx geographies as a blueprint for resilience minimizes if not invisibilizes the space-making of her Black students. In effect, it is as if showing Black students the world does not include their own local geographies.

Not all teachers in the study (unintentionally) drew on such dichotomies. One teacher in particular, Amara, highlighted her own personal experiences as Afro-Latina to illustrate the urgent need to open up, and recognize, different types of spaces for immigrant, Black, and Latinx students at her school. Even though she described herself as a "unicorn," because "no one is mixed like me," she stressed how important it was for students to see her as Black and Latinx. As she stated in one interview, "Usually at some point it [Afro-*Latinidad*] comes up and the biggest thing for kids in South Carolina is when you say you're mixed, they just assume Black and White and that's the only possible mixing that could ever take place." The intersections of Black and Latinx geographies were central to Amara's explanations of herself, both in her classroom praxis and in our interview conversations. For example, even as a math teacher she wanted her students to know how the lasting impacts of Jim Crow extend to current labor exploitation and marginalization in the South. Tying current Latinx immigration to Southern Reconstruction she stated:

> It all comes down to profit. And that's what's really hard trying to explain to adults and students. Even like the school to prison pipeline and why the focus on immigration now...but I'm like, okay so Reconstruction, pre-Jim Crow, reconstruction [Black] people were supposed to get the 40 acres and the mule and then Lincoln is assassinated. The new guy comes in, stops that, and a lot of that land was taken back. I try to explain to my kids, prisons didn't exist before the Civil War but if you read the Thirteenth Amendment carefully, if you are in prison you were a slave and I was like, so like think about it, you know I tell my kids you're used to your land being tended to, free labor. So if people were in prison you get free labor and now if certain people are in prison you have to fill that with cheap labor, Latino immigrants.

Rather than draw Latinx and Black geographies as binaries, like the previous two teachers, Amara leans into absences and entangles Black space with her deployment of *Latinidad*. Interweaving Reconstruction, Jim Crow, capitalism, migration, and the school-to-prison pipeline, Amara shows students "there would be no Latinx geographies without Black geographies." (Cahuas, 2019, para. 1). Further, just as she highlights the possibilities and multiplicities of her own identity, she offers students examples that:

> Latinx and Black geographies are inextricably linked, because Blackness and *Latinidad* are not mutually exclusive and because Black thought, experiences, history and politics, along with the legacy of transatlantic slavery, profoundly shape contemporary social and spatial arrangements in las Americas. (Cahuas, 2019, para. 1)

Drawing on the connections of geographies, Amara creates new spaces in which one can be immigrant and Black, one can be structurally and historically marginalized and continually creative and resistant. Perhaps, Amara's understanding of the potentialities of Latinx and Black geographies is evidenced in the following exchange with a student:

> I was reading this book, um to my kids on black women who made impacts on different things and one of my very stereotypical White skater boys asked me, Mrs. Franklin, what it be like if, you know, this, this, and this didn't exist. I was like it would be freakin' Wakanda, like we would be so advanced.

Rebeca: Positionality Reflection

Similar to Tim, I moved to a large, predominately African American urban city located in the Southeast to pursue my PhD in educational studies. I left my position teaching 5th and 6th grade English Language Arts in a school located in Trenton, New Jersey to immerse myself, or so I thought, in scholarship on critical literacy and language awareness. Yet, as I learned more about the local and regional spaces that were now my new home, I became especially curious about what local media and academic sources were describing as the unprecedented migration of Latin and Central American immigrants to the city and, more broadly, to regions of the Southeast and South (e.g., Deeb-Sossa, 2013; Jones, 2019; Marrow, 2011; Massey, 2008; Ribas, 2015; Steusse, 2016; Zúñiga & Hernández-León, 2005). I wondered how these spaces differed from those I had previously inhabited like parts of New York City and New Jersey, where various versions of *Latinidad* and Latinx diasporic communities were firmly rooted. Indeed, many of these spaces provided me with a sense of community during early adolescence and adulthood, as I grappled with understanding my own *Latinidad* as a first-generation Mexican immigrant.

When I moved to this hypersegregated Southeastern city, I also grappled with understanding the rapid and unprecedented arrival of primarily socioeconomically marginalized Latin and Central American immigrants to an urban space so profoundly marked by a legacy of White supremacy and anti-Black violence. Years of White-enacted racist and discriminatory practices have produced a city characterized by a stark Black and White racial divide, where African Americans are significantly more likely to live in poverty and send their children to underfunded schools than their White counterparts. And, I wanted to know what these demographic changes within such a hyper-segregated space located in the Southeast meant for the primarily Latinx and African American youth attending schools together in the city. These were the questions that became the focal point of my research.

To better answer these questions, I immersed myself in local educational spaces, primarily schools, across different neighborhoods in the city that had different levels of experience with the arrival of Latin and Central American immigrant youth. Starting in 2014, I spent time volunteering and tutoring, as well as working on other research projects that although not directly related to my developing research interests about educational spaces in the "New Latinx South," nonetheless provided me with an opportunity to interact with schools and communities. I soon noticed a disconnect between what was happening in some of the spaces and places that I now inhabited as volunteer and tutor and percolating dominant narratives developing from local media and government sources about these primarily Latinx-driven demographic changes.

First, there were a number of media reports that linked the arrival of Latinx immigrants to the city with growing instances of conflict between "Black and Latino" youth. Second, local government reports, as well as media coverage, disseminated reports and initiatives contending that immigrants were key to reviving an economically struggling city and regenerating a stagnant population growth. What struck me about these narratives, reports, and media stories were the underlying relationally racialized narratives they emitted that implicitly drew on tropes, stereotypes, and racialized representations about immigrants, *Latinidad*, and Blackness as they described conflict and immigrants' role in the city (see Gamez, 2020a for a more detailed

description of these discourses). Coverage of developing tensions among "Black and Latino" youth not only positioned Blackness and *Latinidad* as two distinct racialized groups, omitting the experiences of Afro-Latinxs, but, importantly, also reported on a litany of potential reasons for this conflict that primarily relied on individual level explanations of prejudice and competition. And, African American youth were often positioned as the main instigators of conflict because of what the media characterized as their negative and harmful actions towards newly arrived Latinx students. In a similar vein, media and city government documents outlining a city-wide immigrant initiative meant to retain and woo immigrant families as a measure to combat a faltering city economy and declining population rates implicitly positioned African Americans negatively: as immigrants, particularly Latin and Central American immigrants, were described as "valuable employees" and "job creators," African Americans remained the unnamed comparison. In other words, these kinds of discourses implicitly yet actively linked immigrants to cultural tropes of model minority values of hard work and family values that perniciously positioned African Americans as the unnamed reference against which these representations are made (Dávila, 2008).

Yet, at the same time, I also noticed that the prevalence and strength of these seemingly race-neutral discourses appeared to vary depending on the educational spaces one encountered and the communities within which they were located. In some schools located in particular corners of the city, especially those that had received larger numbers of Latinx immigrants, discourses of "Black and Latino" youth conflict, coupled with narratives that linked the arrival of Latinx immigrants with economic growth manifested themselves in adult talk in schools and in neighborhood talk and media coverage. In other parts of the city, these relational discourses that constructed *Latinidad* as not only an already solidified ethnoracial category but also as a foil to Blackness were relatively absent. How was I to make sense of these intersecting demographically changing places/spaces--the "New Latinx South", the Southeast in particular, the city and its varied neighborhoods and the schools that populated them--and their relationship with the abundance and/or absence of these racialized narratives and discourses?

A Black and Latinx geographies framework provided the grammar for understanding that what I noticed were the intimate connections between place and race. Race, as a social formation, is spatially imbricated and "subject to the 'stickiness' of place" (Markusen, 1996 as cited in Price, 2012). Yet, as Black studies scholars and a Black geographies framework remind us, place in the United States is intimately connected both to the sedimentation of specifically anti-Black racist practices *and* to Black space-making. As such, the arrival of Latin and Central American immigrants to the "New Latinx South" and to this city located in the Southeast, as well as their uneven dispersal throughout the city, suggests that entanglements between and across *Latinidad* and Blackness are subject to both White enacted historical legacies of exclusion and the particularities and possibilities of extra local spaces.

Research in Changing Schools: Relationally Racialized Scripts: "Good Latinx" and "Anti-Black" Scripts

Indeed, the personal experiences and research vignettes I include in this paper draw from a broader study that precisely explored how schools, given their particular sociocultural contexts --that is, their spatial location within the city and their student demographics--respond to Latinx-driven demographic changes and how these responses, in turn, shape how youth come to understand the borders between Blackness and *Latinidad*. I completed 18 months of ethnographic research across two Title I middle schools, Roots Academy and New Horizons,[4] located in this Southeastern city. On the one hand, the student population at New Horizons transformed from

predominantly African American to predominantly Latinx in the span of ten years (due to the rapid arrival of Latin and Central American immigrants). It is also located in the southeastern quadrant of the city, an area that experienced the highest growth in Latinx immigration since the early 2000s. On the other hand, Roots Academy is a predominately African American school that has only recently experienced the arrival of Central American immigrant youth. I took an unpaid role as an on-site tutor/academic aide and translator/interpreter across the two schools. I primarily spent time working and interacting with early adolescents as they made their way from 7th to 8th grade. In addition to in-depth participant observation, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with 66 youth, as well as with parents, teachers, administrators, staff, and community members.

One key finding, among many others, focused on the kinds of national, local, and neighborhood level racialized scripts that schools drew on as they responded and tried to make sense of Latinx-driven demographic changes (Gamez, 2020b). While these scripts varied across both school contexts given their particular sociocultural contexts, they all implicated Blackness and L*atinidad* in some way. At New Horizons, adults drew on "good Latinx" racialized discourses that relied on culturalist-based model minority myths that positioned Latinx as a monolithic group, but that, crucially, also simultaneously relationally (re)produced essentializing anti-Black narratives that rendered Black youth and Blackness as deviant and placeless (Gamez, 2020c).

For example, like the teachers in Tim's study, Jenny and Kim, Mr. Brody, a White teacher, also forwards a "good Latinx immigrant" script (Dávila, 2008) that relies on culturalist and individualist reasonings while implicitly contrasting Blackness. In his articulation of why certain students do well in school and others do not, Mr. Brody explains:

> ...It also varies on how important education is to the parents in the family, um, but that varies by race too, especially within city schools. Because you do have–one of the Spanish speaking newcomers, who is in 4th grade, who, Jesus, I don't know how he picked up a second language, which is English, this fast (snaps his fingers) and he is doing that well with it. Because the family's placing importance on, 'we came here for you to get a good education.' And he's working his little butt off[...Yea, well, it's that their parents value their children's education. I think it really depends, like a lot of our kids that do well have that parent support because they have this push of 'I came over with nothing, to work hard.' Like school is your job. Um like if you really see the higher achievers, they make their children do their homework, they make their children read every night, and there are also no behavior issues. Like I think of in eighth grade now like a Jorge or say a Jimmy. But for many of our other kids, it's the behavior and mental health issues that comes with, like, their experiences. (Interview, May 11, 2018)

Mr. Body gives Jesus, a "Spanish speaking newcomer" and Jorge and Jimmy, two second-generation Latinx youth, as examples of students' whose success is due to parental influence. As he explains, these students are doing well "because the family's placing importance on, 'we came here for you to get a good education." If academic achievement varies by racial and cultural differences in a school that is overwhelmingly, and in the middle school, exclusively, populated by African American and Latinx youth, then who remains the unnamed racial group whose parents do not place importance on education? African American youth.

These relationally racialized discourses also implicated me. Adults at New Horizons quickly labeled me as Latina or Hispanic and positioned me as a "role model" or "mentor" for

Latinx students, but in doing so they not only constrained and enclosed *Latinidad* but also obliquely engaged in relational racialization of anti-Blackness. As Ms. O'Hare, the White middle school English as a Second Language (ESOL) teacher, commented:

> I'm glad they see someone like you, a Hispanic that made it, a young Latina woman well put together...You know, I think some of the Latina girls see you as a mentor, especially some of the newer ones. I feel there are already so little Latina girls in the school, and so the pool that serves as good role models is really small. But without good role models they're learning all these bad behaviors, talking a certain way back to teachers, catching an attitude. (Field note, April 28, 2017)

I welcomed the chance to be a mentor and a role model for other Latinx youth. After all, there is a wide body of scholarship that links the creation of Latinx educational spaces to increased social belonging and positive educational outcomes (e.g., Irizarry, 2011). Creating these spaces in my classrooms and for my students were also important to me when I taught middle school. Yet, these interactions in the field sharply emphasized to me how *Latinidad* often gets reduced and essentialized in different spaces/places, as it also perpetuates deficit notions of Black students. Indeed, at first glance, we also see Ms. O'Hare acknowledge the need for mentorship and representation as important within the context of New Horizons, where she perceives there to be "so little Latina girls" given the school's history with Latinx-driven demographic changes. However, the rest of her comment is couched in neoliberal notions of respectability that become expected of some racialized and minoritized groups (Shange, 2019; Singh, 2020). Crucially, these notions also insidiously position Blackness as a foil. As she sees it, newer Latin and Central American immigrant girls not only need Latina role models that evince upward social mobility and that appear to be "well put together," attributes she associates as part of my *Latinidad*, but they also need these role models as a shield from the other youths' "bad behaviors" and "attitudes." Again, much like Mr. Brody's comments, African American youth remained the unnamed reference group in Ms. O'Hare's comments: only Latina girls/women can serve as good role models for each other, while other youth at school, who were exclusively Black youth at the middle school level, are reduced to stereotypes and dispossessed of their humanity, as they are cast aside as potential mentors and friends.

Interrogating the "New" in the "New Latinx South:" Reimagining and Contesting Borders

Interestingly, these relationally racialized narratives were hardly present at Roots Academy. Recall that Roots Academy is a predominately African American school located in a part of the city where, at the time of my study, the arrival and settlement of Latin and Central American immigrants proved to be a very recent phenomenon. In fact, as I detail elsewhere (Gamez, 2020a, 2020b), in this particular corner of the city, entanglements between *Latinidad* and Blackness took on a different character altogether. In the vignette that follows, I offer one example that exemplifies this difference and that demonstrates how the "new" in the "New Latinx South" may perhaps point towards instances and spaces of disrupting not only existing borders between *Latinidad* and Blackness but also exploring entanglements between Black and Latinx geographies. In a conversation about how to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, Ms. Blake, who self-identified as African American and served as the school's Community School Site Coordinator, explained

that she saw the "newness" of Latinx enrollment at Roots Academy as an opportunity to rethink *Latinidad*, Blackness, and the relationship between the two:

> So, this whole month is Hispanic Heritage month, I think it ends October 15th. I'd like to do something for our growing Central American population at our school, to make them feel heard. I wanted to do something the kids could do in class, but not like just talking about dances, or food, or the typical thing. We have the chance to lay the foundation for something new here, not just like superficial culture, Latino equals food. I mean that's important and fun, but we have the opportunity to do something new here since we haven't really done anything like this...Or maybe we could do something about migration journeys that would connect the kids in meaningful ways? Like many of our African American youth have migration journeys, from the deep South to here, or from different parts of the city, and that's something they can connect on... It has to be more meaningful than the just Latino equals dancing and food. Cause we have kids like Avery that are both, Black and speak Spanish. I think she's from Panama? I'm not sure how and even if we have time to really think things through, but I think it's time, cause we can and we have that opportunity now, to rethink those like rigid, you know, Black on one side, they have their thing, and Latino on the other. There are many ways those cultures and histories are connected. (Field note, September 25, 2017)

Unlike at New Horizons, where *Latinidad* and Blackness sedimented as separate spheres and where adults continuously juxtaposed Blackness to an idealized "good" Latinx subject, the vignette above exemplifies how *Latinidad*, and its relationship to Blackness, proved to be contested and in-transition. Ms. Blake recognized that place, and the particular temporal dimension of place, created a space to "do to something new." While she recognized existing essentialist articulations of *Latinidad* that link it to "food" and "dance," her comments also reflect an understanding that because of the absence of Latinx youth at school, Roots Academy had seldom engaged in celebrations of *Latinidad*, like Hispanic Heritage Month. However, she sees this absence as precisely an opportunity to rethink *Latinidad* and, more importantly, its connection to Blackness. While she is unsure what thinking in new ways might look like exactly, she searches for opportunities that challenge simplistic understandings of *Latinidad*, recognize the lived experiences of Afro-Latinx students like Avery, and demonstrate how Latinx and Black geographies are inextricably linked. Thus, similar to Amara, the teacher from Tim's study, Ms. Blake also grappled with possibilities for disrupting borders afforded by the specificity of the "New Latinx South."

Discussion and Implications

In this discussion we further elaborate on two intersecting and overarching observations derived from our application of Black and Latinx geographies on to our (auto)ethnographic layered accounts about living, teaching, and researching about Latinx in Southern educational spaces. Specifically, we discuss these observations as they relate, first, to broader conceptual understandings of the "New Latinx South" in the existing educational literature and, second, to the field of teacher education more generally.

The "New Latinx South:" *Latinidad,* Blackness, and Anti-Blackness

A key contention we make in this paper is that the construction of *Latinidad* is relatively undertheorized within educational scholarship on the "New Latinx South." Our interrogation of the construction of *Latinidad* in space(s) of the "New Latinx South" challenges existing approaches within educational literature that tend to position *Latinidad* as a static and monolithic ethnoracial category and removed from those dynamic processes, relations, and spatial configurations that actively give meaning to it. Further, by drawing specifically on Black and Latinx geographies scholarship, we link our understanding of Latinx racialization in the "New Latinx South" to Blackness and anti-Blackness.

For example, an important thread that weaves across our vignettes is how, in the absence of a solidified Latinx identity, *Latinidad* is being constructed differently and in relation to Blackness across these local educational spaces. Educational scholars of the "New Latinx South" have certainly noted the absence of what Hamann and Harklau (2015) describe as "established, historicized, and racialized Chicano or Latino communities or identities" (p. 164), yet the extent to which "absence" is analytically explored and linked to the relational construction of *Latinidad* and existing spatialized histories and racialized bodies is minimal (but see Guerrero, 2017; Gamez, 2020a, Monreal, 2020). Absence of *Latinidad* in the South is often equated with "newness" of *Latinidad* and so "new" becomes the overarching defining category of Latinx (Monreal & Tirado, forthcoming). Scholars often place their emphasis on understanding how the increased numerical quantity of Latinxs, or this "new" demographic, is affecting regions, communities, and schools but position Latinx as a bounded and pre-defined group. As such, scholars position this *Latinidad* as deterministic rather than relational, spatialized, and in process. In other words, the assumption is that the construction of *Latinidad* in the U.S. South will eventually follow what is an imagined singular and coherent Latinx subject in the United States.

However, in both our vignettes, our participants were actively articulating *Latinidad* in relation to both the particularities of regional and local contexts and racialized sedimentations of the past that invoked Blackness as well as anti-Black violence. In Tim's vignettes, both Jenny and Kim drew on well-entrenched "good immigrant" narratives as they grappled with *Latinidad* in South Carolina, where they hoped a specific deployment of *Latinidad* would connect with their Black students and prove a model for upward social mobility. In Rebeca's examples, how teachers understood *Latinidad* and linked it to Blackness varied across neighborhood context. The way in which adults engaged with deep-seated racialized violences of the past and circulating racialized scripts appeared to differ given each community's relationship with Latinx immigration and its particular local demographics (Gamez, 2020a, Gamez, 2020b).

The juxtaposition of Blackness and *Latinidad* and the relational racialization of anti-Blackness within educational spaces is certainly not just a feature of Southern race-making (see for example Shange, 2019). Yet, in educational literature on the "New Latinx South," the relationship between Blackness and *Latinidad* is often unarticulated and unexplored. This absence leaves existing examinations of how Latinx are shaping and interacting with Southern spaces as partial and incomplete. Yet, Blackness and *Latinidad* and the borders between them are crucial to further understand not only because Black and Latinx spatialized histories are intimately linked (Cahuas, 2019), but also because distinct (not equivalent) historical, political, and social processes have inevitably positioned Blackness and *Latinidad* side-by-side in many Southern communities and educational spaces (Jones, 2019; Ribas, 2015). Thus, our interweaving of Black and Latinx geographies and our vignettes collectively point our attention to how the construction of *Latinidad* in Southern educational spaces is always relational and tethered to Black life and space.

One the one hand, as our layered accounts demonstrate, the construction of *Latinidad* in Southern educational spaces can render Blackness ungeographic and placeless as it remains an innominate reference in adults' talk about *Latinidad*. For example, in Rebeca's vignette, Ms. O'Hare's comment about needing "good Latina" role models given the *absence* of a solidified Latinx community in this particular school and neighborhood insidiously forwarded Black youth and anti-Blackness. As Ms. O'Hare saw it, she not only put forth an idealized version of what a respectable Latina should be like ("well put together" and "having made it"), but also felt that Latinas' small numerical quantity and their demographic "newness" needed protection from what she positioned as always already deficient and troubled Black youth.

On the other hand, as both Amara, in Tim's vignette, and Ms. Blake, in Rebeca's example, demonstrate, the construction of *Latinidad* in Southern educational contexts can also center Blackness as both part of *Latinidad* and/or intimately connected. In Tim's example, Amara's articulation of her Afro-*Latinidad* in relation to the South, its demographic changes, and its histories and, in Rebeca's example, Ms. Blake's ruminations about how to forge linkages between African American students and Central American immigrants given the absence of a strong Latinx community, both point to a particular dynamic, in process, creative, and transformative construction of *Latinidad*. Indeed, as we contend in the next section, analyses that center the construction and racialization of *Latinidad* in Southern spaces and how these processes are intimately linked to Blackness and anti-Blackness are not only important to complicate existing conceptual scholarship on the "New Latinx South" in educational scholarship, but also have critical implications for educators and practitioners.

Refusing Binaries and Essentializations to Build Teacher Knowledges

A second general contention that we advance in this paper, and evidence in our layered accounts, is the need to engage generative dialogues with teachers/teacher educators to recognize the invisibilities of unjust geographies that extend into and co-constitute a racialized present and also advance spaces of possibility *where Latinidad* is not constructed vis-à-vis anti-Blackness. We feel this is especially important because as our own, as well as our teacher participants' experiences in Southern educational spaces attest, there is a general desire by educators to use *Latinidad* towards the ends of opening generative and safe spaces for Latinx students specifically, and marginalized and minoritized youth generally. Holding ourselves as examples, we point to Tim's efforts to create an *ofrenda* or Rebeca's (tepid) desire to serve as a mentor as representative of teacher's desires, in line with Kim's, Jenny's, Amara's, and Ms. O'Hare's attempts to foreground *Latinidad* in the interest of their students. However, even as we want to highlight and recognize these efforts, we also argue that such efforts in themselves are not nearly enough (Rodriguez, Monreal, & Howard, 2017). In fact, like Tim's inability to tie Black geographies to his practice of Latinx space-making, and the anti-Black, and often unnamed, foils of good immigrant discourse (Kim, Jenny, and Mr. Body), these endeavors erase or at least continually devisibilize the transformative potentialities of Black geographies. As such, even as teachers work towards more just educational outcomes for minoritized and marginalized youth, there is the tendency to unintentionally reproduce essentializing, dichotomous, and marginalizing ideas of ethnoracial categorization.

Thus, we point to the need for teacher education/teacher education programs to explicitly interrogate and center the relationality of racialized discourse and racial formation so that practitioners lean into rather than refuse the interrelatedness and dynamism of local educational spaces. In this way, teachers may be less likely to fall back upon sedimented racial scripts that call

upon singular examples of success, like Kim's grandfather or Jenny's father, to explain away or erase spatial violences rooted in anti-Blackness. However, given the continual march of teacher education programs towards efficiency, accountability, technicalism, and credentialing (Apple, 2013; Hara & Sherbine, 2018; Popkewitz, 1998; Webb, 2009), and the relative exclusion of instruction about the intersections of race, immigration, and sociopolitical knowledge (Monreal & McCorkle, 2020; Bondy & Braunstein, 2019; Jefferies & Dabach, 2014; Rodriguez, 2019), we see how teachers feel compelled to use *Latinidad* as an instrument towards academic achievement rather than critical conversation. Rebeca's positioning as mentor and role model is but one example of how *Latinidad* is called upon in this way. Yet what we have evidenced at length in this article is how such efforts, however rooted in empathy, good intent, and optimism they may be, reproduce singular notions of *Latinidad* often tied directly to anti-Blackness. In sum, without overt and critical instruction about the relationality of race within local education spaces, the potentialities of creative performances and expressions of Latinidad get folded back into the service of maintaining detrimental racial discourses.

The call to (un/re)knot assumptions about Latinx racialization within teacher preparation is particularly relevant as ephemeral calls for teacher representation hold that simply increasing the number of Latinx teachers in Southern classrooms will lead to better outcomes for minoritized and marginalized youth. Yet such thinking ignores the reality that Latinx teachers, too, have often been schooled in a White supremacist society and "need critical teacher preparation programs that challenge deficit perspectives, undermine entrenched inequities, and develop the practice of teaching for social justice" (Monreal, 2020, p. 90; see also Cherry-McDaniel, 2019; House-Niamke & Sato, 2019; Smith-Kondo & Bracho, 2019). Without greater attention to their role in relational racialization, particularly when tied to anti-Blackness, Latinx teachers might do little to challenge and disrupt the underlying and spatialized webs of existing racial scripts that reproduce racial categories. As such, even as Latinx teachers recognize their role in creating safe spaces for Latinx students, they preclude their own potential. Yet, we also see what is possible when teachers like Amara and Ms. Blake proclaim the invisible and reference the forgotten; those two armed with their own personal and experiential knowledge recognize a different possibility. Ms. Blake's words are powerful attestations towards such shared, transformative, and cooperative educational spaces, invoking the "opportunity to do something new here." We imagine teacher and continuing education preparation that capitalize on the knowledge of Amara and Ms. Black and the desires of those like Kim, Jenny, and Ms. O'Hare to advance expansive notions of *Latinidad* that creatively advance justice rather than instrumentalism, anti-racism rather than neoliberal multiculturalism, and multiplicity rather than assimilation.

Conclusion

Collectively, the layered accounts elaborated in this paper profoundly demonstrate both the creative construction of *Latinidad* in reaction to and contestation to often hostile Southern spaces and the deployment of racialized discourses that position *Latinidad* in relation to Blackness. Specifically, we applied a Latinx and Black geographies lens to our research experiences and ethnographic material, which lifted up absences within Latinx scholarship, particularly in relation to Blackness and anti-Blackness. By linking our research and experiences to a Black geographies framework, we highlighted the possibilities of Black geographies as a way for both researchers and teachers to more thoughtfully create, theorize, and practice safe spaces for their Black, Latinx, and Afro-Latinx students. Such a conceptualization allows us to recognize how the organizing violences of the past create our present spaces, but also that the multiplitious potentialities of Black

Geographies demand different spatial arrangements, and thus, different and more expansive, subjective, (*Latinidad*) imaginations.

Related to teachers and educators, as we elaborated earlier, foregrounding more expansive and relational understandings of Latinidad requires deep engagement with theoretical perspectives and scholarship that centers the relationality of racialized discourse and racial formation. One avenue through which pre- and in-service teachers and educational leaders might begin to counter over-simplistic understandings of *Latinidad* that potentially reinforce deficit narratives of Blackness rests on encouraging educators to engage in a similar process employed in this manuscript--creating and conceptualizing (auto)ethnographic layered accounts. Through this process, educators would interpret and explore their personal experiences and identities in relation to critical scholarship on processes of racialization and racial formation.

Engaging in critical self-reflection by tapping into the potential of modes and variations of autoethnography as a way for pre- and in-service teachers and other practitioners to learn about race/ethnicity, social justice, education, and educational disparities is not a novel idea. Indeed, a robust body of scholarship in the field of education has directly addressed how the autoethnographic mode of inquiry might facilitate complex explorations of power imbalances, race, and processes of racialization (e.g., Ohito, 2019; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Taylor et al., 2008). Yet, our conceptual work foregrounds how pedagogical models that draw on modes of reflexivity should also be proactively connected to broader understandings of how processes of racialization are relational, embedded in specific places and places, and tethered to Black geographies of domination. Thus, we highly encourage engagement with Black geographies literature to be part of this critical reflection process.

For example, Tim's engagement with Black and Latinx geographies scholarship led him to critically examine how his efforts of developing student Latinx identity and corresponding Latinx safe spaces in his classroom through his lesson on *ofrendas* were also linked to an absence of "Black spatial knowledge and struggles" (Cahuas, 2019, para. 18). And, Rebeca's engagement with processes of relational racialization led her to reflect on how teachers in her field site read her *Latinidad* through neoliberal discourses of respectability that also obliquely reinforced anti-Black narratives. Pre- and in -service teachers, then, might share and interrogate similar experiences as they are also pushed to engage with theoretical perspectives and scholarship that centers the relationality of racialized discourse and racial formation. It is through one such process--of generating (auto)ethnographic layered accounts--that pre- and in-service teachers might pursue more inclusive spaces in their classrooms.

Beyond direct implications for teacher education programs, our (auto)ethnographic layered accounts grounded in a Black geographies framework also expand scholarship on the "New Latinx South." As we elaborated, a Black geographies framework nuances, and explicitly centers, the relationality of *Latinidad* to Black Geographies rather than as a singular counter to White spaces. The intersections of Black and Latinx geographies provides a framework through which we can productively begin to think about developing Latinx scholarship--as it expands to understanding "new" spaces and places--while simultaneously not erasing Blackness or the ways in which Blackness and *Latinidad* are intimately connected. At the very least, then, scholars interested in (un/re)knotting assumptions about (Latinx) racialization and exploring Latinx or the construction of *Latinidad* in the context the "New Latinx South" need to thoughtfully engage in substantive exchanges with not only Black geographies scholarship but also the rich work on anti-Blackness and on Afro-*Latinidades* that troubles "monolithic representations of Latinidad" (Busey & Silva,

2020, p. 3). Such exchanges push scholars to theorize more expansive understandings of Latinx and critically ask how anti-Black racisms articulate with the construction of *Latinidad*.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Latinx Research Center at Santa Clara University for organizing this special issue. Specifically, we appreciate the work of editors Gil Conchas, Sophia Rodriguez, Marco Murillo, and Leticia Oseguera. Also thank you to the peer reviewers whose valuable insight strengthened the manuscript.

Funding

Tim acknowledges the following financial support in supporting the research and writing of this article, The Spencer Dissertation Fellowship and the Southern Regional Educational Board Doctoral Writing Fellowship. Rebeca acknowledges the following financial support for the research and writing of this article, The American Educational Research Association Minority Dissertation Fellowship.

NOTES

1. In this manuscript we prefer to utilize the term Latinx or Latinxs to speak broadly about a supposed ethnoracial demographic category that is always *in the making*. While we sometimes refer to "Latinx youth" or "Latinx people," we intentionally limit these phrases precisely because our paper attempts to capture the construction of this ethnoracial category across different spaces/places.
2. We place the term the "New Latinx South" in quotations to highlight the complexity of the term and to emphasize, in part, our apprehension in utilizing the term. Privileging the "new" can function to erase not only established Latinx communities in the U.S. South but also other newer and established immigrant groups (Guerrero, 2017; Monreal, 2020; Monreal & Tirado, forthcoming). Despite our apprehension, we utilize the term to capture the unprecedented growth and settlement of Latinx immigrants in a region that has long organized itself along a Black and White racial binary and which, despite heterogeneity across place and context, continues to uphold a regime of White supremacy and the exploitation of racial difference.
3. We chose to capitalize White in this paper. We follow scholars who argue that capitalizing White asks scholars and readers to interrogate what Whiteness is (Ewing, 2020). As sociologist Eve Ewing explains for why she capitalizes White: "In maintaining the pretense of invisibility, Whiteness maintains the pretense of its inevitability, and its innocence […] As long as White people do not ever have to interrogate what Whiteness is, where it comes from, how it operates, and what it does, they can maintain the fiction of race is other people's problem, that they are mere observers in a centuries-long stage play in which they have, in fact, been the producers, directors, and central actors" (Ewing, 2020).
4. To protect the identities of participants, all names (city, schools, students, and teachers) are pseudonyms.

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JLER
Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

IS STRUCTURAL CHANGE "PRACTICAL"? LATINO BOYS & IMAGINING OTHERWISE

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AUTHOR NOTE

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ABSTRACT

Most policy discussions around Latino boys aim to foster academic success without fully considering the way unequal outcomes are by design. The zero-sum nature of US education warrants a critical analysis and fundamental reimagining. I employ the lenses of critical social theory and critical discourse studies for a three-fold purpose: (1) examine the (im)possibilities of academic success, (2) examine how discourses of practicality are weaponized against efforts to enact structural change, and (3) engage the concept, imagining otherwise, in the field of education. Special attention is given to contemporary educational and political events to highlight the importance of going beyond "practicality," abolishing all processes that generate unequal outcomes, and reimagining the forthcoming world of education. I call for a serious interrogation of educational structures, delving into a more critical and imaginative realm.

Keywords: Latino Boys, Political Discourse, Educational Inequality, Abolition

Introduction

Consider a fictitious scenario. All students from marginalized backgrounds become high-performing students—strong SAT scores, strong GPAs, and strong letters of recommendation. Even in a scenario where all students are classified as "high-performing," top universities would reach a saturation point and awards would only go to a select number of students. In essence, the U.S. education system is a zero-sum game, which guarantees a few winners and ensures the reproduction of inequality (Labaree, 2010). One need not delve into a wholly fictional realm to see similar results. Harris and Tienda (2012) studied the Top 10% law in Texas that guaranteed admission to their flagship campus for all students who graduated in the top 10% of their high school class. Two major findings were established: (1) many students did not apply, even when they graduated top of their class, and (2) if all students had applied, their flagship campus would

be forced to deny qualified students. In tandem, these examples reinforce the argument presented by Fischer and colleagues (1996)—education in the U.S. is inequality by design. Yet, most policy discussions about Latino boys (and other Students of Color) aim to increase academic outcomes without contesting the zero-sum nature of U.S. schooling.

Amid the present COVID-19 era, calls for reimagining education are widespread. For many, "returning to normal" is no longer a viable option, as financial crises put pressure on public institutions, limiting their available resources; as corporatization takes a stronger hold of our everyday life; and as some might argue, fascism is emerging via clandestine federal agents suppressing political mobilization, attacks on voting rights, and a myriad of other efforts designed to limit democratic processes. Still, others might argue that "returning to normal" means returning to substandard conditions that led to this social problem in the first place. Hence, the solution, I concur and argue, is to imagine otherwise. Here, I explore the obstacles that impinge on our ability to imagine otherwise, and in turn, what imagining otherwise requires of us. I pay special attention to Latino boys, as this demographic has garnered significant attention in both academic and political realms. Indeed, the rise of what Henry Giroux (2018) calls, "neoliberal authoritarianism," was initiated by political diatribes against "bad hombres" (Adame et al., 2017). It is precisely this political rhetoric—along with other racialized attacks—that led to an upward transfer of wealth, weakening of public institutions, and strengthening of the corporate sphere (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). In the academic realm, Latino boys received significant attention, as major political initiatives, such as President Obama's My Brother's Keeper and the ongoing California's Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color, provided strong incentives to study and improve the lives of Latino boys (Davila Jr., Berumen, & Baquedano-López, 2015; Saénz et al., 2016).

