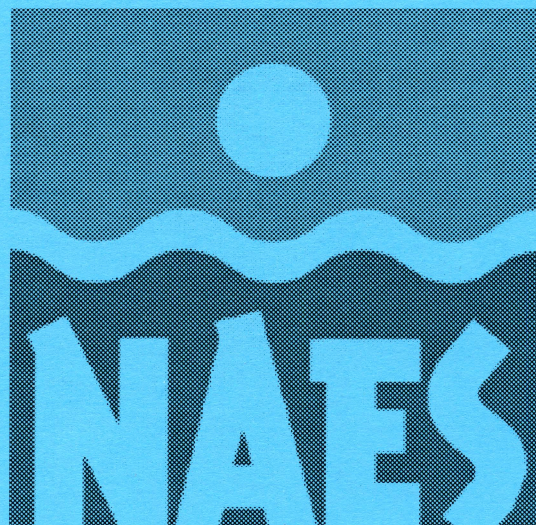


# ETHNIC STUDIES REVIEW



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Perspectives and Retrospectives**

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## The National Association for Ethnic Studies

Ethnic Studies Review (ESR) is the journal of the National Association for Ethnic Studies (NAES). ESR is a multi-disciplinary international journal devoted to the study of ethnicity, ethnic groups and their cultures, and intergroup relations. NAES has as its basic purpose the promotion of activities and scholarship in the fields of Ethnic Studies. The Association is open to any person or institution and serves as a forum for its members in promoting research, study, and curriculum as well as producing publications of interest to the field. NAES sponsors an annual Spring conference.

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# ETHNIC STUDIES REVIEW

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1999

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The Urban Educational Experience  
Volume Editor: Larry J. Estrada

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## **Editor's Note**

This issue of the journal takes a comparative look at the intersection of schooling, language, identity, and public policy as they impact ethnic minority population groups both domestically and internationally. In the first article Amara Holstein examines the social and political fallout of the recent anti-bilingual education initiative in California. Claimed by many as being anti-immigrant and anti-Hispanic, Holstein contends that this initiative falls within a broad, historical lexicon of nativist sentiment and backlash intended to disempower Hispanics and other linguistic minorities in the United States. Her analysis also focuses on the personal voices of California Hispanics and their ambivalency towards this particular initiative.

Churchill and Churchill compare and contrast the perspectives of and approaches to bicultural and bilingual education taken by Canada and the United States. The authors provocatively touch upon the differences between the two nations in terms of language and educational policy. The Canadian model looks upon bilingualism as a defining quality of their national identity as opposed to the models of the U.S. and other nation states who look upon bilingualism and multilingualism as an assault upon their national character.

Barbara Birch in her study of pragmatic prescriptivism describes the cultural and political conflicts which occur when

school policy becomes the arbiter of proper linguistic form within the classroom. She maintains that recent policy actions taken by the Oakland School Board to include the use of ebonics within the formalized school setting have inadvertently acted to unleash deep seeded language prejudices and racism which have long existed within the American social fabric. Her thesis gives credence to the fact that the educational arena will increasingly become a stage for competing political ideologies and a battleground for ethnic and identity inclusion.

In his work Jack Thornburg presents a case study of the Latino community of Aurora, Illinois, and the various strategies of engagement and resistance which the community undertakes to combat institutional and social forms of racism. He advocates that true ethnic and cultural inclusivity necessitates direct civic action and political mobilization in education, business, and local politics.

Dawkna and Mc Kinney's examination of the 1994 Luster & McAdoo study reinforces the fact that social norms as well as community and familial value structures differentially impact the academic achievement of Euroamerican and African American adolescents. Among African American youth maternal education and family values toward education appear to be the primary determinants which insure student success and aspirations for continued education while Euroamerican students are more affected by socio-economic status and peer group culture. This particular assessment gives renewed hope to those who would argue that strength of family and parental outlook in many instances can account for student success despite poverty and environmental conditions.

In the final article Helen Lock provides us with an insider's perspective of a young, African emigre who upon entering a British boarding school finds herself in the rapidly changing social and cultural landscape of post World War II England. In this article Lock gives a personal and compelling account of the African diaspora and how immigration from previous colonial possessions are increasingly transforming the social dynamics of Britain and other former colonial powers. This particular narra-

tive also reflects upon the ability of the individual to attain personal empowerment within the educational process by redefining her own identity while still retaining the “blackness” and “Africanness” of her cultural base of strength.

This edition of the *Ethnic Studies Review* presents a broad range of viewpoints and policies that reflect the changing ethnic and cultural patterns occurring on a global scale. Mitigation of ethnic conflict and the promotion of cultural pluralism are greatly influenced by governmental policies, political ideologies, and educational strategies that consciously seek to include and appreciate the contributions of diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. The field of ethnic studies will increasingly rely upon comparative studies and analyses to fully assess and understand the historical and socio-psychological dynamics of race and ethnicity within U.S. society and its institutions.

Larry J. Estrada  
Western Washington University





## **Politics of Language: The California Bilingual Education Initiative**

**Amara Holstein**

This essay examines issues of power and multiculturalism in relation to the education of children through debate over monolingual versus bilingual education and how language is a source of power.

The initiative on bilingual education which passed in the 1998 summer election in California was touted by its detractors as the next anti-immigration initiative. The initiative called for an end to bilingual education, advocating instead to have one year of “sheltered immersion” in English for students who do not speak English. Under this initiative almost all children will be taught in English only unless requested otherwise by the parents of the child, and funds will be provided to parents who agree to tutor their children in the family’s native language. Said by many to be another immigrant-hating piece of legislation, its supporters and opponents were expected to fall along similar lines to previous such legislation. As a lawyer for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund said, “This is the third in a chain of anti-immigrant, anti-Latino proposals” (Streisand 36).

The debates surrounding this initiative explicitly concerned

bilingual education's efficacy and future worth. Educators and teachers came out strongly against this initiative for the most part, saying that it was a political move on the part of its main proponent and creator, Mr. Ron Unz. He has been characterized in all reports as a "wealthy businessman" who some said was using the issue of bilingual education to his own ends. Educators argued for the most part that bilingual education does work, and that it is, in fact, the best way for children to learn English and other subjects when English is not their first language. They see bilingual education as a means to keep the native language intact and to further the education of both English and the native language. To its opponents, then, the initiative was a racist attack against minorities and another attempt to further place these children in a disadvantaged position.

In these debates, however, the proponents of the initiative did not fall so clearly into the lines that the rhetoric assumed, and the issues surrounding this debate have not fallen into the expected pattern. People from different backgrounds who felt strongly about this issue had unexpected reactions. Rather than most immigrants opposing the legislation, the situation was more complex than it initially appeared. With the exception of the proponents who explicitly wished to curb immigration and end multiculturalism, most of the proponents of this initiative were the immigrants themselves. These people did not deny that their children should keep their native language, and in fact many stated their desire that their children keep learning about their native culture and language. However, the arguments here suggested that the place of this cultural learning is in the home, not the school, and the school should be teaching their children English as the first priority.

This remains a debate more about power and who holds it and how language is a source of power. The school is a site around which these arguments take place, yet they go far beyond that of bilingual education. The parents see English as a form of power and wish to attain that power. The educators recognize this fact but want there to be other languages which are as powerful as English in the U.S. and see an end to bilingual education as an end to the fight for minority empowerment without assimilating into Anglo culture.

## **Background and Methods**

Because of the current debates centered around this issue and in light of the current climate after recent anti-immigrant initiatives it is necessary to further investigate the rhetoric behind this issue on both sides. The idea that immigrants voted for such a proposition seemed counter-intuitive since the program was ostensibly created for the benefit of immigrants. Thus to say that all supporters of the initiative were racists seemed too simplistic. Though this is only a brief survey of the ideas and arguments centered around the issue of bilingual education and by no means encompasses the views of all the people involved in this debate, the interviews and research give a tantalizing view into the way this debate was shaped by the rhetoric and individuals involved.

Since there are so many facts and figures already available for background information and since there was also a great deal of hypothesizing done by both sides on the nature of their opponents' arguments, the approach taken in this study is to interview in depth a sampling of people involved in this issue and then to use the vast wealth of other resources on this topic (both academic studies and media reports) as background and additional information. Ten formal interviews were conducted over the space of ten-weeks. The interviewees were chosen because of their diverse experiences in relation to bilingual education, and they were told the purpose of the interviews. The interviews were evenly distributed among teachers of bilingual education and people who spoke English as their second language but had various experiences with learning English as a second language (One woman was put directly into an English-only classroom; another was put into a Spanish-only classroom, and a third had children who had been in bilingual classrooms.) One interview was done with a young man who had been in a bilingual classroom and who was teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in the Oakland school district in an after-school program. Four of the other interviews were with bilingual education teachers, two of whom identified themselves as being from other countries.

## **Context**

It would be helpful to delineate exactly what is meant by

the term “bilingual education” in the strictest sense of the word before going on to discuss how it is used as a political term in the current debates. Bilingual education is not a new concept in the last few decades, nor is it a unified concept meaning only one thing in terms of education. Bilingual education had its beginnings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when students in various parts of the country were schooled in their native language upon coming to America as immigrants. German, Spanish, Czech, Italian, and Polish were among the languages which schools taught not only as foreign languages, but also as content-area instruction (Ovando 24). Indeed, in the 1910 census, Crawford points out that “23 percent of foreign-born whites, 39 percent of Japanese, 41 percent of Chinese, and 66 percent of other immigrants spoke no English, as compared with less than 10 percent of foreign-born residents in 1990” (Crawford).

Yet the backlash against speaking languages other than English in the schools began right around the turn of the century. European nationalist sentiment began to rise, especially as new immigrants began arriving from southern, eastern, and central Europe, while the already-established immigrants from northern and western Europe “clamored for power to control institutions, and the one solution to the power struggle focused on schools” (Ovando 24) This in tandem with the idea of “Americanization” in light of the World Wars contributed to the decline of bilingual education in the schools. Languages other than English were seen as “bad.” As opposition to the inclusion of other languages in schools and government increased, the tone was set not just against the other languages but also against the people who spoke them.

In California this opposition was made explicit on several fronts: debates over Spanish language rights and the translation of government documents into Spanish prompted one state legislator to say, “I have no regard for this demagoguery that panders to this foreign element, that follows it for years and years. . . . I speak whereof I know when I say that hundreds of those who pretend to be citizens of California are recent immigrants from Sonora and other portions of Mexico, some of them bandits, cutthroats, and robbers...” (Debates 2). And one California school official in the early 1900s said that

German was a language that “disseminates the ideals of autocracy, brutality and hatred” (Zimmerman 39). The only bilingual programs that took place at this time were those that were remedial and used only in special circumstances (Ovando 25).

Then in the 1950s and 1960s with the rise of new immigrants coming into the country English as a second language started to become a program widely instituted in schools, as students began to receive education at their level of English proficiency (25). Programs were started in bilingual education in Coral Way, Florida, San Antonio, Texas, and Rough Rock School on the Navajo reservation (Bay Area 4). Bilingual programs in Florida during the 1960s were instituted in response to the great wave of Cuban immigrants into Miami. Following these changes, in 1968 a statute was passed by Congress (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), which gave money to bilingual education programs and was known as the Bilingual Education Act. With this and building on the civil rights movements of the time, bilingual education enjoyed a resurgence in popularity.

In 1974 the pivotal San Francisco court case, *Lau vs. Nichols*, went to the Supreme Court, and the decision set the precedent for future bilingual education programs. The case was a class-action suit in which a group of non-English-speaking Chinese immigrants brought suit against the San Francisco school system for failing to provide the 1,800 Chinese students with an equal opportunity to learn. The case did not deny the importance of learning English, but rather the decision was that equal opportunity and materials must be provided for these students and that the school must design a program to meet the language needs of the students. As the Supreme Court decision said, “We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experience wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful” (Ovando 34). Based on this court decision and other decisions like it throughout the country, bilingual education programs were instituted and required in most states, including California.

Bilingual education as a program, though instituted in most states, is in no way uniform. The Bilingual Education Act defined bilingual education as “the use of two languages, one of which is English, as mediums of instruction” (Bay Area 4).

Yet as many have pointed out, this definition is extremely broad and would include any school in which one class is taught in a language other than English. In fact, as Roberts points out, “Bilingual programs are so diverse that it is problematical to make generalizations” (370). The term “bilingual education” must be explained in terms of its most common forms in order to better understand the context and arguments in which it is placed. Two of the most common forms of bilingual education are the maintenance and the transitional programs, though ESL programs (related to which is the sheltered model proposed in the initiative), immersion, submersion, and two-way or enrichment programs are also all models that are commonly found.

The transitional model of bilingual education is one in which students with limited English skills are taught in both their native language and in English for a certain period of time until their English is deemed acceptable enough to succeed academically, at which point the student is withdrawn from bilingual classes and put in monolingual classes where English is the only language of instruction. This model is also known as providing the students with a “bridge” to move from their native language to English. The federal guidelines for this model suggest a time period of three years in which to move the child into an English-only classroom (Roberts 374). This type of model has been criticized for being too assimilationist (Roberts; Ovando and Collier) as well as for the short time period given to learn English. Ovando and Collier do suggest, however, that this type of model is useful to older students, who have already developed cognitive capabilities in their native language and for whom these skills can easily transfer to English (Ovando 39).

In the maintenance model of education, on the other hand, the emphasis is on continuing instruction and education in the native language while learning English and then continuing to learn and speak in both languages even after dual-language fluency is achieved. Ideally both languages would be “maintained” through the twelfth grade and even through college when possible. In these programs, in contrast to the transitional model of bilingual education, the student is expected to be bilingual and bicultural. Yet these programs do not always have

the support of the language-minority parents (for reasons that will be detailed later). These programs must have large numbers of students with the same native language to exist, and there must be "interest and support in the community for having a bilingually educated population" (Roberts 375).

Another program that often is regarded highly is two-way enrichment bilingual education. In this program non-English speakers and English-only speakers are put together in a classroom, and both are taught two languages and work academically in both languages. An English-speaking student is often paired with a non-English speaking student, and they are supposed to use each other as resources (Ovando 41). These classes, therefore, include both minority and majority language speakers, and the goal here is pluralistic and aims at developing a bicultural and bilingual population.

Least assimilationist of all is the Canadian model of bilingual education, or the immersion model, in which the student is placed in a classroom in which a second language is the only language taught. This model, however, assumes that the students will be language majorities in their culture, not language minorities such as the immigrant children in the U.S. In Canada, therefore, this model has been used to teach English speakers French.

The model of immersion is often confused with the American model, which is termed "submersion" by educators (Roberts, Ovando and Collier). The goal in this model is to assimilate the child into U.S. society, and it puts non-native English speakers into English-only classrooms despite any lack of English skills the child may have. While this model is not legal for schools with non-native speakers of English, Roberts points out that often oversight or ignorance on the part of the schools leads to children being educated in this model. This is a much-criticized model by educators, who say that many such students in these programs "feel marginalized and drop out before finishing high school" (Roberts 372).

Another criticized model is that of English as a Second Language in which the language minority child is "pulled out" of academic classes to learn English. In ESL programs students are taken from their English-only classrooms at some point during the day (for a period of time ranging anywhere from

twenty minutes to half a day) for concentrated instruction in English. Again, since the emphasis here is on the student learning English as fast as possible, this model is also said to be assimilationist by its detractors and inferior to the point of being only useful in addition to other models (Bay Area 11). Proponents consider it as good as other methods of bilingual education in a child's education (Alexander 9). And thus ESL is closely related to the sheltered immersion model proposed in the initiative. Sheltered immersion is basically an ESL program with some subject-area classes also taught in the native language of the children and is a time-limited program under the initiative. Once the students have learned English adequately, they are put back in the English-only classrooms full time.

### **Analysis of Interviews**

Though the above models are important as a means with which to better understand the issues, rather than focusing on the efficacy of the models themselves (for which there are points and counterpoints on either side of each model and findings and studies to back all these points), the actual rhetoric and positioning which encompass these models of bilingual education provide insight into the focal point of the debate. Both sides seemed to agree that learning English is important for immigrant children and that school is the place where English should be learned. Yet what was at issue was the native language and what that language represents, as well as what English represents in relation to the native language. The debate here, though often couched in terms of the models above, often revolved more around issues of power and multiculturalism than the actual education of the children.

The arguments in this debate on both sides revolved around the issue of language and the idea of "speaking." No matter which position people took in terms of bilingual education, most people in this debate seemed secure in the idea that language is a powerful tool and that speaking is a means to assert that power. Having a "voice" is important. One interviewee, Maya, said, "Language is key." Another, Sonia, talked about the idea of languages as having "cultural capital" in Bourdieu's sense of the term: that languages provide access to modes of power and that by virtue of what one speaks, one's



access and determination in terms of that power is established. Indeed, Sonia added, “Discourse is about modes of power.” These languages are thus not seen as all being equal in American society, and this is where the real issues come into play.