This commentary consists of three key sections and arguments: (1) *The (Im)possibilities of Academic Success,* highlighting the limits of increasing academic outcomes among Latino boys, (2) *Discourses of Practicality,* examining how these political discourses serve to reproduce structural arrangements, and (3) *Imagining Otherwise,* encouraging educational researchers to delve into a more critical and imaginative realm. I employ the lenses of critical social theory and critical discourse studies to examine my subject of inquiry. According to Zeus Leonardo (2009), critical social theory in education is an interdisciplinary framework, emanating from Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Critical social theory captures the way race (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Haney-López, 2014), gender (Crenshaw, 2014; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016), and capitalism (Giroux, 2018; Kantor & Lowe, 2013) shape relations of power and the conditions students experience. In similar fashion, critical discourse studies examine the way logics and assumptions are embedded in discourse (Santa Ana, 2002); the way power dynamics shape language practices (Rosa, 2019); and, the way discourse serves as the main vehicle for ideology (Fairclough, 2013).

Following the insights of Leonardo (2013), I embrace a dialogical framework that is less concerned with a single line of thought and more concerned with understanding inequality, structural forces, and ways to achieve our liberation. I draw from a content analysis of political discourse and an ethnographic study on high-performing Latino boys. This study took place in the Bay Area of Northern California, featuring a group of Latino boys (i.e., candidates for valedictorian and students who met UC-Eligibility) in their senior year of high school, as they applied to top universities across the U.S. I address the following questions: How is increasing academic success limited in our efforts to address structural inequality? How is inequality reproduced through discourses of practicality? And, how might we reimagine a world wherein Latino boys and other marginalized groups are free from inequality and injustice?

The (Im)possibilities of Academic Success

On December 31st 2018, while most students and academic personnel were preparing for the New Year, Mr. Rodriguez offered feedback to Junior, a candidate for valedictorian at Skyview High School, on his application to Stanford. Mr. Rodriguez noted the following:

> Junior…I read over your entire application and it was impressive. You present a strong political tone which some readers will greatly appreciate. You do a good job of masking the fact that you were not heavily involved in activities during your first years in HS. If I were a reader at Stanford, I would accept you in a heartbeat...but I'm not...and I worry that they might pass on you, especially because they already accepted a student from Skyview this year, and rarely do they admit two students from the same HS....
> On the west coast all top students funnel their ambitions into only one ivy-league-ish school, Stanford, and that is unfortunate, because the competition is ridiculously tight...My point is, you have a very strong template that you can use to apply to other excellent schools-so you should do so...and not put all your eggs into one private school…

In a gentle way, Mr. Rodriguez's note conveys to Junior how the education system works. Stated succinctly, the U.S. education system guarantees that there will only be a few winners. Yet, in most policy discussions about education, we often ask: Why does educational inequality persist? For a moment, I return to the fictitious scenario from my introduction: Imagine that all students from marginalized backgrounds become high-performing students. Even in this fictitious scenario, our educational structure is a zero-sum game, such that universities, like Stanford, would reach a saturation point, awards would only go to a select number of students, and so on. As forecasted by Mr. Rodriguez, Junior was rejected from Stanford three months later.

The zero-sum phenomenon is a central part of our ostensibly meritocratic education system. A system that assigns and determines distinction, admission, and academic success based on a set of socially constructed measures (Gonzalez & Núñez, 2014; López-Figueroa, 2016). At its core, the zero-sum phenomenon refers to how the academic success of some students necessitates the exclusion of others, in line with the scenarios presented above. In a society where race, class, and gender shape the foundations of cultural, educational, and governance structures (Collins & Bilge, 2016), it should come as no surprise that our meritocratic system legitimizes, values, and reproduces what bell hooks (2000) calls, "white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchy." Countless studies show how dominant ideologies are reproduced via K-12 school curricula (Anyon, 1980; Bowles & Gintis, 2011; Leonardo, 2009), teacher-student relationships (Singh, 2020; Solomon, 2015), standardized testing (Dixon-Román, 2017; Fischer et al., 1996), college admissions (Karabel, 2006), and job hiring (Cerda-Jara et al., 2020; Haney & Hurtado, 1994). Often, the reproduction of privilege and subordination occurs through allegedly neutral or colorblind policies, such that, whiteness, masculinity, and high social class status need not be explicit for different outcomes to emerge based on group membership (Bedolla, 2010; Collins & Bilge, 2016). The ideology of merit and its corresponding system, therefore, individualizes a structural phenomenon to create the illusion of legitimacy and a deserving group of students, who should gain access to elite institutions and reach the upper echelons of U.S. society. Since prestige, distinction, and academic success in a hierarchical society cannot be universal, the zero-sum

phenomenon in education guarantees that only a few students will succeed while the majority of others are inevitably subject to exclusion and failure, with this framing of success.

Still, a substantive body of research on Latino boys sought to examine ways of increasing academic outcomes (Davila Jr. et al., 2015; Conchas, 2006; Fergus et al., 2014; Harper & Associates, 2014; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Saénz & Ponjuan, 2011). Increasing student outcomes offers better social and economic opportunities, the argument goes. There are several issues are with that assumption, however: (1) academic success, as stated above, is a zero-sum game and not accessible universally; (2) academic success is socially constructed and requires mastery of knowledge created by and for dominant groups (e.g., standardized testing, K-12 school curricula, etc.); and (3) even among "high-performing" students from marginalized backgrounds, many experience a range of obstacles that impinge on their academic potential. Consider the following examples: Fabian, another high-performing Latino boy at Skyview High, withheld his follow-up essay after being waitlisted at UC Berkeley due to a lack of academic support; Salvador, who was hoping to attend UC Berkeley's college tour was discouraged from attending, because his teacher said, "there was no point," and that UC Berkeley would deny him, although he was later waitlisted; and, Anthony, whose older brother attended UC Berkeley, shared during an interview that his brother dropped out due to financial pressures. It is important to note that all these students identified as "low-income," and previous research has shown that even when poor and rich students demonstrate the same academic preparedness, poor students are less likely to graduate from college (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Certainly, there were success stories, such as Luis and Junior, who were both candidates for valedictorian and received admission to UC Berkeley with strong financial packages. My reason for highlighting the former examples, however, is to illustrate the way structural obstacles, at times, override students' academic success.

Furthermore, researchers argue that education and criminalization are intimately connected (Conchas & Vigil, 2012; Hurtado & Sinha, 2016; Fergus et al., 2014; Mireles-Rios et al., 2020; Rios, 2011). This entanglement is often referred to as the "school-to-prison pipeline." Rios and Galicia (2013) argue that "some marginalized Latino youths are no longer 'learning to labor' but rather 'preparing for prison'" (p. 62). Hurtado and Sinha's (2016) study is particularly important here, as they interviewed Latino men at some of the nation's most prestigious universities, many of whom were completing their master's and doctoral programs. Strikingly, however, many of these Latino men reported experiencing similar levels of criminalization that are reported among Latino boys and young men, who are not high-performing students (see Rios, 2011). The racialization of Latino men as criminals (or "bad hombres") persists despite their academic achievements. In accordance, Cerda-Jara, Elster, and Harding (2020) examined whether a college education among formerly incarcerated men would improve their job prospects. Two major findings are pertinent herein: (1) overall callback rate was 50% lower for college educated men with criminal records versus college educated men without a record, and (2) whether a bachelor's degree was earned before or after the criminal record had no impact on the number of callbacks. Among Latino men specifically, 9% received callbacks if they had a clean record and a BA; 5% received callbacks if they had a record before their BA; and, 6% if they had a record after their BA. Their findings provide evidence that a college education does not counteract the stigma of a criminal record (Cerda-Jara et al., 2020), in support of my earlier argument that academic success does not buffer Latino men from the social conditions that render them criminal.

Another area to consider is the nexus between academic success and ideological structures. Given that merit is socially constructed by dominant groups, one should expect high-performing students to become susceptible to reproducing ideologies of privilege and subordination. In a

previous article, I wrote the following: "On the surface, one would assume that achieving high levels of education is only positive for our communities, but what happens when those people advance the very political and corporate interests that hurt us?" (Davila Jr., 2019, p. 5). I offer the examples of former Mexican President Felipe Calderon, a Harvard alum, who perpetuated government corruption, advanced U.S. corporate interests under the guise of free trade, and furthered the exploitation of Mexican workers (Ackerman, 2019; Fernández-Kelly & Massey, 2007; Harvey, 2007), as well as President Barack Obama, also a Harvard alum, who proceeded to support charter schools, public-private partnerships, and increased corporate influence (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Kantor & Lowe, 2013). Moreover, other studies have documented how President Obama employed racial narratives to advance My Brother's Keeper, including: (a) adhering to individual-level narratives about academic success (Dumas, 2016), (b) placing blame on family structures (Crenshaw, 2014), and (c) opposition to "big government" (Haney-López, 2014), in favor of a much weaker, less comprehensive form of support—corporate philanthropy (Giridharadas, 2018).

Taken together, these findings remind us that merit, academic success, and the zero-sum phenomenon, deserve critical scrutiny. Here, one can witness how the current educational structure guarantees inequality and how Men of Color, who climb the social ladder, at times, take on positions that reproduce unequal structures and dominant ideologies. Importantly, I put forth that *diversifying an unequal structure does not eliminate the fact that our structure is unequal*. In a critical discourse analysis, Lim (2014) demonstrates how neoliberal logics are embedded in educational curricula. Lim's (2014) analysis of *Thinking Skills* reveals how it:

> privileges utility over empathy, and logic over intuition; it deals with abstract, intellectual principles while neglecting or downplaying the emotions; it is aggressive and confrontational rather than collegial and collaborative; and that is individualistic and prizes personal autonomy over community and relationship. (p. 65)

This study reminds us that the underlying logics of academic success—competition, individualism, and dominance—are firmly rooted in European notions of masculinity (hooks, 2000). Academic success, then, becomes intimately connected to the reproduction of masculinity and whiteness (Collins & Bilge, 2016).

Discourses of Practicality

The field of education is widely recognized as an "applied" field, where researchers examine and identify *practical* applications to support schools, teachers, and students. It is assumed that knowledge generated will aim to increase student outcomes and reduce disparities vis-à-vis race, gender, and social class. Funding for research and requests to engage in research, especially in K-12 schools, are typically accepted or rejected based on *practical* contributions. Practicality is central to the work we do. Considering the insights of Tuck and Yang (2018), however, we must ask the following questions: What does justice want? How is our focus on "practicality" limited? And, does justice necessitate that we consider, engage, and imagine what is otherwise deemed "impractical"?

The COVID-19 era sparked battles on several fronts: policing, healthcare, and certainly, education. Teachers and administrators were tasked with paramount duties, from developing online curricula to implementing safety measures for their students—often with few resources,

especially among public school personnel. These times and crises remind us how all aspects of human life, including healthcare, employment, and policing, are intimately connected and shape students' academic trajectories (Noguera, 2011). In response, educators are calling for ways to reimagine schools, and activists are calling for efforts to defund the police and redirect tax-payer money to public resources, including education. Political opposition to defunding the police has come from both Democrats and Republicans. Yet, the impact of a redistribution of public monies would benefit Black and Latino boys immensely. The Sentencing Project (2013) found that one of three Black boys and one of six Latino boys born in 2013 can expect to spend time in prison.

From defunding the police to reopening public schools, *discourses of practicality* are central to the reproduction of inequality and business-as-usual. Using this phrase, I refer to discourses that (1) obfuscate, shut down, or dilute calls for social justice, and/or (2) reproduce social conditions by framing actions that run counter to the status quo as illogical or unrealistic. For contemporary examples, consider the following political statements:

> Donald J. Trump (2020) - "I disagree with @CDCgov on their very tough & expensive guidelines for opening schools. While they want them open, they are asking schools to do very **impractical** [emphasis added] things. I will be meeting with them!!!"
>
> Evans and Ellenbogen (2020) in the *Tampa Bay Times* - "Gualtieri, one of [Florida's] most influential law enforcement leaders, has called the police abolition movement 'dangerous' and '**unrealistic**.'"
>
> Harris (2020) in *Democrat & Chronicle* - "Adding to those concerns with an **impractical** suggestion like defunding the police is irresponsible and misguided. Our energies can be better spent on developing true police reform not chasing foolish ideas."
>
> Gutman (2020) in the *Seattle Times* - "[Sue Rahr, a former King County sheriff and the executive director of the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission] thinks it's '**unrealistic** and inappropriate' to ask officers to respond to dangerous situations without firearms."

In each case, discourses of practicality serve not as conclusions drawn from evaluative efforts, but rather, as declaratives and rejections of otherwise possibilities.

In the first case, Trump seeks to reopen public schools and create the impression of business-as-usual by endangering the lives of students and school personnel. In the second and third, top law enforcement leaders dismiss the idea of police abolition by calling into question its practicality. Last, in the fourth, the executive director of the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission declares that police must respond with firearms by framing efforts to disarm as impossible. Parallels exist in other arenas. One must only consider Medicare-for-All and calls to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement (or "ICE"). In the case of Medicare-for-All, Sarlin (2019) for *NBC News* reported, "Joe Biden and other Democratic presidential candidates…have decried it as **unrealistic** and overly disruptive." For the latter, abolishing ICE, *The Atlantic* (2018) reported, "One Democratic Senate staffer, who requested anonymity to speak candidly, called the movement 'a waste of time…**Realistically**, ICE is not going to be abolished.'"

Discourses of practicality quickly emerged to shut down these proposals by members of Congress, who frequently vote in favor of status-quo, neoliberal policies (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Harvey, 2007). In effect, these discourses operate to constrict the realm of possibilities (Wodak & Meyer, 2015), frame business-as-usual as an inevitable future (Fairclough, 2013), and as Althusser (2006) might argue, interpellate the subject into a dominant ideology. Scholars in the field of critical discourse studies show us how discourse is never neutral (Rosa, 2019; Santa Ana, 2002), and instead, operates as the main vehicle for ideology (Fairclough, 2013). Discourses of practicality in the field of education limit our realm of possibilities, constrict our imagination, and cast the current structure of education as an inevitable future or as "common sense" (à la Gramsci, 2000). Discourse, as a structural process, socializes us to develop ways of being and ways of thinking that often unknowingly shape what counts as rational, pragmatic, and by extension, reproduces social structures (Haney-López, 2014; Santa Ana, 2002). Importantly, discourses of practicality within the context of social justice and political mobilization cannot be products of logical or scientific reasoning, as these demands are pointing to a future that is yet to come, a future that does not exist yet. In the words of Angel D'Angelo, who founded *Restorative Justice Coalition* after the killing of Jesus Cervantes in 2017, "Everything's always impossible until it happens" (Evans & Ellenbogen, 2020).

Imagining Otherwise

In the edited chapter, "Against Prisons and the Pipeline to them," Crystal Laura (2018) writes, "I cannot, for the life of me, figure out why it is sometimes easier for us to see an impending end to the world itself than it is to see a world without prisons" (p. 19). Laura proceeds to argue that access to information is not the problem. Indeed, we have access to information now, more than ever. It is not that people fail to understand the catastrophic impact of prisons on Communities of Color. Instead, Laura argues it is our inability, as a society, to *imagine* what that world looks like—our inability to imagine abolition. In writing about abolition, and specifically, abolition democracy, Angela Davis (2005) writes that any institution that inflicts violence and suffering (e.g., prisons, enhanced interrogation facilities, etc.) must be abolished for democracy to emerge. In other words, no effort to reform these institutions will eliminate their complicity in marginalization. We must, therefore, abolish and imagine otherwise.

The question remains: How might we reimagine education to serve a more transformative end? I argue, in alignment with Ashon Crawley (2014), that it begins by disrupting normativity and exploring the unlimited possibilities that exist beyond our current structure. Imagining otherwise in education, like Davis' (2005) notion of abolition democracy, entails the elimination of all processes, logics, and technologies in education that sustain inequality, such as standardized testing (Fischer et al., 1996), selective enrollment (Meiners, 2010), competition (Lim, 2014), and tracking (Oakes, 1985). Imagining otherwise entails that we segue into a more loving and harmonious world, where learning is a communal act; where learning is rooted in notions of sustainability; and, where learning promotes a critical uptake of democracy. Following the insights of other critical scholars (Crawley, 2014; Harney & Moten, 2013; Laura, 2018; Shange, 2019), imagining otherwise—within the context of this paper—refers to (1) abolishing oppressive institutions, (2) rejecting discourses of practicality, and (3) delving into areas that are otherwise deemed impractical, unrealistic, and impossible.

Imagining otherwise begins with abolition, and specifically, the abolition of a society that inflicts or *may* inflict pain and suffering (Harney & Moten, 2013). In line with this argument, Angela Davis (2005) describes abolition democracy as, "the abolition of institutions that advance

the dominance of any one group over any other" (p. 14). Abolition, then, is a means to an end, a road to democracy that is to come. Davis draws from Du Bois' (2017) notion of abolition democracy, such that it is not primarily nor merely a negative process of destruction, but also building and creating new institutions. Several caveats emerge, however. As Jack Halberstam reminds us, "We cannot say what new structures will replace the ones we live with yet, because once we have torn shit down, we will inevitably see more and see differently and feel a new sense of wanting and being and becoming" (as cited in Harney & Moten, 2013, p.6). I can, therefore, only present what I yearn now: sustainability, love, and democracy. A transformative education would, then, center itself around and build from these principles. A glimpse into history may give us hints.

In the book, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*, Manuel and Posluns (1974) argued that technologies mediate our relationship with nature. It is symbolic, then, that most Indigenous technologies were and are related to food, clothing, housing, and medicine. These innovations exemplify Indigenous values and the way principles of sustainability and relation to land, guided how Indigenous societies were and continue to be organized; as opposed to Europeans, who at the time of Columbus, had innovated mostly along the lines of transportation and instruments of war (e.g., ships, wagons, steelware, certain breeds of horses, and guns). Most importantly, Manuel and Posluns (1974) argue that Indigenous "gifts" were available to anyone who needed them, including Europeans.

Harney and Moten (2013) put forth the notion of the undercommons, wherein critical projects, abolition, and radical possibilities are imagined and take place. According to Harney and Moten (2013), the undercommons are open to anyone: "the door swings open for refuge even though it may let in police agents and destruction" (p. 38). Therein, however, lies the possibility of the refugee, for whom we did this work. It also reminds us that radical work is always contested terrain, and at times, a dangerous endeavor. Returning to the notion of abolition, Harney and Moten (2013) state in conversation with each other:

> Moten: "I don't believe that what has happened in general is reparable...It can't be repaired. The only thing we can do is tear shit down completely and build something new" (p. 152).
>
> Harney: "For me, abolition is both about a kind of acknowledgement that, as Fred says, there's no repairing or paying back the debt...there's a whole history of debt that is not a history of debt, which doesn't need to be forgiven, but needs to become activated as a principle of social life" (p. 154).
>
> Moten: "Whereas, what Stefano is talking about, I think and I concur, is an abolition of credit, of the system of credit, which is to say, maybe it's an abolition of accounting" (p. 154).

I quote their interaction at great length, for it exemplifies the transactional essence of capitalist society. Everything is tracked, accounted, and labeled accordingly, which shares important parallels with education, where students are also tracked, accounted, and labeled, in preparation for the economy (Bowles & Gintis, 2011) or in preparation for prison (Rios & Galicia, 2013). In addition, Harney and Moten give us a glimpse into what is needed for abolition to transpire. Moving away from capitalism's transactional essence, they push us to think in a more

critical way, such that we should be responsive to each other's needs unequivocally and unconditionally, regardless of debts paid or how many debts exist. Likewise, a critical interpretation of a future educational space would not be based on ideologies of transaction nor efficiency, but rather, sustainability, love, and democracy, wherein our sole commitment is to care for—not keep track of—in order to support, come together, and educate.

Conclusion

Drawing from critical social theory and critical discourse studies, the impetus for this commentary is three-fold. *First*, I highlight the (im)possibilities of academic success to encourage researchers to go beyond increasing student outcomes and take seriously the structure of education and its zero-sum nature. *Second*, I examine *discourses of practicality* to show how these discourses often serve to obstruct calls for social justice, and by extension, reproduce social conditions. And *third*, I engage the concept *imagining otherwise* to delve into a more critical and imaginative realm, thereby encouraging researchers to go beyond what is deemed practical, abolish the zero-sum phenomenon, and imagine a transformative education rooted in love, sustainability, and a critical uptake of democracy. Latino boys receive special attention herein, as this demographic has become a central target in the rise of neoliberal authoritarianism, while simultaneously, Latino boys represent a major topic of discussion in recent educational scholarship. The implications of this work, however, go far beyond Latino boys. Discourses of practicality affect all marginalized groups, and imagining otherwise promotes unique opportunities to dream about abolition and liberation from anti-Blackness, colonization, patriarchy, and other oppressive structures.

In education, it is crucial to consider ways of abolishing the zero-sum phenomenon and reimagining the future of education—free from its structural, "meritocratic" constraints. It is also important to remember: the success of a few students necessitates the exclusion of others, such as college admission to elite universities, successful completion of university "weeder" courses, and high scores on standardized tests. These meritocratic technologies operate under the guise of identifying the most talented students and generate unequal outcomes by design. One should, therefore, deploy critical scrutiny against calls to raise academic success when they fail to contest the structure that maintains and reproduces unequal outcomes. A fundamental change in the way we conceptualize education, therefore, is a fruitful avenue to transforming social conditions for Latino boys and other marginalized youth.

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JLER
Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

BILINGUAL TEACHING PRACTICES: MEETING THE NEEDS OF LATINA/O YOUTH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This multiple-case study sheds light on bilingual secondary pre-service teacher practices and the instructional pivots they make to deliver content area instruction in Spanish to secondary Latina/o emergent bilinguals. Lesson plans and interviews with pre-service teachers were analyzed to examine the challenges and possibilities of bilingual instruction at the secondary level. Issues such as absence of multilingual instructional material and knowing the academic content in Spanish were identified as obstacles. Yet, the resourcefulness of pre-service teachers to locate materials online led to instructional pivots that allowed the primary language of Latina/o students to serve as a tool for accessing often abstract content.

Keywords: Bilingual, Secondary Latina/o, Translanguaging

Introduction

While still more can be learned about bilingual practices in elementary schools, research is needed about bilingual instructional practices at the secondary level. The scarcity of research on bilingual education serving Latina/o students in secondary schools is likely due to the common stagnation of dual language programs after elementary school. Dual language programs, a type of bilingual program, look to support students' bilingualism and biliteracy. Partly to blame for the stagnation of these programs includes the availability of target language curriculum and other instructional materials across subject areas, student attrition, and a lack of qualified content area teachers prepared to teach in the target language (Boyle et al., 2015; Montone & Loeb, 2000). Few teacher education programs currently prepare teachers to be dual-language teachers in secondary schools in California. A review of teacher education programs that have been accredited by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) in California to offer a bilingual authorization to secondary teachers revealed only two programs in the state (CTC, 2017). The scarcity of bilingually authorized secondary teachers may be the reason for the limited number of bilingual programs at the middle and secondary school levels.

In the northern California county where the present study took place, there are 16 dual language elementary programs, five dual language programs offered in middle school, and two at the high school level. A review of the middle and high school programs in the county shows that most subject areas are taught in English and two courses are offered in the target language. With goals of bilingualism and biliteracy by the time students graduate, it is difficult to see this possible with breaks in opportunity to build language and literacy skills in the target language.

The lack of bilingual programs at the secondary level means a missed opportunity to reap the benefits of knowing two languages for Latina/o students. In addition to social and cultural benefits, recent research on bilingualism suggests that there are also cognitive benefits to being bilingual. Healthy bilinguals across their lifespan have been recognized to have enhanced executive control (Bialystok, 2011; Bialystok et al., 2009). Executive control manages processes responsible for cognitive functions like attention, reasoning, problem solving, and planning. Perhaps due to enhanced executive control, bilinguals also benefit from a delay in the onset of behavioral variants of dementia by four to six years (Alladi et al., 2017). A recent study on individuals who had recently suffered a stroke found that while bilingualism does not delay aphasia after a stroke, aphasia is less severe for bilinguals when compared to monolinguals (Paplikar et al., 2018). There is also evidence of economic benefits of bilingualism, particularly salary benefits for bilinguals in the beginning stages of their careers (Agirdag, 2014; Rumbaut, 2014). Our findings provide insights into the variables that promote and inhibit teachers' use of students' primary languages at the secondary level that would allow these students to reap the benefits of their bilingualism.

Bilingual Spaces in Secondary Level Content-Area Instruction

The bilingual education field has seen an increased call for bilingual instruction in target language and English-medium classroom environments. This is particularly good news for Latino/a students whom perform best academically in these instructional spaces. Moreover, the field is shifting from a static and isolated view of bilingualism to one of dynamic bilingualism where languages interact and influence one another (de Jong, 2016). The dynamic language practices of bilinguals have been called translanguaging (García, 2009; García & Wei, 2014). We use translanguaging as a theoretical framework to understand the language practices of the bilingual secondary pre-service teachers of focus in our study. As such, we view the natural and flexible language practices of bilinguals as the norm. Translanguaging recognizes the existence of a single linguistic repertoire from which bilinguals and multilinguals draw from to negotiate and make meaning in a variety of communicative spaces.

Bilingual teachers are developing expertise in leveraging translanguaging to support student learning (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; García et al., 2017; Mazak & Carroll, 2016). Pontier and Gort (2016) report on dual language bilingual teachers enacting translanguaging practices to support students' vocabulary development and understanding of the structures of the narrative genre. In this study, a teacher is captured requesting a student's use of target vocabulary in English, creating a space for Latina/o student response in Spanish and later following up in English. Such fluid language practices make allowances for Latina/o students to use language features (i.e., vocabulary) that are most salient for the task at hand. This practice breaks from previous dual language models where teachers were trained to keep languages separate, so as to not confuse students (Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey, & Pasta, 1991). Below, we review studies on the language practices in dual language secondary level environments and recommendations of translanguaging

as pedagogy in English-medium content area classrooms delivering instruction to Latina/o students.

Language practices in target language content instruction

As noted above, most dual language programs can be found in elementary schools, and there are few studies on dual language teaching practices at the secondary level, especially high school. Dual language programs in secondary schools often consist of language arts and social studies in the target language (de Jong & Bearse, 2014; Menken & Avni, 2017; Montone & Loeb, 2000). The remainder of the content areas are often taught in English.

In a recent study of a Hebrew-English dual language middle school program in New York City, Menken and Avni (2017) describe teachers' use of flexible language practices instead of strictly separating languages in instruction as recommended by city dual language bilingual education policy and much of the dual language literature. The middle school offered Hebrew-medium instruction in a Hebrew language and culture class and social studies (Menken & Avni, 2017). Teachers shared content videos in Hebrew and engaged the class in discussion in English while using Hebrew expressions; included Hebrew-English glossaries in worksheets; permitted students to translanguage in the classroom; and often provided English, Arabic, and Hebrew definitions for key vocabulary (Menken & Avni, 2017). Menken and Avni (2017) argue that flexible language practices were necessary to provide students with a wide range of home language practices and exposure to Hebrew with access to and engagement with content. Translanguaging in secondary level content areas can be helpful, however, an absence of quality content material in the target language can pose instructional challenges. In describing Spanish-medium social studies instruction in dual language middle schools, Rodríguez-Valls, Solsana-Puig, and Capdevila-Gutiérrez (2017) lament the challenges that a lack of quality social studies sources pose to teaching social studies in Spanish. Noting the rarity of bilingual primary sources, Rodríguez-Valls et al. (2017) describe the possibilities afforded by Article I of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo when students analyze, interpret, and compare texts in Spanish and English. Given the lack of bilingual historical primary sources for use in United States social studies classes, teachers are often tasked with translating original sources. Such translation, however, requires teachers and students to be cognizant of the cultural or structural features lost in translation (Rodríguez-Valls et al., 2017). Rodríguez-Valls et al. (2017) argue for a horizontal collaboration model where social studies and target language arts teachers work together to identify skills, strategies, and common assignments that will promote advanced levels of bilingualism and biliteracy.

Middle school teachers in de Jong & Bearse's (2014) study of a two-way immersion (TWI) strand within a school recognized the advantages of collaboration between social studies and language arts teachers. The absence of common planning time, however, posed challenges to social studies and language arts collaboration (de Jong & Bearse, 2014). Similar to the challenges described by Rodríguez-Valls et al. (2017), middle school social studies teachers in de Jong and Bearse's (2014) study reported a lack of grade level high quality target language materials. This unequal access to high quality content materials required teachers to spend additional time preparing lessons because of the translation work involved. Two-way immersion social studies teachers also shared that the expectation to align their curriculum with other middle school teachers restricted their ability to more fully explore issues of social justice important to the TWI mission (de Jong & Bearse, 2014).

Translanguaging opportunities in English-medium content instruction

While dual language classroom environments provide fertile ground for teachers and students to access and use their full linguistic resources, bilinguals in English-medium classrooms[1] can also draw on their linguistic resources to use a language other than English. The well-known Sheltered-Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP; Echevarria et al., 2007) includes "clarifying key concepts in first language" as a feature and thus suggests leveraging students' bilingualism to make sense of academic content in English-medium classrooms. In a study examining the efficacy of the SIOP model in science instruction, researchers found positive trends but the differences between the SIOP and control group were not statistically significant (Echevarria et al., 2011).

In a study of two small high schools in New York City, García, Flores and Chu (2011) describe the bilingual practices that teachers and students enact within schools that do not meet traditional definitions of bilingual schools. Cooperation Academy, one of the small schools in the study, has taken great care to hire Spanish-English bilingual teachers, guidance counselors, aides, and school administrators and gives students the option to complete key long-term projects in Spanish, English, or in both languages (García et al., 2011). The second school, International High School, also hires bilingual staff and encourages students to use the languages of their choice to make sense of the content. Students use Google Translate and peer language tutoring and the teachers often interact with groups of students in the languages the students are using (García et al., 2011).

Recently, researchers and practitioners (Celic & Seltzer, 2012; García et al., 2017) have created educator guides aimed at providing strategies and activities to leverage students' bilingualism to learn content. García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2017) present Stephanie's classroom, an 11th grade social studies teacher, as an illustrative example of how a monolingual teacher can enact translanguaging pedagogy in high school. In a unit on César Chavez, Stephanie provided all students with Spanish and English readings side by side, gave students a choice on reading one version or both, and emphasized that students were free to take written notes in the language of their choice. Stephanie often encouraged students to use their complete linguistic resources to take notes, analyze and discuss texts, and to answer worksheet questions (García et al., 2017).

These studies suggest there are spaces within instruction at the middle and secondary school level to bring to bear the linguistic resources of emergent bilinguals. Yet challenges exist, including availability of materials and time to translate materials. These studies observed various practices with in-service teachers. The present study focuses on pre-service teachers and their teaching practices as they navigate integrating both Spanish and English into their instruction.

Methods

A case study approach was implemented to capture complexities of the individual participant in their unique classroom context and do so holistically. This allowed us to report individual (e.g., Spanish language proficiency, Latina/o identity) as well as context (e.g., school language policy, language of instruction) characteristics and specifically how the two influenced each other. The case study design permitted us to go in depth with our participants in what Yin (2017) refers to as 'real-world context'.

Case Study Participants

Luis (pseudonym) is male. He is 28 years old and holds a Bachelor of Science in

biological sciences with a minor in chemistry. His ethnic background is Latino (Mexican-descent), and he is fluent in Spanish and a primary speaker of the language. He describes his fluency in Spanish as more colloquial than academic. He is currently in the Single Subject Science intern pathway and is in the Bilingual Authorization program. He matriculated in the Bilingual Authorization program to be able to instruct in Spanish to ensure newcomer students would gain access to the chemistry content he was hired to teach. He is the teacher of record in a high school with 95% Latinx students, where he teaches chemistry.

Karla (pseudonym) is female. She is 28 years old and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology. She is a native Spanish-speaking Latina (Mexican-descent) and describes herself as working to develop her academic Spanish. She is currently in the Single Subject Science pre-service Bilingual Authorization pathway. Karla enrolled in the Bilingual Authorization program to ensure her students had opportunities to sharpen their Spanish language skills. She is a student teacher in a high school with 52% Latinx students, where she teaches sheltered biology.

Diana (pseudonym) is female. She is 26 years old and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history with a minor in education. She is Latina (Peruvian-descent) and is a native Spanish speaker. Like Luis and Karla, Diana is working to develop academic Spanish. Her goal in enrolling in the Bilingual Authorization Program was to support her students in using all of their language skills to learn U.S. History and civics. She is currently in the Single Subject Social Science pre-service Bilingual Authorization pathway. She is a student teacher in a high school with 22% Latinx students, where she teaches U.S. History and civics.

Setting

The teacher education program where the participants were enrolled offers a post-baccalaureate Single Subject Preliminary Credential across subject areas—World Languages, Social Science, English, Mathematics, Science, and Physical Education. The program integrates professional coursework and clinical field experiences guided by state teaching performance expectations. Candidates have a year-long clinical experience with a seasoned cooperating teacher in a school context that is diverse linguistically and ethnically. There is an integrated Master of Arts in Teaching degree, which candidates receive upon successfully completing the teacher education program. To fulfill the program, candidates must complete 50 quarter units, the equivalent of 17-ten week courses. The program can be completed in one year (Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring) or two years (Fall-Winter-Spring-Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring). The same number of courses are covered in both the one and two-year programs. Simply in the two-year program, the courses are spread across a two-year span. The program is situated in northern California where Latina/o students make-up 38% of the student population.

The teacher education program also offers an intern teacher pathway. This pathway allows teacher candidates to be employed full-time while they complete the teacher education program on a part-time basis. Students in the intern pathway take the same courses as those in the pre-service pathway, yet do so in a different sequence and with a different partnership structure with the collaborating school districts for their clinical experience. Instead of a cooperating teacher, interns have a mentor that is typically the department chair of the program.

Pre-service teachers can also enroll in the Bilingual Authorization program. Pre-service teachers that decide to add on this authorization to their preliminary credential must show proficiency in Spanish, complete three additional courses (Bilingual Foundations, Bilingual Methods, Latina/o Language and Culture) and be placed in a clinical site with a cooperating teacher

that teaches in their students' primary language, bilingually, or in English with many primary language supports.

Instrument

We used an interview protocol to document how novice teachers made sense of their bilingual practices. An interview protocol was used to capture participants' reflections of their instruction as well as their planning. These reflections allowed us to capture the plans teachers were making for Spanish language, and they also provided opportunities for critical reflection that allowed them to see instances of where the translanguaging practices may have been possible. The open-ended interview posed questions with probing follow up queries around three main topic areas: a.) participants' background; b.) subject area learning goals, and; c.) emergent bilingual pedagogy.

Demographics. The participant background information questions included questions about age, ethnicity, and educational background, as well as questions about languages spoken by participants. Participants were asked to describe their Spanish and English language proficiencies around areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Participants were also asked to tell what their first language was and the context in which they learned Spanish and English.

Subject Area Learning Goals. This section of the interview posed questions about the subject area the participants were teaching and materials used to teach the content, as well as learning goals they had for their students. Participants were also probed about their sense of efficacy in teaching their content area, as well as efficacy in teaching their content area in Spanish. Additionally, participants were asked about the resources they had available to teach their content and to teach their content in Spanish (e.g., *Do the curricular materials you use provide the support you need to be a successful teacher of your content? How so?/Why not?*). Given some participants are in the pre-service teacher pathway, and therefore assigned a cooperating teacher, we asked about the support the cooperating teacher was providing to assist the participant in becoming a more successful teacher of the content.

Emergent Bilingual Pedagogy. Participants were also asked about the bilingual pedagogy they employed and if they employed it, why they did so. Questions were posed about how successful the participant felt as a teacher of emergent bilinguals, challenges they faced teaching the subject to emergent bilinguals, and the supports they received from their school to support the schooling experiences of emergent bilinguals. We also asked questions about the support the cooperating teacher provided to ensure the success of emergent bilinguals. Participants were also asked to evaluate the curricular materials being used in the classroom for their support (or absence of) in leveraging emergent bilinguals' primary language (e.g., *Do the curricular materials, or your cooperating teacher promote the use of the students' primary language?*). We also posed two questions that had participants consider the instruction they provided and whether the students' primary language was leveraged. One question posed: "*Think back to instruction you provided in the last week. Have you had the opportunity to use the students'* primary *language in your instruction? (probe: Can you provide some examples? If none, ask about online resources in L1; bilingual dictionary; L1 use*)." A second question about the participants' own emergent bilingual pedagogy had participants reflect on a lesson plan they had constructed for their content and students (participants were asked to bring 2-3 lesson plans they had previously taught in their teaching placement--*Take a look at one of the lesson plans you have prepared. Do you see instances where you leveraged the students' primary language? In retrospect, are there ways in*

which you might have drawn on or built on the bilingualism of the students? (probe: are there ways in which you might have elicited students' primary language? How? Where?).

Each interview was conducted at either the participant's school site or at an office of the teacher preparation program. The interviews took approximately 30 minutes to complete. No incentive was provided to the participants for their participation in the research. Participants were informed that the interview could be conducted in whichever language(s) they preferred.

Data Analysis

To identify the practices our pre-service teachers engaged in as they worked to leverage their high school students' bilingualism, we conducted interviews and collected a lesson plan and a reflection of the lesson. During the interview, we asked the pre-service teachers to walk us through the lesson plan and identify spaces where they saw opportunities to leverage their students' bilingualism. We first coded interview transcripts to identify prevalent themes (Miles et al., 2013) within each interview, or case. Then, we compared and narrowed prevalent themes across participants. We reviewed lesson plans and reflections to confirm or disconfirm evidence forming the themes. Our findings draw on the most prevalent themes having to do with leveraging of the pre-service teachers' and students' bilingualism in the high school content.

Findings

Luis: First Case Study Participant

Several variables influenced the degree of primary language support that Luis provided his students. These variables include a school context where the Latina/o students' primary language is valued and expected to be utilized to support student understanding; a highly linguistically homogeneous student body; being a teacher who embraces the use of technology to support his students; and lastly, his training to become a bilingual educator. Below we unpack these constructs that we culled from Luis's interview.

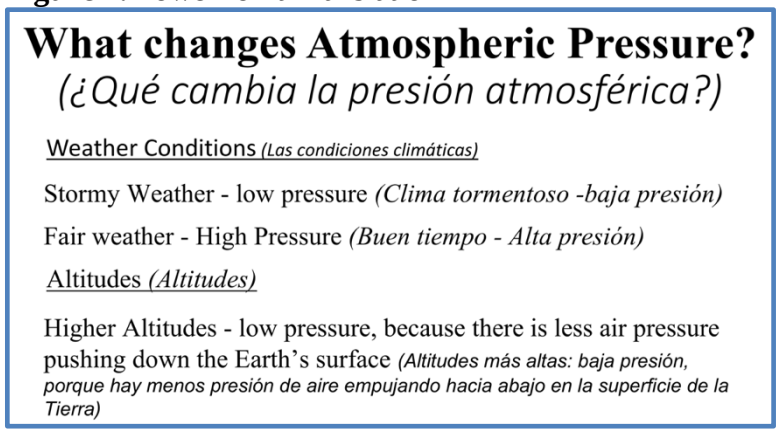
School Context. The school where Luis completed intern training is largely comprised of Latinx (97%) and White (1%) students (2% was unspecified). While not much support is available for Luis to leverage the bilingualism of his students from the curriculum he is expected to use or assistance from the administration in the form of professional development, Luis sees the school as valuing students' bilingualism. The school is primarily made up of English Language Learners. In the 2016-2017 school year, only 4% of the student body was identified as "English-Only" students. The school's mission is to graduate students that are "bi-literate in English, Spanish, mathematics and science." A quick tour of the school website reveals that this is a critical goal of the school, as information about the school is available in both Spanish and English. For example, the parent and student handbook are available to download in both Spanish and English. Garcia (2001) suggests this welcoming aspect of bilingualism in schools makes for a better adjusted student body. Yet, in the classroom, Luis reveals the school could do more to support his efforts to leverage the students' primary language. He states:

> I think we need more improvement with that [support to provide Emergent Bilinguals]. Right now, we need more resources—materials, para-educators that are bilingual would be great. We have some students with very little English and others that are fluent. It's hard to teach all those students. A bilingual paraprofessional would be able to help me with students that need more help. (February, 2018)

When asked specifically about the curriculum materials he uses to teach chemistry, he mentions that the educative elements of the curriculum do not offer any help to leverage the Latina/o students' primary language. This is similar to the findings by Boyle and colleagues (2015), where they found that the absence of educative curriculum features addressing the home language of students. The more generic English Learner pedagogy suggestions are offered like "use visuals, review vocabulary." Moreover, in the school context, his mentor teacher has not provided Luis with the models of how to use the students' primary language to teach chemistry. In the interview, Luis mentions that his mentor teacher has provided him with excellent feedback on making his instruction culturally relevant to students, but not with helping Latina/o students use their primary language to learn the chemistry concepts he was responsible for teaching.

Linguistic Homogeneity. Luis mentioned that the classes he teaches have been entirely filled with Latinx students identified as Latina/o English Learners, and he suggests this is the reason he has been able to provide primary language support in his chemistry sections. During class lectures, Luis uses powerpoint to relay key concepts to students. He mentions that he has translated these powerpoints to Spanish and made them available to his students. See the below example.

Figure 1. PowerPoint Translation



Luis mentions that this type of support would not be possible if he had languages beyond Spanish and English represented in his classroom. When asked, "*How are your students responding to the instruction you provide in terms of both learning and engagement?*" Luis responds that the Latina/o students are learning. He mentions that 85% of his students are engaged. Luis explains that the students who are not engaged are those identified as English Language Learners with very little English proficiency. For these Latina/o students, he provides the lecture notes in Spanish. He declares that he has also found reading material in Spanish about the topics they are studying and sends these resources home with the students. In his lectures, he also calls attention to cognates and makes it a point to call on students who appear to be least engaged in the class in order to motivate them. He does state ,though, that he struggles with finding the Spanish cognate of some words. He gave the example with *thermodynamics*. He was not sure if in Spanish, the two morphemes are flipped and hence pronounced *dinámicaterma*. Yet after some instruction about word order in Spanish to his class, his students found an example in their Spanish reading material where the term is pronounced *termodinámica*. Such conversations about science vocabulary have been shown to support both language and content learning for Latina/o English learners (Bravo & Cervetti, 2014).

Technology. Luis has found technology to be a particularly useful tool to integrate Spanish into his instruction—Newsela, Google Translate, YouTube. Luis uses Newsela, a database of leveled reading materials, to provide his students with reading material about topics he is covering in class in Spanish. He downloads these reading materials and sends them via email to his students with the goal of building background knowledge. Luis likes these texts because they are written at a reading level that is accessible to his Latina/o students. Below is one example of a text he made available to his Latina/o students.

Figure 2. Spanish Reading Text

Pequeños sismos bajo el Monte Santa Helena sugieren que el magma está cargando las cámaras

By Alan Yuhas, The Guardian, adaptado por la redacción de Newsela
05/15/2016

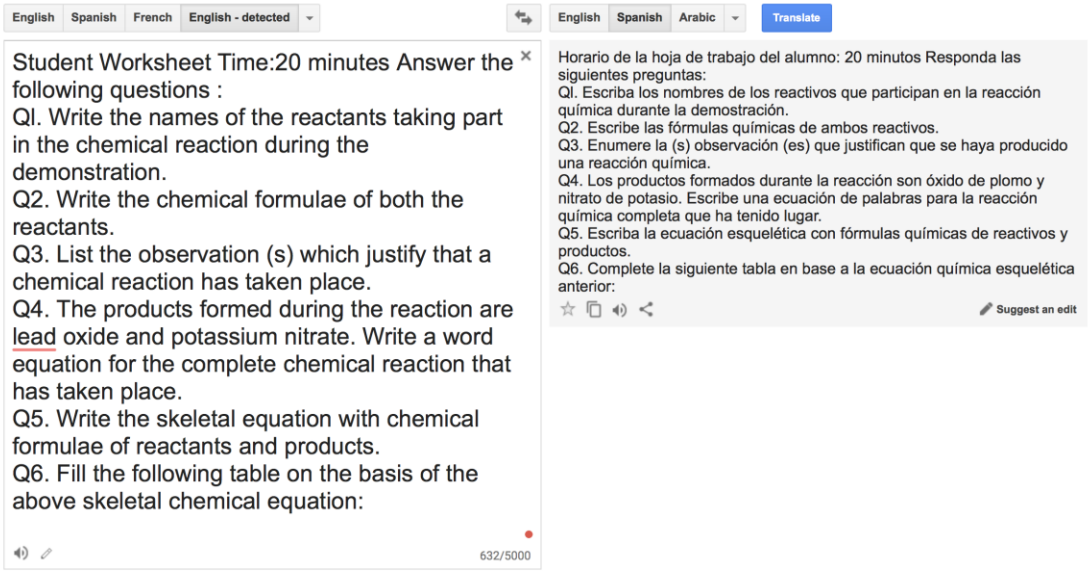
Grade Level **7**

Word Count **484**

El Monte Santa Helena emite un penacho de vapor y ceniza el 1 de octubre de 2004.

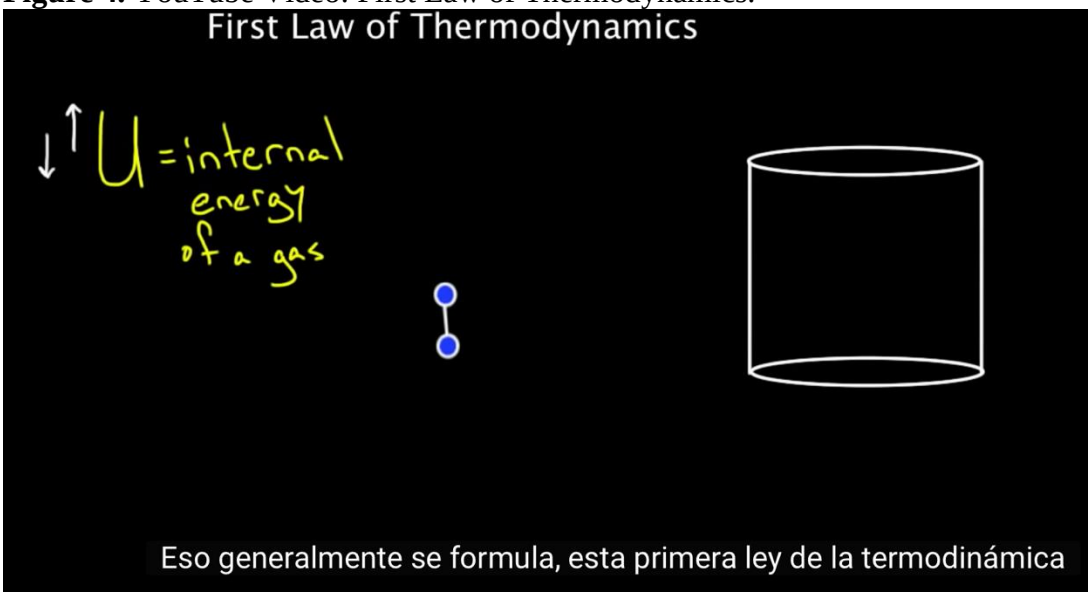
Google Translate is another tool that Luis uses to translate worksheets, instructions he provides to students, and lab reports that students will complete. Google Translate allows a person to import, or copy and paste, text, and the translation application will translate the text to multiple languages. Below is an example of a translation that Luis made.

Figure 3. Google Translate of Instructions.



Luis also makes use of YouTube to illustrate various chemical reactions. To integrate the Latina/o students' primary language, Luis turns on Spanish subtitles or allows his students to view the video with Spanish overplay. Below is a screenshot of one of the YouTube videos with the Spanish subtitles he utilized.

Figure 4. YouTube Video: First Law of Thermodynamics.



These strategies that Luis employs are partly implemented for accessibility reasons (e.g., Latina/o students learning the periodic table or about chemical reactions) but also to engage and motivate his Latina/o students (e.g., feeling their language is welcomed, feeling proud of bilingualism).

Bilingual Training. Luis partly attributes his explicit models for integrating Spanish into his teaching from the bilingual training he is receiving. In the interview, Luis was asked to review a lesson plan he had created and to reconsider some of the instructions he provided. He was given several minutes to review his lesson plan that he had submitted for a course and that he taught at his intern placement. Pointing to the anticipatory segment of his lesson plan, he recalls, "Say the instructions in Spanish. It would not take long to do." Then pointing to the procedure segment of the lesson plan, he states, "Model the materials that had to be used in the lab and model in Spanish." He mentioned that he often thinks about using the primary language of Latina/o students solely in the beginning because it can motivate students, but now as he rethinks the lesson, he sees space for the primary language to be integrated at various points throughout the lesson. He continues to explain that at the close of the lesson he could have allowed students to share what they learned with a bilingual buddy in Spanish and then have them translate that to English, if the Latina/o student was capable.

Luis saw a space for integrating Spanish into his instruction, even though the curricular materials he was provided did not suggest leveraging Latina/o students' primary languages. He has been resourceful with technology to make his instruction more accessible through the integration of students' primary languages. He pays close attention to ways he can integrate the use of Spanish in his chemistry class to not only allow his students to acquire deep understandings of chemistry, but also to motivate them to be engaged in wanting to learning chemistry and to be proud of their bilingualism.

Karla: Second Case Study Participant

Karla's student teaching placement classes and classroom demographics played key roles in the amount of primary language support she provided in class. Both of the classes to which she was assigned were identified as sheltered biology classes, and her students were linguistically and ethnically diverse. We turn to Karla's interview to describe the challenges she faced in using students' primary languages in instruction.

School context. The school where Karla completed her student teaching is largely comprised of Latinx (52%) and Asian (39%) students. Only 12% of the students in her school were identified as "English Only," or monolingual English speakers. The high school makes important documents available in Spanish, Vietnamese, and English. The documents in the community's home language signals an effort to make information accessible to non-English speaking students and families. The school offers sheltered courses in an attempt to provide emergent bilinguals with access to content while supporting their English language development. Sheltered courses traditionally have the primary goal of learning content and secondary goal of acquiring English.

Classroom context. Karla was placed in two sheltered biology courses for her student teaching. The first course was made up of students whose first language was Spanish and were identified as English Learners, but spoke predominantly English in class and with peers. The second course was largely comprised of students who had recently arrived in the United States with beginning English proficiency. When asked how successful she felt as a teacher of emergent bilinguals in her sheltered biology classes, Karla shared that she's been struggling with wanting to provide primary language instruction and knowing that her sheltered class focuses on biology *and* English language acquisition. She explains:

> It's really hard. I feel like I'm battling a lot with having this class where my students are supposed to be learning English, and biology, but I can't teach them in Spanish... how do I...Like I can't sit there and give this part of the lesson in English and then repeat the exact

> same thing in Spanish. It's, I don't feel like it's feasible, so it's really difficult to know what parts I need to go over with the students in Spanish. I don't know. (February, 2018)

When asked if she uses any Spanish in her teaching, Karla replied:

> I try. Yeah, I'll translate words here and there and be like, 'hey, do you know how to say this?' and someone will pop up and say it to the whole [class] and I'll be like 'yeah' you know, that makes sense, that's great. So, I try, I just don't know how much Spanish to bring into the classroom would be appropriate? And I talked to my field supervisor and he's like 'yeah, you know, but you have to tell them the purpose of this class is to learn English,' but I'm like 'yeah, but I'm not just going to be like sorry, learn English.' So, it's something that I'm trying to figure out. (February, 2018)

Karla struggles with identifying what content to cover in the students' primary language, especially since her classes are formally assigned as "sheltered." This challenge is compounded because she has newcomers in her classes with very beginning English proficiency. Karla explains:

> I have three students who have been in the country one or two months, so I can really only talk to them in Spanish, and I have some difficulty. Sometimes, you know, I have them talk in partners and things like that and like help each other translate, but then I feel like guilty, because it's like, 'you speak English and Spanish, now translate everything for this student.' I don't think that's fair either. So, I'm battling with that. (February, 2018)

Karla's lesson plan documented the use of Spanish to translate vocabulary. She asked the class to help translate, and she also partners bilingual students with newcomer students, but she feels uneasy about having students be responsible for translating course content. Like the findings from Menken and Avni (2017), Karla's translanguaging practices included utilizing both languages rather than keeping the languages apart. Karla's reluctance to use her Spanish to provide primary language support for Spanish speakers is not only due to the "sheltered" designation of her biology class, but also to the linguistic heterogeneity of her classes and her desire to provide equitable access to all of her students.

Linguistic heterogeneity. Unlike Luis's school where most of the students were Latinx and shared Spanish as a primary language, the largest student populations at Karla's school were Latinx and Asian. The students in her classes were primary speakers of Spanish and Vietnamese. Karla's Spanish was helpful in making content accessible to Spanish speakers, but her inability to speak Vietnamese and provide the same support to all of her students worried her. Her worry was brought to the surface as she shared her concerns about using Spanish to aid students in her classes:

> What about my students who are Vietnamese, and they speak Vietnamese? Is it fair for me to use all of this Spanish and be like 'well you guys can deal with the English?' So, I feel guilt sometimes, right? So there's this one time where a student's like, 'oh Ms. Nguyen would translate for us,' and I'm like, 'I would if I could. I don't speak Vietnamese. I'm sorry.' (February, 2018)

Karla's guilt about not being able to provide Vietnamese language support like she did for Spanish was evident by the tears streaming down her face when she shared this. Her inability to provide the same support for both groups of students was clearly a source of deep concern. While she was unable to provide the same level of primary language support for her Spanish and

Vietnamese speakers, Karla translated vocabulary terms into Vietnamese using Google Translate (as evidenced by her lesson plan); provided structured notes where students could fill in the missing information as they learned the content in class; used visuals; and encouraged students to use their Chromebooks for electronic translations. Sometimes, Karla translated entire handouts into the students' primary languages. Even though Karla struggled to identify when to provide primary language support, she explained that she often translated important biology concepts into Spanish and asked the class for help translating the concepts into Vietnamese. When using instructional videos, Karla was aware that she could turn on captions for primary language support, but she questioned the quality of the translations, especially for Vietnamese, since she was unable to verify the translations herself.

Overall, Karla wanted to provide primary language support in her sheltered biology class but was unsure how much and when to draw on students' home languages. Her primary goal was to help students develop scientific thinking and an understanding of biology. She was aware that, because she taught sheltered biology, she also needed to help students develop their English language skills. In her mind, using primary language support was inconsistent with the goal of developing the English language. She made instructional decisions based on what she thought would help her students learn biology and develop scientific thinking and used primary language support as a result. Still, she questioned whether she was making the right decisions in using primary language support and worked to provide her Vietnamese speaking students with equitable access to content.

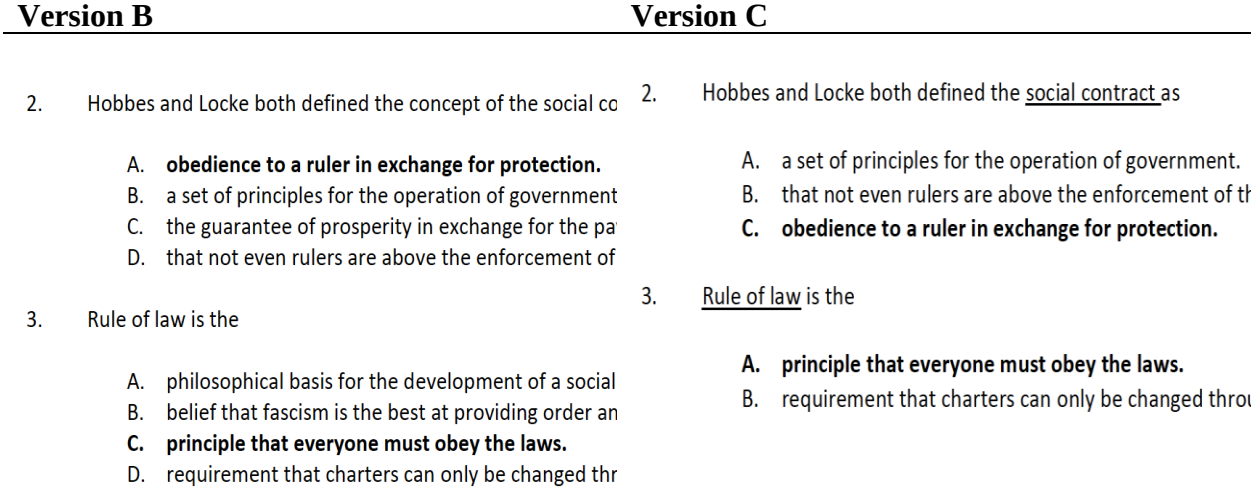
Diana: Third Case Study Participant

Diana's school and classroom context were quite different from Luis's and Karla's placements. Diana's school is located in an affluent area in northern California that has access to many resources. For her student teaching, she was assigned to teach U.S. History and civics in classrooms with few Spanish speaking students. The low number of emergent bilinguals in her classroom and the department's expectations for instruction created challenges to Diana's ability to leverage her Spanish to provide primary language support. Even though she saw little room to provide primary language support in her placement, Diana worked to develop her content specific Spanish and rehearsed her lessons in her primary language.

School and classroom context. Diana completed her student teaching placement in a school where approximately 65% of the students were identified as speaking "English Only." . The school student population was comprised of 4% Black or African American, 36% Latinx, 20% Asian, 22% White 12% Filipino and 4% unspecified. According to Diana, she had one emergent bilingual in her U.S. History class and three in civics. Her emergent bilingual student in U.S. History demonstrated advanced English proficiency and a solid understanding of content, so Diana did little to provide him additional support. In civics, Diana provided the same support to emergent bilinguals that her mentor teacher provided. She had little flexibility to do otherwise because the civics department all followed the same curriculum and instructional methods. All civics teachers delivered a lecture using the same PowerPoint slides, used a department-created civics packet for every unit, and had students work on the packet for approximately half of the class.

Emergent bilinguals in all civics classes received an alternate multiple-choice exam, version C. The version C exam had simpler language, fewer answer options, and underlined key words. See the figure below for a comparison of version B and version C of a civics exam.

Figure 5. Version B and Version C of a Civics exam



Version B

2. Hobbes and Locke both defined the concept of the social co

A. **obedience to a ruler in exchange for protection.**
B. a set of principles for the operation of government
C. the guarantee of prosperity in exchange for the pa
D. that not even rulers are above the enforcement of

3. Rule of law is the

A. philosophical basis for the development of a social
B. belief that fascism is the best at providing order an
C. principle that everyone must obey the laws.
D. requirement that charters can only be changed thr

Version C

2. Hobbes and Locke both defined the social contract as

A. a set of principles for the operation of government.
B. that not even rulers are above the enforcement of th
C. obedience to a ruler in exchange for protection.

3. Rule of law is the

A. principle that everyone must obey the laws.
B. requirement that charters can only be changed throu

Deviating from the civics curriculum and modifying instruction in a way that differed from how the civics department at the school taught would have meant going against her mentor teacher's instructions and department expectations. Reflecting on her attempts to modify instruction at the beginning of the school year, Diana says:

> I've asked if I could stray away from it and they're like 'no, the students need to work with the packet, no matter what, it has to be done.' So that's the issue that I'm running into in which, at first I was really frustrated, and I was like 'but my kids need more than this, right?' When they're up and they're talking and stuff, they're really active, right, and they're really engaged, but if I'm telling them to sit down, you know, 'be quiet, look in your textbook for the answers,' then, of course, they're going to be a little bit turned off to it all. That's what I struggled with at first, but because now I've just learned to just accept it, I don't want to be like problematic in the department, because any change that I make, they would have to approve and implement as well.

At the time of the interview, Diana was teaching civics the same way as the rest of the team and she had only used Spanish a handful of times with her Spanish-speaking emergent bilinguals. The times when she used Spanish were to ask for assignments or to remind her Spanish-speaking students of the work they needed to submit.

Spanish Fluency in Social Sciences. Diana shared that while she considers herself fluent in Spanish, she has difficulty with Spanish vocabulary terms specific to her content areas. When asked for an example, she said:

> Como se dice 'New Deal,' right? Or como se dice 'Cold War,' or como lo llamaron, si tenía un diferente nombre...so, I think the New Deal would be an example right, because I think in Spanish, es la 'Nueva Regla'? Something like that, right, which when translated, it's not the same. Yeah, it's not the exact same, right, so things like that, where it's like, the perspective is different; why would they call it that versus the New Deal? And then what about Regla, why? Why is there a difference there? So, things like that. Maybe battalion...coup d'etat, you know, they're very specific, which is not even English. It's a French word that I now have to learn in Spanish.

To learn the Spanish translations for content specific terms, Diana turns to resources shared in her bilingual authorization courses and other resources she can find online. She struggled as did the participants in Rodríguez-Valls et al.'s (2017) study who found few quality resources available in the primary language of their students. Diana also turns to her mother, a primary Spanish speaker and immigrant from Peru, for help with Spanish translations and to practice her U.S. History lessons before teaching in front of the class. Diana rehearses the lesson by teaching them to her mother in Spanish. She does this as a way to make sure she has a thorough understanding of the content before teaching the material in English. She explains:

> In order to feel comfortable in my content, right, I'll have my powerpoint made in English, but I'll call my mom over, and I'll go [over] each slide in Spanish in order to help solidify my understanding, because sometimes I'll have to like play with the idea and I feel like, if the idea is not solid in English, then I can't translate it into Spanish. So, I found myself a lot of the time I'll be explaining these concepts and I'll be like wait I don't know, wait is that really what I want to say, and then I'll have to think over it again. Then at the same time, I learn Spanish with my mom.

By pushing herself to explain history concepts to her mother in Spanish, Diana created a self-check system that allowed her to identify areas that she needed to further develop. If she was able to explain history concepts in Spanish in a way her mother understood, then it was likely that the concepts would be clear to her students as well. While Diana had little flexibility to provide primary language support in her student teaching, she leveraged her own bilingualism to solidify her understanding of content and added to her knowledge of content-specific terms in Spanish. Due to the scripted nature of instruction provided by Diana, the lesson plan reflection was not conducted with her.

Mediating Factors in Primary Language Integration

Several variables mediated the role the primary language played in the instruction the three participants provided to their secondary level students. Context, resources, and curricular materials were some variables that brought about the use of the primary language in their sciences and social sciences courses. Below we describe these variables and how they impacted the participants differently.

School Context

The goals and missions of their schools mattered in how two of the three participants viewed the role of students' primary language in schooling. Luis's school provided many signs that he should leverage the students' primary language in his instruction. In comparison, this theme was not referenced in Karla and Diana's interviews. For Karla, in particular, she understood that given she was teaching a sheltered biology course, she needed to focus on teaching biology and provide opportunities for her emergent bilinguals to practice using and hearing English. This perspective of what it means to teach a sheltered course does not parallel with what sheltered instruction can include. Sheltered instruction includes the use of the primary language to make the content comprehensible (Echevarria et al., 2006). In the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), a common model used in schools to deliver content instruction, the primary language is suggested as a strategic practice to make content comprehensible--"Ample opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in L1 [primary language]" (Echevarria et al., 2006, p.16). Both the

teacher education program and the school where Karla is a student teacher need to emphasize that sheltered instruction includes space to leverage students' bilingualism.

Classroom Linguistic Demographics

The linguistic makeup of the students they served offered each of the three participants differing strategies to integrate the primary language(s) into their instruction. Diana had few emergent bilinguals in her class while Karla had more, but her students represented multiple languages. Luis's Latina/o students were overwhelmingly emergent bilinguals and were all primary Spanish speakers. Luis's class, while hyper segregated by language, as described by Gándara (2012), provided the easiest path to deliver primary language instruction in his course. Luis did not have to feel the guilt Karla felt when she was unable to support her Vietnamese students via their primary language. He could also use the primary language more often than Diana, given she only had a few Spanish-speaking students and not in every course where she was student teaching. While not mentioned by the participants, the primary language abilities of students also vary and may create challenges for students to learn content in a language where they may not have strong command of the academic register in that home language.

Curricular Materials

Only Diana mentioned that the curricular materials she was using provided examples of how to leverage the primary language of the Latina/o students to assist them in their content learning. The adopted materials that were provided to her had a bilingual glossary in her social science textbook. Students were able to view key vocabulary defined in their primary language to support their understanding of and participating in the learning of the content. Luis mentioned he would welcome his chemistry book being available in Spanish. He referenced absent these texts, his new arrival emergent bilinguals would miss out on a lot of chemistry content. More quality materials like those developed by García and colleagues (2017) would be welcomed by Luis. Establishing multilingual collaborative groups, utilizing multilingual texts, and leveraging bilingual glossaries would have helped Luis in assisting his students in understanding the chemistry learning goals he set for them.

Educative features in curricula are critical aspects of teacher's learning (Beyer & Davis, 2009), and not including elements of how the primary language can be leveraged to support content area learning is a missed opportunity. Some curricula identify cognates in the texts that students will engage with during instruction, as well as provide links to elements of the text in the students' primary language (Cervetti et al., 2015). Utilizing educative features of curricula to share with teachers' different approaches to integrating the students' primary language(s) during instruction can offer additional models for teachers to support their emergent bilinguals.

Primary Language Proficiency

Using their academic Spanish language proficiency, the participants were able to mediate the primary language integration into content. Luis struggled with the vocabulary of the content in Spanish, as did Karla. Diana similarly felt it necessary to practice the lessons she would deliver to her emergent bilinguals in Spanish with her mother. The teacher education program where the participants enrolled assessed their Spanish language proficiency, but the assessments conducted did not gauge the academic language of the contents they would teach. The program must do more to support the disciplinary language of the content in Spanish. Currently, the program offers three courses that are delivered in Spanish to continue the development of language. Given the struggles

our participants felt, these courses may require specialized attention to the academic language of the content in Spanish.

Discussion and Purpose for Primary Language Integration

The purpose for leveraging the primary language in their classrooms also differed among the participants. Pursuing biliteracy skills among their Latina/o students and motivating and engaging students, as well as providing the scaffolding necessary to give Latina/o students access to the content were some reasons provided for using the primary language. Below, we discuss these themes further in providing comparisons between the three participants.

The three participants, as Latina/o teachers used their linguistic capital to address the needs of their students. They felt it was necessary to use the students' primary language to give them access to the content they were delivering. The abstract concepts they covered in their courses were best made accessible to students by using their primary language. Graphic organizers or additional wait time, common English Learner pedagogy (Diaz-Rico, 2017), would not be sufficient to support the learning of content for their Latina/o emergent bilingual students. The primary language was a bridge to provide access to content and keep high school students on pace to graduate on time with their primary English-speaking peers.

For Luis, it was more than access to content that pushed him to integrate the primary language into his chemistry class. He described how he used the primary language in his instruction to motivate his Latina/o students and to get them excited about chemistry and about school in general. This affective element was not mentioned by Diana or Karla, who focused their attention on content when asked about why primary language support should be a part of content area instruction. Part of the difference may have been Luis's additional experiences working with Latina/o youth and could potentially be explained by how many Latina/o emergent bilinguals he works with in comparison to Karla and Diana.

Luis similarly wanted his students to graduate being bilingual and biliterate. This was partially guided by the Seal of Biliteracy opportunity that students at his school can attain. Luis's school offered and promoted the State Seal of Biliteracy. This is "a recognition by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English" (California State Board of Education, 2012). The Seal of Biliteracy was also an option at Karla and Diana's school sites, although not as widely advertised as at Luis's school.

Conclusion

Secondary level Latina/o pre-service and intern teachers in the study made instructional pivots to integrate the primary language(s) of their Latina/o students into their content area instruction. They did so for various reasons, including providing access to content, engagement, and promoting biliteracy. Yet, they also faced several challenges in doing this work. The curriculum they used to deliver instruction did not provide the resources they needed, and the support from administration and mentor teachers was not provided in this effort either. Notwithstanding, the novice Latina/o teachers we interviewed were very resourceful in finding material online and leveraging the language support of others, as did Diana with her mother, or Karla pointing out cognates to her Latina/o students.

To reap the benefits of bilingualism as found by Bialystok (2011), Latina/o emergent bilinguals will need Latina/o teachers that have the training and tools necessary to support Latina/o students' primary language(s) beyond the elementary grade classroom. Latina/o Pre-service

teachers will need additional support in their courses to develop the type of bilingualism that includes the language of the disciplines, including the pedagogical Spanish competencies necessary to teach a variety of content areas (Aquino-Sterling, 2016). Programs that train Latina/o pre-service teachers to be bilingual teachers at the secondary level must consider the type of obstacles that Latina/o pre-service teachers face at their clinical site in integrating the primary language of students. Addressing these obstacles will ensure Latina/o pre-service teachers get a chance to implement and see the benefits of integrating the primary language of their Latina/o students into their content and subsequently give their students a chance to build academic bilingualism. These efforts to prepare teachers to leverage the linguistic and cultural capital of Latina/o students at the secondary level is critical to address the college opportunity gap. Bilingual teaching practices provide teachers with the tools to ensure Latina/o students are college ready.

NOTES

1. English Medium classrooms are instructional contexts where the English language has been designated as the language of instruction. This means the teacher provides instruction in English and with materials that are written in English.

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JLER
Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

HOW ARE CALIFORNIA'S LATINA/X/O STUDENTS FARING?: CHARTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' SPANISH/ENGLISH DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT

Despite the widespread popularity of both Dual Language Programs (DLP) and charter schools in California, little is known about the intersection of these two school models. In a quantitative study utilizing several statewide databases, researchers explored four questions related to DLP and charter schools: 1) How many Latina/x/o students attend charter DLP? 2) What are the student body characteristics (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, EL status) found in charter DLP vs. neighborhood-based attendance (NBA) DLP? 3) Do Latina/x/o students in charter DLP outperform those in NBA DLP? 4) What are the teacher characteristics (credential status, misassignments) found in charter DLP vs. NBA DLP? Analysis revealed previously unknown basic demographic information about student and staffing characteristics in DLP, as well as significant differences between charter and non-charter DLP in schoolwide mean language arts CAASPP scores and proportional enrollments of Latina/x/o, white, and Asian students.

Keywords: Dual language, charter schools, school segregation, California, Latinx, Hispanic students

Introduction

In California, where the public school population is now 55% Latina/x/o[1](California Department of Education, 2020), Dual Language Programs (DLP)[2] are increasing in popularity. In the 2018 report *Global California 2030*, the California Department of Education (CDE) outlines a plan to quadruple the number of DLP in the state by 2030 as "part of a larger effort to better prepare students for twenty-first century careers and college, recognizing that multilingualism is an essential skill" (p. 5). DLP, whose goals are for students to achieve bilingualism, biliteracy, grade-level competence, and sociocultural competency (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2015), are lauded for their ability to bring together students from different language backgrounds to learn together in the same classroom. Supporters claim that participation in DLP raises student test scores and better prepares students to compete in the global economy (e.g. Lindholm-Leary, 2005).

However, for all their promise, there is much that remains unknown about DLP in California and the United States more broadly. In *Dual Language Education Programs: Current State Policies and Practices* (2015), the U.S. Department of Education recognized the need for further research, citing the need for states to accurately count the number of programs in existence and to collect information about student demographics. The report called for further studies exploring what features of DLP lead to increased student acquisition of content. But, in order for this type of research and evaluation to be possible in California, we must first focus our efforts on creating a comprehensive account of the state's DLP that includes information on various attributes including student, teacher, and program data.