Certain languages are seen as “marked” or “unmarked” languages; it is by virtue of where they stand in relation to their “markedness” that determines their access to power. Edelsky explains the difference between an unmarked language and a marked language in that the unmarked language is that which is “assumed” or taken for granted to be the language used in a certain domain and that the marked language will be any other language placed in relation to the unmarked (Edelsky 26). In the schools, then, English is seen as the unmarked language which everyone “should” learn, and the other languages spoken are marked, or “unnatural.” For as Ovando and Collier define the terms, “expanding the concepts of marked and unmarked languages to the groups they most closely represent, unmarked culture in the United States tends to be associated with white, middle-class, Protestant, non-ethnic, English-speaking groups” (Ovando 118).

Marked languages are not objectified parts of society, however, nor do they stand alone; as Sonia pointed out, “Language is developed and used in interaction with others. It is a social tool; it doesn’t stand on its own.” Rather, marked languages are seen by many people as acting also as “markers” for those who speak the languages. “Language is linked to culture,” Philip said. “There are certain values and understanding in a culture that give the language its meaning.” Maria also maintained this importance of language to culture, saying that “Spanish language and their heritage are linked. Language plays a big part in culture, and the Mexican culture has a strong oral tradition which is very important.” Perhaps this idea of language as “marking” people of a certain culture can best be illustrated with an example given by Edelsky that she encountered in her fieldwork as she watched two children interact:

Kathy: I can speak three languages — English and Spanish and Indian.

Katie: Well I can speak four — English and Spanish and Scotland and Jewish!

Kathy: So! I'm gonna learn Flagstaff! (a city about 150 miles away) (21).

Even at the young age of six, then, language and culture are confused, and language becomes a marker for identity and other cultures ("Scotland" and "Jewish").

Often the "marking" of a person is obvious in terms of bilingual education, when children are placed in classrooms for Spanish-speakers based only on their last names, which "mark" them as part of a certain culture and, therefore, as part of a certain language. This happened to Maria's sister, who was put in a Spanish-bilingual classroom only by virtue of her last name, even though she spoke fluent English. The handbook put out by the Oakland School District also recognized this problem:

Spanish-surname persons in the Southwest are frequently called bilinguals although they may have no knowledge of Spanish at all. Misclassification on the basis of name is likely to continue until we recognize that the term "bilingual" is inappropriate unless the person concerned does indeed have some knowledge of two languages. The "nationality" of his surname is an unreliable indicator of which language or languages an American speaks (Bay Area 11).

In this way, "naming" becomes "marking" and makes all those who are "marked" by language into a marked culture, be it an accurate marking or not.

Thus even as language becomes the symbol for a culture, the dominance of one language over others becomes the excuse of one culture over all others. Mike, speaking about English, argued that education should "really emphasize English as the primary language. Yes, it's cultural hegemony, but some things just are that way. You know, you sometimes have to be a martyr for life. . . . it's basically saying, 'We're in charge here,' but that's the way it is." English is recognized as the language of dominance, the unmarked language, and at the same time is shown to be a cultural symbol. "We're in charge here" shows the self-conscious idea that English is the language of power and that those who speak English are the "we" who are the holders of that power over the others.

Holly also saw English as that unmarked language of American society. As she was talking with someone about whether or not there is an “American culture,” Holly argued that there is such a thing as an American culture and that it is “all the things that you think about when you think about the United States of America. You think about some of these banal kinds of things, like baseball and hot dogs and Hollywood, and you think about English as the language. . . .” English becomes like apple pie: good and wholesome. So where does that leave those who are not part of this history of English and who are not part of this unmarked culture?

These people often are described by those in the interviews and those in the literature as being dominated by the unmarked language by virtue of their being marked. As Sonia said:

But if you speak with an accent or a different variety of English, you have a lot more fighting to do to prove yourself. This is not just about individuals but is a community issue. Whole communities are excluded from the mainstream because of their languages.

This domination of the marked cultures by virtue of their languages oftentimes results in the creation of a “silencing” of those marked languages and, therefore, a silencing of cultures. In this way the dominant unmarked culture dominates these marked cultures and maintains that hegemony that Mike addressed. And that silence becomes internalized by those who are marked, for as Soto writes after visiting a Latino senior citizens center, “A large sign at the top of a wall sums up the sentiment: ‘Escuchar, Mirar, y Callar’ ( ‘Listen, Look, and Be Quiet’ ). The strategy that this particular generation has internalized and passed on to the next generation is one of total passivity and subjugation” (Soto 21). As the Chinese American writer Frank Chin is quoted as having said:

The deprivation of language in a verbal society like this country’s has contributed to the lack of a recognized Asian-American cultural integrity. . . . Language coheres the people into a community by organizing and codifying the symbols of the people’s common experience. Stunt the tongue and you have lopped off the culture and sensibility (Cheung 7).

Yet these “marked” categories are not only silences, but are portrayed in a poor light by unmarked culture. Again the legitimacy of English is emphasized, as those who do not speak English are seen as being “lesser” people. Holly spoke to this sentiment in her interview:

So I go to work in the morning, and I don't know what country I'm in; all the signs are in Spanish or Korean and the whole face of the city is absolutely different than it is in Pacific Palisades or Santa Monica or Venice Beach even — it's filthy; it's absolutely filthy, and you see your little street vendors, selling popsicles or whatever. . . you know, the people who are saying you can't take our culture away (Lambert 4).

Here Holly seemed to be equating the dirt with the fact that these people speak Spanish or Korean (“all the street signs” ), and she used these signs in a different language as the marker for her later point that it was bilingual education. Student's understanding in their native tongue makes school subjects accessible. The only debate is over which bilingual education model is most effective (Rodriguez 53). Indeed these sentiments were echoed by most of the teachers in the interviews with the exception of Holly.

At first glance, then, the proponents of bilingual education seemed to be holding fast to the idea of bilingual education because of its help in teaching children English and other subjects. Bilingualism is seen as a tool with which to help children learn the culture into which they have immigrated and a tool with which to teach children academically. As Paul stated, “Supposedly if you learn, master a language, then it's no problem for you to master a second language.” And as Sonia said, “There is a great deal of evidence and studies that have been done to prove that bilingualism is a cognitive asset. It gives kids the ability to manipulate complex language codes and to transfer this to their academic work.” The implication, then, is that bilingualism is good as a tool to help within school and good to help the children learn academically.

The argument around bilingual education and the initiative was thus placed in a dichotomous relationship of educator vs. policy maker, with the former “knowing” better than the latter, since after all the issue was being shaped in terms of language

as an educational tool. As Sonia said, “Unz is a policy maker, not an educator.” And when Philip was asked about his opinion concerning the debates surrounding bilingual education, he noted, “Well, first of all, it is all about politicians, not educators. These are people who have never taught. . . .”

Yet it seems that behind this idea that bilingual education is only good in terms of being used as a tool to learn is the very important idea that bilingualism also is a tool of power for these students. Since language is a marker and English is the unmarked language in American society, it appears that the emphasis placed on bilingualism is explicitly also to help the children gain a medium of power that is not that of the unmarked category, that is, to empower the children through their native language rather than just having them assimilate into English-speaking culture. Therefore, an emphasis on both English and the native language will give children an advantage over their monolingual peers. Much of the debate by educators over of which bilingual program is most successful centers around which program is least assimilatory for the children. As Sonia stated:

People need to value bilingual education as a good. The first language needs to be an unmarked language; it needs to be unstigmatized. In any program, then, bilingual education would be valued over monolingual education. A lot of kids now want to speak English and they could care less about their native language. They can't speak to everyone. So kids should want to be bilingual. Kids should say, “You only speak one language; I speak two.”

In this ideal languages that are marked now become unmarked, and all children are put into bilingual education programs. In fact many of the proponents of bilingual education discussed how their ideal was to have all students speaking all languages in bilingual classrooms. As Abbe said, “I think that every kid must learn more than one language,” and Maria, talking about the model of the small school district where Anglo and Latino children are both learning Spanish and English added, “It is stupid to maintain ourselves as a monolingual culture.”

Formal education is seen to be the place where this should

happen, since in this way languages can become formally unmarked. In this way the children are portrayed as leading the United States into a new millennium of cultural cooperation; as Mancillas wrote,

This is a priceless resource: a new generation of Americans committed to preserving and strengthening a democratic and pluralistic U.S. society, but also having a birthright familiarity with Latin American, Asian or Middle Eastern societies. Think of what these children might contribute in an age of revolutions in communications and development that we, today, can hardly imagine (Mancillas 507).

The ideal here is one in which all languages are viewed in equal terms of power and that none are marked. Children thus become the banner-holders for a new generation of Americans, a position achieved through bilingual education and the power of cultures other than that of the Anglo-American English-speaker. As Abbe stated:

I think everybody under twenty-five understands that we need to learn more languages in this country, especially today with this incredible wide-open, NAFTA and all this stuff going on. . . . Our kids and their future careers, whatever they're in, are going to be enhanced by knowing more than one language.

Language has moved outside the classroom and is here envisioned as multiple discourses of power, moving into a global community in which American children are well-versed to deal with this new world. In this vision school becomes a training ground for a new tool in the power of multiple languages. George Solis wrote in the web page for SmartNation (a group that supports bilingual education),

Remember racism is alive and only one step short of being reinforced within our schools. Education is the key to anti-racism. . . .

He went on to ask about bilingual education, Isn't this so that our students and children gain an opportunity to sit at the table of knowledge and equality with all children (Solis).

Soto asked,

Are American schools and communities willing to

implement collaborative power models? Should the schools of a democratic nation insist that children's language and cultures be valued (Soto 95)?

### **The “Other Side”**

The opponents of bilingual education do not share this vision of their children moving into a bilingual, multi-cultural world. Indeed their eyes are not even looking to this broader conception of power. Rather, most of these immigrants have their eyes firmly focused within the United States and are trying to figure out how to negotiate the boundaries of power and win within the current framework of that power. Whereas the proponents of bilingual education see native languages other than English as being the means within which to create a new power structure within American society through the school system, most immigrants seem more to be concerned with situating themselves within the existing system of power. These immigrants do not see the balance of power between the languages as being equal and so they react to this by wanting their children to learn only English in school. Maria talked about how materials were of lesser quality in the Spanish classrooms, and Edelsky discussed how even in a two-way bilingual program, English was still seen as the predominant language (Edelsky 19). Thus, the reality is still seen by most immigrants to be that power lies in the acquisition of English.

Indeed, the idea of power resting in the knowing of English is one which was explicitly used in the debates regarding the initiative as the main argument of most people against bilingual education. Feeling that bilingual education does not stress English learning to a great enough degree, these opponents believed that cultural and native language learning should take place in the home and that the school should educate the children in the medium of power. Unz argued, “The only way you can get a good job and succeed is if you speak English. . . , and schools are not doing a good enough job” (Riccardi). Philip added that many parents are working in low-paying jobs because of their inability to speak English. One father said, “My children learn Spanish in school so they can grow up to be bus-boys and waiters. I teach them English at home so they can grow up to be doctors and lawyers” (O’ Beirne 21). Ramon, the

father of a teenager who is having problems in school, wanted his daughter to learn English and was not as concerned with Spanish; and Maya insisted that “English is needed to open doors—in order to have access to things, you need English. If I had a kid, I would only want that kid to learn English.”

Speaking English is equated with social and economic success, based both on the parents’ own experiences and on the idea of “The American Dream.” As Lenin Lopez stated in Spanish at a parent meeting regarding bilingual education, “A lot of us want our kids to learn Spanish so they can write to their grandpas or whatever. . . .But I want my children to learn English so they won’t have the problems that I’ve had,” (Pyle). Spanish (and other non-English native languages) becomes the language of the private sphere, and English is regarded as the public language and the language of power.

These images are not to say that parents do not want their children to learn their native language. Rather, the parents seem to feel that it is the role of the school to educate their children in English above all else and that the native language can be taught in the home. Each language is seen as needing to be taught in the sphere in which that language will be used: the native language in the home, English outside the home (in school). Ramon, Maya, and Maria all agree with this idea. As Maya said most explicitly, “The role of the school is solely to expose the kid to the [English] language. If the child understands the language completely, then the school has done its job.” This ideology would suggest that bilingual education is not actively teaching English to students fast enough, and that in not doing so the children are being held back from avenues of power to which only English can provide the entrance.

## **Conclusion**

While the proponents of bilingual education did not seem to acknowledge the desire of parents for their children to be fully fluent in the current discourse of power, many immigrants seemed to look past a possible future in which multiple languages function as modes of power. Both sides of this debate focused on the issue of language as power and language as attached to culture and modes of cultural power. Yet the way in which these notions were explained takes on different mean-



ings for each side. Rather than being split along racial lines, the sides of this debate seemed split more along the lines of the educators and the parents and politicians. The former saw the importance of learning academic subjects and the means with which to think cognitively as of foremost importance. Language is a means to the end of being “educated,” and bilingual education is necessary to achieve this end. The educators and community activists also viewed bilingualism as the key to creating a multicultural society in which all languages have equal access to power and where all children can be powerful by virtue of rather than in spite of being bilingual. At the same time these people saw the dissolution of bilingual education programs as being an attack on the cultures of these immigrant students.

The parents, on the other hand, also focused on the issue of language as power. But unlike the educators who seemed to be saying that native languages are part of that power, the parents were saying that English is the language of power of the public sphere, and for their children to be part of that power, they must speak English. In this view, then, the school should be educating the children in that language of power, and teaching the children in the native language of the family should take place in the private sphere: in the home, in the community, through the church. These parents did not seem to want to be the founders of a new society in which bilingualism is powerful; rather, these parents wished for their children to enjoy the benefits that they cannot have because they have fewer skills. The parents saw power as resting in an institution they must be part of or which they will never benefit from.

The educators and supporters of bilingual education in this debate felt that it has been long enough that English has been the only language of power, and it has been long enough that people of color have been marked as inferior by their language and their culture. Unfortunately, in this fast growing multicultural, multiethnic society these two groups are still speaking past each other and have yet to create a meaningful dialogue in which modes of power can be explored with both parents and educators.

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**Schooling and Ethnocultural Communities  
in Canada: Alternatives for Planning  
A Post-Modern Century**

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This essay examines trends in education that affect Canadian schools.

As in most countries the US debate on the place of ethnic and cultural communities in education is strongly influenced by national, state, or even local politics with little reference to outside influences. It is ironic to note that at the same time the 1998 NAES National Conference was being held in Fresno, CA, the campaign to establish Proposition 227, which would have the capability to impact several linguistic minorities, was well under way. The proposition essentially aimed at eliminating most bilingual education programs and was approved by California voters in June, 1998. The very size of the population of a state like California—with a population greater than that of a geographically huge country like Canada (about 32 m. Vs. 29 m. in 1998)—means that statewide political debates on topics

such as affirmative action and bilingual education can be won and lost almost without reference to other states or regions of the United States, much less to foreign countries.

In short-term politics no one gains advantage from comparisons with other jurisdictions. But we do contend that comparisons can be very important for reflection and long-term planning of the type that was the central theme for the 1998 NAES meeting. In the following we argue that Canada can be viewed as a sort of laboratory for changes that are fundamentally reshaping the agenda of world education, changes that have long-term planning implications for the United States. This argument does not suggest that models borrowed from Canada or anywhere else can or should be transplanted into U.S. schools, certainly not without major adaptation and modification. Changing education is difficult, and no one should pretend that borrowed models constitute a panacea. Instead, our focus is on major trends that affect issues outside education — changes in the way people view nations, nationalities and citizenship. These changes have direct relevance to education. We will show how these changes are reflected, at least partially, in some aspects of Canadian education.

To approach our topic we will briefly note distinctive characteristics of the U.S. decision-making context and then turn to the Canadian laboratory, starting with changes to the concept of nation and citizenship and then describing specific schooling models relevant to minority communities.

### **Distinctive Aspects of U.S. Educational Policy**

Planning for better schools in the twenty-first century promises to be extremely difficult in most of the United States. Existing models of education that serve the disadvantaged are being dismembered and destroyed by misinformed criticism that feeds on latent racism and prejudice against the poor of all ethnic and linguistic origins. These changes can be traced to the rise of neoconservatism in the 1970's, heralded by attacks on the "inefficiency" of desegregation measures and continued by a generalized attack on the role of government and the growth of "entitlements" (Wirt 5-18). The impact was equally visible with respect to policies on bilingual education. In the decade of the 1980s only one piece of legislation was passed

to increase the permissible scope of bilingual education: Colorado changed its prescriptive legislation removing a substantial portion of its entitlements; the existing California legislation was pushed by the governor into lapsing through “sunset” provisions, and efforts were made to alter laws in Texas and Illinois in the same direction (Sacken and Medina).