As DLP gain attention, a different movement for school reform has gained traction and become a popular topic of national conversation; the charter school movement has sparked debates about school choice, fairness, and accountability with commentators claiming variously that charter schools embody the promise of experimentation, the establishment of a mechanism by which poorly performing or unmotivated students could be easily expelled, or the long-term strategy of breaking the teacher unions. Like DLP, results of studies connecting student performance in charter versus neighborhood-based attendance (NBA) schools have been uneven and difficult to interpret (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005; Gill, 2016). Some researchers have called into question whether charter schools are using fair enrollment practices (Renzulli, 2006), while others have focused on charter schools' extreme variance in resources and teacher qualifications depending on local context (Bodine et al., 2008). Charter schools are often described in the literature and the wider media as "schools of choice," a term we argue is both inaccurate and unfairly biases readers against "traditional" public schools. We therefore refer to non-charter schools as neighborhood-based attendance, or NBA, schools, highlighting the historical and common approach to assigning students schools. NBA schools have, of course, failed a great many students in the past hundred years of widespread public education, but because school districts have, especially in recent years, permitted students to transfer from one NBA school to another, it is not accurate to say that NBA schools are not a "choice." In fact, under NCLB (No Child Left Behind), districts were required to offer parents whose children attend "low performing" schools the choice to move schools. Whether parents had the resources (e.g., transportation options) to move their child to a different school is another matter entirely.

Of California's 570 elementary charter schools, it is unknown how many are also DLP. With 10.5% of California's students enrolled in charter schools and 55% of California's students identifying as Latina/x/o (California Department of Education, 2019), research exploring the intersection of these two major educational reforms and their impact on the Latina/x/o community is urgently needed. Despite our current "Age of Accountability" making available more data about schools and students than ever before, basic information about California's DLP is still lacking. Although individual student data would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of differences between charter and NBA DLP, we decided it was worth carrying out this initial analysis using the data that is publicly available due to the importance of this topic.

Our study used 2018 data from several statewide databases, merged to create a more complete set of variables, to investigate the following research questions:

1. How many Latina/x/o students attend charter DLP?
2. What are the student body characteristics (ethnicity, socioeconomic status, EL status) found in charter DLP vs. NBA DLP?

3. Do students in charter DLP outperform those in NBA DLP?
4. What are the teacher characteristics (credential status, misassignments) found in charter DLP vs. NBA DLP?

The results of our study will be of interest to school districts and leaders in California who are concerned about the growth of new charter schools and their planned "charter," or instructional focus. Our study aims to provide school districts with previously unavailable information that can be of use as they make decisions about how to allocate resources and plan for programs and school models that have the best chance for student success. We hope that the results of this initial analysis will also provide a pathway for future study into this topic with a focus of creating a more comprehensive data set as time goes on.

Literature Review

Bilingual Education

While education in languages other than English (LOTE) has existed in this country in one form or another since its founding, it was not until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 that federal law introduced protections for LOTE speakers' right to equal access to education. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964) stipulates that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (p. 252). A 1970 memorandum by the Office of Housing, Education, and Welfare (HEW) further clarified that Spanish-speaking students' inability to access the English-only curriculum constituted discrimination on the basis of national origin and required districts to take "affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency" (35 Fed. Reg., 11595). While the HEW memorandum did not specify any specific action or the possibility of native-language instruction for non-English speakers, these documents were used in two court cases, *Serna v. Portales Municipal Schools* (1972) and *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), which respectively ruled that Mexican-American students were constitutionally entitled to instruction in Spanish and that non-English speaking students were entitled to special instruction to aid them in accessing the curriculum (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1990, p. 37).

As a result of these rulings, bilingual education gained traction in the United States as a means for districts to fulfill their responsibilities to non-English speaking students, primarily in the form of Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), also known as early-exit bilingual education. In the TBE model, students entering school are taught content knowledge in their native language while simultaneously receiving instruction in English, with the goal of transitioning students into mainstream English-only classrooms as soon as possible (Malakoff & Hakuta, 1990). While TBE was an improvement from the "sink-or-swim" model students were previously subjected to, the programs faced criticism and implementation issues. TBE classrooms were often perceived to be remedial programs by district actors, community members, teachers, and the students themselves (Collier et al., 2006). Furthermore, research has revealed uneven implementation of TBE in many classrooms where Spanish instruction has been neglected for a variety of reasons, including pressure from administration to exit students as quickly as possible, the perception that students should learn only in English to prepare for English-only standardized tests, and teachers who are certified bilingual but are not truly comfortable teaching in a LOTE (Hinton, 2015). In California, opposition to TBE as the default placement for minority language speakers was the basis for Proposition 227, which required parents to opt-in to bilingual education classrooms. Although the

ballot measure did not, as some have claimed, outlaw bilingual education, its passing created an opportunity for many districts whose commitment to bilingual education was already weak to shed what they perceived as costly and ineffective programs that served mostly poor, minoritized students (Gándera et al., 2000).

Dual Language Programs

As an educational reform, DLP owe their origin to the work of Canadian educators, who in the 1960s engaged in what was called the St. Lambert experiment. (Bruck et al., 1974). Native English speaking and native French speaking kindergarten students were placed in the same classroom and received content instruction in both languages. The goal was full bilingualism and the capacity to learn challenging academic content in both languages. Their model, more or less, has been implemented many thousands of times worldwide and especially in the US. (Kim et al., 2015). In contrast to TBE, the goals of DLP are "full bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level academic achievement, and multicultural competency" for both native English speakers and speakers of other languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2005, p. 56). DLP can be classified as either one-way or two-way, with one-way programs serving a linguistically homogeneous group of students (more than two thirds of students are dominant in one language) and two-way programs where about half of the students are dominant in each language (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2018, p. 3). While TBE served only language-minority students, DLP gave native English speakers the opportunity to learn a second language and were able to attract upwardly mobile, predominantly white families (Valdez et al., 2016).

DLP have steadily gained popularity in the United States since the 1990s (Wilson, 2011). Their proponents point out the economic advantages of bilingualism in the global job market (Lindholm-Leary, 2005), and claim that DLP students consistently outperform monolingually-educated students on English assessments of academic skills across all domains (Rolstad et al. 2005; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Willig, 1985). With such lofty claims, it is not surprising that many school districts are eager to approve DLP where students are sure to become "the high achievers of this planet" (Collier et al., 2006, p. 30). While these studies paint a clear picture, others point out the difficulty in determining whether DLP participation truly results in higher levels of student performance given the self-selecting nature of these programs. Several studies have shown that EL students educated bilingually (either through a TBE or DLP model) have better long-term outcomes for language proficiency and academic achievement than EL students educated in an English-only program (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017), and a 2015 study by Valentino and Reardon found that students in DLP models had the best outcomes over time despite initially scoring lower on tests of English language and academic proficiency when compared to students in TBE programs.

If the academic rewards of DLP are great, so, too, are the risks if the programs are poorly designed. The Center for Applied Linguistics' *Guiding Principles of Dual Language Education* (2018) stresses that programs with a high level of planning have the highest level of student success, and cautions that "there should be a clear rationale for modifications, and programs should avoid frequent changes based on an uncritical attempt to keep up with the latest curricular or instructional approaches" (Howard et. al, 2018, p. 13). DLP, like TWB, can suffer from uneven implementation, and many have begun to raise questions about whether the needs of LOTE speakers are being neglected as schools and districts cater to the best interests of their more affluent English-speaking students (Valdes, 1997; Valdez et al., 2016). Valdes (1997) warned that in DLP with high levels of social and economic inequality between students in different language groups,

minority-language speaking students would become domesticated language teachers for middle and upper class white students, whose bilingual abilities would allow them to secure jobs that were once the domain of the Latina/x/o community. Many believe that the primary benefit of DLP are their social goals; while TBE segregated students from one another based on native language, DLP are intended to promote what has been variously referred to as biculturalism, multiculturalism, or sociocultural competence. Bringing together students from different language backgrounds as equals who help each other become bilingual is certainly a noble goal, but DLP must be vigilant to avoid the recreation of inequities in the classroom.

Testing in Dual Language Programs

Willig (1985), in a meta-analysis of 23 efficacy studies of bilingual education programs, found that bilingually-educated students consistently outperformed their monolingually-educated peers on English-language assessments of mathematics, language arts, reading, and "total achievement"(p. 269). In a similar meta-analysis of Arizona bilingual education models, Rolstad et al. (2005) found similar results, concluding that students participating in bilingual education programs scored higher on English-language measures of reading and mathematics proficiency than their conventionally-educated peers. While these results are promising, Baker and Lewis (2015) point out that there are many intervening factors that prevent clear conclusions regarding whether bilingual education causes higher levels of student performance. They note that DLP students are a self-selected group, and describe the state of our field of knowledge about bi- and multilingual education as "complex, kaleidoscopic, and sometimes conflictive" (p. 112). Flores and Beardsmore (2015) highlight the high level of within-group diversity among DLP models, and call for researchers to work towards a more nuanced understanding of bilingual education as a multifaceted enterprise rather than a single program model.

Many researchers have questioned whether state and federal assessment policies, which stipulate English-only assessments are fair and valid measures of emerging bilingual students' ability. The requirement of No Child Left Behind and its reincarnation, the Every Student Succeeds Act, that all students participate in English-language proficiency testing has created what Shohamy and Menken (2015) refer to as a "de facto English-only policy in all states" (p. 265). Although the previously mentioned meta-analyses found bilingual education students to score higher on English-language assessments, a study by Saalbach et al. (2013) showed that dual language high school students' performance on a math test was negatively impacted when the language of the test was different from the language of instruction. A 2006 study by Marian and Fausey found similar results when testing bilingual adults in one language when they had learned the information in a different language.

This picture becomes even more concerning when we consider that DLP may have a higher proportion of students classified as EL than traditional schools. Wolf and Leon (2009), in a comparative study analyzing mathematics and science items from 11 statewide assessments, found unsurprisingly that the linguistic complexity of test items was associated with differential item functioning between EL and non-EL students. The researchers found that it was the general academic vocabulary that appeared across multiple disciplines, and not the context-specific or technical vocabulary, that caused the greatest degree of difficulty for the EL students, speculating that general academic language may not be explicitly taught and thus disadvantaged the EL students. In a reaction to the differential success of EL students on standardized assessments, some researchers have explored modifying test items in an effort to make them equitable for ELs and provide a more reliable picture of these students' conceptual understanding and ability level in

mathematics. Sato et al. (2010) were able to linguistically modify test items in a way that maintained the validity of the item while increasing the reliability of scores for not only ELs, but monolingual English-speaking peers who had low proficiency in Language Arts (p. 53). While test item modification is a promising arena for future research and improvement of statewide assessment validity and reliability across student groups, the issues that arise from high-stakes, summative assessments are present, and perhaps magnified, in dual language classrooms due to the interaction of EL students and a multilingual curriculum.

The charter school movement

In the past two decades, partly as a result of the No Child Left Behind legislation, which notably avoided mandating prescriptive instructional practices and instead required that schools reach arbitrary scores on standardized achievement tests, educators and policymakers, especially, have largely avoided discussing *how* students are taught and instead engaged in fervent arguments over *where* they are taught and which types of schools produce the highest test scores. To the long-standing debate over the efficacy of public vs. private schools, policymakers in nearly every U.S. state amended laws and codes to permit charter schools, publicly funded schools given wide latitude in both the types of students they enroll and the qualifications of the teachers they hire. Indeed, the performance and growth of charter schools has become *the* primary educational reform debate (Jason, 2017).

Charter schools were first approved by the California state legislature in 1992, just one year after Minnesota approved the country's first charter school legislation. From their inception, charter schools saw rapid and consistent growth, with nationwide charter enrollment tripling to over 3 million students between 2007 and 2018 (Lake et al., 2018). Charter school expansion has slowed; however, since 2016, the expansion of charter schools has dropped off nationally and in California, with charter school proponents citing decreasing availability of facilities, a saturated market, and increasing political opposition to charter schools (Lake et al., 2018). While those in favor of the charter school movement claim that charter schools allow for educational innovation unencumbered by the regulatory restrictions faced by NBA schools, detractors warn that charter schools are a neoliberal scheme to privatize public education, break up teachers unions, and siphon resources away from existing public schools (Jason, 2017). Research on the effects of charter schools on neighboring NBA schools have shown effects ranging from negative to neutral to positive, leaving the picture unclear (Gill, 2016).

Staffing in charter schools

Some of the largest arguments against charter schools have dealt with the differences in teacher characteristics between charter and NBA programs. Several studies have found significant differences in teacher turnover, with charter school teachers leaving at dramatically higher rates than their NBA school counterparts. Stuit and Smith (2012), in a study of teacher attrition in charter vs. NBA schools in multiple states, found that teacher attrition in charter schools tended to hover between 20-25% compared to the 11-14% range found in traditional public schools. The authors found the factors most associated with teacher attrition to be years of experience and credential status, with new and un- or under-credentialed teachers leaving at rates as high as 40%. The explanation for these high turnover rates may be connected to personnel policy differences found in charter versus NBA schools--charter schools in many states are able to hire large numbers of un- or under-credentialed teachers, and teachers at charter schools are less likely to be members of unions and more likely to be at-will employees (Miron & Applegate, 2007; Newton et al., 2018;

Podgursky & Ballou, 2001). Matsudaira and Patterson (2017) found that California charter school students' achievement in mathematics was positively associated with teachers being unionized, but their study found only 28.2% of charter school teachers were unionized compared to the 93.6% of unionized California teachers identified in the 2008 schools and staffing survey.

Students in charter schools

The range of research on charter schools has been far-reaching. Many have addressed questions regarding the ethnicity of students served by charter schools (Renzulli, 2006), while others have explored the difference in academic performance, if any, between students who attend charters schools vs. those who attend neighborhood-based attendance (NBA) schools (Clarke & Burt, 2019; Toma & Zimmer, 2011). The results of dozens of studies are uneven at best. Several researchers have raised questions about charter schools' admittance practices towards students with disabilities, and a 2012 report by the Government Accountability office found that charter schools enrolled only 8% students with IEPs compared to the 11% found in traditional public schools. Some studies show that charter schools often enroll a disproportionate number of Students of Color who outperform NBA students, but the picture is inconsistent (Buddin & Zimmer, 2005). Epple, Romano, and Zimmer (2015) found that student enrollment in charter schools has been changing: between 2001 and 2010 charter schools substantially increased their proportions of Latina/x/o students (19% to 27%) and students receiving free/reduced lunch (30% to 50%), while proportions of African American and white students decreased over that time period by 4% and 5%, respectively (p. 8). Whitehurst et al. (2016) found that charter schools were on average more segregated than traditional public schools, tending to serve more homogeneous student populations than their neighboring NBA schools. These results were corroborated by Monarrez et al. (2019), who found that district charter school enrollment was positively related to district levels of segregation for Black, white, and Latina/x/o students with the most dramatic effects of segregation appearing in suburban districts with low enrollment of Black and Latina/x/o students and urban districts with high enrollment of Black and Latina/x/o students. In an extensive report on charter school segregation, Frankenberg et al. (2011) found that Black charter school students were the most likely to be enrolled in highly segregated schools, although Latina/x/o charter students were also more likely to be enrolled in highly segregated schools than their NBA counterparts, a pattern that was seen nationwide and in California specifically.

Much of the attention on charter schools has focused on African American students' academic performance in charter vs. NBA schools (Bodine et al., 2008; Whitehurst et al., 2015). For instance, after hurricane Katrina, New Orleans schools, which served primarily African American students, "reformed" the entire school system to a charter model. Whether the reformed charter schools have served students any better is an open question, but the political controversies have been shrill. However, one significant group of students attending charter schools has remained largely unstudied: elementary-aged students who attend DLP in California. At present, we do not know how many Latina/x/o students attend such schools and almost nothing about their academic performance. Of the few studies exploring DLP in charter schools, most have addressed teacher quality or teacher experiences (Gebhard, 2002). And yet the pedagogical and administrative demands of delivering a high quality DLP are well known (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008). We wondered if charter schools are offering a coherent program to the Latina/x/o students who attend charter DLP and students' levels of academic achievement. Our initial questions, such as the number of charter DLP, were more mundane, but still largely unexamined in the literature.

We have both methodological and theoretical purposes in studying a relatively small number of students. True, Latina/x/o students at charter DLP make up a small proportion of the Latina/x/o students in California, but it is an important group. First, in choosing to study only DLP, we have identified schools with somewhat common purposes and goals, thereby making the comparison more valid. Of course, we admit that a school can claim to offer a comprehensive DLP even if the actual educational experiences do not match. If DLP deliver on their promise of both promoting bilingualism and encouraging the mixing of ethnic and language groups (Téllez, 2010), then we should be concerned about the effectiveness of this unique pedagogical experiment. And when the school is also a charter school, the importance of the results are compounded, because now we are exploring the consequences of two significant educational experiments, one pedagogical and one structural.

Methods

To create a statewide database of elementary DLP, researchers started with a publicly-available list of California DLP from the California Department of Education, containing 334 DLP. As this database was created in 2012, we anticipated that more DLP may exist. We then searched the county office of education websites for the largest counties, which captured an additional 16 DLP. This yielded a list of 350 DLP. Ten were found to be high schools or middle schools and deleted from the list, and researchers added seven more programs that they learned were initiated after the first publicly available list was created[3]. The resulting list of 347 elementary DLP is likely the most comprehensive to date considering that the CDE does not maintain a current list of Dual Language Programs, although without a reliable state-maintained database, it is likely our database still undercounts the true total[4]. Grade-level mean 2018 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) scores for third, fourth, and fifth grade language arts and mathematics tests were collected from the CDE website for each school and added to the data set, and schoolwide mean CAASPP score variables for mathematics and language arts were created by taking the mean of grade-level mean scores for third, fourth, and fifth grades.

Next, data from the 2017/2018 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) was used to add each school's enrollment data and staffing data, as well as each school's California Directory Search code so that future research would not depend on using schools' names, which appear differently in different state databases. Student data included each school's total enrollment, percent of students in each ethnic group, percent of students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), percent of students who were designated English Learners (ELs), and percent of students receiving free or reduced lunch. Staffing data included information from 2016, 2017, and 2018 on each school's number of teachers who were fully credentialed, working without a full credential, or working outside their area of competency, as well as each school's count for misassigned teachers of ELs, total teacher misassignments, and total unfilled teacher vacancies.

Finally, a statewide database of charter schools, created by selecting for "public," "elementary," and "charter" in the California Public School Database (available online from the CDE) was compared to our database of elementary DLP, which identified 26 charter DLP schools. We removed 33 schools that had partner languages other than Spanish, resulting in 314 Spanish elementary DLP with 25 of those being charter schools. We chose to use only DLP with Spanish as the partner language, as our research interests are specifically tied to Latina/x/o students attending Spanish/English DLP. Our final Excel spreadsheet was then read into SPSS version 27. Initial analysis consisted of simple counts and measures of central tendency, which were then

followed by independent samples t-test to determine whether differences in means between the charter and NBA groups were statistically significant or simply due to normal variation in the data.

Results

Student body characteristics

According to the schools' reported enrollment data for 2018, 13,381 Latina/x/o students attended charter DLP in California, accounting for 8.6% of the 155,668 Latina/x/o students attending DLP. Across all elementary DLP, Latina/x/o students accounted for 72.1% of the 215,894 students enrolled. However, the percentage of Latina/x/o students was not the same for charter and NBA DLP, and independent samples t-test revealed significant differences in the ethnic makeup of charter versus NBA DLP.

Table 1

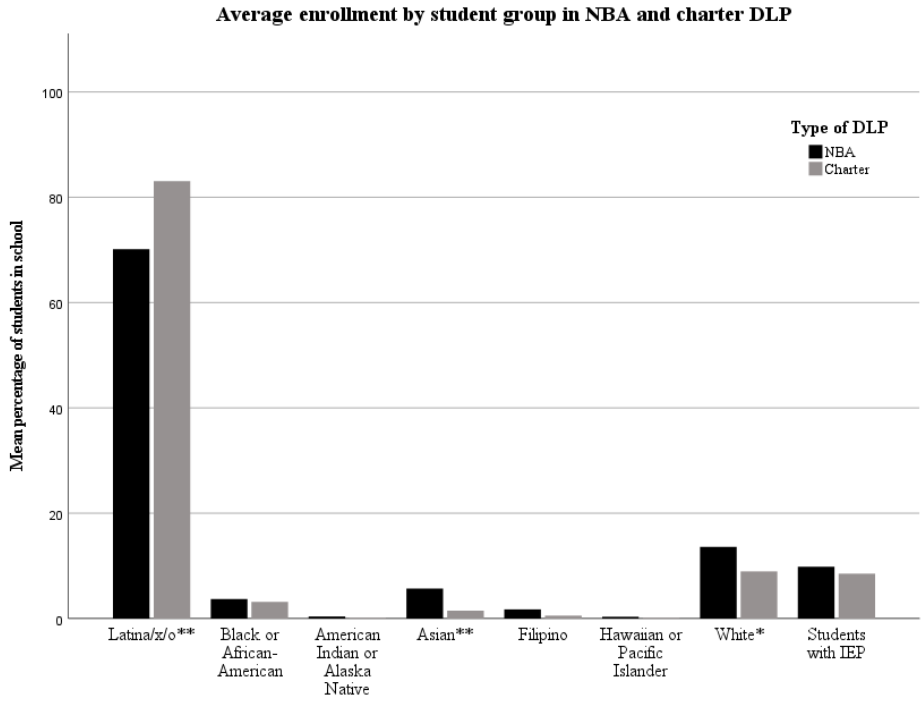
Latina/x/o enrollment in California Spanish/English elementary DLP in 2018

Student group	Number enrolled
Total students enrolled in DLP	190,904
Total Latina/x/o enrolled in DLP	136,578
Total students enrolled in NBA DLP	174,769
Latina/x/o students enrolled in NBA DLP	124,240
Total students enrolled in Charter DLP	7,089
Latina/x/o students enrolled in Charter DLP	6,050

The charter schools had a significantly higher percentage of Latina/x/o students than NBA schools--charter DLP had a mean of 83.06% Latina/x/o students, while the NBA DLP mean was just 70.04% ($t(43.17)=-2.05$, $p<.01$). Conversely, charter DLP had less Asian and white students than NBA DLP. The charter schools had a mean of 1.51% enrollment of Asian students compared to a mean 5.66% in NBA DLP ($t(189.98)=-5.0$, $p<.01$), and 8.94% enrollment of white students versus a mean of 13.71% found at the NBA DLP ($t(35.16)=-2.07$, $p<.05$). Furthermore, the charter schools had a lower percentage of students with IEPs than the NBA DLP--8.53% versus 9.83% ($t(33.25)=2.04$, $p=.052$). While this is a small difference that approaches significance, the underenrollment of students with disabilities in charter schools is a trend that has been seen in previous studies (Government Accountability Office, 2012), and therefore should not be ignored.

Figure 1

Differences in student body makeup in charter vs. NBA DLP



* $p<.05$ ** $p<.01$

Note. Mean enrollment by student group for DLP in 2018--statistically significant mean differences can be seen for the Latina/x/o, Asian, white, and Students with IEP groups.

Despite these differences in student body makeup, other enrollment features were not found to be significantly different when comparing charter DLP to NBA DLP. Both types of schools had similar mean numbers of students and percentages of students designated EL or receiving free/reduced lunch. Mean total enrollment in elementary DLP was 610 students, while mean total enrollment in California elementary schools for 2018 was 506 students. While we do not know if this difference is significant, we thought it was interesting to note for future research as DLP may be enrolling more students than traditional elementary schools. As charter schools seem to be recruiting students with the same socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds as NBA, it raises questions about why their ethnic makeup differs significantly, and if this enrollment pattern is intentional or incidental. One of the primary goals of DLP is to encourage the mixing of cultures, bringing together students of various backgrounds to learn in the same classroom. With this in mind, the disproportionate number of Latina/x/o students in charter DLP and the significantly lower percentage of white and Asian students may mean that charter DLP are failing to integrate students from various ethnic backgrounds. There is certainly a great deal of linguistic and cultural diversity within the large group of students designated Latina/x/o, but without individual student data, and given inconsistencies in the accuracy of EL designations (Haas et al., 2015), the relationship between Latina/x/o identification and EL status remains unclear. Furthermore, with previous research revealing troubling inconsistencies in charter schools' teacher quality based on the ethnic and socioeconomic makeup of the student body (Bodine et al., 2008), it would be remiss to ignore this finding in future research.

Table 2
2018 Student body characteristics in California elementary Spanish/English DLP

Characteristic	Mean percentage
DLP students receiving free/reduced lunch	70.04%
CA students receiving free/reduced lunch	60.88%
DLP students designated EL	41.62%
CA elementary students designated EL	19.39%

Note. Statewide means have been included for reference.

Student achievement

The mean schoolwide 2018 CAASPP scores for California's elementary DLP were 2453.5 (SD=36.2) for Language Arts and 2456.9 (SD 31.9). For reference, the statewide mean for schoolwide elementary Mathematics and Language Arts CAASPP scores were 2461.3 (SD=85) and 2463 (SD=94), respectively (California Department of Education, CAASPP Reporting, 2018).[5]

When schoolwide mean scores on the CAASPP were compared between the two types of DLP, analysis revealed a statistically significant mean difference in the schoolwide mean language arts CAASPP with charter DLP showing scores a mean of 10 points lower than NBA ($t(38.16)=-2.05$, $p<.05$).

Table 3
2018 Schoolwide mean CAASPP scores for CA elementary Spanish/English DLP

Type of school, content	Mean score and standard deviation(in parentheses)
All DLP Language Arts	2447.30(36.98)
NBA DLP Language Arts	2448.62(37.65)*
Charter DLP Language Arts	2438.60(21.90)*
All DLP Mathematics	2451.4(34.45)

* $p<.05$

Note. Because the difference in mean score between charter and NBA DLP was not significant for mathematics, only the mean score across all DLP was included for the Mathematics CAASPP.

Staffing characteristics

We were able to compare teacher characteristics on five measures for school years 2016, 2017, and 2018 using the school staffing data found in the "Conditions of Learning" section of the SARC: number of teachers working without a full credential, number of teachers teaching outside their credential's competency area, number of misassigned teachers of English learners (those teaching ELs without an EL authorization), total number of misassigned teachers, and total teacher

vacancies. Although previous research has shown that charter schools often have higher teacher turnover and less experienced, credentialed teachers than traditional schools (Stuit & Smith, 2012), means were similar between charter and NBA DLP across all categories in our analysis.

Table 4
2016-2018 Staffing characteristics at California elementary Spanish/English DLP

	Mean number of teachers by year, standard deviation(in parentheses)		
Staffing characteristic	2016	2017	2018
Teachers without full credential	1.13(3.83)	1.13(2.85)	1.17(2.31)
Teachers outside area of competency	.17(.73)	.25(.88)	.34(1.21)
Misassigned teachers of ELs	.05(.26)	.11(.43)	.09(.47)
Total misassigned teachers	.15(.54)	.32(1.03)	.35(1.25)
Total teacher vacancies	.16(.51)	.07(.36)	.08(.36)

Note. This table shows the mean number of teachers in each category for the years 2016-2018.

Conclusions and Implications

The first guiding principle outlined in the Center for Applied Linguistics' 2018 *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* is that "all aspects of the program work together to achieve the three core goals of dual language education: grade-level academic achievement, bilingualism and biliteracy, and sociocultural competence" (Howard et al., 2018, p. 24). The similarities in students' mathematics performance between the charters and the NBA DLP suggest that students' grade-level achievement in mathematics is not affected by placement in a charter school, but the disparities in language arts CAASPP scores between the two school models is troubling. It is difficult to know why we see this difference in mean scores, but we speculate that the decreased ethnic diversity seen in the charter schools, both in the literature and our own study, may be connected; DLP rely on students having both English and Spanish models to learn from in the classroom, and it is possible that charter DLP, with their more homogeneous populations, might be falling behind in their ability to provide students with strong English-language models. Although the groups of students designated as Latina/x/o and EL certainly contain a substantial amount of within-group linguistic and cultural diversity, current measures do not adequately

capture this reality. For example, the current Home Language Survey (the first step in designating California students as EL) identified only 6% of students as potential multilingual learners, while a proposed updated survey identified almost 40% of students as multilingual learners (Haas et al., 2015). This lack of clarity around student demographic designations makes the true cultural and linguistic balance in DLP classrooms unknown.

We believe that our study fills an important gap in the research, and is a valuable first step to understanding more about DLP and charter schools in California. However, our study was not without faults. A major limitation in our comparison of student achievement in charter versus NBA DLP is the lack of a statewide Spanish-language test of academic achievement, making it impossible to know if students at charter and NBA DLP are gaining bilingualism and biliteracy at the same rates. While a Spanish language assessment[6] is currently in the process of being rolled out, state policy only requires English-language testing, and we are unable to compare student achievement and progress in LOTE. With only English-language assessment data, any analysis of student achievement in DLP is missing a vital component. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see the progress of the California Spanish Assessment in future years and how this new achievement data will clarify our picture of charter and NBA DLP. A second limitation of this study was our lack of access to individual student data. We hope that in future investigations into this topic we will be able to access individual, longitudinal student data, nested within classrooms within schools, allowing us to perform more advanced statistical analyses.

Apart from measures of student achievement, the disproportionate enrollment of Latina/x/o students versus white and Asian students that we see in charter schools calls their performance on the final goal of sociocultural competence into question. In our view, learning the language is just the vehicle to the broader cultural benefits that come from two-way programs. Unfortunately, schools and even school districts are becoming increasingly segregated (Orfield et al., 2003), and thus the opportunities to create well-designed, linguistically and ethnically diverse two-way programs may be decreasing. When DLP were originally conceived in the St. Lambert Experiment (Bruck et al., 1974), the mixing of cultures was heavily emphasized. In early formulations of two-way programs, biculturalism was seen as necessary for the model, requiring a classroom with an equal mix of English and LOTE speakers. With shifting demographics in the United States and California, especially, this model may be increasingly difficult to implement. Recent changes to the stated goals of Dual Language Education have shifted from "biculturalism" to "sociocultural competence," seemingly de-emphasizing the integration of students from different backgrounds in favor of a more general pedagogical focus on appreciation of diversity. But results from at least one DLP suggest that the cultural knowledge and interactions that students gain can be of equal importance to language development (Téllez, 2010).

As charter schools require parents to opt-in to a specific program, it is of utmost importance that parents truly understand what type of education their children will receive and the implications of one program model or another. A DLP and its associated promises of bilingualism, biliteracy, and linguistic/cultural integration, may sound quite attractive to parents. However, if these charter school programs lack the integration of linguistic and cultural groups and the balanced approach to language of instruction crucial to the initial conception of DLP, parents may unknowingly enroll their children into programs that have substantial differences from what they expect. A cursory review of how charter DLP websites are marketing their DLP appears to be inconsistent with what many educators think of as a DLP model. Along with many other educators, we believe that a key component offered by DLP is the opportunity for all students to learn literacy in their native

language, a program feature that seems impossible to fulfill in charter schools that advertise DLP with a 90-100% LOTE program for early elementary grades. Parents, who have put their trust in these schools to teach their children in two languages, have the right to full information about the type of program their children will truly experience.

John Dewey (1902) made famous a quote commonly attributed to Horace Mann: "one former is worth a thousand reformers." Dewey's use of Mann's quote, in our reading, was to emphasize that creative ideas and new methods outweigh mere critique of current models. While there is nothing wrong with reform, it must be done with caution, with consistent evaluation of outcomes, and vigilance to ensure that the reform is not being tested on children whose families may lack the knowledge or confidence to understand the potential effects of the reforms on their children's life chances. Although we believe in the value of DLP, the paucity of information around important issues such as basic demographics, student achievement, and the gap between research-based practice, policy, and implementation requires attention if we are to be sure that California's Latina/x/o students are not being short-changed. We hope that this study leads to further research that uses individual student data, nested within classrooms and schools, in order to better understand the relationship between school model, student and staffing characteristics, and student achievement in DLP.

NOTES

1. We prefer the somewhat unwieldly acronym Latina/x/o, in place of the now-common term Latinx, to represent students whose ethnic or national heritage is rooted in the geography of Latin America. Although now popular as a generic reference, Latinx emerged as a suffixation to represent "Latinos" who identify as nonbinary. Therefore, to use Latinx for all who represent this heritage is inaccurate. Our term includes those who identify as female, male, or nonbinary.
2. The terms used to describe language education programs are varied and often confusing. The programs we are studying have been described as two-way immersion, two-way bilingual education, dual immersion schools, and dual language programs, to name a few. We prefer dual language programs, or DLP.
3. These additional DLP were discovered by sharing our list with colleagues working with Dual Language education in California and asking if they noticed any programs we had missed.
4. Existing resources vary widely in their counts of California's DLP; The California Association of Bilingual Education's website directs visitors to DualLanguageSchools.org, an organization that lists 515 DLP in California, but does not separate schools by type (elementary versus secondary, public versus private). In contrast, The Center for Applied Linguistics' Dual Language Program Directory lists only 160 elementary DLP in California. The origin of the information in these two databases is unclear. Our database, though it may not be completely comprehensive, is based on the most current data available from the California Department of Education. Our database is available upon request.
5. The difference in standard deviation between the statewide and DLP datasets can be attributed to the state's dataset being based on individual student data, while the DLP dataset's use of schoolwide mean scores decreased the variation.
6. The CDE is currently in the process of rolling out a new test that aligns with Common Core State Standards for Language Arts, but the California Spanish Assessment (CSA) remains optional (California Department of Education, CAASPP Reporting, 2019). In 2019, the only year in which this test has been administered, 24,313 students in grades 3, 4, and 5 took the test, accounting for

only 12.7% of California's 190,904 third through fifth grade students attending DLP. It is unclear how many of the students who took the CSA in 2019 attended DLP, and the CSA does not presently have a mathematics component.

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JLER
Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

IGNITE THE LEADER WITHIN: VIRTUAL LATINX YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AMID COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Summer Youth Programs continue to grow as a way to provide alternative educational spaces for Youth of Color who are often framed in deficit ways and that position them as being "at-risk" or in need of assistance (Weiner, 2006; Brown, 2016). To address these perceived deficits, after school and summer programs have been created and funded to serve the needs of children and Youth of Color, in particular Latinxs and African Americans. The literature often centralizes a pathologizing narrative that Youth of Color need saving (Tuck, 2009) via Summer Youth Programs to "keep youth off the streets" and avoid delinquency (Baldridge, 2014). Recent scholarship points to the necessity to interrogate the underlying racialized discourse that permeates through summer youth programming towards one that acknowledges and centers youth agency, resiliency, and identity. This article presents findings from a study of Latinx youth that participated in a summer youth program hosted virtually through collaboration with the Prevention and Early Intervention Division of the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services, and two universities in Central Texas. Due to COVID-19, the summit was re-imagined virtually and strives to build and nurture a community of youth leaders. This qualitative study also examines and evaluates Latinx youth

participants' (ages 13 to 18) expectations of and experiences in the virtual summer youth summit. Our study questions included: 1) How do Latinx youth learn about leadership through an Online Youth Summit amidst COVID-19? And 2) How does the Youth Summit provide a (virtual) space to re-narrate Latinx youth leadership? Emerging findings indicate that Latinx youth were given opportunities to re-narrate leadership and activism, co-create networks and virtual connections with other Latinx and Black youth, and reflect on their own identities and community involvements.

Keywords: Latinx Youth, Youth of Color, Summer Youth Programs, Youth Leadership, COVID-19

Introduction

As of 2019, according to the Pew Research Center, Latinxs constituted approximately 18% of the total U.S. population (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020). Within the K-12 system, Latinx[1] students represent the largest minority population in the United States' western and southern regions, 41% and 21%, respectively (NCES, 2013). In a Latinx policy and issues brief published by UCLA's Chicano Studies Research Center, Pérez Huber and colleagues (2015) revealed that out of 100 Latinx students who begin at the elementary school level, only 63 Latinas and 60 Latinos graduate from high school. The policy brief indicates that the apparent increase in overall Latinx educational attainment in the last decade may be due to a general nationwide Latinx population increase of 18 million, or 5%, inferring that the gains may be attributed to the demographic change and not necessarily to more equitable education (Pérez Huber et al., 2015).

Summer youth programs often provide alternative educational spaces for Youth of Color who are often framed in deficit ways and position them as being "at-risk" or in need of assistance (Brown, 2016; Weiner, 2006). To address these perceived deficits, after school and summer programs have been created and funded to serve the needs of Children and Youth of Color, in particular Latinxs and African Americans. The literature and philanthropic efforts often centralize a pathologizing narrative that Youth of Color need saving (Tuck, 2009). Summer youth programs are often seen as a way to "keep youth off the streets" and prevent troublemaking and delinquency, since there is an underlying assumption that youth have an abundance of free time (Baldridge, 2014). Recent scholarship points to the necessity to interrogate the underlying racialized discourse that permeates through summer youth programming towards one that acknowledges and centers youth agency, resiliency, and identity.

This article presents a subset of data from a more extensive study that draws from non-Black Latinx youth experiences of youth who participated in the virtual Texas Summer Youth Summit from June 22nd to June 25th, 2020. The Youth Summit is an annual event that brings together young leaders from Community Youth Development (CYD) programs across Texas for an opportunity to build and enhance their leadership skills, ignite their commitment to service and positive change in their community, and provide opportunities to connect with and learn from their CYD network of peer leaders. Due to the global pandemic caused by COVID-19, the Youth Summit was hosted virtually for the first time in 2020. The youth leaders and leadership team reimagined a virtual Youth Summit that bridged together multiple youth sites throughout different regions in Texas. In order to better understand how the virtual format of the summit contributed to a space of youth empowerment, engagement, community activism, and leadership development, we draw from a culturally sustaining pedagogy framework (Paris, 2012) to pose the following research questions: (1) How do Latinx youth learn about leadership through an online Youth Summit amidst COVID-19? and (2) How does the Youth Summit provide a (virtual) space to re-

narrate Latinx youth leadership? This project speaks to the educational leadership, well-being, and educational pursuits of a multiplicity of Latinx youth.

Background and Literature Review

Summer Programming and Youth of Color

After school and summer youth program initiatives that serve Children and Youth of Color are often guided by deficit perspectives (Brown, 2016; Weiner, 2006). Research indicates that summer youth programs provide a safe space for youth to "drop in and hang out" (Halpern et al., 2000), provide youth with a designated mentor (de Anda, 2001), or have youth engage in activities and attend field trips (Perkins, 2007). Similarly, summer youth programs provide youth with employment opportunities or teach them employment skills. Most youth programs highlighted in research studies provide youth with programming that is preventative, diversionary, and enriching (Green et al., 2000). Community youth development (CYD) programs tend to focus on Youth of Color from lower socioeconomic communities. Previous research shows (Allen et al., 2006) that these youth were categorized as "at-risk" and "disadvantaged," framing youth in deficit terms because of where they live, their racial and ethnic backgrounds, and their families' socioeconomic standing. In addition to the focus on youth employment in summer youth programs, this categorization indicates an ideology of meritocracy. Modestino (2019) highlights that policymakers seek to utilize summer youth programs to offer an "alternative pathway" to youth that makes "criminal activity less attractive" (p. 601). The underlying assumption is that if youth have the tools to gain employment, they will stay out of trouble.

According to the literature, what are some of the impacts and successes of summer youth programs? Allen, Cox, and Cooper (2006) analyzed the resiliency results of disadvantaged youth who participated in an outcome-based camp compared to a "traditional" camp. The outcome-based camp implemented Benefits Based Programming (BBP), in which specific goals were set with activities purposefully designed to reach those goals. Traditional camps were camps that did not have goal-oriented activities. Compared to the traditional camps, BBP resulted in an increase in "resiliency" skills, while traditional camps did not show such results. In another study, de Anda (2001) interviewed youth and mentors to evaluate the impact of a mentor program for "at-risk" youth. Youth and their mentors built close and trusting relationships over time. Overall, the youths' expectations matched the outcomes, and they received favorable concrete, interpersonal, and affective benefits from the mentorship program. Other researchers developed theoretical propositions as to why and how summer youth programs work (Larson & Angus, 2011; Modestino, 2019). For example, Oakland Freedom Schools, implemented a culturally relevant summer Language Arts enrichment program for African American children. They saw that their curriculum positively influenced the youths' racial identity and views towards African/African American culture and precepts (Bethea, 2012).

COVID-19 & Online Interfaces: Re-narrating Latinx Leadership

The novel COVID-19 virus drastically altered many aspects of everyday life for people across the globe. Given the severity of the virus, numerous states across the U.S. temporarily closed down services and mandated "shelter in place" orders in March of 2020, which were set to stop the spread of the virus. However, as of July 2020, Texas had more than 430,000 cases as one of the states with the highest COVID-19 rates, according to the Center for Disease and Control Prevention (Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the U.S., 2020). Due to the rapid spread of

COVID-19 and the reality of the virus across the state of Texas and nationally, hosting an in-person summit was not possible due to the closure of the university campuses, where the summit would have been held. In addition, a face-to-face summit would have tremendously exposed youth, coordinators, and families to contagion. For these reasons, the youth summit was transitioned from an in-person summit to a virtual platform within weeks while maintaining the summit's purpose and mission to educate, engage, and empower youth. Although the youth summit was not initially envisioned to be virtual, this change provided an avenue to create multiple online interfaces to explore the role of virtual Latinx leadership, or what we call in this article, a step towards *re-narrating* Latinx leadership and activism.

George Floyd & Black Lives Matter Movements for Racial Justice and Against Police Brutality

Simultaneously, another pandemic was brought forth once again (and one that has been historically present for centuries): the systematic violence and institutionalized anti-Blackness that permeates through every facet of U.S. society, especially around police/ing. The murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police reignited a worldwide social movement for racial justice, and many news outlets noted this movement as the United States' most extensive collective action against racism and anti-Blackness (Buchanan, 2020). Coined by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, the #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM) movement garnered national recognition in 2015 after the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and the subsequent murder of Eric Garner in New York City by the cities' respective police departments. Although these two murders gained national media coverage, the #BlackLivesMatter movement expressed the enduring and generational violence against the Black community under the guise of "law and order." Black Lives Matter organizers have made great strides since 2015 to systematically address issues of racial profiling, institutionalized anti-Blackness, hyper surveillance of the Black community, and race-based murders by all law enforcement. However, the recent murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd demonstrated the perpetual negligence of the concerns raised by the Black Lives Matter movement and Black communities.

Given the immediate realities of the multiple pandemics occurring at the time of the Youth Summit, the virtual interfaces for the youth summit leadership also centered the importance of #BlackLivesMatter. As recent scholarship demonstrates (Dixson, 2017), schools often neglect the socio-historical contextualization of movements such as Black Lives Matter through watered-down multicultural curricula. Many scholars urge educators to critically examine the complexities and realities of Black Lives Matter through racially liberatory pedagogy, Black Lives Matter-aligned teacher education and the creation of a "language of solidarity" between Black and non-Black Latinx students (Castillo-Montoya et al, 2019; Martinez, 2017; Mayorga & Picower, 2017). In this light, the Youth Summit hosted an array of Black speakers and workshops centered on the Black Lives Matter movement through social media, emotional intelligence, mental health, poetry, education, art, music, and non-Black youth solidarity, among many other topics. Non-Black students, especially non-Black Latinx students, ideally would benefit immensely from a multiplicity of ways to engage processes of leadership that are conscientious of Black solidarity and the issues of Latinx anti-Blackness. The Director, Dr. Edwards, and some of the team members of the non-profit that hosted the youth summit identify as Black and shared their perspective on the importance of acknowledging Blackness and movements towards coalition building. Dr. Edwards explained:

> We serve based on who we are...We teach based on who we are. We can't separate who we are, our life experiences, how we are being and becoming. My experiences of growing up in predominantly white schools, my entire you know K through 12 experience. And really not understanding my own racial identity until late high school into college makes me passionate about wanting all [of] us to understand Black culture, Black history. Because, I believe that the whitening of our history, the whitening of our country is really the basis of how we maintain racism and education is the first place in our schools that...kids learn about race. And so from me being Black influences how I want kids to reimagine how they understand America and how they understand activism and understand the role of movements in this country because I think tied into every movement, we've ever had in this country, whether that's women's rights, farm workers rights, the civil rights movement...stem from enslaved Africans fighting to be free.

Latinx Youth in Texas

Discussing the school context in Texas is important to address the deficit perspectives often faced by Latinx youth, especially since they are founded on a socio-historical and political context of discriminatory practices that have negatively affected Latinx and Hispanic communities for generations (San Miguel, 2013; Valenzuela, 1999). Key factors such as school and residential segregation, racially segmented labor incorporation, denial of political access, and surveillance and containment by policing forces, including the Texas Rangers, have an enduring legacy that continues to influence the current context of Latinx, Tejanx lives in Texas (San Miguel, 2013). Systemic inequities continue to deny equal educational opportunities to Latinx, Hispanic students, often pushing youth out of schools or into the school-to-prison pipeline rather than to four-year universities (Robinson, Urrieta, Counts, 2014; Urbina & Wright, 2015). Valencia (2000) described, for example, the widespread school failure of African American and Mexican American students in Texas public schools by citing long-standing systemic public school inequities. Valencia (2012) showed that Latinx student failure is often the result of historic school segregation and deficit perspectives that structure the consequent limitations in the learning opportunities afforded to African American and Mexican American students in Texas public schools.

Using school district data, Valencia (2000) also highlighted the detrimental impact that segregated schooling has on African American and Mexican American students' academic achievement. Segregated schools produce inferior schooling and diminish academic performance, evidenced by lower scores on high-stakes standardized tests. Furthermore, students attending high minority schools in Texas were more likely to be taught by non-certified teachers, who were more likely to teach in schools with lower test scores, indicating a correlation between teacher certification and students' test performance (Valencia, 2000). Fassold (2000) also showed that exit-level testing in Texas harms African American and Latinx students, mainly because they attended schools with the lowest accreditation scores.

Latinx and African American students in Texas remain disproportionately tracked, especially into lower-level math courses, which has a long lasting impact on educational access (Fassold, 2000). Poor school quality and culturally irrelevant school curricula have a negative impact on learning opportunities and correlate to poor test performance, which is strongly associated with disparity in educational opportunity in Texas public schools (Conchas, 2001; Fassold, 2000). High school exit exams have also impacted African American and Latinx students'

high school graduation rates since the 1990s (Haney, 2000). Latinx, Hispanic students, especially those of low socioeconomic backgrounds, generally have systematically been denied positive learning opportunities in Texas, making it difficult for them to be academically prepared for four-year colleges or university enrollment despite the top percent admissions policies in place (Perna et al., 2010). Coupled with dwindling funding opportunities, Latinx, Hispanic students are often funneled to community college systems as their only option for entry into higher education (Del Real Viramontes & Urrieta, 2018). Even when they are enrolled in "higher status" schools, Latinxs are not seen as key contributors to educational policy regarding racial injustices and concerns for lack of diversity and representation at their respective schools (Rodriguez, 2017). Given this socio-political education context as well as deficit perspectives, Latinxs, Hispanic and African Americans are often targeted for after-school, summer, and other enrichment programs.

A Youth Summit Planned by and for the Youth as Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

We draw on the theoretical framework of culturally sustaining pedagogy to situate the youth summit's creation, the youth's responses to the summit, and future considerations for Latinx youth leadership. Culturally sustaining pedagogy calls for centering youth voice, advocacy for community-based educational accountability, humanizing research, and encouraging critical consciousness (Johnson, 2017; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Paris, 2012, 2019). Culturally sustaining pedagogy is not only responsive or relevant to the cultural practices and experiences of youth, but also supports youth in "sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities…" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). Youth are positioned as carriers of knowledge who draw from their communities' cultural wealth and their embodied epistemologies (Bernal, 2002; Yosso, 2005). One of the aims of culturally sustaining pedagogy is to raise critical awareness and to center youth voices. The Youth Summit generated a space where Latinx youth could collectively re-narrate their understanding of leadership. A group of youth representatives shared their opinions, perspectives, and ideas at monthly meetings and planning workshops. Youth leadership informed programming decisions and guided the planning and virtual implementation of the Youth Summit. Therefore, both the process of creating the summit and the summit itself had deep connotations of culturally sustaining pedagogies that spoke to centering youth epistemologies (Paris & Alim, 2014) and honoring the communities from which they come (Yosso, 2005).

Additionally, through culturally sustaining pedagogies, we unsettle the "damage-centered" discourse (Tuck, 2009) of youth summer programming by centering youth voices, and allowing them to re-narrate their own experiences of leadership and advocacy; in essence, to *hablar por mi mismo* (to speak for myself). Paris and Alim (2014) state that equity and access will best be achieved "...by centering pedagogies on the heritage and contemporary practices of students and communities of color" (p. 87). Culturally sustaining pedagogy requires knowledge of what youth in the community deem to be of cultural, linguistic, and sociopolitical significance, not only historically but also contemporaneously.

However, while it was critical to center youth voices, it was also crucial, from a culturally sustaining pedagogy framework, to continuously raise youths' critical consciousness. Paris and Alim (2014) warn that it is necessary to examine and critique ways in which youth expression may be regressive or problematic (ex: homophobic, misogynistic, racist) and to give youth opportunities to learn and grow from these moments. These moments are illustrated within the findings of the youth summit where non-Black Latinx youth felt that Black lives were too central in the final outcome. However, through a culturally sustaining pedagogy, we analyze that hesitation as a generative possibility to imagine how sustaining practices can further fortify strong(er) non-

Black Latinx and Black community coalition building. These learning experiences provide non-Black Latinx youth an opportunity to critically reflect on how standing in resistance and in solidarity with Black Lives Matter does not decenter or take away from their own struggles (Enomoto, 2017).

Setting: Texas Youth Summit

The Youth Summit is a multi-day virtual event sponsored by the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division of the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services (TDFPS), and two universities in Central Texas. The purpose of the Youth Summit is to build and nurture a community of youth leaders throughout the state of Texas who are committed to serve, equipped to lead, enterprising in action, and plugged into a network of other youth who are passionate about making positive change in their communities. The event is intended to provide an opportunity for select participants of their Community Youth Development (CYD) programs to attend an online leadership conference. CYD program sites, which are situated in communities with high rates of juvenile crime, are located in 18 sites across Texas.

Youth Summit Pedagogy

The Youth Summit is grounded in a culturally sustaining pedagogy framework. The summit provided Texas youth with a four-day summit that educated youth on how to become advocates for change through an exchange of ideas, concepts, projects, and reflections that address local needs and global issues including the Black Lives Matter movement and the global pandemic. The summit engaged youth through educational and leadership activities that encouraged them to achieve their highest goals and potential. With a focus on youth empowerment and critical consciousness throughout the summit, youth were encouraged to discover their voice and realize their ability to make a change in their communities.

Youth Summit Curriculum

The culturally sustaining curricular approach included a combination of workshops, motivational speakers, and engaging activities designed to inspire leadership, build community, and encourage social change. The workshops emphasized youth empowerment, identity and leadership development, activism, self-reflection, racial and social justice and awareness, and using their voice to make a change in their community. The final Youth Summit schedule included Dr. Bettina Love and Dr. Farima Pour-Khorshid as keynotes. Youth participated in workshops and activities that focused on social justice education, student activism, queer activism, radical healing, Hip-Hop activism, community leadership, and youth mental health, to name a few. Interactive and collaborative learning activities included icebreakers, art, drumming, music, improvisation, and self-defense activities.

The Youth Summit brought together approximately 100 youth (n=100), along with their Youth Coordinators (n=18) and undergraduate and graduate students (n= 8) from three Central Texas universities, as well as a planning committee and leadership team. For this study we focus on data collected from a subset of 12 non-Black Latinx youth and two members from the leadership team.

Youth Summit Leadership

This year's Youth Summit Chair was Dr. Edwards. She is an outspoken advocate and change-maker who experienced parental incarceration during childhood. As an adult she spent 10 years researching the impact of schooling, race, and incarceration. Her research and work with the

community led her to found a non-profit organization dedicated to transforming how communities and families combat the school-to-prison pipeline. Her work is inspired both by her family history and the inspiration she has drawn from the resilience of the young people she's encountered who are working to reconstruct their lives after confinement. As the Youth Summit Chair, Dr. Edwards felt that it was important this year to empower youth to lead and to use their voices to advocate for their communities.

Dr. Hernandez serves as the Chief Operating Officer of Dr. Edwards' organization. There, he works with adolescents to develop their critical consciousness via experiential learning opportunities to empower them to become agents of change in their communities. Dr. Hernandez's goals for this year's summit were to help youth build their leadership skills, while engaging and prioritizing community by encouraging youth to recognize and use their voices.

Methodology

The larger study consisted of a mixed-methods approach that included pre-summit and post-summit youth, coordinator, and parent surveys. Additionally, twenty five participating youth (ages 13 to 18) were interviewed before and after the Youth Summit to gain more insight on the impact of the youth summit on youths' self-concepts about identity, their potential for leadership, and positive behavior decisions in their communities. This article specifically examines data from youth interviews, Town Hall presentations, and leadership team interviews to better understand the expectations and experiences of twelve non-Black Latinx[2] participants' (ages 13 to 18) in the virtual Texas Summer Youth Summit. Our study questions included: 1) How do youth learn about leadership through an Online Youth Summer Summit amidst COVID-19?; and 2) How does the Youth Summit provide a virtual space to re-narrate youth leadership? Reflexive qualitative and participant observation methods (Davies 2001; Spindler, 1982) were used prior to, during, and after the summer youth summit, and include: pre- and post-surveys, observations of the youth in the various components of the virtual summit by the research team members, multiple Zoom interviews with a subset of the study youth participants (n=25), and document and video analysis. A constant comparative analysis method (Creswell, 1988; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) was used to examine the data. Further discussion of the research methodology follows.

Data Sources/Collection

Survey: Pre-summit and post-summit anonymous surveys were conducted with each of the youth participants. Youth participants were asked to rate their overall Youth Summit experience, how well the Youth Summit achieved its goals, the importance of workshops, activities, and keynote sessions.

Interviews: Semi-structured pre-summit and post-summit interviews were conducted with twenty five (n=25) youth participants to learn about their experiences in the virtual youth summit. This included questions about what they learned, enjoyed, short and long-term leadership goals, plans for engaging community action, and their own cultural and civic identities. For this study, we draw from the data collected from twelve youth (n=12) who self-identified as Hispanic or Latinx. All of the interviews were conducted via Zoom.

Observations: Observations and accompanying fieldnotes of the planning meeting day and the virtual youth summit were conducted by the Co-Principal Investigators and the three graduate research assistants online via Zoom.

Documents/Artifacts/Video: The following documents and artifacts produced by the youth participants were collected: a) individual and collaborative video projects, b) written reflections

about social action community projects and c) video of collective activities during the virtual youth summit.

Seven of the 12 non-Black Latinx youth interviewed identified as female and five as male. Their ages ranged between 15 and 18 years old. Although there is a regional diversity represented, most of the youth interviewed were from South Texas. Notably absent were non-Black Latinx youth from North and far West Texas. The following table shows a brief profile of the youth interviewed.

non-Black Hispanic/Latinx Youth Participants Interviewed

Pseudonym	**Race/Ethnicity**	**Age**	**Region/City**
Melissa	Hispanic	17	Corpus Christi
Jose	Hispanic	15	Pasadena
Ruben	Hispanic	16	Pasadena
Carlos	Hispanic/White/biracial	17	Lubbock
Maria	Hispanic	17	McAllen
Iris	Hispanic	18	Laredo
Diego	*Initially identified as White, but also talked about being Hispanic	17	Laredo
Alberto	Hispanic	15	Austin
Salma	Hispanic	17	Brownsville
Jackie	Hispanic	17	Corpus Christi
Stephanie	Latinx	17	San Antonio
Itzae	Hispanic	15	San Antonio

Findings and Discussion

The findings from this study indicate that non-Black Latinx youth found that the youth summit provided them an opportunity to re-narrate their understanding of leadership and service within the context of the simultaneous pandemics of COVID-19 and institutionalized anti-Blackness and racism. Through our analysis, youth expressed that the summit offered generative possibilities to re-narrate leadership, especially how to co-create leadership possibilities virtually, imagining leadership through multiple online interfaces, youth self-advocacy, and youth activism. Additionally, the findings suggest opportunities for growth such as more explicit youth leadership opportunities to bridge Black and non-Black Latinx solidarity.

Co-create Virtual Leadership

The virtual space necessitated by COVID-19 to avoid face-to-face contact provided a platform for youth to co-create knowledge, community, and leadership development, guided by

culturally sustaining pedagogy. Many of the youth surveyed expressed that having an in-person summit would have offered opportunities to meet new people, interact with the speakers, and share a community space. However, most of the non-Black Latinx youth also understood the necessity to host an online summit given the "shelter in place" state guidelines, and therefore expressed the ways in which the summit offered virtual leadership opportunities that they could co-create with other youth and with the workshop session speakers, even if they were not physically in the same space. For example, Jackie, a 17 year old youth from Corpus Christi said:

> Since the summit was virtual like it actually got us to be together, talking about these topics that we really need to discuss. But even though we couldn't see each other in person. We were there for each other. You're talking about topics. When you're talking about. It was really effective.

For Jackie, being able to discuss important and needed topics outweighed that the youth summit was virtual. The fact that they were not physically present in one location did not diminish the feeling of togetherness for Jackie as well as the effectiveness and feeling of unity that the virtual summit brought to her. Melissa, another 17 year old youth from Corpus Christi also shared:

> Even though it was virtual, the way the speakers interacted with us in the breakout rooms and made things interactive. It was, I know it's kind of hard, especially since we're not in person, but they really knew how to make everything fun and interactive and try to get the talk. That's what I really like also.

Like Jackie, Melissa also appreciated how the speakers in the summit made an effort to be interactive and "try to get the talk," despite the difficulty of using an online platform. The speakers made the summit fun for the youth participants like her.

As both Jackie and Melissa discussed, although there were limited aspects of a virtual summit, there were also possibilities that virtual online sessions provided to collaborate that were unique. The summit opened up avenues for the youth to bring forth their digital media literacies into their youth leadership and activism as legitimate and valid ways of enacting youth leadership epistemologies. Jocson (2018) argues that there is much to learn from the "making, unmaking, and remaking of meaning" of youth within learning spaces that show how youth draw from new media literacies to "make statements about place and uneven relations of power as they understand the world around them" (p. 152). The social media used during the summit mobilized different capacities to enact activism, leadership, and center youth voices through multifaceted digital landscapes and this moved youth leadership and activism towards multidirectional possibilities via online interfaces. The capacity to use online interfaces to open up spaces for possibility and creativity was best captured by what Salma, a 17 year old youth from Brownsville, shared:

> For sure creativeness because just by the thought of the summit being virtual we had to find ways to be able to interact and just be there in the moment, even though we're not there. We didn't notice since we were thinking outside the box in ways that we could imagine ourselves there.

For Salma, the virtual summit demanded creativity and "thinking outside the box" to engage in interactive ways with the other participants. Salma also mentioned the need to imagine herself "there," even if she was not physically "there" with the rest of the participants.

One of the highly successful youth leadership co-creative projects during the youth summit were the Town Hall Presentations hosted on the last day. Each Youth Site was charged with doing a community needs assessment on pressing social issues in their communities and finding solutions to the issues. The youth received the instructions months in advance to brainstorm, do their research, and together deliberate solutions. Youth were instructed to present these issues and solutions in a presentation in the manner they wished, whether that was through creating a skit, a video, or a song, to name a few options. Youth were encouraged to be creative in their solutions to the issues they addressed, as long as the presentation was appropriate and related to the topic of the forum. Many of the youth groups had an opportunity to work on these projects before the "shelter in place" orders, but others did not, and some changed the issues they wanted to address based on the changing and pressing social issues in their communities such as the pandemics. This year's presentations ranged from addressing issues of access to health care and the COVID-19 pandemic, police violence, food security, teenage pregnancy, gun violence, and mental health to poverty and barriers within society. The Town Hall presentations helped build on culturally sustaining pedagogy, by rethinking youth community leadership and building leadership capacity, through the centering of youth input. Additionally, culturally sustaining pedagogy mainly focuses on centering youths' own communities, and the Town Hall projects were a perfect opportunity for that. However, we also suggest that culturally sustaining pedagogy can help build solidarity among communities, by furthering youths' understanding of their peers' communities and sharing the Town Hall presentations via the summit was key for building solidarity.

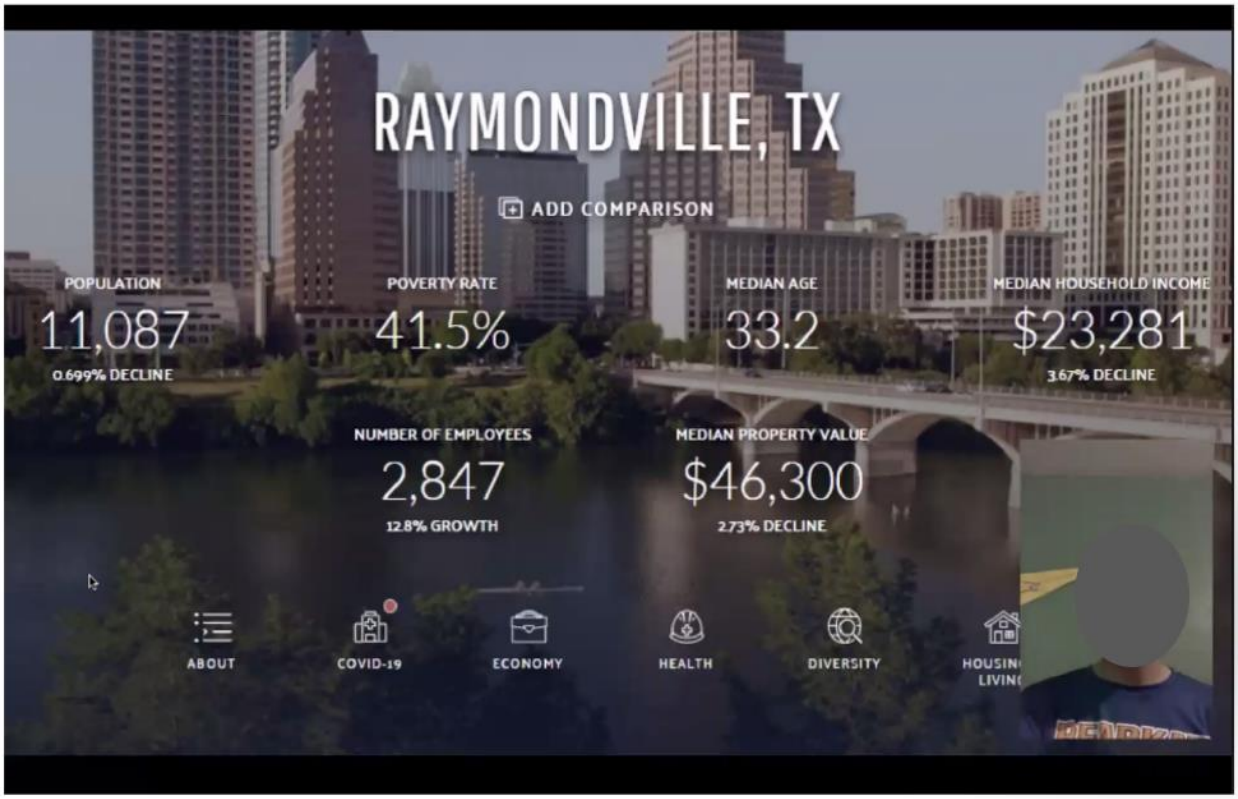
A highlight from the Town Hall presentations was a group of youth from a site in the greater Houston area that presented on police violence against the Black community. Their presentation reflected the nations' uprisings against police brutality. The youth re-enacted police violence against Black people in the U.S., and said the names of Black people who have been murdered by police. Included were George Floyd, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, and Sandra Bland. Their call to action was to create a platform that would allow youth to voice their ideas on social injustice. Figures 1 and 2 are screenshots of the group's Town Hall and demonstrations of the realities of anti-Blackness and police violence on the Black community and other People of Color.

Figure 1. Town Hall on Police Brutality

A group of youth from a site in “the valley” in South Texas called attention to their community’s lack of access to emergency healthcare. This access to emergency care was heightened specifically in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially because Latinxs, Hispanics account for 50% of all infections in the state, and South Texas has been a hot spot with increasing numbers of casualties (Killough et al., 2020; Trevizo, 2020). In this case, the city of Raymondville, as shown in Figure 3 below, lacks access to emergency healthcare. Even though this was identified as a long time issue, the COVID-19 pandemic made it much more evident as a pressing need. The closest healthcare center is a 40-minute to an hour drive away, which is extremely inconvenient and unsafe in emergency situations.

Figure 2. Town Hall on Police Brutality

Figure 3. Town Hall Presentation on Lack of Emergency Healthcare



The youth from Raymondville, all Latinxs, proposed building a new emergency clinic which would benefit not only their surrounding area, but also the rural towns nearby that do not have access to emergency healthcare either. These are only a few examples of the creative ways that the youth were able to collaborate on projects that involved leadership, activism, and social and racial justice.

"*Hablar por mi mismo*" *(To speak for myself); The importance of youth self-advocacy and voice*

As discussed, Black Lives Matter was a central component of the youth summit as the #BlackLivesMatter movement provided countless ways to learn about leadership, activism, coalition building, and youth voice. Centering and uplifting youth voice is an essential tenet of culturally sustaining pedagogy. The Director and Chief Operations Officer, both who identify as Black, discussed the importance of centering youth voices in line with the central components of the summit. The director, Dr. Edwards for example commented:

> That's always our focus, we want to send youth out in the community with a voice and we want them to feel like they have a voice and we want them to feel like they have an opportunity to advocate for the things that they believe in.

Thus, while the themes of advocacy, activism, and movements ran through most of the four-day summit, self-empowerment was highlighted as key in centering youth voices, as mentioned by Dr. Edwards. For Dr. Hernandez, the Chief Operating Officer, experiential learning was also key to

developing a critical and inquisitive mind in the process for youth to recognize and use their voice. According to Dr. Hernandez:

> I'm providing ultimate spaces for them to engage in learning outside of the classroom to kind of maximize experiential learning positions them to not just be a better student, but to be a better overall individual and that's critical, you know, positioning them to learn to grow to ask questions. I think a world in which we empower youth to not only recognize their voices but know how to use their voices. I think that positions us to make significant strides and [be] a more equitable society.

Throughout the summit, youth were guided in experiential learning opportunities to reflect and to use their voices in purposeful ways.

Multiple youth expressed the impact that the speakers and the themes had on their own perceptions of youth advocacy and using their voice. Even though the Latinx demographic of students we focus on in this article did not identify themselves as Black or African American, youth like, Rubén, a 16 year old from Pasadena, Texas, mentioned that the summit encouraged youth like him to "*Hablar por mi mismo"* (to speak for myself) and to speak on the injustices that others face. Carlos, a 17 year old Hispanic/White, biracial youth from Lubbock, also added, "I for sure improved on my leadership skills, learned how to be more outspoken, trying to teach others how to speak out loud." For Melissa, a youth from Corpus Christi, the summit was an eye-opening experience:

> ...it really opened my eyes into a lot of things, whether it was leadership, whether it was movements or different things. It really [pushed] the message of using our voice that was one of the main things that I got from the whole thing was just using your voice, using your voice. We are young, we're the voice, we're the change for the future. So that message really got put across throughout that whole summit.

The message of youth voice and empowerment seemed to resonate well with youth like Melissa who likened her experience to an awakening, an eye-opening experience.

Invited keynote speakers were also important during the summit because their message was amplified in special ways. For example, Dr. Bettina Love, acclaimed social justice scholar, presented on the importance of youth having confidence in the knowledge they carry and embracing who they are. She talked about creativity, social justice, Black joy, Black love, and the ways we find joy and humanity out of oppression by providing examples of Black creativity, ingenuity, and beauty through music, art, protest, and storytelling in community. Notably, she was widely referred to by many of the youth as a powerful speaker with a transformative message. Maria, a 17 year old youth from McAllen, commented:

> What the speakers talked about. She [Dr. Love] shared some significant quotes that she wrote down. One said to "use your powers" and I felt like that was very good. Because sometimes we don't have something that can help contribute to [fixing] issues, but she said to use your power and it's good advice because we can use it for, like the future.

Like Maria, youth participants surveyed overwhelmingly expressed that keynote speakers' topics were relevant to their lives.

Most of the non-Black Latinx youth interviewed related to how the recent murder of George Floyd and the subsequent actions across the globe for Black Lives Matter further elucidated the inherent systemic racism and anti-Blackness against Black people and People of Color. As Alberto, a 15 year old youth from Austin, expressed:

> Um, I guess, seeing like I said earlier, seeing connections between things, to maybe question things, if they don't seem right to me, and if I feel the need that like it should change it. Like speak out about it. Like I question police officers and what is systematic racism. Just around like a bias against People of Color, like and compared to like with white people. And just like the privilege that they get sometimes compared to other people. And especially recently with George Floyd, this like it showed me. [On] how unfair it can really be and even though it isn't all cops, I guess, kind of, it's kind of scary to think about the system is against, like calling people.

The culturally sustaining pedagogical and curricular components of the summit created paths for non-Black Latinx youth to also consider an intersectional critical consciousness to inform them and their communities on actions they "can take to resist systematic oppression and support Black liberation" (Castillo-Montoya et al., 2019, p. 1141). Clearly, Alberto made these important connections between systemic racism, policing, and white privilege.

The Youth Summit drew on culturally sustaining practices to make sense of non-Black Latinx leadership and activism, both as a way to encourage a "language of solidarity" (Martinez, 2017) between Latinx and Black communities, as well as to show the longevity and importance of Black epistemological thought in activism, social movements, and political struggles. Exploring this issue was evident and important for Jackie, who shared:

> It [the summit] did make a difference because we finally got to talk about some issues between our community and individually. We were talking about what we thought about the movement, like the Black Lives Matter movement and we talked about how our education needs to be better for us. And that we are really not learning much in school. We were basically talking mostly about things that go on in our lives.

Finding a "language of solidarity" between non-Black Latinx and Black students was imperative for the leadership team, especially because, as critical educators, they were acutely aware that most school classrooms do not provide opportunities for non-Black Latinx and Black youth to cultivate activist "stances and alliances that foster a sense of shared, historical, political, and linguistic solidarity" (Martinez, 2017, p. 188). In this way, activism and youth voice were contextualized in the summit to respond to the immediate (and pervasive) realities of anti-Blackness and police brutality, and to introspectively examine non-Black Latinx people's experiences and commitment towards racial justice.

A bridge not fully built: Non-Black representation

The Youth Summit focused far more on social and racial justice issues than in previous iterations. Understandably, this was due to the immediacy of the issues that surfaced after the murder of George Floyd and also due to Dr. Edwards and Dr. Hernandez's stewardship of the summit. However, focusing on the Black Lives Matter movement was also about facilitating and centering youths' voices and implementing a culturally sustaining pedagogy. However, there were

instances in which non-Black youth, including Latinx, felt that Black Lives Matter was *too* central within the summit itself. These anonymous survey responses include:

> All presenters were the same race. They did not represent my hispanic race. The keynote speakers all talked about the BLM, white supremacy and capitalism as evil! The presentations were not about leadership they were about joining BLM -- Anonymous Youth Survey Response

> I did not like the information presented it was all about joining BLM -- Anonymous Youth Survey Response

> I didn't like how doctor love was talking about the whole black [lives] matter the whole time. I am completely for black lives but the summit was not just black students it was all colors I think we forgot that. -- Anonymous Youth Survey Response

While in these anonymous responses, only one youth mentioned they were "Hispanic," these responses are useful to understand other non-Black youths' sentiments of the summit focus. The youth summit aimed to facilitate Black Lives Matter as a leadership building capacity, but not all youth felt that this was achieved successfully. Some non-Black youth even went on to say that the summit was misrepresenting leadership and their ethnic and racial background.