The approval of Proposition 227 by California voters in the June 1998 primaries—a proposition essentially aimed at eliminating most bilingual education programs—is only one additional entry in a long series of attempts to build on popular fears and propose radical solutions that feed into the neoconservative agenda. The fears are fanned by media accounts and are widely held (Crawford), but the overwhelming evidence of research and the consensus of respected academics contradicts them (Cummins). Such a contradiction between informed opinion and political action raises many questions. We leave to others the discussion of how power relationships in society shape minority schooling (Darder) and instead ask a question: What rationale is so powerful that even well-meaning media and opinion leaders seem unable to call a spade a spade, unable to point out the negative impacts of such changes on the educational chances of children from ethnic and linguistic minority groups?

The rationale, the “glue” that holds together against the force of evidence and reason, is the goal of schooling citizens; not just any citizens but good, upstanding American citizens. Like most observers we would agree with this goal, just as we endorse the goal of the French or Polish governments of schooling good, upstanding French or Polish citizens and, so on, from country to country. The problem arises when the rationale of schooling good citizens gets clothed in a very limited version of what a citizen should be in a contemporary nation, a limited version that reduces citizenship to having one language and one culture—each the “official” one, thus allowing as little diversity as possible.

The debates on multiculturalism in public school curricula and textbooks mirror the nationalistic tone summarized in the title of a famous study on school reform: *A Nation at Risk*. This study of multicultural politics and education policy-making in New York and California by Cornbleth and Waugh begins its

discussion of the contemporary debate by focusing on historical debates in the US: Nativism, discrimination against newcomers, and resurgent neonativist movements in the 1990s. The authors trace current neonativist feeling to confusion between two types of nationalism, ethnic versus civic. One US version of nationalism, they note, is civic nationalism based on “the people” defined in “universalistic terms of human rights and citizenship,” but “neonativists conflate ethnicity and nationality” ( 35). They further note that Britain and Canada have a civic identity based upon allegiance to a parliamentary and legal system and symbols such as the Crown. And, indeed, the case studies they present in the remainder of the book provide abundant evidence of how rationales for opposing recognition of diversity in curricula are grounded in a neonativist vision of uniformity, a uniformity that strongly suggests the only good American is an American who lives “up” to the unified standards of language and culture of white Anglo-American tradition. The ethnic roots may be disguised, but for persons who do not share the roots, the implications are obvious.

There is evidence that US policy has made accommodations to diversity and that, at least during the period from about 1955 to the late 1970s, tended to move in the same direction as policy in other advanced industrialized countries. A study which one of the authors helped direct for the OECD<sup>1</sup> provides what remains the most detailed contemporary portrayal of educational practices and policies for linguistic and cultural minorities across different countries. A key finding of the study is relevant for planning: Even though their political debates on education evolved in almost exclusively national terms, most of the countries (with the important exception of Japan, a non-participant in the study) had followed a long-term pattern of evolution that was similar in direction. In the period up to about 1955 all but a small handful had ignored educational issues related to non-mainstream cultures and languages, but a little over 20 years later all except Japan had developed policies that (a) recognized the need to take into account divergent languages and cultures and (b) evolved towards a far greater recognition of those languages and cultures than anyone might have dreamed possible at the beginning of the period (Churchill 1986; Allardt, Noah and Sherman).

Long-term trends appear to sweep through education, even though the individual countries affected do not consult or consciously copy each other (Churchill 1998), and US education has not been exempt from this process. It is our contention that planning for US futures in education should take into account worldwide trends that have a potential relevance. The one we deal with here is the long-term decline of the nation-state, which is particularly relevant to planning for education in a multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial future.

### **The Decline of the Nation-State**

The observation of converging patterns of minority education policy in different countries leads us to two major assertions: first, world-wide trends in the evolution of governmental processes have a direct relevance for what is likely to happen to education in the United States in the long term, if not necessarily in the immediate future; second, this evolution directly affects the way individual countries view the nature of concepts as fundamental as citizenship duties, national languages, and national cultures. In the following, we sketch some of the directions that such evolutionary processes have taken and then show how they relate to certain models of education that have emerged in Canada within the last two decades—models that may give much food for thought to those looking at the future of US education in relationship to languages and cultures outside the Anglo mainstream. Just as California politics and culture are sometimes regarded as a laboratory where popular fantasies are acted out on a trial basis then packaged into media and marketed to the world, so we believe Canada is a laboratory where extraordinary developments are occurring in the evolution of the most imperial of all the inventions of modern Europe—the nation-state as it emerged by the year 1900, the nation-state that is the model for organizing all modern societies on the face of the earth. It is the model usually based on the concept of “one people, one language, one state” who together form the nation.

We have reviewed these trends related to the nation-state in a recent lead article of the *International Review of Education* (Churchill) and will only summarize here a few of the salient forces at work. A variety of authors have identified major forces



that are converging to change what citizens can expect their national governments to control and/or do for them. Some see the challenge in terms of culture—the penetration of “foreign” ideas by means of satellite, internet or multinational corporations. As a former French Minister of Culture phrased it: “...might the truth be more ominous: the higher the satellite, the lower the culture? The disappearance of languages and cultural forms is the great risk today. Diversity threatens to be replaced by an international mass culture without roots, soul, color, or taste” (Lang 43). Some express fear but others embrace openly an ethic of consumerism, progress in communications, the spread of trends in dress and habit that erase national identities (Ohmae). But behind all the trends of so-called globalization most see a rising merchant economy that obliterates national borders to make way for the triumph of a new world order based upon concentration of capital in transnational corporations controlled by a class of super-rich persons who owe allegiance to no one and have successfully defied any national government to tax their profits and financial transfers in a significant way (Saul 144-45, Thurow).

What does all of this have to do with minority education? Everything, in our opinion. The entire structure of public schooling as it exists today in both industrialized and non-industrialized societies is based upon the idea of a national government that provides a common education to prepare citizens to live as members of a people who, collectively, are “the nation” united by a common language, culture, and loyalty. Only a handful of states have made accommodations to permit meaningful development of separate languages and cultures. Until recently in the European world the main examples were Switzerland, Belgium and Finland. The much-touted Soviet and Yugoslav models have now been revealed for the sham that they always were—centralized political control through bureaucracies that manipulated different national symbols to perpetuate dominance by one or two ethnocultural groups within a dictatorial framework that permitted no organized opposition. Stripped of the shell of jargon, the model is the same one that has been the model of both right and left wing governments in the former colonial world, almost without exception.

But what happens to the whole apparatus of one lan-

guage—one culture—one nation, when the nation-state enters into decline and can no longer control its own economy, its own culture, its own mode of life? What happens to minorities when the dominant national culture is under threat? Do they become the scapegoats of frightened governments determined to eliminate internal differences, as if these differences would save the so-called national culture and language from a broader erosion? Or does the diversity within the individual country become the stake in the battle for survival, as the “nation” takes on new meaning and as diversity is converted from a problem into a resource, to borrow a distinction from Ruiz (3-25)?

It appears highly likely that the western industrialized world is on the verge of a major transition—to a world where sovereignty plays a very different role, the world of the post-modern nation-state. We see this new form of nation-state as redefining the concept of nation to accept diversity as an integral component of citizenship. A few countries are playing a significant role as laboratories of change. The most visible is the European Union. The European Union provides a model of attempted transnational regulation and control almost, but not quite, on the same plane as the transnational forces of capitalism that it seeks to control.<sup>2</sup> An attempt is being made to create a new economic and political order that uses the remaining elements of national sovereignty to protect divergent cultures and social systems. And a handful of states, particularly Canada and Spain, are at the forefront of experimentation with new models of internal structure that permit the nation-state to play a strong and useful role for the foreseeable future. Outside the western industrialized world the other most likely candidates for creating new models of viable nation-states are perhaps India and South Africa.

In turn, a prime function of governments would be to preserve the diversity of cultural and linguistic community structures within nation-states against the homogenizing forces of globalization.

### **Canada as a Source of Models**

The case can be made that Canada is emerging as a jurisdiction with unusual characteristics that make it a candidate for becoming in the not distant future one model of “post-modern

nation-state," even if there is probably no consensus as to what a post-modern nation-state might be. Space does not permit developing this theme in detail, but it would be important to understand certain basic factors at work in the Canadian scene.

The ideas of the authors have emerged in part as a result of having done two coast-to-coast interview studies, one in the 1980s, another in the 1990s. Both were focused closely on elements related to what it means to be Canadian and, specifically, a Canadian living as a "minority," that is as a numerical minority in a province or territory with a different cultural group as the dominant mainstream. The first was a study related to a federal program that subsidizes education for the "official linguistic minorities" in Canada's provinces and territories, as well as the teaching of English and French the two "official languages," as a second language in the provincial education systems (Churchill in association with Peat Marwick and Partners). The second was a review of the relationships between these English and French linguistic minorities in each province with the majority group of the province and, more specifically, with the so-called "ethnic communities," citizens whose ethnocultural origin is from elsewhere in the world than France or the British isles (Churchill and Kaprielian-Churchill 1991).

For the sake of brevity, we may suggest the following aspects of Canadian law and political structures as indicative of something growing progressively more unusual in terms of the dimensions of sovereignty. All of these aspects have developed rapidly in the last thirty years.

1. Official bilingualism is a fact of life. About 98 per cent of Canadians speak either English or French or both official languages, though the vast majority speak only one of the two languages.<sup>3</sup> The federal government has made massive strides toward providing services in French and English to all citizens, and a number of English-dominant provinces have moved towards developing services in French. Quebec has always provided basic bilingual services to its English-speaking minority.

2. The status and role of French-speaking Canadians have been transformed in the last three decades. From virtual second-class social and economic status (even in Quebec) in the

period before roughly 1960, French-speaking Canadians have gone through a massive social transformation. All significant aspects of political and economic control within Quebec are dominated by French-speakers, and in other provinces significant progress has been made in providing education and public services in French, most notably in New Brunswick and, to a lesser extent, in Ontario. (The latter two provinces are the home of about three-quarters of the French-speaking population outside Quebec, roughly 750,000 out of 1,000,000.)

3. An interesting by-product of the current legal structure is that individual citizens have specific, constitutionally guaranteed rights that are, at least in theory, transferable between provinces and territories. The most important of these is the right of parents to have children schooled in English or French, wherever numbers are sufficient to justify such schooling.<sup>4</sup>

4. While accepting the existence of two official languages, the Canadian government and constitution have not converted the two related "cultures" into official cultures. The motivation for this is the widespread impression among persons who are not of French or Anglo-British descent, that recognizing culture officially would base the Canadian state on ethnicity rather than open citizenship. Instead of two official cultures, an official policy of multiculturalism has been proclaimed at the federal level, linked with a loose form of constitutional recognition.

5. Combining the recognition of two official languages for the provision of federal government services with an official policy of multiculturalism has had important symbolic implications: individuals may be free to feel fully "Canadian" while continuing to speak another language in most or all of their daily lives and to adhere to their own culture, however defined.<sup>5</sup>

6. The Canadian governmental system is among the most decentralized in the modern world. Provinces have powers almost unheard of in any other federative system, and they continue to joust for more power. Canadian provinces have a long record of negotiating agreements with the Federal Government that confer on them one form or another of special status. New Brunswick is the only province that, in all aspects of its governance, is officially bilingual. Quebec, on the other hand, is officially bilingual in terms of the Canadian constitution with respect to the operations of its legislature, the vot-

ing of laws and the operation of the courts—even though its legislature has proclaimed the province unilingual French. (The law in question, like all other laws down to the present day, was only valid when voted and proclaimed in bilingual versions, and provisions that contradicted constitutional provisions were gradually eliminated through court challenges). On such crucial issues the Canadian provinces are a checkerboard of diversity. For example, representatives of the Quebec government have a major role in selecting immigrants (a federal responsibility) who intend to reside in Quebec, thus exercising a de facto control over access to citizenship for potential immigrants.

7. In cultural matters while Ottawa has control of foreign affairs, provinces are responsible for education. To square the circle, official delegations to organizations such as UNESCO are made up of a mixture of federal and provincial officials.

8. The native peoples of Canada—persons of Amerindian and Inuit (previously “Eskimo”) descent—are progressively referred to as First Nations. The change in vocabulary emphasizes a growing consensus that persons of aboriginal descent should enjoy certain rights that predate the occupation of the North American continent by European settlers. The existence of rights predating treaties with European powers has been recognized in a variety of Canadian court decisions, even if the practical, political and legal implications remain a matter of dispute.

9. The model of official bilingualism and multiculturalism became a model for aspirations of First Nations together with their demands for a form of sovereignty over territories they hold or claim. The present Northwest Territories with a territory of 1,323,000 square miles (3,426,000 square kilometers) is now governed by a territorial legislative body in which English and French share their role as official languages along with four indigenous languages. In 1990 a decision was made to separate off the vast eastern portion of the territory, to be named Nunavut. As of 1999 Nunavut will be controlled for all intents and purposes by the Inuit people, whose language will be a territorial official language alongside English and French.

In summary Canada houses a social and legal complexity that defies the simple tenets of old-style sovereignty. At the

same time, it is also the industrialized country whose sovereignty is most vulnerable to transnational forces. Most Canadian industry is under U.S. ownership; most television viewed in the country comes from U.S. sources, and most films are produced in the U.S. Two U.S. magazines alone receive more advertising from Canadian sources than all Canadian-based magazines put together. The conclusion of the North American Free Trade Agreement merely consecrated a continental domination of the United States over its northern neighbor in almost all domains.

This, then, is the volatile mix out of which post-modern Canada is emerging: a country that is officially bilingual in French and English, where multiple cultures are recognized through an official policy of multiculturalism, viewed as the opposite of official biculturalism, where indigenous peoples have asserted rights and are being bargained with increasingly as First Nations rather than as wards of the state that can be disposed of at the will of the majority as represented in Parliament.

Sovereignty looks very different north of the border, as does the concept of citizenship. Not surprisingly the educational implications of this changed mix are also very different.

### **Emerging Models of Education**

The recognition of non-mainstream groups and their claims in education has become the central issue in the evolution of schooling in Canada and many other countries. The political nature of the problem reflects an important dimension of state activity, one which often was overlooked in the past. We borrow from Raymond Breton the concept of "symbolic allocation of resources" as being a function of government on a par with the allocation of physical and financial resources that are already recognized in the economic role of the state. (Breton 122-44). This function has given rise to a new form of political bargaining that is particularly relevant to schooling, what the Canadian political philosopher Charles Taylor calls "the politics of recognition." This new function of the state, as embodied in public schools, is at the heart of everything from the demands for affirmation of multicultural identities in the curriculum to the debate over bilingual education in California.

The Canadian political evolution sketched above has given rise to a variety of forms of educational practice whose value and implications are highly variable. In the following we will deal only with three forms that appear most illustrative: education for persons of recent immigrant extraction, French immersion schools for English-speaking children, and the constitutionally guaranteed schooling for official linguistic minorities, English in Quebec and French elsewhere. Readers must keep in mind that these official linguistic minorities have a different status from other minorities.

Our studies of the evolution of programs for immigrant and refugee children (Kaprielian-Churchill and Churchill 1993, 1994) confirm a fundamental willingness of school authorities to make major curricular adjustments to accommodate children who are new to Canada ( McLeod; Samuda, Berry and Laferrière). On the other hand no general provision exists to allow most children to have access to forms of bilingual education that are equivalent to the U.S. practice of transitional bilingual education, i.e. using a mother tongue other than English or French to teach school subjects while the child (speaking a third language as mother tongue) gradually acquires the main provincial language of instruction (French in Quebec, English elsewhere). Instead of such transitional bilingual programs, all provinces require immigrant children (including children born in Canada to immigrant parents and speaking a home language that is not English or French) to study full-time in the dominant provincial language. Meanwhile, the children are supposed to receive instruction in English as a second language (or French as a second language in Quebec). Failure to provide instruction in the mother tongue is a singular shortcoming in Canadian educational policy that has been strongly criticized by advocates of equal educational opportunity (Cummins and Danesi; Corson and Lemay).

On the other hand, most provinces permit voluntary access (where enrollments suffice to offer them) to programs that are variously termed “heritage languages” or (a more recent euphemism) “international languages,” along with a number of parallel programs that emphasize African Canadian cultural heritage. In Quebec a limited number of “classes d’accueil,” or reception classes, are provided to assist children, but

they are generally of very short duration. Programs for elementary schools in the English-dominant provinces usually relegate heritage languages and black studies to times outside the regular school day. Alberta and Manitoba do have, however, a limited number of Ukrainian language immersion programs, often serving third and fourth generation Ukrainian-Canadians. Canadian studies have repeatedly shown that teaching children in their mother tongue, even in the admittedly weakened environment of after-hours and Saturday school classes with teachers drawn from their communities, does not detract from their achievement in English and other school subjects but in most cases has a positive effect on achievement (Cummins and Danesi).