The centering of Black Lives Matter in the movement for justice in the Youth Summit aimed to also challenge enduring colonial discourses that permeate the cultural knowledge of different communities. An impediment to understanding the inclusion of Black Lives Matter by some of the non-Black youth, could also be due to the historical pitting of minoritized communities against each other. Anti-Blackness, sometimes unconscious, other times conscious, needs to be addressed and acknowledged.

Future Considerations

Youth programs that centralize the Black Lives Matter movement as a crucial sociohistorical phenomenon that actively uproots the longevity of systematic racism and institutionalized anti-blackness, must consider ways to provide non-Black youth, including Latinx, explicit ways to re-narrate their leadership and activism in *collaboration with* Black youth. Due to the reality of Latinx anti-Blackness, this is especially imperative for non-Black Latinx youth to consider given the entangled anti-Blackness and anti-Indianness of *Latinidad* (Busey & Silva, 2020), the negligence of Black and Afro-Latinx voices, and the contributions of Black digital leadership especially via Twitter hashtags (Dinzey-Flores et al., 2019; Paris, 2019; Soto-Vega & Chavez, 2018). It is also imperative, drawing from culturally sustaining pedagogy, to help youth identify and constructively criticize ways in which youth can continue to perpetuate anti-Blackness, in order to support youth in growing their critical consciousness. More clearly articulated efforts to continue building these bridges between Black and non-Black Latinx co-collaborative leadership possibilities would have strengthened the experiences of more non-Black youth, including Latinxs, who may have felt that their voice was not being represented.

We argue that these coalition building possibilities will demonstrate that Black Lives Matter is inherently for all marginalized peoples because it is through Black liberation that other systems of domination, such as immigration law enforcement, can be abolished. There is often a positioning of Latinx struggles against Black struggles in the media, especially regarding

immigration as a central Latinx struggle. However, we further problematize these positions because immigration is also a deeply anti-Black systematic power, since one in three non-citizens facing deportations on criminal grounds identifies as Black (Palmer, 2017). Therefore, we are not suggesting that these two different issues (police violence and immigration) are Black vs. Non-Black issues, but that both are Black struggles that non-Black Latinx youth can identify with in order to bridge their struggles with Black liberation movements.

Suggestions for improvement might include: 1) include speakers who are Black or AfroLatinx, 2) create explicit workshops or sessions on Black Lives Matter as a catalyst for non-Black Latinx youth leadership and activism, 3) provide more opportunities for Black and non-Black Latinx youth to co-create during youth programming, 4) present historical information on both the tensions and alliances between social movements of Black, Indigenous, Chicanx, Tejanx, Latinx, and People of Color, and 5) establish more robust, enduring youth leadership networks beyond the program/summit. In this particular case, due to the realities of COVID-19, the Youth Summit was re-envisioned virtually but the hope is that in the future it will be hosted once again in person. Regardless, the virtual Youth Summit provided generative ideas and directions to expand youth's digital literacies to further develop their activism, leadership, and their identities.

Conclusion

This study explored multiple online interface modalities for non-Black Latinx youth leadership and activism via an online summer Youth Summit in Texas. Due to the simultaneous pandemics of COVID-19 and the (continued) anti-Blackness and systemic racism, this study extends current discussions about the ways summer programs enrich youth experiences and impact their conceptualizations of leadership, activism, and identity amidst arduous and turbulent conditions. Specifically, the Youth Summit had an overwhelming influence on the non-Black Latinx youth, whose experiences we focused on in this article, especially in regard to leadership and activism. Although culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) does not necessarily focus on leadership building capacities, through our study, we foreground that CSP has the potential to center leadership as culturally sustaining and important for youth. The youth were able to co-create digital leadership and felt encouraged to speak on their own behalf, against racial injustices, and ultimately to re-narrate their own leadership and activism through digital interfaces.

However, a few non-Black youth, including Latinx, expressed concern of over-centralizing Black Lives Matter, and feeling unrepresented. We recommend that such voices be taken into consideration for future youth programming to create more robust culturally sustaining practices that are aligned with fighting anti-Blackness and bridging Black and non-Black Latinx solidarity. Young people are creating intricate and complex ways to participate in leadership and activism in the precarious situations of global pandemics and social distancing, where they are able to use their digital media literacies and familiarity with online platforms to expand the reach of their leadership capacities. We find that this study comes at a crucial juncture for fostering online activism, digital leadership, and non-Black Latinx solidarity capacities in the movement towards eradicating institutionalized anti-Blackness, racial violence and white nationalism against Latinxs, and other forms of systemic oppression (Landeros, Montes, Muñiz and Urrieta, 2021).

NOTES

1. We use Latinx to break down the existing gender binaries and acknowledge all intersecting identities within the Latina/o/x community. Further, we also seek to acknowledge and be inclusive of people who may identify as, trans, queer, agender, non-binary, gender non-conforming or gender fluid.
2. 11 youth self-identified as Hispanic and 1 youth as Latinx.

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JLER
Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR LATINX, IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES: CENTERING ADVOCACY AND CRITICAL CARE

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ABSRACT

This paper examines the role of school leadership in centering the rights, wellbeing, and identities of Latinx, immigrant students and their families. It is guided by the following questions: How do school leaders envision and articulate their roles and responsibilities in sites serving immigrant youth? How does this orientation influence the policies and practices they enact in their schools? Drawing on a three-year case study of a public high school that almost exclusively serves Latinx, immigrant students, this paper illustrates how a school's leadership can apply an advocacy approach and notions of critical care to more holistically serve students and their families. As a "site of possibility," this school and its leadership suggest important considerations for policy and practice in other contexts, especially in a political environment that is hostile to immigrants and in the aftermath of a pandemic that has taken a disproportionate toll on immigrant youth and their families.

Keywords: Immigrant students, school leadership, family engagement

Introduction

Immigrant families face a unique set of challenges that can negatively affect the wellbeing and academic success of immigrant children and youth (Olneck, 2006; Patel, et al., 2016; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). In particular, immigrant students who are English Learners[1] face higher rates of psychosocial issues (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011; Sibley & Brabeck, 2017), struggle to attain proficiency in English after six years in US schools, and are more likely to drop out of high school (Clark-Gareca et al., 2020; García & Kleifgen, 2018; NCES, 2019). Contributing to or compounding these patterns, schools can often be alienating spaces for immigrant students when they are forced to speak only English and pressured to abandon their own culture, while largely being overlooked and underserved (Contreras et al., 2020; Jaffe-Walter, 2016; Valenzuela, 2005).

In the face of these inequities, scholars have also documented the strength and resilience of immigrant students who are able to apply their own familial, linguistic, and social capital to successfully navigate educational spaces (Enriquez, 2011; Jaffe-Walter & Lee, 2018; Reynolds &

Orellana, 2019; Sánchez & Salazar, 2012; Valenzuela, 2020). In 2020, in fact, 28% of students in U.S. colleges and universities were either first-generation immigrants or the children of immigrants, accounting for 58% of the growth in the total number of students in higher education between 2000 and 2018 (Batalova & Feldblum, 2020).

Still, the inequitable conditions facing immigrant students in schools have worsened since the 2016 U.S. presidential election and under the current federal administration (Gándara, 2018; Pentón Herrera & Obregón, 2018). Amid threats to build a border wall, attempts to end DACA, and a family separation policy, scholars have documented an increase in xenophobia and hostility towards immigrant students (Conchas & Acevedo, 2021; Gándara, 2018; Nguyen & Kebede, 2017; O'Connor & Mangual Figueroa, 2017; Pentón Herrera & Obregón, 2018) and have shown how those forces have shaped the positions and practices of their teachers (Darragh & Petrie, 2019; Dubin, 2018; Jaffe-Walter et al., 2019; Martin-Beltrán et al., 2018; Miranda, 2017). Children of undocumented parents, especially, are experiencing greater fear over the possibility of being deported or facing the deportation of their family members (Capps et al., 2016; Dreby, 2012). As a result, the current political climate is associated with worse outcomes in student mental health, school attendance, and academic performance (Ee & Gándara, 2020).

Under this adverse political context, it is even more important to examine schools that can serve as safe havens for immigrant students and their families. The purpose of this study is to explore a "site of possibility" (Weis & Fine, 2004)—in this case, a public high school in New York City that has produced positive academic outcomes among immigrant students, while attending to their socioemotional and material needs. While prior research has documented how schools can create safe and welcoming learning environments for immigrant students (Bajaj & Bartlett, 2017; Jaffe-Walter et al., 2019; Jaffe-Walter, 2018; Kessler et al., 2018), this paper will focus on the role of school leadership, in particular, because of the prominent role it plays in shaping the experiences and outcomes of students (Grissom et al., 2021). The examination of school leadership, conceptualized here as the formal roles held by the principal and assistant principals (APs) as well as a distributed sense of leadership among other staff, is guided by the following questions: How do school leaders envision and articulate their roles and responsibilities in sites serving immigrant youth? How does this orientation influence the policies and practices they enact in their schools? Drawing on a three-year case study of a high school that primarily serves Latinx, immigrant students, this paper illustrates how the school's leadership applies an advocacy approach and notions of critical care to effectively serve students and their families. Given the school's track record of success for immigrant students, its model of leadership suggests important considerations for policy and practice in other districts.

Literature

School Leadership for Immigrant Students

This paper builds upon prior research focused on school leadership for immigrant, English Learners (ELs).[1] A large body of this research has documented the multiple ways leaders provide linguistic support for EL students. These include expanding the role of ESL (English-as-a-Second Language) teachers (Brooks et al., 2010), increasing teacher capacity in the area of language development (Scanlan & Lopez, 2012), investing in dual language programs (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2018), and reclassifying English learners (Okhremtchouk et al., 2018). Other research on leadership for immigrant students has focused on improving collaboration among leaders across schools (Brooks et al., 2010; Theoharis & O'Toole, 2011) and creating opportunities for collaboration between school leaders and their district administrators (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014).

A second prominent strand of research on leadership for immigrant students focuses on the political dimensions of their work. Valenzuela's (1999) work on what she terms "subtractive schooling" has been especially influential in framing the ways schools often apply policies and practices that minimize the culture, language, and identities of immigrant students. Gándara and Hopkins (2010) added to this work by exploring how restrictive language policies reinforce the marginalization of immigrant ELs, while failing to produce academic gains. In light of these conditions, recent scholarship has examined the ways school leaders can disrupt deficit perspectives and assimilationist norms by creating welcoming, authentic environments for immigrant students (Burkett & Hayes, 2018; Crawford, 2017; Crawford & Witherspoon Arnold, 2017). Another body of work has illustrated how school leaders can promote political empowerment among immigrant students and families (Burkett & Hayes, 2018; Crawford, 2017; Liou, 2016; Miranda, 2017). In their case study of a school leader who works in the US-Mexico border region, for example, Lopez, Gonzalez, and Fierro (2006) provide a model of socially conscious and politically informed leadership that recognizes the multiple cultures and languages of their school community, while mobilizing and empowering students, families, and the larger school community. More recently, Crawford (2017) documents how school leaders challenged anti-immigrant state policies that impeded school access among undocumented students. School leaders have also played an important role in negotiating accountability policies to ensure that teachers are better positioned to effectively serve immigrant EL students (Palmer & Rangel, 2010). This paper builds on extant research by focusing on the role of school leadership in building supportive environments for immigrant students in the context of a political environment that is particularly hostile to immigrant students and their families.

Schools and Immigrant Families

Scholars have long established a relationship between family-school engagement and students' academic outcomes, including higher test scores, greater motivation, and lower dropout rates (Ceballo et al., 2014; Cooper & Crosnoe, 2007; Fan et al., 2012; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). Yet, immigrant families are less likely to interact with schools than native-born parents (Gaitan, 2012; Sohn & Wang, 2006; Turney & Kao, 2009). While educators may interpret this phenomenon as a lack of motivation or limited educational concern on the part of these families, it is often due to a number of structural barriers that have little to do with interest or motivation (Gonzalez et al., 2013; Jones, 2003; Rodriguez & Lopez, 2003; Walker et al., 2011).

First, limited proficiency or comfort in English coupled with a lack of bilingual staff or translation services can be a major barrier to engaging with schools (Carreón et al., 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Gonzalez et al., 2013; Turney & Kao, 2009). Beyond language, there is often a misalignment between the cultural norms of immigrant parents and the white, middle-class norms of their schools that serve to marginalize, exclude, or cast immigrant families and students from a deficit perspective (Dabach et.al, 2017; Flores, 2016; Rodriguez 2015). Because schools typically have narrow expectations about how parents and families should communicate and behave, departures from these hegemonic norms are considered to be lacking or problematic (Carreón et al., 2005; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). In particular, Latinx immigrant parents are more likely to practice some level of deference to school officials and teachers, which may limit how often parents interact with educators or challenge academic decisions affecting their children (Calzada et al., 2010; Ceballo et al., 2014; Gonzalez et al., 2013; Villalba, 2007).

Even when immigrant parents do overcome these barriers and attempt to engage with their

child's school, they tend to feel largely ignored or unwelcome (Auerbach, 2002; Carreón et al.,2005; Hill & Torres, 2010; Hill & Tyson., 2009; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). Compounding these responses on the part of the schools are broader racial and ethnic stereotypes about certain immigrant groups. For example, scholars have documented a rise in Islamophobia in schools that establish the "otherness" of these groups, resulting in exclusion and denial of resources (Abu El-Haj, 2010; Bajaj et al., 2016; Jaffe-Walter, 2013; Sirin & Fine 2007). Similarly, this "othering" of and xenophobia of immigrant, Latinx families may be even more visible since the advent of the Trump administration, its anti-immigration policies, and the disparagement of the Mexican community in particular (Costello, 2016).

As immigrant families continue to experience avoidance, slights, or outright hostility, they are over time less likely to connect with school staff, thereby reinforcing the stereotypes and deficit-oriented views educators hold of the immigrant families they are supposed to be serving. This paper illustrates a decidedly different model of establishing authentic engagement with families that extends beyond parent-teacher conferences and parent volunteers—one that is grounded in advocacy, allyship, and care for the rights and humanity of immigrant, Latinx families.

Advocacy Leadership and Critical Care: Conceptual Framework

This paper is informed by a conceptualization of leadership that centers authenticity and advocacy (Anderson, 2009). Leaders that center these dimensions of their work recognize systemic inequities that are manifested in the daily lives of their students and families. They are conscious of the material realities of their communities—access to health care, food, safety, and shelter—and assume the role of advocating for these basic needs when they are unmet. Beyond conceptualizing social welfare as a human right (Berliner, 2006), advocacy leaders are inherently political and approach their work from their ideological commitments. They are also motivated by more than student achievement. Rather, they use their buildings as sites of possibility to reimagine a more just society. Anderson (2009) explains:

> At a broader level, they know that some causes, such as inequitable social policies, may be beyond their immediate control, but they have a deep belief in the power of education to foster not just kids with high tests scores, but also powerful and informed democratic citizens with influence over those very policies in the future. (p. 23)

To that end, these leaders are willing to take risks, be transgressive, and act adversarial in the face of existing policies and power structures to advocate for those communities that have less access to certain resources or channels of power. At the same time, advocacy leaders do not work alone. They inspire and empower multiple stakeholders, including teachers, students, and families, to challenge existing inequities as leaders in their own right. Leadership is also shared via alliances with external organizations rooted in the community or focused on its needs and assets (Gold et al., 2004; Shirley, 1997). These conceptualizations of advocacy leadership—both its political nature and its focus on achieving justice through partnerships—help us understand the beliefs and practices of the leadership described in this paper.

In tandem with advocacy leadership, another lens through which to interrogate the school leadership in this case study is the role of care in schools. I draw especially on scholarship that challenges or expands on notions of care for marginalized groups. The work of Nel Noddings (1992, 1998, 2002) established the ethics of care and trust as essential dimensions of teaching and building relationships with students. In this conceptualization, teachers develop curriculum of care, schools organize themselves around personalization and supportive structures, and educators strive

to see and serve the whole child. Extending beyond these principles, however, a number of race-conscious scholars have challenged colorblind theories of care and called for considering the racially grounded political issues that affect the experiences of students of color (Alder, 2002; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Katz, 1999; Noblit, 1993; Thompson, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). This work has pushed us to think beyond care within interpersonal relationships and center the racialized dynamics of those relationships.

Moreover, these scholars challenge us to investigate the ways notions of care have been coopted by educational reformers who aim to express "care" by commodifying social emotional learning, focusing on the assimilation of students into circumscribed modes of being and achieving, and centering narrow metrics of student "success" over their overall wellbeing. Rolón-Dow (2005), for example, sought to understand how caring and teacher-student relationships were situated in the specific sociocultural context of a particular school and the racial relations therein, finding that teachers' care narratives actually normalized racism in schools. Similarly, Jaffe-Walter (2016) illustrated how teachers use discourses of care and concern to further alienate students by pressuring them to assimilate into the norms of the dominant culture. Presenting an alternative to these models, other research has documented the approaches and practices of leadership rooted in critical care (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006; Wilson, 2016).

In this paper, I envision the integration of advocacy leadership and critical care as a set of concerns for and corresponding actions that address the structural and political inequalities faced by marginalized, minoritized students and families. Leadership that enacts both advocacy and critical care for immigrant families and students is unconcerned with reproducing white middle-class norms, but rather with preserving students' languages and identities, promoting student agency, and developing critical consciousness across the wider school community. As a site of possibility, this school provides a leadership model for meeting these aims through external partnerships with advocacy organizations, authentic relationships with families, and asset-based, culturally relevant learning experiences that leverage students' native language.

Methods

Research Context and Site Selection

This paper draws on a larger study of the Internationals Network for Public Schools, an educational nonprofit organization founded in 2004 that supports public secondary schools designed to serve immigrant youth who have been in the country for fewer than four years. Most of the Network's 23 high schools are located in NYC, while a few are located in California, and the D.C. area. Students who attend Network schools come from over 100 countries and speak 90 different languages. A majority of the Network's students have high economic needs (e.g., eligible for public assistance, living below the federal poverty line, or living in temporary housing) and many are undocumented or live in mixed-status households.

Network schools have established a positive reputation for graduating students that are typically underserved in other schools (Gross, 2017; Hernández et al., 2019; Stavely, 2019). In the first stage of our larger study (a quasi-experimental analysis), we found that attending a Network school has a positive impact on the academic outcomes of immigrant students when compared with those attending other high schools in the same district. The second stage of the larger study was designed to explore *how* these Network schools produce positive results for immigrant students. To create a rich picture of the policies and practices of these sites as well as the perspectives and commitments of their educators, our research team conducted qualitative case studies in two of the Network high schools with the strongest academic impacts on graduation

rates (though they also exhibited positive impacts on attendance and credit accumulation). This paper specifically draws on the data from the case study site that predominantly serves Spanish speaking students in the interest of exploring effective schooling for the Latinx community.

This high school site—which I will refer to in this paper as La Paz International[2]—is located in the Bronx and serves a Spanish speaking population of newcomer students, 15% of whom are undocumented. What is obscured in the population description is the diversity of cultures represented by the student body, who have recently arrived from Central and South America as well as the Caribbean (see Table 1). Nearly all speak Spanish, but a small number of students speak a dialect from a region in Ecuador. More than 50% of their students exhibit low levels of literacy in their native language when they enroll in the 9th grade, often due to interruptions in their formal education.

Table 1

School Characteristics of La Paz International

Borough	Enrollment	Student Demographics (%)	Economic Need Index[a] (%)	English Learners[b] (%)	Special Education (%)	Impacts on 4-year graduation rates (%)
Bronx	426	99 Latinx <u>Country of origin (n)</u> Costa Rica (1) Dominican Republic (279) Ecuador (40) El Salvador (6) Guatemala (25) Honduras (48) Mexico (9) Spain (3) United States (12) Venezuela (3)	97	88	3	+22

Source. New York City Department of Education Administrative Data and authors' calculations.
[a] The Economic Need Index is based on the percentage of families (with school-age children) in the student's census tract whose income is below the poverty level, as estimated by the American Community Survey 5-Year estimate.
[b] All students entering the ninth grade at these schools are classified as English learners. These numbers reflect that some students are reclassified before graduation.

Despite these challenges, La Paz's graduation rate is 84%, higher than that of the city average (76%). More importantly, Table 1 shows the substantial *impact* the school has on graduation rates, a measure that captures student gains over and beyond what they might have achieved elsewhere. La Paz also received the highest designation (i.e., "excellent") on nearly all of the district's Quality Review measures (i.e., rigorous instruction, supportive environment, strong family-community ties, trust, and student achievement) in the 2018-2019 school year. In addition, 97% of families who responded to the City's annual parent survey reported that school staff regularly communicate with them about how families can help their child learn (compared to the city average of 88%).

Data Collection

Data sources for this case study (Yin, 2014) include interviews, focus groups, observations, and a review of documents over a three-year period from the fall of 2017 to the spring of 2020 (see Table 2). Over this time period, we conducted 45-60-minute formal, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and focus groups with 35 members of the school community including: three school leaders (i.e., principals and two assistant principals), two guidance counselors, the parent coordinator, as well as teachers and students from across grades 9-12. In addition, we interviewed all school leaders a second time near the end of our data collection. We also conducted informal interviews by phone and correspondence over email to ask clarifying questions and follow up on certain themes as they emerged in the data. Interviews and focus group protocols were designed to elicit understanding of the school's mission and vision, organizational features, professional conditions of its teachers, learning environments for its students, and collaboration with families and external partners.

In addition to interviews and the focus group, we also conducted 10 classroom observations across different subjects and six observations of professional meetings (e.g., grade level teams, coordinating council, restorative justice committee) to learn more about how the school's learning environments and professional conditions supported immigrant students. Observations typically lasted the length of a class period and were documented with a running chronology of the observed activities (Creswell, 2013) followed by field notes that described classroom activities, participants' actions, important dialogue, and included reflective notes (Emerson et al., 1995). In addition, we followed up each classroom observation with an interview of the classroom teacher. Finally, we also collected and reviewed relevant documents, such as school mission statements, handbooks, professional development agendas, parent meeting agendas, and resources created for families to provide further context for the data collected across observations and interviews. Though this particular paper draws largely on interviews with school leaders and teachers, the sustained time at this site and the triangulation of multiple data sources helped deepen our understanding of the school's culture as well as the ethos and practice of its leadership.

Table 2

Data Collection

	Interviews with school leaders	Interviews with other support staff	Focus groups with teachers	Observations of	Observations of classrooms	Focus groups

				professional meetings		with students
Number of activities	6	3	4	6	10	2

Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected in our fieldwork, our six-person research team applied a multi-step process (Hruschka et al., 2004). First, we relied on deductive and inductive approaches to create a coding scheme (Miles et al., 2014). Based on a combination of the research questions, prior literature, the interview protocol, and reflection memos generated after each school visit, we created 12 distinct categorical codes (Saldaña, 2016). We then applied this initial coding scheme to the same random sampling of transcripts and observation notes, which generated additional codes, revisions to the codebook, and more precise code definitions. The team conducted multiple rounds of this process until acceptable levels of reliability were met (e.g., better than 80% of kappas > 0.9). Our final codebook included 25 distinct codes.

The codebook and data were then uploaded to Dedoose, a web-based qualitative data analysis software program, to facilitate coding of the remaining data. We continued to check interrater reliability regularly throughout the coding process by having pairs of coders double code 10% of transcripts and observation notes. After the first round of coding, each member of the team generated a coding memo based on initial reflections of salient patterns in the data and code frequencies. We discussed these memos in depth to identify focus areas for second level coding (Miles et al., 2014). Our second level coding generated 14 thematic analytic memos in total, which delineated emerging themes and identified illustrative examples of those themes from the data. A prominent theme that emerged early on was the relationship between the school's leadership and the current political context. This analysis established how the school leadership engaged immigrant families and young people through advocacy and critical care.

Our collective analysis was informed by our individual identities as well as our familiarity with Network schools. Two of our members (including myself) come from immigrant households and thus, our perspectives helped center our questions and analyses on the lived experiences of immigrant students and families. In addition, two of our members had done prior research in Network schools, which provided the rest of us with a strong foundational understanding of the historical and organizational context of these schools. While the Network schools are unique in that they are designed to exclusively serve newcomer students, the focus on the findings below center on perspectives, approaches, and practices that can be applied in other educational contexts serving immigrant students.

Findings

Our fieldwork illuminated a number of school dimensions that reflected the tenets of the Internationals Network model, including the focus on experiential learning, collaborative teaching environments, and the integration of language and content. At the same time, spending time in this particular setting revealed the ways its unique student population (nearly 100% Latinx and Spanish speaking) and the primary role of the principal also set it apart in ways that offer helpful insights

into how school leadership can serve Latinx, immigrant students with commitments to their. The school's formal leadership consists of the founding principal and two assistant principals (APs); however, throughout this paper, I will make clear when I am describing beliefs, dispositions, or practices by these individuals, as well as those that reflect a more distributed sense of leadership across various school members. While the teaching staff includes a number of first- and second-generation individuals from South America, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Europe, all three school leaders are white women born in the United States. Given their whiteness and the privilege it affords them, their operating principles and subsequent actions represent the work of allies or approaching the role of "co-conspirators" in the fight towards freedom and justice for marginalized communities (Ally or co-conspirator, 2016). The school leader(whom I will refer to here as Marylyn Woods)delegates large dimensions of the school's operations and planning to her assistant principals, leads the school through a collaborative committee, and supports teacher autonomy (Villavicencio et al, 2020). At the same time, takes ultimate responsibility for serving the school community, empowering her APs and teachers to do the same and building external partners to address their needs when the school cannot.

The Personal is Political: Protecting the Rights of Immigrant Families and Students

When we first met Marylyn (who asks teachers, families, and students to call her by her first name), she was entering her 10th year as principal of Laz Paz. Within minutes, it became clear that she is an authoritative leader who rarely minces words. In particular, she spoke candidly about the current federal administration and its assault on the rights of immigrants—both documented and undocumented. Her work at La Paz is informed by a deep and historical understanding of the treatment of immigrant communities, how policies have changed over time, and the effects of those policies on the lives of the families served by her school. For Marylyn, the "personal is political" and the politics of today inform how she thinks about the school's mission and her role and responsibilities as a school leader.

Working from this political conceptualization of her leadership, she sees her role and that of her teachers as frontline advocates for their families and students. This has been especially true in the last few years, as the current political context poses additional risks for immigrant students and families. Many of the school members described that since the 2016 presidential election, stories about raids by Immigrant and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and random checkpoints throughout the city have created a climate of fear and a greater distrust of institutions and authority figures, including schools and school leaders. The principal reported, "I've definitely had parents tell me that they're fearful of any kind of state or city official places—just fearful that they'll be revealed in some ways." The fear and anxiety are justified: several teachers and some students reported that ICE officials are now more commonly spotted, especially near train stations and around schools in particular geographical areas. This includes the South Bronx, where the school is located and where nearly 60% of the community is Latinx.

These are not merely passive observations or empty expressions of sympathy, but rather they motivate concern, empathy, and action around protecting the rights of the school community. In particular, the principal has ensured that the school proactively helps to arm the community with knowledge of their rights as undocumented and documented immigrants, strategies for dealing with immigration officials, and legal supports when needed. After the 2016 election, she invited local immigration advocates to run multiple "Know Your Rights" seminars for families in Spanish. Representatives from these organizations shared practical information about a range of issues related to legal status, immigration fraud, housing laws, and access to healthcare. At every

monthly parent meeting, an immigration lawyer is available to advise parents on individual cases pertaining to documentation status and other legal issues. In addition, information, pamphlets, and representatives from other local advocacy organizations can often be seen near the front door during these meetings.

These external partners have also educated teachers on who is allowed to come into the building and what types of credentials need to be shown to enter. The teachers, in turn, have delivered units to their students on the rights of immigrants and undocumented individuals in New York State and the country. Overall, these efforts were born out of the fears incited by the current political context and a commitment to protect the rights of students and families. One of the assistant principals described:

> These aren't things that I've ever had to deal with prior to this political environment, so that's hard, but we had someone come in and just talk about, "Here's what happens if they come to your door, how you should act, what you ask to see," and assuring our students, "You stay calm. You ask to see this. This is the only time you have to open your door." I think most of the agencies know that the schools and other institutions are wise to them. They're more successful going to a person's home and harassing them there. Because a person who's scared is going do whatever the big, bad guy in the uniform says.

Her description makes vivid the ways in which students and families are made to feel unsafe in their own homes and the responsibility she and the staff have taken on to provide support in this type of situation.

In one particularly frightening incident, a 12th grade student reported to the principal that he was taken in by what he deemed to be immigration officials. He ended up jumping out of the moving vehicle, coming back to school, and telling the front office, "I don't know where they're taking me. They're taking me to New Jersey. I'm never going to see anyone again!" Marylyn recalled the boy being "scared for his life." After that, the school received multiple phone calls from Homeland Security, which accused them of hindering the justice process and threatened that the student would report as a runaway. We can imagine a scenario in which a school's leaders are justifiably intimidated by the involvement of a federal office, but Marylyn and one of her APs reacted with—if not outright resistance—a refusal to merely follow orders. She recalls replying to someone from Homeland: "If these people are going to be taking this child out of state forever, I need the proper discharge forms. I'm doing my job." While many school leaders are told to avoid any actions that may be interpreted as political, Marylyn positions her opposition to these types of authorities as a critical part of her role, part of what it means to be a school leader.

Entre Familia: Creating a Culture of Community and Care

If the leadership at La Paz is ready to be confrontational with the outside world on behalf of students and families, it is because they regard them as members of a family. That is to say, the school leaders, teachers, and students collectively create a culture focused on relationships entre familia. As an educator with over 30 years of experience, Marylyn attributes some of her leadership style—as head of family—to her experience as a student and later professional in South America:

> The kids have a relationship with us, the same kind of relationship I used to have with my teachers when I lived in Venezuela. The teachers call me by my first name. The kids here call me by my first name. The kids know that that doesn't mean that they don't respect me. It's just that school in our country (and here) is like a family, and so I think the kids understand that this is their second home.

To wit, Marylyn and her APs relate to students—who may tower over them—like mothers. They switch fluidly between Spanish and English mirroring the speech of "their kids," they ask them if they have eaten and nag them if they insist on having chips and soda. They give out hugs freely, offer students their offices when they need to talk or when they just need a few moments to put their heads down. They practice an open-door policy with their families and know many by their first names. Their care and warmth are situated within the context and cultural backgrounds of the families they serve and function as the foundation for understanding their experiences, responding to their needs, and recognizing their value to the school community and society at large.

As an extension of community that she wishes to cultivate, Marylyn and a team of teachers have recruited and hired a diverse teaching staff who in many ways resemble the student body. She said, "[Students] get to see professionals who come from countries they've come from," thereby providing students "windows and mirrors" among the teaching staff. Many of the staff reported being able to relate to students because of their own immigrant backgrounds, while staff who did not share that background highlighted the ways these perspectives were useful in their own practice. For example, one of the assistant principals, a white woman born in the U.S. said:

> I think it helps onboard people more quickly when you have so many people of different backgrounds, and different Latino backgrounds on your teams. They're able to just offer a perspective that I think—someone like me, I just didn't have coming into it. That's been really helpful.

This is not to say that teachers who are native to the United States cannot apply empathetic stances towards immigrant students or create welcoming classroom environments, but their teaching composition and hiring practices do highlight just one of the multiple ways Marylyn considers the care of her students across multiple aspects of the school's policy and practice.

She has also placed in prominence certain roles and responsibilities that provide concrete sources of support, including that of the school's parent coordinator (a former student of the school), the guidance counselor, and its two social workers. The parent coordinator uses her own background and familiarity with the community to inform her outreach to parents and inspire a range of supports offered on Saturdays, including classes in English and computer literacy, as well as workshops in banking and stress management. Moreover, partnerships with local community-based organizations allow the parent coordinator to help meet some of the families' medical and mental health needs. Marylyn also obtained a grant to hire a social worker—a position that is sometimes a luxury in a small school. The social worker almost exclusively works with long-term absences and chronic tardiness, acknowledging that these are typically symptoms of underlying hardships facing newly arrived immigrants. The guidance counselors, who have both served as teachers in other schools prior to taking on this role, work as intercessors between teachers, students, and parents in addition to providing mandated counseling for those students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Aside from these specialized roles designed to provide authentic care and individualized support, the school's leadership has also made it a priority that every adult in the building (including teachers, paraprofessionals, school aids, administrative assistants) receive training related to trauma-informed care. In addition to the heightened trauma stemming from the anti-immigration rhetoric and policies of the Trump era, this professional development is largely a response to growing accounts of suicide ideation, students running away from home, and conflicts between students and their families. A common source of trauma among the students they serve is family separation and reunification. While the students at La Paz are from many different countries whose migration experiences vary greatly, separation from parents is a common hardship. In many

cases, reuniting with parents can also present serious challenges, especially when young people have experienced feelings of abandonment or isolation. In other cases, a family's pressure on students to work or give up aspirations of college can present an equally complex set of dynamics. While the school's leader is clear that trauma-informed professional development alone cannot solve these issues, it does provide a set of tools to address the emotional fallout of separation and reunification.

Don't Let It Go: Preserving Culture, Language, and Identities

While Marylyn believes her work (and that of her staff) entails advocating for the rights of their families and providing critical care, they do not relate to the community only through the struggles they may experience. Rather, there is an inherent and explicit value placed up on their cultural backgrounds and their language as an expression of their collective identities. Deepening their knowledge of the diversity within the Latinx community they serve, the staff display artifacts of the history, language or dialects, cultural practices or traditions of the students' various countries of origins around the school's hallways and inside of its classrooms.

These visual signals help create an environment in which students do not have to check their identities or home languages at the door. The AP reflected:

> I think really celebrating and highlighting the culture is important because some of our kids come in thinking, "I've got to hide it or put it away, because I'm in the U.S. now. It's all about English and blah, blah, blah." We just want them to realize, "This is a beautiful, amazing thing you're bringing to us, and we want you to share it and be proud of it, and not let it go."

To that end, the school is fully immersive in Spanish and English. There is no stigma around speaking Spanish in class with peers or teachers; in fact, on the contrary, framed as a tool to help students socialize in a new place and ultimately support their learning goals. "There's no rule for how much language can be spoken at which time," Marylyn states. "I refuse to do that because that's not normal or natural. That's not real life."

In contrast to the sole focus on English acquisition present in many schools serving English Learners, the principal explained that one of the school's missions is that students graduate being able to read and write equally well in both languages. As part of this model, the school offers math and science in Spanish in the 9th and 10th grades. In addition, 9th and 10th graders take all their classes together within smaller cohorts, so newly arrived 9th graders can benefit from the social and academic support of their peers in the 10th grade. One of the primary assumptions behind the principal's decisions around language development is the separation of language skills from outcomes related to content. This allows teachers to acknowledge the content-related skills students may bring even if they have not yet mastered the second language. In other words, the school does not allow students' level of English to make invisible their knowledge sets and abilities. The other AP explained:

> That's why we've separated them because we don't want language and skills to hinder them getting credit, which they deserve, because they have technically passed all of their content outcomes. We're not forcing them to all of a sudden speak English their first year. …. The way that we separate our outcomes into content, language, and skill, so it delineates the idea that language is not inherently connected to content. Students can be highly successful in their content, but maybe not yet on their language.

The school's approach to language not only rejects deficit narratives, but it also creates unique opportunities for students to excel in their native language, while exposing them to rigorous

curriculum and instruction. One of my most vivid experiences at La Paz was observing a 9th and 10th grade class reading and analyzing the 15th century Spanish play, *La Celestina* by Fernando de Rojas. Though Spanish is my first language, I was struck by the sophistication of the prose and the vocabulary the students used to discuss the work. The fluidity with which they grappled with themes of misogyny, prejudice, and religion within the historical context and its connection to contemporary events made obvious that their language was not perceived as a barrier but as a vehicle towards learning and self-actualization.

Discussion and Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research

The U.S. foreign-born population is 13.7% and steadily rising. Moreover, the growth of newcomer destinations in geographical regions that have not historically served immigrant students suggests that districts and schools across the country will need to adapt to effectively serve these communities. By examining a school that has made positive impacts on the academic outcomes of immigrant students, this paper contributes empirical scholarship towards understanding approaches that effectively support a growing, but historically underserved community. At the same time, the limitations of this study raise critical questions about the capacity for other schools to enact these policies and practices and sustain them over time. Though we collected our data over two years, the principal retired the year after and there was some tension between the remaining assistant leaders. How likely is it for schools to maintain an ethos established by a school leader who leaves? How do schools like Le Paz remain committed to their central mission in the face of principal and teacher turnover? Another limitation of the study is the singularity of the site itself. The case study site was uniquely created to serve Spanish speaking immigrant students, setting it apart from other schools in the district. Moreover, schools in its Network have been able to negotiate, over several years, certain district mandates and practice "creative compliance" (Tienken, 2020) to better serve immigrant ELs. How difficult might it be for other schools in the same system to apply these lessons when they do not have some of the affordances or community of a Network school?

The distinctive qualities of the case, however, may actually uncover some of the way we may reimagine traditional school settings. Situated alongside scholarship that documents promising practices for immigrant communities, this paper provides a conceptual model—an integration of advocacy and critical care—through which to understand and interrogate educational spaces that serve immigrant students. By focusing specifically on the school's leadership, this paper also adds to an existing body of work on transformative leadership, as embodied by individuals and a school's very ethos. To that end, this work offers a rich description of school leadership grounded in advocacy and critical care, which in turn inspired policies and practices to more holistically serve Latinx, immigrant students and their families. Moreover, by illustrating how the principal of this site helps to protect the rights of undocumented and documented families (especially in an increasingly hostile political environment), provide critical care through her staff and external partners, and preserve the culture and language of her students, this paper reveals concrete approaches that can be adopted by other school leaders who serve immigrant, mixed-status communities, and other marginalized populations.

This paper also suggests considerations for leadership programs that typically focus on skills related to operations, school budgets, and academic instruction, but may not spend sufficient time on political contexts, social justice, and racial consciousness nor how these factors may intersect with the roles of school leaders today. Practically speaking, that might involve integrating a historical and sociopolitical lens into the courses and content of a program, professional

development focused on anti-racism and racial justice, and mentorship or apprenticeship with experienced leaders of color. It may also entail reexamining accountability frameworks in which "care" is enacted through a colorblind lens and focused on reductive measures of social emotional learning. While leadership programs and school districts may discourage school leaders from engaging in politics, not doing so may signal to immigrant families and communities of color more broadly that their daily realities aren't seen and don't matter. This is especially true when federal policy and political leaders cast aspersions on immigrant groups, further disintegrating their trust in authorities and institutions like schools. This article may also raise important, critical questions about the model of the strong leader. What will happen, for example, in the wake of Marylyn's departure? To what extent will the policies and practices she established continue without her leadership? It is thus important that leadership programs also build leaders' capacity to empower other members of the larger school community to take on roles of advocacy and create structures and systems that are sustainable beyond inevitable transitions in leadership.

Based on this work, districts and schools may also want to consider policies around bilingual education and creating asset-based, rigorous learning opportunities to leverage and further develop students' native languages. Moreover, the way language policies are framed should reject deficit perspectives that explicitly or implicitly push students to give up aspects of their culture and identity, including their language. Given La Paz's track record for producing positive academic outcomes for immigrant students, this model also suggests that centering the cultures and identities of students and their families is not antithetical to student achievement, but rather goes hand in hand with effectively educating and graduating students. Since we know that immigrant ELs are half as likely to graduate from high school, it is critical to study sites that have been able to "beat the odds," especially for newcomer students. Future research should provide empirical evidence of the approaches taken in sites that have proven to be effective, while establishing more explicit linkages between these approaches and a range of student outcomes.

Conclusion

The lessons learned from this study will be especially important during the era of COVID-19 and its aftermath. The pandemic has had a disproportionate effect on immigrant families (who are more likely to work outside the home and less likely to have healthcare), while the move to remote and hybrid classrooms may leave many English Learners and non-English speaking families further disenfranchised from the system. In the face of these material realities, schools will have the responsibility to forge relationships with families, understand their needs, establish external partnerships with community-serving organizations, and better integrate home lives and funds of knowledge into curriculum and instruction.

The national policy landscape is also shifting once again under the leadership of a new federal administration that has already reversed a number of Trump's anti-immigration executive orders (including the "Muslim ban" and the border wall). While these acts may result in some cautious optimism among immigrants and allies, we should neither forget nor ignore the xenophobia and white nationalism that continues to thrive in this country and around the world. We should also recognize that most of the policies that have historically harmed immigrant families were enacted and enforced long before Trump. It will continue to be incumbent on policymakers, researchers, and educators to keep immigrant students and families at the forefront of our work, while we reimagine education in the wake of a pandemic; let us not return to "normal" but let us aspire towards an educational system grounded in the humanity of our students and justice for our communities.

NOTES

[1] In this paper, I use the term "English Learners" or "ELs" to be consistent with how respondents in the study referred to students who are learning English as a second language. In more recent years, the schools in the study (and the Network of schools they belong to) have adopted the term "multilingual" to recognize the ways that students' bilingualism is a social and cognitive resource.

[2] While most English Learners are actually native born, a majority of immigrant students are also ELs (Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

[3] In this paper, the school's name and the names of individuals are pseudonyms.

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JLER
Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

"IT'S LIKE WHERE DO I BELONG?": LATINX UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH ACTIVISM, IDENTITY, AND BELONGING IN NORTH CAROLINA

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study explores how undocumented students in North Carolina navigate their identity, belonging, and decision-making about activist efforts. Drawing on fieldwork and interview data (2017-2019), we provide policy context and empirical evidence through the voices of undocumented youth about their everyday realities and dilemmas that being undocumented with the benefits from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) present. We shed light on local resistance and the complexity of undocumented youths' lives as they navigate their immigration status and find belonging in the local community of activists.

*Key Words***:** Undocumented; State Policy; New Latino South; Activism

Introduction

A recurring question related to the experiences of undocumented youth that we encounter as Latinx scholar-activists and critical researchers is: Where do I belong (Rodriguez, 2017, 2018)? This question was uttered to Sophia by undocumented student activists as we discussed on-going organizing efforts. The concern about belonging is connected to the "dilemmas" undocumented immigrants face as college students and recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA),[1] and as activists in a community in North Carolina. In other words, undocumented students, such as those in this article, are included to some extent as college students and as recipients of the temporary benefits of DACA; however, they remain in "limbo" (Gonzales, 2016) in many ways as outsiders to the citizen community, and yet distinct from other undocumented peers who may be ineligible for DACA.

The utterance, "Where do I belong?," links belonging with identity dynamics and undocumented youths' experiences of exclusion from educational and social opportunities due to anti-immigrant policies (Rodriguez, 2017; 2018). In the current U.S. political context these questions of belonging are particularly dubious. Research about undocumented youth experiences of belonging and identity often focuses on how they grapple with their immigration "status" in society--a status informed by discourses of "illegality" (Rodriguez, 2017; Gonzales, 2016; Menjívar, 2006) that position these youth as criminals, and thus undeserving of governmental resources or access to opportunity (Chavez, 2013). Belonging is not a benign term; rather, it refers to larger external forces that shape undocumented students' identities, relationships, interactions, and access to opportunities. Juana, the composite identity featured in this paper, has experiences that are emblematic of other ways that undocumented youth face exclusion and fragmented moments of belonging.

While belonging is central to immigrants' lives (Rodriguez, 2017; 2019; Jaffe Walter & Lee, 2018; Malsbury, 2013), more pressing policy constraints and encounters with the racialized crimmigration system threaten the lives of undocumented youth. By crimmigration, we refer to the intersection of immigration and criminal law, and how bureaucratic entities are enforcing immigration law (Armenta, 2016; Arriaga, 2017). Their belonging is experienced in relation to larger discourses of illegality, and perceptions of their deservingness are built into policies, laws, and institutional practices (Lopez & Reyna Rivarola, 2021; Nagel & Ehrkamp, 2016; Patel, 2015; Patler & Gonzales, 2015; Reyna Rivarola, 2017; Rodriguez, 2018; Yukich, 2013). Furthermore, the ongoing hostile rhetoric and actions of the Trump administration and long-standing history of racialized U.S. policies and the recruitment of undocumented labor to contribute to southern economic sectors--most notably agriculture, meat processing, and construction—continue to shape the lives and positionality of undocumented immigrants (Guerrero, 2017; Marrow, 2011; Ribas, 2015; Weise, 2015), as do complex race relations (Rodriguez, 2020; Brown, Becker & Jones, 2018; Jones, 2019). Given the underrepresentation of undocumented youth voices in the scholarly literature, this exploratory case study of undocumented youth activism in the New Latino South describes the policy context and showcases how undocumented youth struggle to navigate anti-immigrant policy contexts and increase their belonging as activists. Drawing on fieldwork and interview data (2017-2019), we provide policy and empirical evidence through the voices of undocumented youth about their everyday realities. We shed light on local resistance and the complexity of undocumented youths' lives as they navigate their immigration status and find belonging in the local community of activists.

We situate this study in previous research on undocumented youth activism, the politics of belonging for undocumented students, and how policy contexts shape opportunity and access in North Carolina. Our data from DACA-recipients revealed their perspectives of immigrant justice locally. Additionally, we raise important questions about how undocumented youth perceive the activism and their organizing efforts in the larger context of the stratification within the undocumented community. This means, not all undocumented youth are eligible for DACA and DACA as policy is precarious in nature; and, it is important to understand the diversity and complexity within the undocumented community and to problematize the dreamer narrative (Abrego & Negron-Gonzales, 2020).[2] While we are cautious not to generalize, we find that current research has not addressed such complexities about navigating "undocumentedness"—the realities, relationships, and barriers—in our focal state of North Carolina; we aim to provide analytic insights from this exploratory case study (Firestone, 1993; Rodriguez, 2020).

Previous Research

Barriers for undocumented students: An overview

Despite the visibility of undocumented youth activism both in K-12 and higher education settings (Munoz, 2015; Reyna Rivarola, 2017), less is known about the uncertainty as to where undocumented youth fit in with other Latinx populations and undocumented affinity groups. In other words, not all undocumented students are eligible for DACA; therefore, groups such as "dreamers," face stratification, difference, and dilemmas within the undocumented community, and sometimes within their own families, especially if one sibling is eligible for DACA while another may not be."[3] As dreamers are part of a larger social movement-building, the dreamer-identity or label refers to undocumented youth that have mostly lived American childhoods (Flores-Gonzales, 2017; Gonzales, 2016), and has largely been applied to those eligible for the Obama-initiative, Deferred Action For Childhood Arrivals (DACA, 2012). Much of the previous research has yet to account for the variation and stratification within the undocumented community as only *some* are eligible for reprieve from deportation through DACA while having family members who are ineligible and restricted from access to public and social resources and instead focuses on how DACA and other supportive in-state tuition policies allow for access to education and other forms of inclusion (Abrego, 2008). For example, roughly 700,000 recipients of DACA are in the U.S. with additional immigrant students eligible for it but not accessing due to fears or financial constraints (Ee & Gandara, 2019), and more recently arrived students do not qualify for it.

To complicate this further, much of this research does not account for the many undocumented youth who do not qualify for DACA, such as more recently arrived newcomers (Rodriguez, 2019; 2020). We underscore the precarity of DACA, as a policy that promotes deservingness and hierarchies that exclude some from benefits (Ybarra, 2018), while also excluding the many undocumented youth who fold into the local landscape. We problematize DACA as a temporary policy that serves some, and that also varies by state context (Cebulko & Silver, 2016). Given this, the current study centers on the variation of belonging and tensions within the undocumented youth community.

Scholars also draw attention to the criminalizing forces and mechanisms underlying immigrants' lives in the U.S.—both the symbolic and discursive violence the undocumented community faces. Armenta (2016) argued that in the area of law enforcement, U.S. society witnessed the emergence of the "so-called crimmigration system," in which the immigration enforcement system is intimately intertwined with the criminal justice system. This means that Latinos in particular are highly targeted and racialized as criminals, and have to "navigate their everyday illegality" (De Genova, 2002; Negron-Gonzales, 2015).

Additional constraints are placed upon Latinx immigrants specifically as these crimmigration systems threaten what are supposed to be safe spaces--schools. Schools, as protected spaces under the Supreme Court case *Plyler v. Doe*,[4] are compromised by the threat of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in an institution that suffers from limited due process, enhancing the "culture of surveillance" in many communities such as the one in this study (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017). Scholars (Rodriguez, 2018; Roth, 2017) note that in places like the New Latino South, where this study occurs, states like Alabama and South Carolina are not protecting undocumented children from law enforcement. For example, the encroachment of immigration policy into schools, as part of a larger immigration surveillance apparatus, paired with racialization processes in schools leads to a school-to-prison-to-deportation pipeline (Hlass, 2018). These surveillance apparatuses are rising and sustained in communities and schools. This is

important context for understanding the everyday realities and barriers that undocumented youth face. Despite strides in immigration reform or political wins, there remains deep variation and stratification within the immigrant and undocumented communities (Gonzales & Ruiz, 2014).

Anti-Immigrant Contexts in the New Latino South

This research builds upon previous scholarship that seeks to understand the ways in which immigrants in the South are excluded from public spaces broadly and schools specifically. As state and local level legislation related to immigration rises dramatically (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2017; Odem & Lacey, 2009), it is necessary to understand why local/state legislatures seek/adopt immigration policy. Chavez and Provine (2009) found that common rationale such as "threat"' rhetoric and negative economic and criminal perceptions, are not associated unilaterally with restrictionist legislation. Building on that research, Ybarra, Sanchez, and Sanchez (2016) used cross-section time-series analysis to find that economic recession paired *with* changing demographics were correlative of increased immigration policy at the state level. Interestingly, local growth in the Latinx population yields increased restrictive policies while Asian population increases had no measurable impact, which speaks to the racialized hierarchies of immigrant groups. Specifically, the model minority stereotype positions Asians as honorary whites and not a significant threat to the social or economic status quo in many states (Goodman, 2015; Rodriguez, 2015, 2018). Thus, anti-immigrant anxieties, and the ensuing racialization of immigrant groups (Sáenz & Douglas, 2015; Verma et al., 2017) are tied directly to the expansion of Latinx populations in the historically segregated, Jim Crow South (Winders & Smith, 2012).

Another reason Southern states enact strict immigration laws creating restrictive local policy contexts for newcomers relates to popular, white supremacist attitudes in the formerly Jim Crow South. Odem & Lacy (2009) argue more exclusionary state and local immigration policies are the result of shifting popular attitudes in the region writing, "most official rhetoric and policy in the Southeast in recent years...seeks to limit especially unauthorized immigrants' access to employment, transportation, housing, health care, higher education, and public benefits" (p. 150). These scholars, and others (Oboler, 2010), argue that many local ordinances in Southern localities aim to discourage flows of immigration, make life harder for immigrants, or drive out those already there. For example, communities in Georgia and the Carolinas maintain housing regulations that require landlords to verify immigration status and incur fines for renting to undocumented immigrants (Odem & Lacy, 2009). This racialized practice is akin to what Bonilla-Silva (2015) calls the "new racism," in which aspects of social life are restricted through policies, processes, and mechanisms that undercut or outright deny minoritized groups access to standard quality of living or living wage jobs. Local unease is compounded by the former presidential administration that sought tighter enforcement of immigration laws while rolling back protections such as the DACA program. Latinx communities in the South must also worry about increased ICE activities and re-established 287(g) programs (Nguyen & Gill, 2010)[5] that seek to further constrain their lives.

In addition to state policies being enacted out of fear or explicit legacies of racist and white supremacist attitudes, state policies are also seeking to criminalize immigrant groups. For example, specific policies like those criminalizing living arrangements are proposed by localities to control immigrants in the New Latino South. Rodriguez and Monreal (2017) explore how policy discourse produces problematic categories of knowledge about immigrants creating the necessity for restrictive legislative actions. Rodriguez and Monreal (2017) found that state level policy constructed immigrants to be dangerous Others, an economic and security threat to the residents

of the state. Immigrants thus become the subject of specific types of knowledge and the object of targeted policies like increased law enforcement surveillance and continual verification of one's (legal) status. This research is especially pertinent because the construction of a threatening immigrant subject sets forth the perception that immigrants are undeserving of state resources like schooling and access to equitable funding.

The examples above illustrate how state policies in the South impact undocumented immigrants' everyday lives and suffocate their protected status in school and right to educational opportunity under *Plyler*. The examples also underscore the powerful processes of racialization and disciplinary surveillance. Such racialization processes like profiling practices, increased disciplinary encounters, and deficit-based ability discourse frame immigrant students as deviant and threatening to the fabric of the state(s) in the South with broader connections nationally given the anti-immigrant political landscape. We note these examples to point out the uniquely anti-immigrant context of the New Latino South and how this context bears upon immigrants' lives, shaping their access to educational and social resources, and how they choose to engage in activism or mobilization efforts to fight for their rights. These examples illustrate that immigration and education policies are highly influential and act jointly in the context of the U.S. South.

Activism and North Carolina as a Focal State

Our collective empirical work in North and South Carolina over the past decade showcases how local contexts, particular policies and discourses, shape undocumented immigrants' lives and the precarity in which they engage in activism and mobilization efforts to obtain resources (Rodriguez & Monreal, 2017; Rodriguez, 2018). Despite the many barriers undocumented immigrants face, movement-building and community resource-sharing occurs. North Carolinians participated in the mass mobilizations of Latinos in 2006 and Zepeda-Millan (2017) suggests the decline of that protest wave was the result of an increase in raids, deportations, hate crimes, and state and local anti-immigrant ordinances. Although other campaigns persisted—namely a fight for tuition equity and driver's licenses—the emphasis on local deportation practices did not. It is only relatively recently that campaigns—led by some of the participants central in the 2006 protests—have resurfaced to target these practices at the local level. And not until 2018 did persistent campaigns targeting Sheriffs and their participation—both voluntary and unquestioned practices—in local immigration occur. These unquestioned practices of adoption, particularly of biometric screening practices, mirror the rational ignorance typically reserved to describe when citizens, "do not appear to have concerns intense enough to provoke participation and information gathering" about a particular issue (Robbins et al., 2008).

The present political climate—characterized by the blatant anti-immigrant rhetoric during the 2016 U.S. presidential elections that continues today—has also encouraged local resistance against immigration enforcement partnerships. In some ways, this reflects conditions similar to the 2006 Latino waves of protest, which emerged under 1) Republican Party control, 2) strong nativist sentiments after 9/11, and 3) looming legislative threat in the Sensebrenner Bill of 2005 (Zepeda-Millan, 2017). Furthermore, few national efforts prior to the former presidential administration have forced the Democratic Party, both locally and nationally, to take on these concerns. With limited national movement among this two-party political system, this research contributes to a call by Polletta (2002) to focus on local movement organizations and leadership, lower profile efforts to ensure local changes, and the organizational structures that facilitate this.

We argue that grassroots activists, mainly Latinx immigrants, critical of both political parties, are able to work in coalition with nonprofits while maintaining tactics and goals created

outside of the "sealed-off political realm" (Kalir & Wissink, 2015). Although previous survey research describes political participation prior to the 2006 protests, highlighting that Latinx immigrants are less likely than U.S. born Latinx and other racial and ethnic groups to engage in non-political activities (Leal 2002; Leighly & Nagler, 2013; L. Martinez, 2005; Martinez, 2008; Verba et al., 1995), this is not the case currently. Furthermore, the national and state climate facilitates a limited two-political party solution to local immigration enforcement and more progressive efforts like tuition equity, which provides a unique opportunity for immigrant grassroots activists not to be beholden to those parties in order to construct a more expansive platform.

We note all of this to set up the context for the challenges that undocumented youth are encountering as they attempt to decide which immigration reforms to fight now (described below). Next, we outline the research context of North Carolina for this particular study, our research methods, and empirical evidence from undocumented youth activists.

Conceptual Influences

As we noted, undocumented students face barriers to education and social mobility. Their undocumentedness (Rodriguez, 2020), while complex and varied, is embedded in contexts of reception and other economic, social, and political frames that positions them as "illegal," "good" or "bad," and "deserving" or "undeserving" of resources and access to opportunities (Abrego & Negron-Gonzales, 2020; Rodriguez, 2018). The conceptual frames of illegality and deservingness shape the conditions that undocumented youth live (Rodriguez, 2018; Patel, 2015) and are useful in this study to understand how undocumented young people are living through their status of illegality and engaging locally in movement-building and activism. Similar to Menjivar & Kanstroom (2013), we begin with the assumption that illegality can be experienced, defined, and lived differently across groups (p. 8). Connecting the lived experience to local contexts, these authors argue, "The importance of context— social cleavages shape not only how individuals experience illegality but how they have responded, organized, and mobilized" (p. 7). We build upon the frames of illegality as undocumented youth respond to these structures and how they contextualize notions of "deservingness" as it relates to their eligibility for DACA by showcasing the dilemmas that are entangled within this DACA identity. Grounding our study in these concepts while also being attentive to undocumented youth perspectives help build case knowledge about undocumented youth activism and belonging. In this article, we are interested in sharing how the local context of North Carolina sets up the conditions for undocumented youth to engage in activism and what identities and sense of belonging are available in this context, which results in a tenuous struggle for positive identity and belonging for many undocumented youths.

Research Context and Methods

North Carolina & Population

North Carolina is located on the southeastern coast of the continental United States. It is estimated that North Carolina's population has reached 10,273,419 through Census Bureau Projections in 2017 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). In comparison to other states, North Carolina is the 9th largest state in terms of population size (NC.gov, 2018). According to the demographic profile of Hispanics in North Carolina in 2014,the total Hispanic population in North Carolina is 890,000 making it 9 percent of the total state population (Pew Research Center, 2014), and while seemingly small, much of this population is undocumented and is isolated in rural parts of the state.

A total of 350,000 undocumented immigrants comprised 43 percent of the immigrant population and 3.4 percent of the total state population in 2014 (American Immigration Council, 2017). As time has passed, the trends report an increase across the board in North Carolina's Hispanic population and undocumented populations. More than 25,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in North Carolina (American Immigration Council, 2017). While the age breakdown of undocumented immigrants varies, for this investigation, the age range from 16 to 24 is used to understand the experiences of this population given that the participants in this study are in this range and enrolled in a local private college with DACA support. Within the age range of 16 to 24, it is reported that 59,000 were in this category in 2014 (Migration Policy Institute, 2014). The Latinx immigrants in North Carolina come from various parts of Central and South America. The countries of birth of most of this population include: Mexico and Central America, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (Migration Policy Institute, 2014).

The shift in destination for the Latin American migrant stream is part of a larger demographic trend that includes new immigrants from other countries as well as people relocated from all parts of the United States seeking to take advantage of the cheaper cost of living and the economic advantages of the South (Gill, 2010). North Carolina presents a place for opportunity for Latinx immigrants to lay roots due to the lower cost of living and higher labor opportunities (Marrow, 2011; Ribas, 2015).

Research Questions

While many states felt the brute force of a shifted political climate when Trump was elected, New Latino Southern geographies have been restricting access to social and public resources for Latinx immigrants broadly and undocumented immigrants specifically for decades. In this focal state, studying activism, divisions, and diverse challenges in the Latinx undocumented community was central. The project was grounded conceptually in concepts of deservingness, illegality, and belonging, and social movement literature (Enriquez, 2014), asking the following research questions as part of the larger study:

> How are Latinx undocumented immigrant youth engaging activism in their local communities? How do Latinx undocumented youth talk about the dilemmas they face due to their status and sense of belonging?

The primary objective of this article is to understand the policy context of North Carolina and how it shapes undocumented youths' activism and sense of belonging. We also hope to intervene in some of the dreamer narrative as a unified experience of DACA-recipients and instead reveal the complexities that DACA-recipients face as they navigate their status and make decisions about activist efforts. This contributes to previous literature by examining tensions within the undocumented community on issues related to their activism and status as undocumented.

Research Design and Methods

This exploratory case study was conducted between 2017-2019 of undocumented youth who became activists during high school and who are activists in higher education and community settings in a focal state, North Carolina. The college-going youth attend a small religiously affiliated private institution known for its inclusion and tolerance. The college-going students are recipients of DACA, but many of their family members are undocumented or ineligible for DACA. Case study design can be instrumental when trying to understand a particular phenomenon

(undocumented youth activism) in a particular context (New Latino South and North Carolina) to show particulars about their movement building efforts and struggles of solidarity within the undocumented community (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016; Yin, 2014). Case study is also useful when attempting to bound local systems in order to build case knowledge about particular phenomena. Prominent researchers in methodology agree that case study research is an "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2014), and that the "thick description" of a singular case in particular is useful for understanding the complexity of phenomenon in order to provide significant detail such as the insights gained in this article from the unique and tenuous experience of undocumented youth activists (Geertz, 1973). While case study, and singular case analyses are often subject to criticism, including threats to validity, replicability, and generalizability, in this study, the fact that undocumented youth are a hidden, silenced population as well as the location of this anti-immigrant context, necessitates a dire need to study this population from the grassroots-level. We do this in order to build understanding about how immigration reform is needed and impacts their everyday lives and intergroup relations.

Participants and Data Sources

Participants were recruited through an initial connection made with a local community organization that partnered with the high schools to support immigrants' rights as well as through professional networks by the two faculty co-authors of this article given our decade-long work as local organizers (Felicia) and mentors within the community (Sophia). From these initial connections, additional participants were recruited through snowball sampling given the sensitive status of this population (Rodriguez, 2017; Golash-Boza, 2016). All participants reached out to the researchers via phone on their own and then met in person. The participants were told the purpose of the study and agreed to share their experiences being organizers and activists on their university campus, in their high schools prior to going to college, and in more state and national venues. The nature of the organizations that they were involved, since some were involved in multiple groups, included mostly undocumented youth and sometimes their family members. The organizations were largely made up of DACA recipients. In some cases, one organization was solely comprised of undocumented immigrants, some with DACA and some without it. The participants self-reported as undocumented. They also shared that they were from Mexico and had lived in the community or elsewhere in the state since early childhood, similar to what Gonzales (2016) has called the 1.5. generation. This refers to undocumented young people who arrive at young ages and live mostly American childhoods, i.e., attending school and becoming integrated into local communities in North Carolina (Jones, 2019).

Semi-structured interviews typically lasted from 60-120 minutes. The participants included in this article were interviewed between 2017-2019 and developed a mentor/mentee relationship with Sophia due to shared interests in sociology and immigration reform, including three of the participants attending Sophia's graduate level classes in sociology and research methodology, and meeting regularly with her for coffee or a meal to discuss current organizing efforts over the course of the two-year study.

Sophia also engaged in participant-observations. These were conducted at organizing activities, including protests, workshops, community meetings, and vigils. Sophia assisted undocumented youth working on activist projects such as researching state policy (Rodriguez, 2017; 2018) and assisting them in preparing letters to senators and providing workshops through

a college access program at the local university that has a long-standing relationship with the undocumented community. One additional event included a protest and vigil outside of the local ICE agency where undocumented immigrants along with others painted fake tombstones. Undocumented immigrant youth activists read the stories of undocumented young people who had been living in this southern state and had been recently deported, which resulted in their death upon their return to Central America. Sophia regularly attended workshops organized by undocumented youth to share resources for undocumented families to learn about policies, educational rights, and the college admissions process. Sophia attended and participated if asked by the youth and often served as a resource for youth in various ways, typically by supplying policy information or speaking at events that were organized in the area at local universities. Felicia has extensive experience providing strategic advice within the broader undocumented immigrant community in the local community where this study occurred as well as at the state level. Felicia, in this capacity, has contributed to and led workshops with local groups around increasing awareness of immigration enforcement, police accountability, and access to higher education.

Methodological Decisions and Composite Identity for Participants:

The focus on the participants will all be under the pseudonym, Juana, which is a composite identity. To be clear, we did not delete or leave out the diversity of voices in creating a composite identity; rather, we present a composite that incorporates all undocumented youth voices. The purpose of the composite identity is two-fold. The first reason we chose to develop a composite is to protect the confidentiality of the youth in these organizing spaces who are entangled in a larger crimmigration regime in the state, especially given the heightened threats this community faces and the local cooperation between ICE and local law enforcement (Arriaga, 2017). We wanted undocumented youth voices to "expose hegemonic power arrangements" such as the very policies that sustain the undocumented youth in this study's marginalization and invisibility in society (Baez, 2002, p. 35). The power dynamics and explicit forms of exclusion and discrimination against the undocumented community are significant factors that informed our desire to protect the identities of the participants and thus warranted the methodological choice to leverage the composite identity.

Second, the composite identity is a type of "counter-narrative" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), and it relies on multiple People of Color who have experienced a particular context. Further, Harper (2009) argues, "Composite stories are useful for representing the often-disregarded experiences of a larger group through a smaller subset of 'characters' who represent the group" (p. 702). And, finally, Harper (2009) posits, "Composite characters in the story reject commonly held assumptions regarding their limited potential" in society or in relation to social mobility (p. 702). The youth in this project were eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) and held views that they had some privilege with DACA status (Gonzales, 2016). This tenuous status, however, did not mean that they were exempt from discrimination and racism in the community or policy context. At times, the youth felt empowered but also felt limited in what they could accomplish. They struggled to articulate how their voices mattered in society, but through organizing, explored how they could contribute to "the movement" as they referred to it. Important to their experience was learning the limitations of the DACA status as well as how it situated them within the larger undocumented community, which included recently arrived undocumented immigrants and those with family members who had been deported and/or were ineligible for any protections. These things came to bear on the participants' mental health and

opened up their learning about the stratification in the undocumented community and the false narratives surrounding their unity.

Indeed, the undocumented youth in this study offered critical perspectives that reject the common assumptions about Latinx immigrants that are used against them in punitive ways in American society. The youth here comprise a voice that rejects deficit discourses and resists the oppressive assumptions about the Latinx community and undocumented youth that they are "bad hombres" or "stealing jobs."[6] Instead, they are long-standing members of the communities and engage in civic action and organizing for their rights. Participants in the study shared similar concerns and experiences of struggling with activism and focusing on a singular composite case analysis provides a particular kind of depth to the case study and phenomenon (Roulston, 2012). Because this population is underrepresented, and due to the exploratory and sensitive nature of the topics, participants requested to be de-identified. Thus, we also made this methodological decision to protect their identities and continued efforts to engage locally, knowing that their views were evolving (Arriaga, 2017). What is reflected here is the result of these two years of the project.

Analytic Processes and Decisions

While this research was a collaborative effort, meaning the study took form as relationships with the youth deepened, there were overarching research questions for this project, which was noted above as: How are Latinx undocumented immigrant youth engaging activism in their local communities and talking about belonging in relation to it? How do Latinx undocumented youth talk about the dilemmas they face due to their status and sense of belonging? Using these questions as a guide, relationships developed with local undocumented youth activists as they reached out to Sophia. Sophia wrote analytic memos after each interview and observation as a form of preliminary analysis, often checking in with youth to ensure data were captured according to their experiences (Birks et al., 2008). The youth wished to remain anonymous due to the politics of their activism. The story of "Juana" is told here to showcase the dilemmas and tensions that came with the mobilization efforts.

As qualitative researchers, we used traditional coding methods. Data were analyzed utilizing common techniques in qualitative research, specifically through open and analytic coding processes (Saldana, 2013). After engaging in four to six 60–100-minute interviews that engaged life histories of undocumented students with DACA for this project in North Carolina, all interviews were transcribed by an outside service. Transcribed interviews were uploaded to NVivo coding software and coded by the researchers. We used open and "flexible coding" techniques to allow for maximum understanding of undocumented students' experiences (Deterding & Waters, 2018). Under open and flexible coding processes, we developed the overarching code of "dilemmas of being undocumented," which helped us organize Juana's narrative. For the analytic coding, we examined developed codes such as belonging, identity, deservingness, privilege, and illegality because those are common themes in the research literature we noted above and themes which we wished to expand upon. The coding processes resulted in two categories, e.g., *policy constraints* and *dilemmas of activism* with subcodes that we describe below such as *belonging and identity, the right type of activism and disrupting the dreamer narrative, and organizing as "taking the good with the bad"* (described in findings).

An overarching finding, then, is the ways that immigration policies shape the fragmented sense of belonging and constrained activism of undocumented young people in the study. There are limitations in this study. As we noted, we intend to build case knowledge about one set of undocumented students within a particular context and do not claim to generalize these experiences

across all undocumented students. To protect the identities of the youth, we use certain details and piece together details from multiple students. We use and contribute the composite as a methodological strategy to protect the identities of the undocumented youth and organizers we work with (Rodriguez, 2017), and at their request to protect their identities, including gender, racial/ethnic backgrounds, and institutions and activist groups they are involved in to the best of our ability. We were given permission by them to disclose certain identity-markers such as being an undocumented Latinx immigrant and recipient of DACA. We value the single story of the multiple to complicate the dreamer narrative and assumptions that all DACA recipients experience inclusion. Instead, we share the dilemmas, tensions, and challenges to belonging for undocumented youth like "Juana."

Findings

From our research with undocumented youth and our policy analyses, three key findings emerged related to policy: college access and state-policies, proposed legislation, and financial barriers. The second part of this findings section focuses on the lived experiences of undocumented youth activists through the composite identity in the study, Juana. We organize the findings around the policy constraints as an overarching theme we found in our policy and empirical analysis. Then, we narrate the responses to such constraints as the key findings related to the undocumented students' experiences of dilemmas, including how their status and as recipients of DACA impact their identity and belonging and shape their engagement and reflections about activist efforts for immigration justice.

Policy Constraints

College Access: The state's inconsistent policies on college admissions, cost, etc. make it challenging for any DACA and undocumented young person to successfully enroll, pay for, and complete a college education. Furthermore, both DACA and undocumented students must pay out-of-state tuition in North Carolina to attend a 2- or 4-year college/university.

There are two loopholes that should be highlighted: non-profit/employer sponsorships are available to community college students who are DACA recipients if the administration is knowledgeable about the process, and in 2018, tuition was lowered for three 4-year universities within the UNC-system (see, NC Promise).[8] Unfortunately, two of those schools are historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), subject to different funding allocation structures and challenges. And in the absence of a multi-racial/issue coalition pushing back against this reduction in tuition, these universities may see drastically different trajectories. Then Senator Apodaca who advocated for Western Carolina University, the sole non-HBCU, explicitly stated he was in favor of the change because it would provide affordability for lower-income and undocumented students, mostly in line with his previous support of tuition equity. According to the Adelante Education NC Coalition's website, between 2004 and 2014, the policies pertaining to DACA or undocumented students in the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) changed or were clarified nine times. In 2004, this included allowing schools to have the discretion as to whether to admit students and whether to make them pay out of state tuition. In 2008, undocumented students were banned from enrolling in the community college system, even after the Department of Homeland Security and the NC Attorney General decided it was discretionary. In 2010, undocumented students were once again allowed to enroll in community colleges but were required to pay out-of-state tuition and forced to wait to enroll in courses to ensure legal residents or citizens were first guaranteed course selections. In 2013, business sponsorships

became available for DACA recipients attending community colleges. Throughout most of this time, continuing into the present, undocumented and DACA recipients were not able to obtain a professional licensure even though they could enroll in the coursework.