A legitimate question arises as to why Canadian authorities have not allowed transitional bilingual education and instead insist on ESL (or FSL) in circumstances where provision of quality instruction is not easily ensured. One study exists of the policy process. In Ontario, the province which receives on average nearly three out of every four immigrants to Canada, the evolution towards a better model of bilingual education ran into a wall of resistance from the provincial Ministry of Education in the early 1970s. The Board of Education of the City of Toronto attempted to set up transitional bilingual classes in response to strong demands from a number of immigrant parent groups. In response, the Ministry of Education issued a formal order to stop programs that used any language other than English or French as a medium of instruction for the regular curriculum. Although much has been done in the interim to ensure widespread availability of heritage language education in all school boards where a demand exists, the formal prohibition remains in effect down to the present (Churchill and Kaprielian Churchill 1994). Similarly, the methods for receiving, assessing and placing new immigrant students are very much under the autonomous control of local school authorities. A study in Ontario showed a situation that was unregulated and highly variable, even though some of the major school boards had put in place systems that were quite efficient (Kaprielian-Churchill and Churchill 1992).

The idea is purely speculative, but one has the sense that the major adaptation to deal with French-English issues in the



late 1960s and the 1970s used up the flexibility of policy makers in the English-dominant provinces, leaving them fearful of letting loose any new potential targets for ethnic nationalism and racism at a time when they were struggling to cope with changes to improve conditions for the French minorities.

At present bilingual education programs have been set up to serve First Nations and Inuit in a few locations. The programs are highly variable and range from studying an aboriginal language as a subject to using such a language as the main medium of instruction (very few instances). Generalizations are extremely difficult, except to say that well-developed transitional bilingual programs exist only in a very few places and affect comparatively few children. However, rapid evolution appears likely and a recent overview of the literature provides a starting point for those interested in charting progress in the future (Corson and Lemay ).

The two other models generated in the last decades, fortunately, have had better results and have a better prognosis for the future. It was in Canada that the French immersion model took root and spread providing impetus to the development of related programs in the U.S. called "dual immersion." In a typical form parents enroll their English-speaking children in kindergarten, where all play and other school readiness activities are conducted under the guidance of teachers and aides who speak only French to the children. In the early years of primary school all instruction occurs in French, with reading of English phased in gradually, starting perhaps in grade three. The astounding results in terms of functional bilingualism became an instant "hit" with the Canadian public and, progressively, with educators in many other countries (Swain; Johnson and Swain). Other forms of immersion exist, beginning later in the elementary school careers of the children and involving a variety of mixes in the use of French and English as media of instruction.

The unusual characteristic of the immersion model is less that it worked than the fact that it enjoyed and continues to enjoy such great popularity in English-speaking Canada. In provinces which are stereotyped as being anti-French, newspaper headlines began in the 1970s to trumpet the case of English-speaking parents spending the night outside immer-

sion schools to enroll their children in the new programs. Today in most provinces the success of French immersion is so great that more English-speaking children are studying in French than do children of the French-speaking minority — sometimes several times as many English as French in a province (Churchill 1998).

The final model is that of the French linguistic minorities in the different provinces outside Quebec. In the early 1960s the English minority in Quebec already enjoyed a complete, high quality educational system that included elementary and secondary schools, community colleges, and excellent universities, all operating in English and mainly under control of English-speakers. By contrast, in the mid-1960s the only existing minority French schools that remained after a century when English-dominant provinces forbade their creation or attempted to close them down were elementary systems in New Brunswick and Ontario. The latter were poorly equipped and had teachers with deficient qualifications. The main conquest of the last thirty years has been the expansion of French-language minority education for the from coast to coast. This was cemented in place by a 1982 constitutional amendment that provides a permanent guarantee of publicly funded elementary and secondary education for the official linguistic minorities of all provinces and territories.

Progress was rapid after 1967 in Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Ontario. Today all ten provinces have French schooling, though the systems are still extremely new in the provinces with the smallest numbers of French speakers. It was only at the beginning of 1998 that the final decisions were made to give the minority control of schools in all provinces after more than a decade of court battles and resistance to the constitutional requirement of control.

The results of these schools are astounding for persons who have trouble understanding that minorities can be bilingual and successful. The most studied creation of schools in a difficult environment occurred in Ontario. Starting in 1967-68, the creation of fully French-language high schools virtually eradicated the dropout of French students before the twelfth year of schooling. In the final thirteenth year required of those going on to university education, the new schools completely trans-

formed the prospects for the French speakers. Enrolled in public English high schools before 1967, the French had only one-sixth or about 17 per cent of the chances of progressing from grade nine to grade thirteenth as compared to non-French students in the same schools. Five years after the schools had been created the time for the first cohort to move up the difference had narrowed so that the gap had narrowed to only about 85-90 per cent of the non-francophone rates. However in the schools that persisted in forcing the French to take most of their programs in English, the so-called "mixed" or "bilingual" high schools, the relative chances of the French only moved up to about 50 per cent of the non-francophone rate. As a result of studies under the direction of one of the authors of this article, these mixed schools were phased down in the late 1970s before being abolished following the approval of the constitutional change in 1982 (Churchill et al. 1978; Churchill, Frenette and Quazi ).

The most important consequences of overall policies in the field of official languages have to do with the conservation and maintenance of minority French-speaking communities in the Anglo-dominant provinces. With the exception of northern New Brunswick and certain areas in Ontario that border on Quebec together with southern Quebec and Montreal these areas make up what are called "the bilingual belt," the main areas of language contact (between French and English) in Canada where the rates of assimilation of French minorities have been a source of major concern for generations. Originally, the concern was mainly that of the French themselves in their struggle to survive as an identifiable group. Progressively, however, their existence as minorities has come to symbolize a certain definition of Canada as a nation-state, a symbol of a national citizenship where citizens of both language groups can coexist.

Beginning with the 1986 census, the results of policies to promote the French language and French education outside Quebec became visible. Exogamy, that is marriage between a minority French speaker and a non-Francophone in English-dominant provinces, has always been associated with a tendency not to transmit French to the children of the couple as a mother tongue. Stated plainly, children with one French-speak-

ing parent were mainly taught English. Exogamy, or marriage to English-speakers, has been a prime factor in the process of assimilation of the minorities, similar to what happens to immigrants from different countries (Landry and Allard 561-92). But the 1986 census showed a reverse trend, an increase in the percentage of mixed English-French marriages whose children learn French as a mother tongue. As a noted demographer commented: "In brief, in the country as a whole, the dominance of English over French, which is still very significant [in the mixed marriages analyzed], has been cut in half within thirty years" (Lachapelle 22).

The link between community survival and schooling in the light of inevitably high rates of exogamy has now been established in terms that, frankly, are more optimistic than any community leader or political advocate of minority schooling would have dared hoped. Landry and Allard, whose pioneering work on the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality is at the center of very active research, have shown that the effects of exogamy in terms of assimilation can almost be eliminated if the parents agree to speak the minority language at home and send their children to the French-language minority schools (Landry and Allard 561-92).<sup>7</sup>

The conclusion to be drawn is that French-language schools combined with a decision in the family to speak the minority language regularly (though not exclusively) to the children virtually overcomes the assimilation factors associated with exogamous marriages. Since exogamy remains the most powerful force acting for assimilation, there is a clear signal that using the French minority schools as a tool, families can conserve their linguistic and associated cultural heritage (O'Keefe).

The total impact of the minority school system can thus be perceived. First, American readers should note that minority French youth in the English-dominant provinces (except for a few areas of northern New Brunswick) who retain their mother tongue also speak English virtually without a trace of an accent. This point is little emphasized in Canadian research, since it is so self-evident to the public at large. Learning and studying in French in youth is not perceived today as an obstacle to speaking and working in English in adult life. The

Canadian issue today is whether French schooling will reduce assimilation. On this point the research by Landry and Allard has provided a strong defense of the schools. At the same time introducing the minority school system across the country has drastically reduced the gap in educational achievement between French and English. This is what is known as a win-win situation.

### Conclusions

From this overview we can see that the Canadian mix of models of schooling for linguistic minorities includes one weak contribution and two very promising models. The weak contribution refers to the failure of Canadian provinces to advance in the direction of transitional bilingual schooling for persons of immigrant descent. What has been done in this respect, the teaching of heritage languages, supports research in other countries pointing to the strong positive influence of teaching in the minority tongue for general achievement and for achievement in the majority language. The first strong model is that of French immersion for teaching French as a second language to English speakers; this model is already well known and has served in part to stimulate similar experimentation in the U.S. and other countries. The second strong model is that of the minority school under minority control. The creation of schools for the French minorities has had two parallel effects: (a) reducing drastically the dropout rates in ways that have had a major impact on socio-economic conditions of the minority and (b) increasing drastically the possibilities for the minority community to pass on its heritage to future generations.

Canada offers a model of education of minorities based upon an evolving definition of the nation-state. The Canadian nation-state of today is, at best, a work in progress. No historical fatality ensures that the experiments of the last thirty years will endure the pressures of power and politics in the contemporary world.

Changes in Canada are deserving of closer attention by American scholars because they have arisen as the by-product of a worldwide trend, the decline of the traditional nation-state. This decline is raising new issues about the role of schools in "producing" citizens and, in particular, is a powerful trend that

runs counter to the revival of nativism in the U.S. The novel responses of the Canadian educational system do not provide simple models that can immediately be transferred to Lansing, Michigan, or San Diego, California. Rather they illustrate dimensions of a problem of minority education that are likely to be of importance to the U.S. in the future. Educators and members of the public interested in planning for new types of relations between schools and ethnocultural communities can benefit from examining assumptions of their discussion in the light of such major trends.

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**Endnotes**

1 The North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), formed by the United States with Canada and Mexico, does not play any role similar to the European Union, except for reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. The methods for conflict resolution within NAFTA are weak and, given the impunity with which the US government wields its economic power in spite of treaty obligations, provide no effective checks or balances to corporate power.

2 The figure is based on self-reporting on the national census and includes, therefore, all residents of Canada, including persons born abroad and persons whose mother tongue is neither English nor French.

3 Limitations on this right apply to naturalized citizens educated outside Canada.

4 Symbolic legitimation does not mean that individuals do not have to deal with day-to-day racism and prejudice of other citizens who disagree with the official policies, but at least the drift of official policy is in a direction of recognizing diversity as legitimate.

5 See below for discussion of immersion programs as a form of language pedagogy.

6 Landry and Allard (1997) amassed a large database of intensive measures of language behavior on some 5000 youth and children from across Canada. In their most recent study of this information, they were able to demonstrate two powerful factors. (a) First they compared children of both endogamous and exogamous marriages—in-marriages versus out-marriages—and confirmed through a variety of measures of linguistic performance the very high levels of language loss, or subtractive bilingualism, found among the children. (b) Secondly, the researchers then identified within the sample two groups. In group one were those children whose parents spoke French in the home to their children and who placed their children in French minority schools (French as medium of instruction). In group two were children from families who sent their children to other schools operating mainly or exclusively in English. They then examined the implications of exogamy in terms of the two milieu: high family-h index. In this case the results were astounding in homes with a high family-school French index; there was almost no difference in language outcomes for the children between endogamous and exogamous marriages (Landry & Allard).

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## **Ebonics: The Debate Which Never Happened**

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The thesis of this paper is that no substantive and impartial debate about the pedagogical value of using Ebonics in the classroom could be held in the United States media because America's prescriptive attitude towards Ebonics does not allow fair and objective consideration of the issue. In presenting this theme I will discuss language ideologies in general and prescription in particular as a common attitude towards language. Prescription with respect to Ebonics usually takes the form of language prejudice. I will conclude with an introduction to one area of language planning, status planning, in which language planners try to improve the status of a dialect or language by selecting a goal, planning the necessary research, and devising a marketing or diffusion plan.

In December, 1996, the Oakland School Board announced a plan to use Ebonics in the classroom, and their decision evoked outrage in the media for four months. This paper is not

in support or in opposition to the school board's plan, nor does it debate the pros and cons of any concrete proposal. The point of this paper is not to argue the status of Ebonics as a separate language, a dialect of English, or a variety of English. Instead my purpose is to discuss the undeniable fact that the plan was never discussed reasonably and impartially in the media for four months because kneejerk negative attitudes towards Ebonics, a form of linguistic prejudice, made a true debate about the issue impossible.

Some terms and definitions are in order. Standard American English (SAE) is the most commonly acceptable way of speaking or writing American English which may not follow all grammar rules in the books but is intelligible to most Americans. It has some regional dialect variation from north to south and from east to west, but is mutually intelligible because of a common core of usage. Ebonics is a way of speaking mainly available to African-Americans, though people of other ethnicities speak it. It has certain lexical, phonological, and grammatical features different from SAE, but its use is highly individualistic. For some speakers it is a native dialect or language; for others it is merely a slight, socially context-dependent variation from SAE. Any types of American speech that diverge substantially from SAE are called non-standard; they include Ebonics, Cajun, Pennsylvania Dutch, and some rural and urban ways of speaking.

According to Pennycook, Phillipson, and Wiley, two major ideologies of language are operant in the world today.

### **Ideologies of Language**

#### **Colonial/Imperialistic**

People do not have language rights.

One language/dialect is better than others; it should be used exclusively.

#### **Ecology of Language**

People have language rights.

Languages/dialects have equal status, but different functions.

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Monolingualism is considered the norm; others should learn the dominant language.

Multilingualism is the norm for societies and individuals.

Laissez faire or "survival of the fittest" is the prevailing attitude toward minority dialects and languages.

Protection and maintenance of minority languages and dialects are necessary.

Multilingualism is a "problem."

Multilingualism is a "resource."

We see signs of both of these ideologies in the United States today, but policy-shapers, decision-makers, voters, and the media generally fall into the colonialist/imperialist camp. The colonialist/imperialist view towards Ebonics can be summarized: African Americans do not have the right to speak the way that they want to because Standard American English is better than Ebonics. Speakers of Ebonics should learn Standard American English because Ebonics is of no value to our society and culture. It survives in spite of diligent efforts to eradicate it. Ebonics is a problem for African Americans to overcome if they are to be able to benefit from social and economic opportunities in our society.

In contrast, the ecological view is that African Americans have the right to use Ebonics if they want to because it is equal in status to SAE. Although SAE and Ebonics are equal in status, they may have different functions in society. For example, SAE is acceptable in business, education, and government, and Ebonics is at present acceptable in homes, neighborhoods, and churches. In recent years there are some overlaps in function in areas of sports, movies, and television where both are acceptable. Ebonics has a value because it is normal for people to have multiple ways of speaking. Ebonics is a resource for our culture and a resource for the individual who speaks it; therefore it should be maintained.

To understand the negative public reaction to the Oakland School Board plan to use Ebonics in the classroom to enhance student learning, however, we need to tease apart language attitudes in more detail. We zero in on the prescriptive attitude that SAE is better than nonstandard varieties of English and that therefore everyone should speak it. We can, in fact, separate out a continuum of language attitudes along an axis of equality VS prejudice (See chart on page 5.). The left column, "equality," generally reflects the descriptivist posture of most linguists, who attempt to root out their own prejudices towards the diverse ways that people speak in order to study 'language' more objectively. After adopting this descriptivist stance linguists have determined that all languages (English, German, French, Chinese, etc.) are in theory effective and valid for all functions (education, government, business, home, neighborhoods, media). They extend this view to all languages without exception: Ebonics, Cajun, and Pennsylvania Dutch could be effective and valid language choices to fulfill any language function.

The most introductory of linguistics textbooks contain the observation that the language, dialect, or variety that people speak correlates with a number of social factors, such as regional origin, nationality, ethnicity, gender, education level, social class, or mobility. Ways of speaking do not correlate well with intelligence or morality. This, of course, merely confirms what we observe anecdotally: intelligent and highly moral people can use double negatives and unintelligent and unscrupulous people can speak "perfect" English. In spite of this there is a pernicious view that people who speak "ungrammatically" are somehow deficient, stupid, bad, even criminal. My local newspaper, for example, printed an editorial from a reader who felt that people who couldn't spell correctly or use the right past participle were showing the same slovenly thinking as those who commit hate crimes or child abuse.

One of the first lessons a student of linguistics learns is that our norms of language, our attitudes towards properness in language, and our expectations about the ways that people should speak are not inherent but rather are reflections of long

and deeply embedded ethnic, social, economic and gender privilege. In other words SAE is the standard in this country because it was and has been and is traditionally the speech of the white upper and middle class. This is, of course, a simplified summary of a very complex issue in the field of historical social psychology of language, but it is the case that SAE is not inherently more melodious than a working class Bostonian variant; it is not more logical than Gullah, and it is not more beautiful than Cajun. Our norms, attitudes, and expectations are based merely on perceived privilege: languages and dialects share the same prestige as their speakers do in society. In addition there is gender privilege which operates on a smaller scale; we see the growth industry of workshops designed to teach businesswomen to speak more assertively and with more power, even to the point of lowering their voice pitch, as if that were the only correct way of getting a point across.

**Attitudes towards minority varieties, dialects,  
or languages**

**equality**

All dialects are effective and valid for all communicative functions.

**pragmatic  
prescriptivism**

All dialects are effective and valid for many communicative functions, but, like it or not, one is accepted better in business, government, and education.

**language  
prejudice**

SAE is correct; others are ungrammatical and need fixing. They may be called "slovenly thinking," "lazy speech," "deficient," or "slang."



## Birch-Ebonics

Intelligence and morality are not correlated with dialect/language.

Intelligence and morality are not correlated with dialect/language.

People who don't speak properly and are stupid and bad. They may be called "sloppy thinkers," or "lazy speakers."

Our norms of speech and writing are due to long ethnic, social, economic, and gender privilege.

Our norms of speech and writing reflect ethnic, social, economic, or gender privilege.

Our norms of proper speech and writing are enshrined by tradition and grammar books. No privilege is involved because all can learn.

The other extreme, that of language prejudice, seems to reflect a common point of view that there is one proper way of speaking and writing and that those who don't speak it have something wrong with them. The "prescription" to heal the deficiency is to learn proper English grammar rules and writing. Furthermore, there are implicit and explicit moral judgments made about those whose grammar is nonstandard. Overt prejudice against nonstandard speakers is considered praiseworthy at a time when other types of overt prejudice have diminished or have at least become more covert. Nonstandard dialect speakers (not just Ebonics speakers) are viewed as stupid, ignorant, lazy, sloppy, or bad. People who hold prejudicial attitudes believe that proper English is somehow historically better, more logical, more refined, more expressive, and so on, possibly because it has grammar books that authenticate it. The history of grammar books and instruction is beyond the scope of this paper, but suffice it to say that grammar book writ-

ers and publishers often capitalize on our linguistic insecurities to make a buck.

In the center column, we find what might be called pragmatic prescriptivism, a middle-of-the-road view that incorporates the sociolinguistic truths revealed by linguists with the pragmatism of operating within a culture and society in which SAE is the dominant language. In pragmatic prescriptivism teachers and others might believe that SAE and Ebonics are equally valid and appropriate but that they have different functions. I am grateful to my colleague, Dr. James Walton, for a useful analogy. We wear both jeans and business suits on different occasions. One is not more valued than the other; they are just different. We expect to wear jeans appropriately sometimes and business suits appropriately at other times. The same can be true of speech. We can appreciate different varieties of speech equally but recognize that they are appropriate in different settings and situations. The result for pedagogy of the attitudes of equality, pragmatic prescriptivism, and prejudice are shown in this table:

**Teacher Attitudes towards Nonstandard Dialects**

<b>equality</b>	<b>pragmatic prescriptivism</b>	<b>language prejudice</b>
Teachers should internalize socio-linguistic truths. Learning can take place in any dialect.	It is the teacher's role to respect students' home dialect and internalize sociolinguistic truths.	It is the teacher's role to eradicate errors from their students' speech and writing.  Respect for the students' home dialect is political correctness.

## Birch-Ebonics

People should be able to speak and write the way they want to, as long as other people can understand.

People should be able to speak and write the way they want to, but they should be encouraged to learn SAE for some functions.

People should speak and write SAE always. Attempts to change any standards are “dumbing down” or even “racist” because they imply that some cannot learn.

Use of a home dialect in school is allowed.

Use of the students’ dialect in school in order to promote content area and SAE learning is allowed.

Use of the students’ dialect is prohibited. It is “dumbing down,” “catering to,” or “racist.”

The Oakland School Board’s plan fell, I believe, into the pragmatic prescriptivism view, but the reaction of the general public, as reported in the media, was characterized by language prejudice. The premise of this paper is that in order for there to be a true debate about the merits of using Ebonics in the classroom, the opinion of the general public, policy makers, and decision-makers has to shift from prejudice towards pragmatic prescriptivism. It is only within that domain that goals and objectives can be set, plans can be made and carried out, and learning results quantified.

Although changes in attitudes towards language and dialect are extremely difficult to accomplish, they can be attempted through language status planning. Language status planning is a field devoted to increasing the number of functions that a language or dialect has in a society by making it more acceptable in different settings, such as school, government, literature, and so on. There have been status planning

attempts in Louisiana, with French and Cajun, that have met with only mixed success (Valdman 97). There has been more successful status planning in Canada with French and Native American languages. These status-planning efforts have given us some ideas of what works and what doesn't.

Status planning works best as a grassroots effort by the speakers of the language, aided by experts, academicians, and authorities (Cooper 99-121). If speakers value their own language and culture and experts and authorities support it, they will make it valued by others. To be more specific, to improve the status of Ebonics the speakers themselves must first see their own ways of speaking as resources for them and not as problems to be overcome. An increase in the status of Ebonics will not come from outside this population. However, the truth is that at present many African Americans do not see Ebonics as a separate variety of English; their use of it is unconscious. If they are aware of it, many African Americans do not value Ebonics because they themselves have internalized societal language prejudice against Ebonics.

Although many linguists value Ebonics, some prominent African-Americans do not. In the reaction against the Oakland School Board's plan, people like Bill Cosby and Maya Angelou gave legitimacy to language prejudice. Because they opposed the plan, others could openly oppose it without the danger of being perceived as racist or prejudiced. For Ebonics speakers to raise the status of their way of speaking, they must become aware of it as a valued variety; they must throw off internalized prejudice, and prominent African Americans must support status-planning efforts, as Toni Morrison did.

A status plan must have a goal, a research plan, and a method of diffusion. The goal for the grassroots movement supported by experts might range from a simple awareness of the history, functions, and value of Ebonics as a resource among African Americans to a more challenging goal of acceptance of Ebonics by the general public as a legitimate mode of expression with a function to play within education, business, and government. Depending on which goal is selected, the research plan might include surveys of language use in the

community of speakers, e.g. the number of bidialectal and monodialectal speakers of Ebonics in rural and urban areas of the north, south, east, and west, the current functions it has in the home, neighborhood, media, church, school, workplace, academe, and the awareness and attitudes of African Americans and other Americans towards it. There has already been funding allocated by the federal government for research on the relationship of Ebonics and African American students' success in learning to read and write in SAE to be carried out in both Oakland and Philadelphia (Rickford 98).

Further research might include studies of the best ways to influence public opinion about language from the bottom up or from the top down. Rickford discusses the media in his attempts to convey the point of view of linguists to the public. He finds that newspapers are unsatisfactory because they actually prevent views opposed to mainstream attitudes from reaching people but that radio is more satisfactory. His view is ". . . the message has to be repeated...anew for each generation and each different audience type, and preferably in simple, direct and arresting language which the public can understand and appreciate" (98).

After the goal has been chosen and the research carried out, a diffusion plan must be made and put into action. The logical place to begin from the bottom up is with a grassroots revaluing of Ebonics which would extend out from radio and television, internet, the African American media and churches, which would influence the masses as well as prominent African Americans who are in a position to influence others. Teacher education is another area where information about Ebonics can be influential. From the top down, language experts and Ebonics scholars should not let up on their efforts to educate our federal and state government and school officials. This is also an area where the National Association of Ethnic Studies could continue to provide some leverage, as does the Linguistic Society of America and the Society for Linguistic Anthropology.

But there are important obstacles to change. First, colonialist/imperialist ideology and language prejudice are

entrenched in our society. People see these as the norm and are unable to entertain other points of view. People who express different points of view, like the Oakland School Board, are shouted down. Linguists like Rickford and others (including myself) received hate mail for expressing such views. That is because language prejudice often thinly masks deep-seated racial prejudices, such as were seen in Web sites which became active during the Ebonics "debate."

However on the plus side the Ebonics issue is an important one for addressing language prejudice and racism in our society, and, handled properly, it can offer opportunities for people to change. That is because although Ebonics is an extremely clear example of language prejudice, it is only one part of a bigger problem. The fact is that everyone is judged by the way that they speak and write, and many people of all social classes and ethnicities face prejudice because of their dialects and accents. Southerners with strong accents are viewed as backwoods racist louts; Jimmy Carter tried to reduce his southern accent for that reason although his speech was very close to "standard." People with northern urban accents are viewed often as stupid street-gang members or members of the Mob. The use of Yiddish-influenced English or Spanish-influenced English evokes a negative response from some Americans. In short language prejudice is confronted by many, and therefore it could be "exploited" to show the commonality of our experience as English speakers. In a true debate about Ebonics we as a society might become aware of our language prejudices and privileges, which is the first step in changing them.

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**Strategies of Resistance and Disengagement  
in an Ethnic Enclave:  
El Barrio in Aurora, Illinois**

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This paper is a case study of a small city undergoing a process of demographic and ethnic change in community, empowerment, and political participation. For the dominant ethnic group these changes are threatening, but resisting the Latino community that they fear tends to set in motion the very conditions that exacerbate the growing prevalence of poverty and the attendant problems of gangs, domestic violence, and school drop-out rates. For the Latino community the challenge to such resistance is through community organizing and bringing pressure upon the city for inclusion in the political structure to influence policy regarding these problems.



## Introduction

This paper addresses the failure of political ethnic mobilization by a Latin American population near Chicago, Illinois, due to social and political elements beyond the control of Aurora's Mexican-American population. This essay will focus on education and the labor market as major social basics contributing to the structural position of the Latino population. As the Aurora labor market continues to transform to meet the needs of the "post-industrial" economy, the educational system takes on greater significance in training people for new employment opportunities. A bifurcated educational system based on ethnicity—middle class Whites in one and working class Latinos and Blacks in the other—operates to center the social problems associated with poverty, discrimination and cultural isolation in predominantly minority schools.

Aurora represents a classic case of Blauner's internal colony where an ethnic population is marginalized, impoverished, and discriminated against. Considering these objective conditions, the limited political response by the community to confront the issue of ethnic marginalization is problematic, especially considering the relative size of the Latino community. Political and economic power remains monopolized in the hands of the white majority, while among the lower classes in Aurora, primarily Latino and African American, there remains significant ethnic isolation that conforms to a system of ethnic stratification and social segregation.

For many U.S. ethnic communities the increase in economic globalization and the virtual collapse of the liberal corporate state has meant a restructuring of the political economy. Both business and government have broken the social contract with the poor, the disenfranchised, and organized labor. Government now takes a less active and direct role in providing public programs to address the issue of poverty and unemployment. In place of the contract a greater reliance is placed on the market and private initiative. Additionally, a new international regime has been instituted where production of goods has given way to service employment as industrial activity has either moved overseas or been computerized. This has a negative effect upon job opportunities and potential income. For example, Kent reports that "the movement from manufacturing

to services has impacted real income levels; by 1987, shrinking industries paid 41.4% more in annual wages than did the expanding ones” (245). The structure now in place provides fewer employment opportunities for those not well educated and who have historically experienced discrimination. Song and Kim conclude that “the new U.S. political economy has functioned to intensify existing structural inequities in American society and to further rigidify ethnic stratification” (237). With higher school dropout rates, less “cultural capital” (that is, middle class parental skills, habits and styles that determine the cognitive skills of their children), and discrimination, various non-white ethnic groups find themselves with low paying jobs and stalled on the lower rungs of social mobility. The growth of technology and a global orientation may likewise further isolate ethnic groups since the dominant group, with its relative wealth and education, is most able to take advantage of the technological and global relationships, allowing them to further insulate and reorient their relationships and interests away from ethnic encounters.

Implicit bonds of language and culture, a set of common values and beliefs, and a shared sense of status hierarchy in the dominant social structure characterize the Latino community. The community, then, is a population whose members consciously identify with each other. But rather than view the Latino population of Aurora as a homogenous group or emphasize regional or interethnic differences (differences between Puerto Rican and Mexican, etc.), this research identifies four major social categories within the Latino community. Certainly, the Latino community is more than just a collection of people living in close proximity to one another. Linked by common heritage to Latin America, and especially Mexico, the community is connected by family and kin, sentiment and knowledge of history, self-help groups, artistic endeavors, social centers and cultural events. In other words, the community is a “constructed” space for the expression of cultural identity. The categories discussed in this paper, as adaptive responses to the surrounding social environment, transcend these institutional and cultural links and divide the community in ways that hinder political action. The four categories, which are based on strategies of engagement or disengagement with the larger domi-

nant Anglo society are (1) a natal home orientation, (2) the gang organization, (3) enclave orientation, and (4) community activism. The failure of Latinos to mobilize their strength is not a consequence of culture or personality. Rather, different segments of the population have developed different strategies based on different perceptions, expectations, experiences, and needs. I suggest that these four adaptive strategies are useful for understanding the limited political mobilization of the local population.

### **Aurora: An Ethnic Enclave**

With the loss of the Mexican-American war of 1848, Mexican-Americans, or Chicanos, were created and viewed primarily as a "regional minority" (Saenz 1993). However since World War II and the various bracero programs Chicanos have dispersed beyond the southwest, moving especially to the upper mid-west. Chicago historically has been an important destination for those leaving the migrant agriculture stream. By 1970, 7.3% of the city's population was Latino. Presently the city core is 24% Latino (450,000 people), and the surrounding metropolitan area is presently 14.5% Latino (1.1 million people). Although 75.5% lived in the core city districts in 1970, this figure fell to 59% by 1995 with many moving into the suburbs (*Chicago Tribune*). Accompanying this rapid growth has been the concentration of the Latino population at the lower end of the social status scale in terms of income, poverty, residence, and education as they have penetrated predominantly white communities.

The mobilization of ethnic identity is a reaction to the continuing relative social isolation from the dominant ethnic group. At the same time various external structural pressures such as a split labor market and various discriminations in housing, education and employment confront the Latino community and force it to adapt either to mainstream capitalist-oriented consumer culture or turn inward and accentuate a Latinismo ideology. By Latinismo I mean a set of beliefs, ideas and perspectives based on shared cultural and historical experience and a system of values and norms which rejects Anglo consumer culture and embraces community, family, and heritage. To an extent, then, modern Latino identity is fabricated out of shared

cultural and structural similarities in its confrontation with the larger white society. This confrontation is viewed in this paper from the perspective of Blauner's "internal colony," that is emphasis is placed on power and resource inequalities across racial lines. Blauner suggested that internal colonialism determines the asymmetrical relations of people of color within the dominant society. "Like European overseas colonialism," he wrote, "America has used African, Asian, Mexican, and to a lesser degree Indian workers for the cheapest labor, concentrating people of color in the most unskilled jobs, the least advanced sectors of the economy and the most industrially backward regions of the nation" (62). He identified several conditions to determine an internal colony: first, the degree of segregation, ethnic isolation, and restricted physical and social movement; second, the unequal access to resources and labor exploitation; third, cultural stigma, and fourth, limited political access. All of these conditions are found in the Aurora study area. These conditions make assimilation into the larger society a myth for blacks and Latinos because the colonial experience defines and embeds them in a system of racial domination. Nagel and Olzak differ somewhat from Blauner; but while recognizing power and inequality, they focus on ethnic identity and the ability to mobilize to compete for scarce social resources, that is, "Ethnic mobilization can be defined as the process by which a group organizes along ethnic lines in pursuit of group ends" (Nagel 96-97), usually in relation to attempts at the maintenance of the enclave by dominant outsiders. Following Blauner, Nagel, and Olzak, efforts at maintaining the enclave should encourage forms of ethnic mobilization to counter this structural position.

Portes and Manning have identified two general reactions to the attempt at permanent confinement of colonized ethnics. This condition has "given rise, in time, either to hopeless communities of 'unmeltable' ethnics or to militant minorities, conscious of a common identity and willing to support a collective strategy of self-defense" (Portes and Manning 49). In this paper mobilization—the willingness to support a collective strategy of self-defense—is considered problematic due to the identification of the four strategies employed to confront the marginality that colonialism entails. Several of these strategies

tend to fracture the community by redirecting focus away from a community in solidarity to individual or group efforts that seem inimical to community mobilization as a basis of collective political power.

Portes and Manning characterize the Latin American presence in cities such as Aurora as immigrant enclaves. The immigrant enclave differs from Blauner's internal colony in that Blauner addresses a larger structural feature of society whereas Portes and Manning focus on structural features of the community. The difference between an enclave and colony is instructive. African American communities, if we follow Blauner's model, are colonies, while the Latino population in Aurora is an enclave. The central organizing feature of such an enclave is the local "indigenous" community economy controlled by members in the community. In African American communities much of the local business enterprise is owned by members of different outside ethnic groups—Whites, Koreans, South Asians, etc. The existence of an "independent" local minority economy is essential for understanding whether it is a true enclave or only a residential community. According to Portes and Manning, there are three conditions to being considered an ethnic enclave: a relatively large number of immigrants (mostly first generation and newly arrived) with the business experience to operate the economy; available sources of capital for investment, and sources of local labor for community businesses. Aurora represents a powerful model of an ethnic enclave. It has all the features of an internal colony—lack of political and institutional power, limited social mobility, alteration of indigenous culture, and geographic isolation—yet it is also a self-contained community with an indigenous economy providing most of what people need.