Proposed Legislation: Unfortunately, the tension undocumented students face and what Juana describes below about her identity and the idea of the "good" immigrant is reflected in various versions of proposed statewide tuition equity language and rhetoric (Rodriguez, 2018). The most recent version of a tuition equity bill was proposed in the 2017-2018 legislative session through House Bill 734 or the In-State Tuition Equity Bill. Like previous iterations of this proposed legislation, there were requirements for those who would be eligible. These included: 1) a high school diploma or GED, 2) attending school in NC for at least 2 years prior to enrollment, 3) proof that the individual would apply for legal status, and 4) be accepted and enrolled at an institution.[9] Unlike previous versions of proposed legislation that were expected to make it past committee readings and find favor with Republicans, this proposed legislation did not have GPA requirements.

Cost: As previously mentioned, undocumented and DACA recipients[10] must pay out-of-state tuition costs at 2- and 4-year public schools in North Carolina. Private schools often classify them as "international" students, forcing them to pay more than "domestic" students. Within both of these systems, students are unable to obtain financial aid from the state or federal government. They may apply for private scholarships, but there is a limited pool of these available, although The Golden Doors Scholarship[11] has gone a long way to provide support for many students.

Each of these themes were discussed across interviews and observations of various organizing meetings and activities. These policy issues and barriers to higher education (Sief, 2004) shape the lives and opportunities of undocumented youth. Thus, as a result, they strategize at local levels to combat the injustices they face. Next, we discuss the experiences of our composite identity Juana and how youth respond to policy constraints. Utilizing Juana's experience, we show the challenges that undocumented youth like her face generally, but also the "dilemmas," she endures due to her feelings of uncertainty about being a DACA recipient when many in the community are either ineligible for DACA, cannot afford to apply, or are scared to apply for it. Our intention is to share Juana's experience in order to complicate the perceptions of the undocumented community as all similar or united as one, and to share the ways that incongruent and unjust immigration policies impact undocumented young peoples' lives, opportunities, and well-being.

Juana's fragmented identity and activist dilemmas

Juana initially shared her story of becoming an activist during the first interview in December of 2017, which to our surprise dated back to her middle school days. She said that she lived in a trailer park in a small town near several major research universities in the South. She explained that often friends or siblings in high school or at the university would attempt to recruit middle or high school students for activism because the undocumented community was long-standing in the surrounding North Carolina communities. Juana revealed that she was a DACA recipient early on in interviews because Sophia attended a local university to speak with undocumented students and their families about navigating college. Juana explained that being undocumented with DACA was a struggle because she observed undocumented people in the community that she felt should have the opportunity to go to college, including those she was involved with in local activist groups, and her siblings and friends. For instance, Juana revealed, "Like, I feel really guilty that like I have DACA and me and my mom didn't push to help my

brother. He doesn't have it." The tensions or "dilemmas" as they are referred to that surfaced throughout the interviews speak to how undocumented students' identities are fragmented, and their belonging is a challenge within and beyond the undocumented community. Below, we map three interrelated themes from Juana's grounded experience to illustrate the tensions of being undocumented with DACA and how it impacts belonging and decision-making about activist efforts. These themes all relate to "dilemmas" of being undocumented, including: identity and belonging, the *right* type of activism, and organizing as *"taking the good with the bad."*

Identity and Belonging

While Juana desired empowerment and belonging as many undocumented students do, she was confronted with a contentious landscape of activism and was learning to understand what her identity as an undocumented student and DACA recipient meant in the local context. She struggled with her DACA-status, seeing it as a "privilege" when compared with other undocumented students. She said, "I am oppressed in certain ways but I'm also privileged in others. And recognizing that, I think is pretty important. I sometimes try to like blame like a white person like, you have privilege, you have it all but like, in reality, I have privilege even if we don't call it privilege with scholarships and networks, and DACA" (12/2017). Juana explains this awareness of her DACA status and being in college as a "dilemma" and as having an impact on her decision-making about how to be an activist within the undocumented community.

Relatedly, Juana repeated the phrase "learning that organizing language matters." Juana described that as she was trying to understand her "own place in the movement," she had to confront and combat phrases from external forces about her (and the larger undocumented community's) label of "criminal." She said, "I'm not a criminal. But, you feel like it. That's the phrase I always hear about us. They're criminalizing our people" (Interview, 2/2019). Juana shared how she struggles to accept her own, what she refers to as, "privilege," of being a DACA-recipient within the community while also feeling the competing agendas and interests with regard to activism efforts. And yet, members of her undocumented community, together, have to navigate their status of "illegality" and thus are assumed to come together in solidarity despite the fragmented feels toward that identity marker and status (Gonzales, 2016).

In addition to managing her "master status" of being undocumented and an immigrant in the South (Gonzales, 2016), Juana noted that she is also still "just in college" and learning who she is. She explained:

> We face all this stuff. In high school, it's the worst, it's so hard. I was lucky I was in honors classes but a lot of people of color and immigrants don't get that opportunity. And high school is all about status and identity and you know, like who's the cool kid, and all this dumb stuff. I was set up to go to college, though. Then when you get to college, you are like free to explore who you are and it's like if you could just make it there, you know, then you might have a chance to really figure out who you are. You know? (12/2017)

She explained that despite the struggles of undocumented immigrants in her family and community, she felt "privileged" in a sense to be in college, but carried "guilt" about her positioning. She noted:

> When it comes to like this whole like, getting an education thing, I think I was a force of upward mobility for a lot of my friends that wanted to go to college. Even now, like they like hit me up and they're like, "How do I get my transcripts?" Or like, "How do you think I should do this?" Like I know a lot about it. (12/2017)

It's one way that she can extend her knowledge and capital within her local friend group and community—a small form of her "activism." Finally, managing the burden of being undocumented with the general adolescent development is not without its isolation. Juana recalled, "I want to help people while I am trying to figure all this out. Sometimes I can't help people with all their questions. I just cry afterwards" (12/2017).

The *right* type of activism and disrupting the dreamer narrative

In addition to understanding her undocumented identity and how its meanings align with the DACA status in the local landscape, Juana grappled with additional dilemmas. She explained

> I've been having this dilemma lately. One activist group wants the undocumented community to support the Succeed Act.[12] I've been in the dilemma of like, is what they're doing like conforming? This dilemma is becoming very internalized to me. I feel like I should conform, and go along with that group, but there are too many scary restrictions in the Act. (Interview, 1/2019)

Juana's "internalizing" of this dilemma speaks to the challenges of being an activist and choosing which reforms to support within her community. Moreover, this dilemma highlights her ability to pursue higher education, a pathway inaccessible by some and undesired by others. Though conflicted, Juana attends multiple organizing meetings to understand the details of legislation and efforts to support immigrants' rights.

The interviews revealed a community divide witnessed and experienced firsthand by undocumented youth. Juana explained that "the undocumented community isn't all unified." She expressed that some activists in the local community are fighting for the Dream Act, which some of her activist peers call "unrealistic," while others support the aforementioned Succeed Act. Relating to the Dream Act, Juana contends that one activist group argues, "Dreamers are political pawns. The Dream Act isn't gonna happen." She notes that the division between supporting comprehensive immigration reform (Dream Act) or acts like Succeed with a number of concessions is not an easy choice for her. She said that supporting the Succeed Act feels like saying, "You guys are the good immigrants [referring to those with DACA]" when there are others who deserve a chance to go to college. She said that since she is a recipient of DACA and another prestigious scholarship, she feels like she is "a good immigrant," and this is troubling to others because she doesn't "always want to be in that group. Because there are other all types of undocumented people here. It feels like it shouldn't be you're either a good immigrant or bad one" (Interview, 3/2018). Yet, she feels that her choice to participate in the Succeed Act group perpetuates these notions of good or bad immigrant rather than seeking a more just and inclusive immigration reform bill. Thus, her dilemma is "figuring out if I am putting my energy into the right side of the movement." While we learned of many specific state level and local level policies that the activists were learning about, the larger point we make here is that through the eyes of Juana, it was not always clear which efforts to put energy into because of the competing agendas within the undocumented community, and some securing benefits from some policies (i.e., DACA) while others were more excluded from education and social resources. On a similar note, DACA recipients also had to fight for a "clean" driver's license. Once DACA became a federal law, each state could decide various parameters. In North Carolina, proposed legislation would have forced these individuals to obtain a driver's license with a pink stripe across it, a move meant to distinguish them from other motorists, further emphasizing their illegality, and potentially leading to racial profiling in encounters with local law enforcement. For some young people with DACA,

this would still provide a previously unavailable privilege while others feared the stigma it would continue to perpetuate.

Organizing as a "taking the good with the bad"

Another emergent theme from Juana's perspective related to the struggle of being a college student, and undocumented immigrant, and an organizer. She noted, "organizing is draining, emotionally draining. It's emotional labor and energy that I put out there and it takes away from homework or relationships" (Interview, 2/2019). These comments are important to emphasize that undocumented youth like Juana face much personal and professional sacrifice. Despite this, Juana finds ways to engage. She elaborated: You see the divide that we've talked about, right? There's the national scene of immigration reform. And I've been to D.C. and done that. But then there's the local scene like the organization here I am part of. There's conflict. There'll be conflict. But, there has to be a variety of tactics. It's taking the good with the bad. (Interview, 2/2019)

While many hardships exist for undocumented youth organizers, the alternative of doing nothing or standing by is not an option. Juana recalled a story of many of the organizers. She explained:

> They're like valedictorians of their high schools. They're like everything you would assume like, high achieving and like they tried doing like an activism workshop. [refers to activists in one of the groups she was involved in] I noticed that a lot of people are very hesitant because they rather protect their families, or they rather not put themselves out there. So, you have this divide. These DACA students who want to fight, and others who want to just be there but listen so as not to put their families or themselves out there at risk. (12/2017)

As she struggled to make decisions about which efforts to support, she explained how she felt belonging to various groups, recalling:

> It [the organizing meetings and supportive people] like pulls people in, it's like they relate to you. It's not like someone like definitely like someone standing up and telling you what to do. But I think it was the group in [a local city] I have been involved in and it was just different in the sense of like they went through; they took the time to go through like policy. There was power in that group. People wanted us to know the policies. (12/2017)

Even though she describes the organizing efforts as "having a lot to learn," she also highlighted how beneficial it is to share knowledge within the community. She said, "We also learn about policies and driver's licenses and racial profiling in the community. It's a lot but activism is a social justice issue. We can learn, lobby, protest, and stuff." As she detailed the ups and downs and learning curve of her initial collegiate years engaging in local immigrants' rights activism, she said, "As for if I am activist?.. I don't really know." (12/2017).[13] As these comments show, organizing efforts were stratified within the undocumented community, with Juana observing some groups with power while others remained in the shadows. Even though these descriptions were part of the evolving process of learning how to be an organizer, the takeaway for Juana was learning about policies, how to navigate them, and how to share knowledge within the undocumented community.

Discussion and Implications

Undocumented youth face uncertainty in their communities broadly. Factors that impact their everyday lives include the presence of law and immigration enforcement and a constantly shifting policy landscape. For those with DACA, like Juana, they may experience some relief and access some benefits; largely, however, these youth still have family members who are not "safe"

from ICE detention, or deportation. To some extent, DACA provides a shield and with the networks in this local community, Juana was able to engage in activities to fight for equitable policies and immigration reform. The benefits of DACA, however, do not outweigh the continued stress and limitations on undocumented youth mobility and belonging. In the case of these youth, who attended a local university that had opportunities for scholarships, many youth in the undocumented community did not have the same access to financial support or were uncertain about how to navigate higher education. In North Carolina, the public-school system of higher education does not explicitly exclude undocumented students. However, they do not allow for in-state tuition support, which creates equity and inclusion issues as many undocumented students cannot afford college tuition without some support. Ultimately, undocumented students organize to increase access in the state, but tensions over how to best organize and which topics to prioritize remain within the community. And as of 2016, 3000 “unauthorized” immigrants graduated from public schools in North Carolina (Migration Policy Institute, 2019), which will continue to present opportunities to demand equitable policies.

The implications of these dilemmas and divisions make youth like Juana feel like “*Your activist work isn't real*,” as one of her activist peers said to her, making her feel like she is on the wrong side of the movement since she had been supporting the Dream Act group. Thus, while there exists evidence of movement building, shared ideology is contestable and yet necessary for coalition-building and sustained coherence (Enriquez, 2014) in social movements. These divisions that Juana observed impact individuals and cause distress and confusion as young people try to fight for “social justice,” as Juana noted. Even with these dilemmas, Juana remained engaged, saying, “It’s all the movement.” While participants have by and large had positive experiences in college, i.e., strong relationships with peers, connections with the Latinx community and various groups on campus, and received positive grades, their perceptions of campus and the community as a safe space for organizing remain uncertain. The undocumented students attend organizing events and groups with both Dream and Succeed supporters in an effort to “figure out the right type of activism.” And yet, a precarious moment for Juana was when DACA was threatened by the Trump administration. She said, “I just don’t know what’s gonna happen and it’s scary, but we keep doing the movement.” For many of those in the movement, 2020 brought substantive changes to DACA. In June 2020, the Supreme Court blocked Trump’s bid to end DACA and in December 2020, many of those barred from applying during the Trump administration could finally breathe a sigh of relief. And effective on December 7, 2020, new DACA applicants could apply, DACA renewal requests could be submitted, and advance parole applications were available once again. The recent Supreme Court decisions will keep DACA protections in place for now. But Biden’s selections for the transition team and for the Department of Homeland Security signal Obama-like enforcement policies, so immigration enforcement and migration and border policies remain precarious. Furthermore, Biden recently appointed Cecilia Munoz—Obama’s top immigration adviser—to his immigration transition team. Some are hopeful that the DHS agency review team will assist in policy changes and Biden picking the first Latino immigrant to lead DHS may signal Latino representation at best and empty representation at its worst.

Our aim here was to showcase the experiences of undocumented youth through the composite identity of Juana, from the ground level, in order to provide insight into how anti-immigrant policies and conflicting opportunities for immigration and education reform burden and bear on the lives of undocumented young people. The effects of incoherent, inconsistent, and/or racist, xenophobic policies at the national and state level limit opportunity and access for

undocumented youth and also inhibit emotional well-being, and create stratification within their community.

Unfinished movement-building

Juana's experience speaks to the problems of both the Dream Act and the smaller legislative efforts that enshrine compromises and the criminalization of immigrants. Her visceral experience of the tension is ongoing and unfinished, mirroring the movement itself. To date, Juana remains open-minded, attending multiple local activist efforts that support undocumented communities. Youth like Juana face external and structural barriers and racism in the South even with DACA, and yet some of the most stifling dilemmas emerge in their activist communities. These instances of internal and intra-group conflict have thus far been less discussed in scholarly and public discourse. While this is a small snippet of Juana's experience, it reflects the undocumented community's tensions in southern localities that are also evident nationally and need attention as new debates and conversations over immigration reform take center stage in U.S. politics. Locally, Juana remains hopeful. Our collaborative work with these youth and broader undocumented community members and organizers leads to additional conversations among/across activist groups in a call for shared ideology rather than the mere recognition of a singular collective identity or experience that appears to be associated with being undocumented.

Limitations

Our purpose here has been to shed light on undocumented youths' perspectives of belonging, identity, and activism from a grassroots-level in a local context and particular moment (2017-2019). We would be remiss to not mention the limitations here. First, case study research inevitably faces threats to validity, replicability, and generalizability. We do not aim to generalize the experiences of undocumented youth. Rather, we hope to offer insight of an invisible population in an understudied region in the U.S. since most research on undocumented activism has to date been in large urban centers with more progressive immigration policies. It was important to us, after our deep involvement with these youth and our local advocacy efforts, to highlight the North Carolina context since it informs how and in what ways undocumented youth can engage in activism. Another point here is that we wanted to highlight the critical reflection of undocumented youth who explicitly struggled with their DACA-status and perceptions of activism. This does not mean that all members of the undocumented youth activist community experience the same feelings or perspectives represented here, but our goal was to provide additional opportunities to learn from within the community.

Second, we raise an important issue of stratification in the undocumented community and thus share another methodological limitation here. This issue is not to comment that one type of advocacy is right or wrong. Rather, our aim in unraveling the dilemmas these undocumented youths face is to show the precarious nature of immigration policies and short-term ones like DACA, especially since they, and current immigrant policies, fail to serve all members of the undocumented community. We note the limitations specifically that we did not interview undocumented students who did not experience fragmented identities or the activists who made our participants reflect on the divisions they observed. We understand the competing agendas in the undocumented community and are humbled by their willingness to share their experiences with us, especially at times when we were highly aware of our privilege as citizens and academic researchers. Some of the organizing efforts we did not attend, even though we were invited to do so, because the spaces were solely undocumented members of the community and we wanted to

respect those spaces. In this case, our choice to not attend their space, left us with methodological limitations noted here such as counterexamples to the perspectives presented here. However, given our decade long work with undocumented high school and college students and organizers, we do know questions of belonging and fighting for rights are enduring (Rodriguez, 2017).

Concluding Thoughts

Our aim in this paper has been modest in its singular case analysis of undocumented youth experiences in relation to the constrained policy contexts and fraught activism of the undocumented community. The dilemmas that undocumented youth face in local communities relate to coming to understand themselves and how their undocumented status impacts their life chances, and how they fit into the broader activist community and U.S. society. The project considered how undocumented youth are engaging in activism in an understudied geographic location, specifically the New Latino South and focal state of North Carolina. While anti-immigrant sentiment is pervasive, the experiences of youth like Juana humanize the effects of policies on undocumented youths' lives. The activism and divisions they encounter trouble and complicate their sense of community and solidarity, and individual identity development at times. Nonetheless, there is always an urgency to organize and fight against injustice in this community. Voices from the Latinx undocumented community are less represented in the scholarship, and thus this project showcases the voices of this hidden population to render visible the strength and courage they exhibit in their fight for a more just society in which they are deeply a part of as activists.

NOTES

1. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program gave young undocumented immigrants legal opportunity to work for two years and relief from deportation fears (Gonzalez-Barrera & Krogstad, 2019).

2. Abrego and Negron-Gonzales (2020) argue, "This "affinity" for Americanness is important to recognize as central to the dreamer narrative because it is intricately wrapped up with notions of deservingness (Negrón-Gonzales, Abrego, & Coll 2015). Indeed, claims to an "Americanness" situate the right to belong in this country as the domain only of those who abandon a non-American identity, or who do not question the basic mainstream tenets of what the United States represents. Such a notion upholds a myth of meritocracy that suggests that all immigrants have the ability to pull themselves up by their bootstraps without demanding inclusion or structural changes (p. 10).

3. While many undocumented youths refer to themselves as dreamers, not all in this community, along with many of their undocumented parents, would qualify for rights under the Dream Act or other immigration-related initiatives such as DACA. For more on the division over this dreamer-identity in the undocumented community, see: http://theconversation.com/undocumented-youth-divided-over-how-to-fight-back-against-trump-immigration-clampdown-81726.

4. Galindo (2012) explains the paradoxical and "unfinished business" of the *Plyler* case (p. 591). Though important to protecting undocumented youth under the 14th Amendment and conferring educational rights in K-12, *Plyler* did not provide pathways for citizenship or postsecondary opportunities. Scholars have described the complicated positioning of undocumented children and youth as they have a right to K-12 education but are also "illegal" in the eyes of the broader society and subsequently criminalized (Galindo, 2012; Gonzales et al., 2015).

5. Section 287g of the Immigration and Naturalization Act allows the Department of Homeland Security to enter into formal agreements with local and state police so that local law enforcement officers can perform some functions of federal immigration agents (American Immigration Council, 2017). The Sheriff of Mecklenburg County, NC became the first Sheriff on the East Coast to adopt the 287(g) Program while the Sheriff of Wake County, NC became the first in NC to adopt a biometric screening and sharing program with ICE—both indicators of eager local law enforcement collaboration with ICE.

6. Conversations between Trump and Mexican President Pena Nieto showcase Trump's most infamous usage of "bad hombres" (Agren, 2017). Those leaked White House documents feature Trump's comments, "You have a bunch of bad hombres down there. You aren't doing enough to stop them. I think your military is scared. Our military isn't, so I just might send them down to take care of it."

7. Elsewhere, Rodriguez (2017) has leveraged the strategy of composite identities while acknowledging their limitations. We do not claim that the views present here reflect the larger views of undocumented youth; however, this particular focal state and community share divergent views about how undocumented youth could and ought to manifest at state and national levels.

8. https://www.northcarolina.edu/wepromise

9. See, https://webservices.ncleg.net/ViewBillDocument/2017/3227/0/DRH10233-LH-117B

10. For more information, see: https://www.ncjustice.org/publications/the-impact-of-deferred-action-for-childhood-arrivals-daca-in-the-tarheel-state/

11. See, https://www.goldendoorscholars.org/

12. The Succeed Act was introduced by two senators from North Carolina and Oklahoma and argues for pathway to permanent legal status for undocumented young people if they pursue higher education. For more information, see: http://immigrationforum.org/blog/the-succeed-act-bill-summary/

13. The characteristics and themes shared here reflect the experiences of the participants insofar as where they live and that they were involved in activism from either middle or high school and now in college, and their feelings of uncertainty about being undocumented and being

recipients of DACA. We elected to use the singular pronoun "she" just for readability here. We note the limitations later in the article.

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JLER
Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

BOOK REVIEW

Solórzano, D.G. & Pérez Huber, L. (2020). Racial Microaggressions: Using Critical Race Theory to Respond to Everyday Racism. Teachers College Press.

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What conceptual and methodological tools are needed to better understand and address the realities of everyday racism that People of Color experience persistently and pervasively across a range of institutional contexts? After years of collaborating – in research, teaching, and activism – Solórzano and Pérez Huber come together to incisively answer this question in Racial Microaggressions: Using Critical Race Theory to Respond to Everyday Racism. Anchored in Critical Race Theory (CRT), particularly it's extension into the field of Education, they offer a vivid, humble, and undoubtedly necessary contribution to expand our understanding of racial microaggressions, which they define as, "one form of systemic, everyday racism used to keep those at the racial margins in their place" (p. 34). I write this review mere days after the violent events of March 16, 2020 in Cherokee County, Georgia that took the lives of eight individuals, six of whom were Asian women. Sadly, these events are nothing new in a country whose investments in white supremacy are directly responsible for the continued dehumanization of Asian American and Asian immigrant women and, by extension, other People of Color. Solórzano's and Pérez Huber's contribution to expand our understanding and urge our interruption of daily racialized assaults hit especially acute with the timing of these murders. This review offers a glimpse into the rich theoretical history, methodological approaches, and modes of resistance highlighted by Solórzano and Pérez Huber to advance our grasp of racial microaggressions.

Solórzano and Pérez Huber begin by describing in their introduction how they were first introduced to racial microaggressions. Solórzano details his journey to CRT and marginality as conceptual entry points to his understanding of this phenomenon. Crediting Peggy Davis' (1989) scholarship in the Yale Law Journal as the first time he came across the word "microaggression," Solórzano followed Davis' citational footprint to the work of Chester Pierce, a pioneer in the study of racial microaggressions. From there, Solórzano went on to conduct several studies on the topic, including key research on campus climate in connection with the Grutter v. Bollinger affirmative action case at the University of Michigan Law School. Pérez Huber recounts her journey's origins as an undergraduate student at the University of California, Irvine, where Mentors of Color animated a desire to pursue interests in race, ethnic studies and education. As a graduate student of Solórzano's at UCLA, Pérez Huber was originally drawn to the work of CRT and racial microaggressions to name what she experienced navigating educational institutions as a Woman

of Color. Later, in her work with the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center and through protest against the anti-immigrant bill, H.R. 4437, she began considering the layered assaults Chicanxs/Latinxs experience, particularly for those who identify as undocumented. This led to research and theoretical pursuits to capture the complexity of intersecting realities faced by undocumented Chicana/Latina women. Coming together to theorize and write about racial microaggressions, Solórzano and Pérez Huber have produced an impressive body of scholarship, which is summarized in the introduction. Equally, if not more impressive, is how their theoretical and conceptual developments have always been in constant conversation with real life and with ongoing struggles for social justice.

Grounded in their personal journeys, Solórzano and Pérez Huber open Chapter 1 with stories – counterstories – of experiences with racial microaggressions, narrated by People of Color. According to Solórzano and Pérez Huber, counterstories "open a discursive space to disrupt the normativity of whiteness and allow for the recognition of race and racism, when in so many spaces, racism is often dismissed." (p. 21). Through a series of examples, these counterstories set the stage for the chapter's focus – namely, to provide a historical context and conceptual groundwork for understanding racial microaggressions. In addition to providing a rich interdisciplinary history to define race and everyday racism, underscoring in particular the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, Solórzano and Pérez Huber provide considerable attention to noting the contributions of Chester Pierce, a Black psychologist who in the late 1960s and early 1970s began writing about racial microaggressions as "offensive mechanisms." Though he didn't coin the term until the 1980s, he had already produced a vast body of work on the topic, linking it to the physical and psychological deterioration of Blacks in particular. Chapter 1 concludes with a concise, yet thorough, introduction to CRT in Education, which will serve as the theoretical anchor for the rest of the book.

Chapter 2 extends the framing of CRT to consider one of its methodological tools – critical race hypos – for understanding and teaching about the types, contexts, effects, and responses to racial microaggressions. Solórzano and Pérez Huber make clear that racial microaggressions are not only verbal in nature. They can also manifest visually in advertisements, films, and even children's books, as well as through body language that can signal a dislike or distrust of People of Color. Racial microaggressions occur in a variety of contexts such as schools, at the mall, or in the workplace, which mediate the subtext, or how microaggressions are conveyed. Solórzano and Pérez Huber stress that the effects of racial microaggressions, both physiological and psychological, can compound over time debilitating one's overall health. Lastly, common responses to racial microaggressions by People of Color were discussed, which also vary based on the type and context of the microaggression as well as it consequential effect. A model is provided to visualize this relationship which is primarily interested in the impact or effects of racial microaggression on People of Color, and less so on the intent or implicit bias of the perpetrator. Nonetheless, understanding how perpetrators respond when "called out" by People of Color for racist comments and behaviors is important for nuancing our understanding of racial microaggressions.

Chapter 3 tackles recent debates about whether the "micro" in racial microaggression adequately captures the gravity of insult and impact that racial microaggressions deliver. Solórzano and Pérez Huber open this chapter with a clear and powerful argument, stating, "racial microaggression could not exist without the policies and processes that allow them to happen, or the ideological beliefs in white supremacy that justify them" (p. 51). They go on to note how racial microaggressions cannot be understood or experienced outside of its intimate relationship with

institutional racism. They remind us that the "micro" in racial microaggressions is not meant to signal "small" or "slight" but rather its incessant nature in everyday life. Even so, they introduce the term, "macroaggression," using the visual of a tree, to underscore the rootedness of racial microaggressions in ideologies of white supremacy. Several examples of historic and contemporary racial microaggressions are highlighted to demonstrate the interconnectedness of this relationship.

Chapter 4 explores how racial microaggressions take place within and between Communities of Color. Linking back to their conceptual anchor in CRT, Solórzano and Pérez Huber remind the reader that while People of Color can internalize racism, they have never possessed the political or economic power needed to enact racism. Internalized racism, like institutional racism, is produced by the ideologies of white supremacy. These ideas are socialized through a variety of institutions and come to shape the viewpoints of People of Color, contributing to beliefs that uphold colorism (i.e. preference for whiteness), for example. Similar to how they approach other arguments in the book, Solórzano and Pérez Huber turn to history to ground their understanding of internalized racism. They look back to the landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education, in particular the Clark Doll Experiment, as evidence of the damaging effects of Jim Crow laws. Lastly, Solórzano and Pérez Huber discuss the intergroup conflict that can arise between Communities of Color as a result of internalized racism. Citing recent tensions that surfaced during the Trump presidency, they stress the power of racial realism (Bell, 1992) to reorder white supremacy even when People of Color find themselves in positions of power to change social conditions.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus on antidotes to racial microaggressions – racial microaffirmations. Having accounted for the painful experiences of everyday racism in prior chapters, Solórzano and Pérez Huber turn to stories of hope, joy, and possibility. Influenced by the work of Steele (1988), Sherman and Cohen (2006), and economist Mary Rowe (2008) who first coined microaffiirmations to describe effective mentorship practices for faculty, Solórzano and Pérez Huber define racial microaffirmations ". . . as the subtle verbal and nonverbal strategies People of Color engage that affirm each other's dignity, integrity, and shared humanity." (p. 85). They go on to provide several examples. For instance, they draw attention to what Black scholars and journalists have described as racial codes, or simple gestures – a head nod – that validate the humanity of Blacks, particular in hostile or predominantly white spaces. They also point to the work of Ward (1996) and Guzman (2012) who examine the culturally specific and affirming practices of Mothers of Color toward their daughters. Lastly, Solórzano and Pérez Huber share microaffirmation examples from their own lives, ranging from the importance of culturally rooted aesthetics to attending Raza graduations. They end by highlighting recent scholarship on racial microaffirmations which is only just commencing in the field of Education.

In Chapter 6, Solórzano and Pérez Huber conclude by summarizing key lessons they've learned in their shared journey to study racial microaggressions. They stress three lessons. The first is that any analysis of racial microaggression must include a recognition and examination of the structural conditions that lead to everyday racism. The second is that resistance to racism has always existed on behalf of People of Color. Third, it is imperative that continued research on racial microaggressions support and value the contributions of Communities of Color toward racial justice. Solórzano and Pérez Huber also highlight promising areas for future research. Some examples include inquiry on K-12 Youth of Color, visual microaggressions, and quantitative empirical research that examines the negative health consequences of everyday racism. They end by speaking directly to praxis, suggesting possibilities for intervention.

In the remainder of this review, I raise several questions that emerged from reading this powerful and timely text. My comments concern three themes: 1) ongoing debates about whether the "micro" in "microaggression" is still appropriate and sufficient for naming contemporary forms of everyday racism, 2) the importance of detailing the range and consequences of responses to racial microaggressions, and 3) the justice possibilities for deepening our understanding and interruption of racial microaggressions when we consider current movements, such as the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), Dream Defenders, Critical Resistance, and many other collectives working at present to steer the conversation away from reform and insist another transformative path is needed.

First, it's key we address recent challenges to the term "microaggression," not for its underlying meaning, but for the use of "micro" to qualify the "aggression." With the rise of the Trump presidency, the frequency and boldness of racist attacks have arguably become much more prominent, when compared to recent history. Though critical race scholars have long argued about the insidiousness of white supremacy across time and space, it was hard to dismiss the shock most of us felt seeing image after image and hearing remark after remark of brutal violence being inflicted on Communities of Color and then brushed aside as acts of patriotism. Calls by grassroot organizations, youth, and even other Scholars of Color to cancel the term "microaggression" for its purported insufficiency to capture the gravity of the moment were resounding. Yet, while these calls were well-intended in their desire for counter-discourses powerful enough to "speak truth to power" at present, they fail for two reasons. The first is that these calls misunderstand what the "micro" in "microaggression" means. Solórzano and Pérez Huber make clear that the "micro" was never intended to mean "slight" or "small," rather it was intended to stress the sinister nature of white supremacy in everyday life. In fact, Chester Pierce explains that racial microaggressions cannot be disarticulated from police brutality, economic exploitation, and mortality rates, none of which are "minor" impacts. Second, by insisting that we abandon the term, these efforts erase the history of primarily Black scholars who brought the concept to our attention. In alignment with CRT tenets, Solórzano and Pérez Huber insist on grounding their understandings through a historical analysis, making sure to foreground the work of Scholars of Color who have been instrumental in theorizing racial microaggressions. Their insistence on this history is key, as it recognizes the intergenerational labor that has allowed us the generative space to theorize about these topics today. Thus, calls to erase and replace "racial microaggression" with a better term threatens an ahistorical analysis that severs the link to the contributions of Black scholars. And such ahistoricism can only contribute to a co-opting of this work, which I have personally witnessed participating in the exponential rise of "implicit bias" trainings in higher education.

Second, I'm compelled by the range of responses Solórzano and Pérez Huber provide to underscore the agency of Communities of Color in responding to everyday racism. In particular, I'm moved by the power of microaffirmations, as both acts of validation but also for their potential to heal. For too long, educational policy has tried to figure out how to capture what makes Students of Color resilient in an effort to package it as a reform strategy to make future students more "gritty." While resistance to white supremacy is undoubtedly important to recognize, study, harness, and support, it's also clear that these lifetime battles debilitate People of Color. Solórzano and Pérez Huber acknowledge these consequences, noting research on racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2006). Though they mention that research on racial microaffirmations is only just emerging, the examples provided give me tremendous hope that despite the permanence of racism, we can find antidotes to heal and thrive as Communities of Color. Rather than center our relationship to the harm, racial microaffirmations assist us in centering our ways of being and

knowing, our relationships to our families and communities, and commitments to futures in which our whole selves are recognized and celebrated.

Third, Solórzano and Pérez Huber have inspired me to think about the relationship between research on racial microaggressions and current abolitionist demands that argue that which needs to be abolished is not simply the prison, but all that it stands in for. These demands consider the intimate dimensions of the prison regime, which structures our social relations and imprints our very subjectivities. Getting rid of police and prisons means nothing if we do not abolish the ideologies, practices, and affective economies of policing in our interpersonal relationships and communities. We must, in short, transform the "intimate investments" within the prison-industrial-complex that come to saturate our very desires, relationships, and modes of relation to one another and ourselves (Rodriguez, 2006). Similarly, Solórzano and Pérez Huber make clear that any effort toward racial justice must consider everyday racial injustice, as a structural phenomenon with consequential "imprints" on our psyches and modes of relating to one another and ourselves. The justice possibilities of what Solórzano and Pérez Huber offer for current movements is clear. It isn't enough to tackle the visible forms of racial harm, we must also uproot and abolish the ideologies of white supremacy that cause them.

In closing, I would be remiss not to acknowledge that we are living in an unprecedented moment. As Karissa Lewis (2020) of Movement For Black Lives (M4BL) argues, we find ourselves in "a culmination of multiple storms converging . . . COVID-19, police violence, racial capitalism in crisis, [and] intensified white supremacy," resulting in mass uprisings across the country and the world. This path demands an end to all systems of violence and a redirected focus away from reforming what has been and toward imagining the not yet. I'm deeply grateful for the powerful words and call to action by Solórzano and Pérez Huber in Racial Microaggressions: Using Critical Race Theory to Respond to Everyday Racism. Their work connects to a long lineage emerging directly out of collective freedom struggles. They enter humbly, but fiercely, to underscore how their theorizing, commitments, study, and interruption of racial microaggressions is part of an ongoing intergenerational quest for justice. As an aspiring critical race scholar myself, I've been deeply impacted by their work here and elsewhere, to push the radical edges of an anti-racist politic to its furthest logical conclusion toward the world we all need and deserve.

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JLER
Vol 7, No 2

http://journals.sfu.ca/cvj/index.php/cvj/index

COMMENTARY

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Santa Clara University has long been an institution that cultivates knowledge with the goal of creating a more humane, just, and sustainable world. It is clear that this vision is also reflected in the Special Edition on Latina/o/x PreK-12 Education for the Journal of Leadership, Equity, and Research. The research represented in the special issue gives voice to Latinx children and youth to better understand their educational experiences and provide models for approaches to best serve this population. Contributing authors apply diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives, including empirical qualitative and quantitative studies to bring clarity to obstacles that impact the educational attainment of Latinx students. These authors also provide *hope*, illustrating models that bend the PreK-12 system to fit the Latinx students rather than bending the Latinx student to fit the PreK-12 system. The special edition must also be applauded for its model to support young Latinx scholars. The special edition creates space for young Latinx scholars to publish their work on Latinx children and youth's experiences in schools, a topic that oftentimes is not well received in mainstream journals. The editors also took careful consideration to partner young Latinx scholars with more seasoned Latinx scholars with the goal of providing an opportunity for mentoring of young Latinx scholars about the academy.

The research presented in this special edition is rich, timely, and sure to inform the education arena as well as advance social justice.

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