### **Structural Conditions of the Aurora Barrio**

The social and political health of a community is dependent upon a number of factors including the educational attainment level of members, the school dropout rate, types of employment, and income distribution. The following briefly examines these factors that negatively impact on the Aurora community and represent the conditions over which the community must struggle.

Aurora, a city of 99,580 people about 45 miles west of Chicago, has a Latino population of 22,864 (City of Aurora, 1995). Latin Americans have been present in Aurora since the arrival of the first Mexican families—Neves Acosta and Julia Padilla—in 1923-1924. During this early period, 50% of all Mexican immigrants were located in the city center around North Broadway, a pattern that presently continues, while numerous male railroad workers lived in make-shift railroad boxcars (Palmer 137). By 1930 ninety-six Mexicans were officially recognized residing in the city, 46% of who were recruited by and worked for the railroads (Palmer 203). Many others worked in the local bracero program. This population growth mirrored the same demographic trend in Chicago where the Mexican population increased from 500 to 20,000 between 1910 and 1930 (Gracia 185-207). A second wave of Mexican immigrants arrived during World War II to work in the local factories, supplementing the black and female industrial labor force.

### **Population**

According to the most recent census, it is estimated that almost 30% of the Latino population in Aurora has arrived since 1980. As of 1990, Mexican immigrants composed 86% of the Spanish speaking population followed by Puerto Ricans with 9 % (City of Aurora, 1995). Presently, Latinos, who make up between 25-27% of the city population, comprise the largest non-white ethnic community followed by African-American at 12 %. In essence, Aurora has two worlds—one Anglo and the other Latin/African-American. The map in Figure One shows the various census districts, highlighting the Latino areas. Notice the tight physical concentration of the population. To the north live predominantly Blacks and working class Whites while to the east and west are mostly white professionals. Until very recently the Fox River that runs through the city was the dividing line, a physical boundary between the Latino and white populations. Latinos have since moved to the west side, occupying the older working class neighborhoods located close to the river. The new boundary is less physical and more economical but real nonetheless. The communities on the west, along with the newer housing developments located to the

east, are separated by the cost of housing. Within a half dozen blocks, the transition is made to newer, middle class homes which substantially increases purchase costs, a major impediment for Latino families. The Latino population therefore has expanded north and south-north into the older black and white neighborhoods and south into older white neighborhoods. Movement further east or west appears to be effectively blocked until such time that income opportunities improve.

According to Figure One, four census tracts are over 50% Latino and four tracts are home to between 30% and 50% Mexican and Puerto Rican peoples. Race and class limit the community's ability to expand. This has already led to a very tight housing market and overcrowded schools. For instance, an analysis of the housing availability by census tracts between 1980 and 1990 demonstrates housing conditions. If we compare census tracts more than 50% Latino (4 tracts,) with those more than 80% white (12 tracts), the trend in housing stock becomes apparent. Between the census years 1980 and 1990, the four Latino dominated tracts lost an average of 7.5% of their housing stock while several tracts more than 80% white had an increase between 145% and 2353%. Several white dominated tracts closer to the city center experienced a small decline in housing of 3% (City of Aurora, 1991). As the inner city housing stock deteriorates due to the age of housing units (most build prior to or right after World War II), the income levels and ethnicity of community residents plays a factor in housing replacement. The housing "crunch" for Latinos is worse than is apparent due to the large numbers of undocumented people. Undocumented individuals are very difficult to account for when gathering statistics.

In general over 60% of the total Latino population of Aurora live within the confines of these eight tracts. A review of Table One gives the exact percentages of five Latino dominated tracts and compares them with predominantly white tracts. The heavily populated Latino tracts are found in the decaying city center of old industrial Aurora while the white populated tracts of Robert Reich's "symbolic analysts" (1992) are located east, south and west of the center in the emerging suburbs.

**Table One: Ethnic Percentages for Selected Census Tracts, 1990.**

<u>Tract</u>	<u>Percent Latino</u>	<u>Tract</u>	<u>Percent Latino</u>
8534	72.0	8416	3.4
8535	50.7	8464	3.6
8536	54.8	8540	3.9
8538	50.5	8545	0.5
8541	35.4	8530	6.0

As mentioned, the Latino population is located predominantly in the several census tracts of the old industrial heart of the city bordering the Fox River. By 1970 the beginning of an ethnic enclave was apparent. In two central city tracts where the percent of lower-income households was between 60% and 90%, the Mexican population had already reached more than 20% of the tract population (U.S. Census, 1970). As Latinos with lower incomes began moving in, “white flight” occurred, as Whites no longer maintained their property or converted to rental property. This led to neighborhood deterioration. The conclusion by Nelson & Associates, “... that Aurora owners of housing in blocks newly penetrated by Negroes permit their properties to deteriorate” (43), not only applied to African-American residential movement but also applied to tracts penetrated by growing numbers of Latin Americans. By the late 1970s the estimated poverty rate among Latinos had doubled to 15% of the population (compared to 6.9% for whites). Median housing values for 1980 (medium statistics are not available) tend to support this conclusion. The census tracts most heavily represented by Latin Americans had median housing values of \$38,200 while values in tracts almost exclusively white were \$74,400 (City of Aurora, 1995). White flight brought with it to the suburbs many city resources, neighborhood investment capital, and political power. By the mid-1980s white movement out to the surrounding areas was relatively complete. The more recent growth of newly settled white areas in the 1990s was due to the movement of middle class white professionals either out of Chicago or attracted to the growth of corporate services—headquarters, information, financial, and light manufacturing—in the suburbs.



Nationwide Latinos are currently the fastest-growing sector of the U.S. population. Latinos, currently 22.8 million, are expected to be the largest nonwhite ethnic group by 2050. This dynamic growth applies to Aurora as well but with the added feature of a general geographic shift in the ethnic population. According to the U.S. Special Census of Aurora in 1986, most of the city's growth has occurred on the eastside. While the near west side, predominantly white, had a slight population decline of 1 %, east of the river the population grew over 10% between 1980 and 1986. Of the total city population the population proportion west of the river declined from 46% to 43% while east of the river the proportion grew from 54% to 57% between 1980 and 1986 (U.S. Special Census of Aurora, 1986). In terms of general population dynamics the city has seen an increase in population and most of this growth has been in the African-American and Latino communities. Recent estimates predict that Aurora's Latino population will reach 28,000 by the year 2000. As indicated in Figure One, while the inner city has become increasingly non-white, the outer fringes have become increasingly white. As a reflection of this trend over the past decade a number of new school districts have developed around the city core to accommodate the perception that the Aurora schools are too heavily populated with black and Latino students, although such reservations are not expressed in terms of race but "proxies" such as the "quality of the schools."

The degree of cultural and structural assimilation is problematic at best. The degree of social-cultural isolation, a split-labor market, physical concentration into a high-density Latin enclave, and the perception of discrimination suggests a marginalized community. The Latino community is very pronounced not just in numbers but also in terms of culture. A national survey conducted by Strategy Research Corporation supports this conclusion with nine out of ten Latinos identifying themselves as "very Latino," and the most likely to remain so ten years from now are linguistically isolated. In the significant eighteen to sixty-four-year-old category the number of respondents indicating that they spoke English poorly or not at all is over 30 percent (Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission 1993). This is significant because this age category is most

active in terms of employment or social-political participation.

The degree of linguistic isolation has several dimensions. One is the pride Latinos feel in their heritage and their desire to maintain a social identity associated with the Spanish language. Second, the continual influx of new immigrants who are native Spanish speakers, estimated at over 20% in the 1990s, adds new ideas and cultural experiences fresh from Mexico to the general community population pool. And third, the degree of Spanish speaking media, Latino religious, charitable, and social services, and the commercial availability of Latino businesses and products in Chicago and surrounding cities like Aurora support the use of Spanish. Another factor is more paradoxical. Writing about border culture in El Paso, Mario García recognizes the importance of maintaining one's culture. He writes, "... Mexicans preserved many native cultural traditions that aided them in their transition to a new American setting by providing a familiar cultural environment" (Takaki 72-81). The paradox is that this helps to encourage the ethnic enclave by constructing a greater approximation of Mexican natal social structure that may limit the necessity to accommodate Anglo culture. The consequence of an enclave for many is "acculturation" to the dominant culture rather than assimilation into it. That is, rather than give up their natal culture, Mexican-Americans negotiate a process of learning Anglo culture without sacrificing their own past. Rios writes, "They chose to accept a bilingual, bicultural mode of life rather than the monolingual, mono-cultural Anglo alternative" (141). The size and circumstance of the enclave, however, can mitigate even accommodation via a bicultural and bilingual mode of life by offering authentic ethnic services that can support isolation of community members, a conclusion supported by several informants.

Secondary structural assimilation, that is, access to an occupation within the power structure and the major social institutions, is limited for a number of reasons. In an earlier study of Spanish-speaking people in Chicago in the 1970s, Walton and Salces found the degree of political participation to be weak. "... Among the hundreds of elected representatives to various levels of government in the metropolitan area there are only four persons of Spanish heritage and these occupy

relatively minor posts” (Padilla 57). For a variety of reasons Latinos in general are not active politically, although, as Yzaguirre correctly points out, voting equals power (179). Contemporary Aurora likewise fits this scenario of low political assimilation. Less than 10% of individuals of Latin descent work in city government, and only 20-25 police officers of Latin descent work in a force of over 234 officers. All the aldermen and all but one city council member are white (one member is black) even in districts that are heavily Latino. It is only this year that the first Latino has been elected to any elected office in Aurora. The consequences of limited political participation are clear. “...Political influence—mere viability—determines who has access to services,” writes Yzaguirre. “It is no surprise,” he adds, “that politically active neighborhoods receive more police protection, more sewers...than less active ones” (179). Although discrimination is a constant presence, low levels of political organization and participation, education level, and the newness of many immigrants are contributing factors.

### **Education**

Low levels of educational attainment, skill attainment, and recent arrival and entry into the labor force also operate to limit structural assimilation. A major contributing factor which supports not only ethnic isolation but also the split labor market is the educational system. Table Two illustrates the degree of educational attainment by the Latino population. Almost 48% of those twenty-five years and older have less than a ninth grade education followed by another 20% without their high school diploma. This compares to African Americans of whom 10% have less than nine years of education. White students by contrast have fewer dropouts and more students going on to advanced degrees. Of those twenty-five years and older, 21% of whites and 9% of Blacks have college or professional degrees compared to 4% for Latinos. As employment opportunities shift toward higher, more complex technologies, higher education becomes essential. The question is how do we account for the greater dropout rate among Latino students? A. Y. So believes that the most significant factor that relates to academic performance is socio-economic status (SES).

**Table Two: 1990 U.S. Census: Educational Attainment, 25 years and Older, by Race, for Aurora, in Percent.**

<u>Race</u>	<u>&lt;9yrs</u>	<u>No H.S Diploma</u>	<u>H. S. Diploma</u>	<u>Some College</u>	<u>Assoc. Degree</u>	<u>Grad B.A.</u>	<u>Prof.</u>
White	9.5	13.4	29.7	20.1	6.1	4.6	6.6
Black	10.1	27.5	28.8	18.9	5.3	6.2	3.2
Latin	47.8	21.3	15.3	9.0	2.3	3.0	1.3

So reports that if one removes the effects of SES on students, differences in performance level tends to diminish (239-70). Perez, on the other hand, believes that the low educational attainment level of Latinos relates to a number of factors including immigrant status, language background, school personnel, and social adjustment, among others (35). The importance of Perez’s insight is that knowledge, skills, and cultural styles are forms of capital that translate into economic success, and low educational attainment can lead, along with discrimination, to the limited economic mobility of the Latino community.

As a consequence of the growing minority population in Aurora, the Aurora school system has seen a dramatic growth in the ethnic student population. School District 131 is the central city district encompassing the Latino community, while 129 is an ethnically diverse district in a period of uncertain transition. District 204 lies on the east side of Aurora within a ring of new middle-class and primarily white housing developments. To the south and far-west of the city are several other and newer school districts which are almost exclusively white and whose districts were drawn to keep those students out of Aurora’s schools.

**Table Three: Aurora School Districts by Ethnicity, Language, Low-income, 1993 and 1994, in Percent.**

<u>School District</u>	<u>Ethnicity</u>			<u>Limited Language Proficiency</u>	<u>Low Income</u>
	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Latino</u>		
31 East	28.8	20.4	49.8	25.4	52.3
129 West	55.6	19.7	22.7	4.2	30.5
204 Indian Prairie	86.7	5.3	2.4	.9	1.7

Tables Three and Four illustrate the ethnic composition of the three major Aurora school districts. The central and closest district to the Latino community is district 131. The average composition of Latino students is almost 50%. Five schools are over 60% Latino and L.D. Brady elementary school has a Latino population of 93.7%. In several 131 schools, the white student body is under 8%. As seen in the tables, there is a relationship between the degree of school ethnicity, language proficiency, and income. The east schools average 52% of the population from low-income homes. The number of students from low-income homes is instructive because it suggests a lower property tax base for school funding. There appears to be a correlation between ethnicity of the east and west high schools and faculty salaries. The average Aurora East High School salary is \$34,469 in 1993 and \$41,540 for Aurora West in 1994. Teachers at East, where the student body is over 49% Latino and 20% Black, earn only 83% of the salaries at West High School. This apparent discrimination goes beyond the physical infrastructure to include per pupil spending, teacher compensation, and school board representation. Following the internal colony model in which dominant whites continue a colonial system of control, it was only last year a Latino was elected to the school board in the predominantly Latino Aurora East 131 School District. Table Three provides specific data for several district 131 and 204 schools and clearly illustrates the degree of student segregation.

While the schools selected in Table Four are the extremes of ethnic segregation, they do illustrate the degree of concentration of Latino students. The increase in a Latino presence is accompanied by a significant increase in low-income students and students with limited language proficiency in English. The table illustrates not only the growth of the Latino school population for select schools in Aurora but also implies the kinds of problems these schools face. L.D. Brady School of District 131 shows the growth of the Latino student population from 1989 to 1993. The growth in the number of students with limited English language proficiency has grown by 57% and the percentage of students coming from low-income families by 138%. At the opposite end is District 204 Wheatland that has seen only a marginal increase in the non-white population. The con-

centration of low- income students presents special problems and demands special resources for District 131 schools. This results in the diversion of scarce school funds to special education and ESL classes. According to one informant, in schools with growing Latino populations such diversion of school resources can be a cause of friction with Whites questioning the validity of such reallocation. The Indian Prairie School is completely the opposite with a student body almost exclusively white and middle class. It is interesting to note that on the west side is one large school district (129) while on the east are two: the older 131 district and the new 204 district. The informant suggested that the new district was developed to prevent the mobility of Latino students from enrolling in the newer, white schools (DM, personal communication). Apparently students can move within a district but not between them. As the figures in Table Four indicate, the two middle schools on the near west side in district 129 are experiencing a transition toward a more ethnic student body as families attempt to break out of the barrio. For the 1994-1995 school years, there has been an average decline of 14.6 in the white student population compared to an average 17.5% and 25.1% increase in the African American and Latino populations respectively. For the twelve schools of District 129 the overall trend is a decline of 5% in the white student population with Blacks increasing their representation by 8% and Latinos by 4.5% (City of Aurora 1995)

**Table Four: Select Aurora Elementary and Middle Schools for 1989, 1990, 1993-1995, in Percent.**

<b>School</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>			<b>Limited Language Proficiency</b>	<b>Low Income</b>
	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latino</b>		
<b>L. D. Brady (#131)</b>					
1989	7.3	6.2	86.5	41.9	33.1
1990	7.4	7.0	85.4	53.2	39.7
1993	4.4	1.9	93.7	66.0	79.1
<b>Wheatland (#204)</b>					
1993	94.6	1.4	0.7	0.0	0.5
1995	92.5	2.2	1.5	0.7	0.7

## Thornburg-Resistance

### Schneider (#129)

1994	64.5	16.4	12.0	0.5	31.4
1995	56.7	20.8	15.1	2.0	37.1

### Greenman (#129)

1994	67.0	16.7	16.1	0.3	38.8
1995	57.6	19.2	22.4	2.3	39.8

The two factors contributing to the demographic shift are the crowded eastside schools and a residential shift across the river as the Latin community responds to a very tight housing market. The implications for many west schools are clear. As a school's ethnic composition shifts toward a non-white student body, white flight increases. When viewing Figure One it is clear that Latinos are highly concentrated in central city schools while low representation is found in the outlying areas. These outlying areas are generally new housing developments which cater to the professional middle class. Students can attend schools within the school district determined by their residence, which in turn is determined by income. The new form of discrimination appears to be based more on class than race. In this case, then, class is a proxy for racial segregation.

These tables suggest that schools with the heaviest Latino (and African-American) student populations are those schools with the greatest degree of social problems based on language and poverty and also ethnic isolation. Brady Elementary is over 95% non-white while Todd is 64%. These schools have witnessed an increase in non-educational social problems with which they must contend, while at the same time they have received a relatively smaller share of educational revenues. If schools are to prepare students with skills for higher education and new high-tech jobs, as well as a greater degree of ethnic integration in the broader political and social community, then District 131 schools, and to a lesser extent District 129, are key to maintaining or breaking out of Blauner's internal colonialism of marginalization and isolation.

## Labor Markets and Income Distribution

Understanding the relationship between education, income distribution, and labor market participation is necessary

for understanding the Aurora community. Much research on Latino income distribution relative to Whites has focused on one of two questions. Are differences in income earnings an outcome of degree of human capital (such as education) or the existence of discrimination? Considering the age distribution and the recent arrival of large segments of the population, both questions are pertinent.

What appears apparent from this table and the following tables is the relationship between education and income. The 1990 U.S. census estimates that over 16% of the Latino population are below the poverty level, an increase of 8% since 1970 (Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission 1993). This is a biased figure since, as one informant estimated, over 30% of the population are undocumented aliens, and these individuals do not apply for welfare aid or unemployment nor are they likely to be accounted for in the census. Yet the undocumented worker, I suspect, earns only a little above the minimum wage, if lucky. While exact figures are not available, the poverty level may be closer to 20-25% of the community even though figures that are more recent place the unemployment rate at about 5%. The unemployment rate, however, is a poor proxy for estimating poverty. The problem is not one of unemployment versus employment but rather the low pay rate of much of the work available, especially for undocumented workers. Nevertheless, low-income students concentrated in poorer schools and faced with various discriminations tend to drop out at greater frequencies than other students.

However, analysis of where Latinos are working suggests a segmented labor market where Latinos are directed into low wage employment. According to Bonacich recent immigrants or ethnic groups from rural areas ordinarily make up a source of readily available cheap labor (1972). Meléndez suggests that "wage inequality could be attributed to barriers that prevent Hispanics access to good jobs" (192; 195-98). The importance of ethnicity for the labor market is determined not only by the structure of local employment availability (i.e., kinds of work available) but also due to employers' perception of the ethnic characteristics of the community (that could lead to discriminatory hiring practices). These groups provide a pool of cheap and often pliable labor but also represent a threat to the Anglo



labor force that traditionally has occupied these low-level manufacturing positions.

In Aurora the Latino labor force is broken into both primary and secondary segments. The primary segment is manufacturing, assembly line, and construction, and the secondary segment are such services as lawn and garden service, restaurant service, and retail supply stocking. Lawn and garden and restaurant services are almost exclusively a Latino reserve throughout Kane and Dupage counties. A rough estimate suggests that about 80-85% of all lawn service is Latino, including supervisory positions. It is interesting to note that there is a segmented labor market in the lawn care industry as well. Most of the private lawn care companies are composed of Latino workers who primarily work around community developments and corporate campuses. These jobs are low wage, have few benefits, if any, and are seasonal at best. However, those employees working for the county who do road work and maintenance are mostly white. These are year-round county government jobs with benefits and higher pay.

Table Five indicates the distribution of employed Latinos over the age of sixteen for those living in census tracts most heavily Latino. While only 6% of the Latino labor force work in agriculture and construction, they represent 17% of all laborers in that sector compared to 2% for Whites. Many of these jobs involve low-skilled construction work and manual labor road repair work. In tract A districts an average of 47% of the labor force is in manufacturing and an additional 16% in wholesale/retail trade. This compares to select white dominated tracts where only 8% of the labor force are in manufacturing and 22% in wholesale/retail. The relatively high number of Latinos in the wholesale/retail business is attributed to size and isolation of the ethnic enclave. Conversely, only 10% of Latinos are employed in professional services and public administration whereas among Whites the figure is 24%. Fewer than 2% of Latinos are in public service while for Whites it is almost 5%. Clearly, the white population is experiencing a transition from a blue-collar labor force to a professional labor force while Latinos remain concentrated in the more traditional labor areas. These figures tend to support national statistics that indicate that 11% of Mexican Americans are in profession-

al positions compared to 30% for white Americans (Feagin and Feagin 1996). Apparently, for whatever reason—education, recent arrival—Latinos are funneled into the sort of jobs most members of the dominant group do not want. Most of the antagonism Latinos face in Aurora comes from working class Whites who compete with Latinos for a limited and declining number of blue-collar jobs. Since upper class Whites are not in direct competition for employment, resources or education, Whites feel only a cultural threat to the ethnic composition of shifting demographics.

**Table Five: 1990 U.S. Census: Employed Latin American Persons 16 Years and Over by Industry and Census Tract, in Percent.**

<b>Tract A*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Ag. &amp; Cons.</b>	<b>Transprt. &amp; Comm.</b>	<b>Whsl. Man.</b>	<b>Ret. Trade</b>	<b>Pub. Serv.</b>	<b>Prof. Serv.</b>	<b>Pub. Adm.</b>
8534	100	6	4	47	16	16	8	1
8535	100	4	4	51	15	11	13	2
8536	100	7	5	46	16	17	7	2
8538	100	7	4	42	18	13	14	2
<b>Tract B**</b>								
8465.1	100	5	11	17	23	22	19	3
8530.3	100	6	8	22	21	16	24	5
8530.2	100	5	7	28	21	14	19	4
8539	100	7	4	16	16	18	32	6

\*Tract A is census tracts with over 50% of the population of Latin American ethnicity

\*\*Tract B is census tracts between 4 and 11% of the population of Latin American ethnicity

The distribution of household income is correlated with the unequal distribution in employment and the lower education achievement levels. With a majority of Latinos found in lower-skilled positions requiring less education their income distribution tends to be skewed downward. On the other hand, according to Table Six, Whites tend to occupy a greater proportion of positions requiring higher education and thus command higher incomes. Almost 47% of all Latinos in the work-

force earn under \$25,000 a year and only about 4% earn incomes over \$75,000. Whites compare with less than 11% earning under \$25,000 and 20% earning more than \$75,000. Overall, average household incomes for Latinos are only 86% of white income. When broken down into per capita income the gap is even wider: Latinos had a per capita income of \$7,938 in 1990 while Whites had \$13,335 in 1990. In per capita terms, Latinos earned only 59% of white income. Finally, the ethnic enclave itself provides substantial employment. The enclave is large and diverse in business to the extent that there is considerable internal demand for labor. Latino community employment tends to be in the wholesale and retail trades where Spanish language proficiency and familiarity with Mexican products and customer interaction is important. Found within the community are a variety of Latin (mostly Mexican American) oriented services such as travel agencies, real estate agencies, automobile sales and repair, hair salons, grocers, numerous vendedoras ambulantes, and clothing stores.

**Table Six: 1989 Household Income Distribution for Selected Census Tracts, in Percent.**

Income	Latino				White			
	8534	8535	8536	8538	8416	8464	8540	8530
\$ - 10,000	13	12	23	9	5	5	3	0
10-25,000	32	30	34	35	2	2	11	15
25-49,999	41	40	31	38	29	51	22	43
50-74,999	10	13	10	14	41	26	27	37
75-149,999	4	5	2	4	23	14	24	5
150,000 +	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	0

**Communities of Resistance and Disengagement**

The exposure of the Latino community to new ideas, values, norms, and institutions has forced it to confront a sense of deprivation, loss, and vulnerability. For many, writes Padilla of Chicago, “integration has come to mean relegation to economically less productive and increasingly marginal positions in the urban labor force” (7). Of interest here is how the community has reacted to this situation. As Padilla argues, “... the degree

of integration of an ethnic group in the institutional life of the larger society determines, in part, the kinds of strategies or cultural innovations that such a group would create to relate to circumstances of society inequality” (6). Four strategies are identified in Aurora which suggest a community of “resistance” and “disengagement” to the various forms of inequality. The four strategies are (1) a natal home orientation, (2) gang organization, (3) enclave orientation, and (4) community activism. In general we can conceptualize the natal home orientation and enclave orientation as strategies of disengagement. Rather than assimilate the goal is to construct a more “authentic” Latino experience within the Latin community and along with withdrawing from most forms of inter-ethnic interaction. Community activism and gang organization, on the other hand, represent strategies of resistance, one “negative” and the other “positive.” Community activists operate from an ideological understanding of the need to further open up the white dominated political economy. Activists, some of whom often share an enclave orientation, are those most likely to structurally assimilate and culturally “accommodate” while at the same time promoting ethnic pride, self-identity, and political response.

(1) Natal home orientation—these are individuals, illegal or legal, who believe residence in Aurora (and the US) is temporary and that sooner or later they will return to Mexico and Latin America. Kearney (1995) refers to these people as “transnationals.” “Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state,” according to Glick Schiller, et al (48). These individuals maintain a dual existence with a predominant strategy or orientation of “disengagement.” They have little interest in investing in community activism to promote social change—they are only visitors, even if they have U.S. citizenship and will eventually return home. Many remain in close contact with their natal village, sending money, owning property, and maintaining village membership through visitations. Residence in the U.S. is an economic strategy rather than any sort of “lifestyle” commitment, especially in light of perceived white antagonism. One informant in particular has

been in Aurora for nineteen years yet returns to Mexico every year and recently bought a piece of land in preparation for moving back. He felt that after nineteen years he remains a stranger in this country, rarely venturing out into the Anglo world and mixing with whites, although grateful for the opportunities it has given him.

(2) Gang organization—these are younger people, generally but not exclusively male, who react to their social environment through gang activity. It is estimated that at least eight gangs operated in Aurora in 1996 with an estimated membership of over 700 individuals (*The Beacon News*). The high ethnic concentration of low-income people and the poor quality of public schools has led to a sense of frustration, anger, and resignation. Gang members are aware of their marginal status on the ethnic stratification ladder. The inadequate assistance the city provides to the community, the limited degree of job availability, lack of recreational outlets, discrimination, and the dysfunctional homes born of poverty and limited opportunity have a negative effect upon many young Latinos' perception of the future. Furthermore, according to one informant, gang members are aware, that “they are not wanted, that whites don't understand or care for ‘Mexicans.’” They are cognizant of real boundaries separating them from white ethnic communities that are essentially “foreign” territory. Gang membership is a form of negative resistance in the sense that gangs confront the broader political economy but have no theoretical basis for understanding the structural and operational makeup of a system that systematically engages in racism, discrimination and ethnic isolation. The only avenue for venting frustration and anger are those within reach—each other.

A variety of reasons look beyond deviance as to why youth join a gang. Cloward and Ohlin suggest that gang membership is attractive in light of counter conditions of unemployment and scarce income opportunities (1960). In Aurora 18% of those in the prime gang age group, twelve to seventeen-years-old, are living below the poverty level. If we include the broad age category, eighteen to sixty-four, the number living below the poverty level increases to 36.1% (1990 US Census, Summary Tape File 3). Twenty-eight percent of all Latin males are either unemployed or have quit looking for work (1990 US Census).

Clearly, gang membership with its associated control over various illegal economic activities—drugs, stolen goods—offers an alternative to unemployment and poverty. In 1996 police seized an estimated \$7.7 million in drugs indicating significant income opportunity (*The Beacon News*). Crime in association with gang organization appears pervasive. The English-Spanish newspaper, *El Conquistador*, stated: “The people of Aurora are worried about gang violence and drug use. Several murders have already been committed in the first month of 1996. A record high of twenty-five homicides in Aurora in 1995 has intensified the fear throughout the community”.

On the other hand researchers such as James Diego Vigil stress that many become gang members in search of a sense of *la familia* in a world surrounded by Anglos, a place where they don’t feel rejected. Joy Brown, et al., reports the following conversation with “Eddie,” an eighteen-year-old (34-35).

Q: “Why is it difficult living here? Do you miss home?” (He has been in Aurora four years.)

A: “The United States in not like I thought it would be. I feel lonely a lot.”

Q: “Why do you feel lonely?”

A: “Not being able to speak [English] well and feeling rejection.”

Q: “Rejection from who?”

A: “White people. It is difficult for them [young Latinos] to be here, to adjust living here. They feel like strangers.”

Gang membership not only can compensate for socioeconomic deprivation but also can provide the means for maintaining cultural and personal identity to counter such feelings. Gangs can provide status and a sense of belonging that many young Latinos find deficient in the community and broader society.

(3) Enclave orientation—individuals in this group may be either legal or undocumented residents. Here the operant characterization is one of rejection of dominant Anglo values and institutional means and/or social disengagement. Aware of their hostile environment or indifferent to it, this group, supported by an ideology of *Latinismo*, chooses to limit their interactions with the broader outside society. The characteristic of

this group is an intentional but general isolation from Anglo society around them. In part as Mexicans have moved into Aurora they have recreated the world left behind—the ethnic enclave. Rois has observed, “Cultural elements which synthesized the *Mexicano Mestizo* were not left behind by Mexican migrants coming north. Language, food, customs, religion, art, music, folklore, and medicine were brought from all parts of Mexico to the United States” (140). English comprehension is limited or non-existent, and physical movement is usually local unless accompanied by someone else. For members of this group shopping is exclusively in the Aurora Latino community (there are three or four major supermercados). Newspaper reading is confined to the two local Spanish language newspapers. Institutional interaction such as PTAs, political activity, and libraries, is very limited with people often relying on their children to mediate. Immigration can be broken down further into two groups. One is comprised of the recent immigrant new to the U.S: young but with limited language and occupational skills. The second group, generally older, has followed families to Aurora and have limited need to move beyond their local community. For example at a *Cinco de Mayo* fiesta last year I met several older Mexican women who, after following their families north, have lived in the community for a number of years yet essentially speak no English. There even exist several *curanderos* and herbal shops.

Because they are both acts of disengagement, there is an overlap between natal home and enclave orientations. There are, however, several differences. Many who share the natal home perspective also work and interact outside the enclave. Even though many will eventually return to Mexico, until that time they attempt various negotiations with the broader community. Many, for instance, work in factories, stockrooms, and restaurants in predominantly white communities. While possibly limited, they do interact with whites. Those remaining isolated within the Latino community are generally older or those newly arrived. Many of the recently arrived are younger and most will eventually seek outside opportunities after a period of acclimation.

(4) Community activism—according to Navarro, competent and committed leadership is an essential component for

any community organization . “Leaders must be multi-functional” informs Navarro. “They are motivators of the people, visionaries who inspire hope and ideas, mechanics of organization, and strategists who plot and carry out the change” (362). In Aurora this is a relatively small group of mostly university-educated, though not necessarily so, individuals who through social service agencies, churches, community centers, and outreach programs mediate between the Latino community and the larger Anglo-dominant social and political structures. This group in general has the ideological consciousness and awareness of the meaning and intent of systematic discrimination and also has the ability to confront the social-political structure and mediate in the name of the Latin community.

Community activists can be broken into three groups: grassroots organizations such as the Latino Empowerment Project; those who work as social service providers such as Mutual Ground; and those “institutional” in character such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the editor of *El Conquistador*, teachers and political officials. All three groups tend to have different agendas and, as in the case of the Chamber and several grassroots organizations, they also have serious disagreements over strategy and outcome.

One major institutional presence in the Latino community is the church. While it is difficult to assess the power and impact of the church, especially the Catholic Church, there are a number of Latin American churches operating in Aurora. One informant, José, is a pastor as well as community activist employing a liberation theological approach to his congregation and the Latin community in general. According to his perspective, his mission is to move beyond addressing the needs of “Americanization” to the issues of social justice and community building. José’s masses tend to accentuate moral responsibility, traditional values, and the need for solidarity. His church and others have become places of refuge for the newly arrived as well as focal points for institutional support for solving community problems.

Activists are a crucial element in community mobilization for development. Community activists include members of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, El Centro Panamericano,



Joel Perez's God's Gym, and the Root Street Community Resource Center. Agencies such as the Favala Foundation and El Centro Panamericano offer and promote various social services. Meléndez's research on development in Latino enclaves supports this perspective, concluding that "These cases show that effective strategies depend on both the mobilization of leadership and other resources internal to the community and their articulation to those mainstream economic institutions that ultimately provide access to jobs and financial resources for residents and businesses" (126).

A small number of Latino professionals are active in developing political strategies such as voter registration drives. Second but less "pro-active" groups are those community members, possibly less educated but equally concerned, who attend meetings and public forums to support the activities of the mediators. Political participation is limited by either the legal status of the voter (you must become a naturalized citizen to vote) or the low median age of the Latino population (Feagin and Feagin). As Gonzalo Arroyo, the director of Family Focus Aurora, observes, "The problem here is not discrimination but participation" (*Chicago Tribune*). One informant who works for a local community agency believes that the reason for such low political and community participation is fear. Many undocumented individuals are fearful of becoming too visible and located by the INS. Another reason suggested is the parochial and unorganized nature of those in leadership positions. Most sociologists would add that political participation, outside of compelling perceived threat to community members, is predicated on class background (Neighbor 10). Certainly educational level, income, and occupation are significant elements in the motivation for political participation.

## Conclusion

Aurora is, as Richard Rodriguez once characterized Los Angeles, a city of separate lives. The Anglo city lies west of the Fox River and on the east side resides the "other," black and Latino. The Latino community is dynamic with numerous Latino owned businesses and services, street vendors, and a variety of celebrations. The summer months are a time of numerous family activities such as *quinceañeras*, school gradu-

ation parties, and fiestas sponsored by local churches. All of these help to strengthen ethnic pride, cultural identity, and promote a sense of cultural community. At the cultural level the Aurora barrio exhibits a strong sense of ethnic solidarity.

Aurora is also a city of impending crisis. Due to the forces of economic globalization Aurora is experiencing transformation. Unlike previous periods entry-level industrial jobs that historically have provided a better standard of living are rapidly declining. While the issue of transformation is difficult to address at the international level, an alternative is found at the local level. Without greater active political participation as an ethnic group it is undecided whether the city will develop policies and devote resources to deal with deteriorating housing stock, unemployment, crime, and discrimination. Without effective public policy the issues of affordable housing availability, public school retention and graduation, and employment opportunities in the Latino community will remain serious. While there has been success in both physical and socio-economic mobility, the success rate has not been enough to off-set the influx of new immigrants or the resident working poor.

The problem of limited political response is not located in various Latino groups' fear of loss of cultural identity by engaging the broader political or cultural communities. Most of Aurora's Latin population is Mexican with a strong sense of heritage and shared historical experience. Engagement therefore represents no threat to ethnic cultural boundaries. As Padilla points out, most ethnic groups in Chicago have "turned to their ethnicity as a strategic solution to their conditions in urban America" (142). Meléndez agrees and suggests that since poverty is usually over-represented in ethnic areas, "ethnic and racial solidarity can have an important impact on city development strategies" (111). Yet unlike Padilla's experience in Chicago, Aurora has been limited in its ability to mobilize Latinismo as a strategic resource with which to confront the political establishment. Due to the twin factors of low-income and the fluid movement of Latinos across national borders, on the national level Latinos have historically had very low levels of political participation (de la Garza). Beyond the well-established observation that the poor do not participate politically, a major impediment to mobilization in Aurora is the number of

undocumented workers in the community. In a recent study Rob Paral estimates that 44% of the undocumented in Illinois are from Mexico (5). Their potential as a political force is attenuated by their fear of *La Migra* (the Immigration and Naturalization Service) and deportation. The outcome of these forces is a poorly developed political constituency.

The natal home and internal orientations of disengagement are individualist in adjustment and thus cannot act as a resource for political action. Gang organization, while pursuing a collective orientation and one of engagement, is located within perceived deviant behavior and is thus not very useful as a resource for operation. Only community activism has the potential to be a consolidating resource for action but is limited in terms of numbers and limited over-arching political vision which engages both the local community and the broader political community. During the 1970s, the Chicano Movement (such the *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán* and the Mexican American Political Association), as a broad nationally-based civil rights movement and ideology, lent encouragement and support to community organizing (see Navarro's case study of the community of Cristal in South Texas). At present, local action in Aurora is not linked to any broader ideological or political movement to help articulate community issues and support organization. However, the articulation of a political ideology should be a major goal of community leadership. Ideology "delineates the movement's direction, symbolism, justification, and strategy" (Navarro 365). The potential for mobilization is there (in terms of issues to confront, population density, a limited but experienced leadership, etc.), but according to my informants there is no over-riding issue around which community members can coalesce.

Social solidarity is all the more important due to the structural changes in the U.S. economy, the low retention rate of Latino high school youth, and the sharp cut-backs in social service programs to aid low income people. It is apparent that the resources to confront the issues of poverty and isolation must come from the community itself. But in the present era of economic structural change a major issue is employment. Based on his research in San Antonio, Texas, Jorge Chapa agrees with this assessment. "Any useful policy discussion,"

he writes, "must address the question of how low-wage, low-skilled workers can earn a decent living. Today, many Latinos are poor because they work in low-wage jobs" (82). It is safe to assume that the industrial employment structure that allowed many groups to experience social mobility is gone and will not return. The problem becomes one of outlining where the possible solutions lie.

Since the labor market structure works against the community as a strategy for mobility, other alternatives must be sought. It appears that greater educational attainment, job retaining, and political mobilization are the only viable solutions. This has two implications. One, influence over city policy can redirect greater educational resources toward retention and increase the chances of Latinos graduating to go on for further education and training. The second implication is at the ideological level of representation. Community leadership must likewise challenge traditional definitions of Latinos. Marta Tienda writes that, "The significance of ethnicity for the labor market stratification... depends not only on local employment conditions but also on how individual ethnic traits circumscribe choices, how ethnic traits are evaluated in the marketplace...." (262). In other words prevailing stereotypes and explanations of Latinos must be confronted and challenged. The dominant ethnic group must see Latinos as a resource rather than as a problem; that is, the future of Aurora is intertwined with the future of Latinos. The challenge of Latino leadership is to develop an ideology around which effective organization can develop. Latinos offer more than just increasing numbers. They offer, Yzarguirre concludes, "values related to family, hard work, and patriotism, among others, [that] help unify all communities" (184). But these values must be articulated and included in a greater, more inclusive political ideology.

The lesson from the Cristal, Texas, experience is that "even if an ethnic group constitutes a majority and achieves community control of a city council, school board, or county, mere election to office does not resolve the many problems they face" (Navarro 374). The challenge of Latino leadership is to develop an ideology around which effective organization can develop. However, the ideology must not only motivate the barrio to action but must likewise articulate to the broader

community the meaning and importance of such action. Even though the Latino population is growing, as it is throughout the U.S. and Illinois, the experience from Aurora suggests that population number or density is not enough for effective inclusion in the political process. As this paper makes clear, educational attainment in terms of high school retention and skills development that lead to post-secondary education is paramount. Education plays two key roles for an ethnic community such as Aurora. First, it is a key factor in adapting to the changing needs of the labor market for income mobility, and second, for developing an understanding of the political process and possible strategies of engagement. Additionally the ability of an ethnic group to influence or to design and implement public policy may be dependent upon developing alliances with the broader, non-Latino community, especially other minorities. These coalitions are necessary to overcome political and social isolation that has been present in the community since its founding. The future, then, is clear—solidarity must be found from within and alliances and coalitions developed without.

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**Contextual Factors Associated with the  
Achievement of African American  
and European American Adolescents:  
A Diversimilarity Approach**

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The current study is an extension of Luster & McAdoo's 1994 study of African American children and ecological factors impacting academic performance of these children. Luster and McAdoo found that maternal educational level, income, number of children and living conditions were related to how well children performed in school. Those children from impoverished backgrounds with uneducated mothers had lower quality academic performance. Using the Nation Longitudinal Survey of Youth data (1992), the current study investigated similarities and differences

in the impact of ecological factors in European American (n = 266) and African American adolescents (n = 400). The results indicated that the home environment best predicts academic performance in African American adolescents while neighborhood conditions are better predictors of academic performance in European American adolescents. This difference may be related to the function of education for the two groups. Education may be a vehicle for status enhancement for European American adolescents. For African Americans, education may enhance class but not social status associated with racial minority status. These results suggest that educational efforts be developed to assist all adolescent in achieving both status and class objectives.

### **Introduction**

Past research focused on the deficiencies of African American children and adolescents. This approach reflected the dominant research paradigm characterized by the ethnocentric school of thought. Luster and McAdoo advanced the field by suggesting that researchers move from this pathology driven approach to examine family and environmental factors that distinguish African American children who are successful from their peers who are less successful. Their study found that the family characteristics of high achieving African American children was markedly different from low-achieving children. Specifically, African American children with high scores tended to come from small families with supportive home environments and incomes well above the poverty level. They also had mothers who were relatively well educated and scored higher on self-esteem and intelligence tests.

Recent studies have emphasized the role of diversity with regard to academic achievement (Luster and McAdoo, 1980-94). However relatively few have addressed both within and between group comparisons in terms of similarities. It is the position of this study that similarities across ethnic groups are as important as differences between ethnic groups. The Diversimilarity Approach which encompasses group similarities and differences can be viewed as a natural extension diversity

exploration. By recognizing and understanding similarities and differences the importance and value of ethnic differences regarding academic achievement can be used to develop strategies for effectively addressing issues which impede academic achievement in all adolescents.

### **Early Literature**

The early literature on African American children and families tended to emphasize problems thereby assuming a pathological approach with regard to African Americans (Franklin; Moynihan). This literature, associated with the cultural ethnocentric school, has been criticized for ignoring the historical and economic contexts within which African American families find themselves (Dodson, 67-82). Adaptation to adverse environmental and economic conditions has led to family formation unique to African Americans. In contrast to the pathological approach, the cultural relativity school has focused on these unique qualities as strengths and as linkages to African heritage (Herskovits; Sudarkasa). While this approach has much merit, a limitation of this approach is that not enough emphasis is placed on the impact of social class and economic factors on family characteristics or on the similarities of parental attitudes, behaviors, and involvement across different ethnic groups (Julian, McKenry & McKelvy, 43, 30-7).

More recently there has been a third approach emphasizing the role of social class in the determination of family structure and characteristics. The social class perspective has been criticized as minimizing the continued existence of systemic patterns of discrimination that consistently place African Americans at a disadvantage (Dodson 67-82). Membership in a minority group often precludes advancement in the academic and occupational arenas (Ogbu 234-50). Often African Americans are required to have more training than European Americans performing similar jobs and are likely to receive less pay for the similar positions (Dodson 67-82). In the face of discrimination in the workplace via inequitable compensation African Americans may rely upon familial support longer than European Americans. This results in an over-representation of African Americans in low-status categories in terms of income. Furthermore as class and status are not comparable

across racial lines, it is difficult to make comparisons between African Americans and European Americans with regard to class and status.

### **Ecological Perspective**

Despite advances towards depathologizing African American families in the literature, many works still rely upon simple, linear relationships between family structure and developmental outcomes for African American youths. As suggested by Luster and McAdoo (65), an ecological approach emphasizing the interrelationship between family structure, environmental factors such as neighborhood conditions and family income, and relationships within the family more adequately address the complexities of adolescent development. The work of Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, suggests that an ecological model best predicts developmental outcomes for children. They characterize contextual influences within a four-dimensional framework consisting of the Macro, Exo, Meso, and Microsystems. The macrosystem pertains to the larger cultural/social structures surrounding children. This consists of values, beliefs, attitudes, and social institutions. Luster & McAdoo (1080-94) suggest that African American children by virtue of belonging to a subculture (a culture within a culture) may have difficulty adjusting to norms and expectations associated with the majority culture. In addition measurements of developmental outcomes, including academic performance, may not account for variations related to membership in a social group with values, beliefs, and expectations differing from those of the majority culture. Included in the external environmental influences are factors such as poverty and neighborhood conditions.

Ogbu (234-50) suggests that European American children may experience elevation in status based upon income and academic achievement. However African American children by virtue of belonging to a racial minority remain affixed to minority status associated with skin color. Despite advances in education and income members of racial minority groups may experience stigmatization, oppression, and discrimination relative to minority status. In such cases a sense of hopelessness ensues causing a lack of participation by members of racial

minority groups. This lack of involvement and participation can contribute to the academic failure of African American adolescents.

The exosystem, the second level of the Bronfenbrenner/Ceci model, pertains to indirect environmental influences which may affect developmental outcomes. It has been noted by Luster & McAdoo (1080-94) and others that parental occupation, stress associated with occupation, and/or lack of sufficient employment can adversely affect parental relationships with children thereby altering developmental outcomes for children.

Interactions across settings are the domain of the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci 101). African American children may experience significant difficulty in a school setting particularly if the school has expectations which greatly differ from expectations within the home setting. Children may have to adopt different communication and interactional styles to be successful in the school setting. The content of academic material may be less meaningful to African American children as texts do not make meaningful connections with children from African American backgrounds (Obgu134-50). Without meaningful connections it is perhaps a reasonable expectation that some African American may not excel in the classroom but have great success within the family and other African American structures having expectations and connections meaningful to the child and the family. When children experience failure in school they may also experience difficulties within in the home related to parental concerns regarding education. Likewise familial distress can lead to academic failure. Thus how one setting impacts upon another can affect outcomes for children.

Lastly, the microsystem pertains to individual settings in which the child is a participant. The home and the school are separate settings which may or may not have conflicting expectations. As suggested by J. McAdoo (183-97), African American children are primarily socialized within the home environment. It is the task of parents to educate children on racism and other subtle nuances which may adversely affect developmental outcomes. When this level of parental support is absent, children may have difficulty adjusting to multiple set-

tings as evidenced by academic failure.

It is important to acknowledge that multi-dimensional contextual (environmental) factors have an impact on academic achievement and developmental outcomes of children and youth (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci; Huston, McLoyd & Coll; Luster & McAdoo). The literature identified family structure, maternal characteristics, the internal home environment, and the external (community) environment (Huston, McLoyd & Coll) as factors predictive of academic performance in adolescents. Difficulty related to either of the afore-mentioned areas may adversely impact academic success for children.

### **Maternal Characteristics**

Maternal characteristics have been identified as important determinants of the academic achievement of youth. Luster & McAdoo examined maternal characteristics regarding the age of mother at first birth, maternal IQ, and maternal level of education in terms of academic achievement in African American youth. They found that children born to young mothers had lower academic performance and were more likely to live in poverty and belong to a single-parent family than children whose mothers were older when the children were born. Furthermore, mothers who give birth at an early age had lower incomes and academic achievements and lower IQs than mothers who were older at the birth of children. Thus maternal characteristics, particularly maternal age at first birth and maternal educational attainment, were predictive of academic performance of adolescents (Furstenberg). However they note that in later life, adolescents with sufficient parental support are able to overcome childhood disadvantages.

A criticism of some studies is that single-parent families were overly represented and as well as African American mothers in many of the samples thereby biasing against these groups. In addition many of the participants were young mothers. The extent to which these results can be generalized to the population beyond the samples is limited. Nevertheless, the importance of considering maternal characteristics as predictors of adolescent academic achievement should not be dismissed. Diversifying groups studied might yield more valid findings.

### **Family Structure**

From an ecological perspective family structure has been identified as important to academic achievement of youth. Maternal marital status has been associated with the developmental outcomes of youth including academic achievement (Hetherington 208-34). Children from single-parent families experience greater poverty and have lower academic achievement when compared with children from two-parent families (Billingsley; Furstenberg 142-51). In addition family size may also influence academic achievement of adolescents. Adolescents from single-parent families with several children have lower academic achievement than adolescents from single-parent and two-parent families with few children. However several writers have noted that the over-reliance on single-parent status when researching African Americans has created a negative, stereotypical perception of the African American family (Boyd-Franklin; Billingsley). This approach has been challenged leading to investigations of African American families that include two-parent families as well.

### **Home Environment**

There has also been increasing recognition of the impact of the home environment on the developmental outcomes of children (Bronfenbrenner 101). Several studies have shown a significant relationship between home environment and the academic achievement of children (Luster & Dubow 19; Luster & Boger 55). In evaluating the home environment, many studies have relied upon the Home Inventory. This instrument requires the evaluator to observe the amount of cognitive stimulation and emotional support found within a particular family (Luster & McAdoo 65). Findings indicate that children from families with positive home environments have greater academic achievement than children from families with negative home environments. Also, two-parent families tend to have more positive home environments than single-parent families, and African American families tend to have less positive home environments than European American families. (Luster & Dubow 475-94).

Aside from observer bias the use of this instrument with African American families has been criticized as it may lack



sensitivity to the cultural uniqueness of African American families. Two-parent families may have a greater sharing of responsibility for child rearing resulting in elevations of Home Inventory scores for two-parent families when compared to single-parent families. Also, with adolescents, perceptions of relationships with parents may provide additional support for the importance of the home environment in terms of academic achievement.

### **Neighborhood Conditions:**

From a community perspective family income and neighborhood conditions can also influence the academic achievement of adolescents. And they are strongly correlated since income often determines the neighborhood in which a family resides (Furstenberg 142-51). Duncan et. al. (65) found that while neighborhood conditions and family income were significant predictors of academic achievement and behavior problems, family income was the more powerful of the two. Children from low-income families resided in neighborhoods perceived as negative by their mothers and had lower academic achievement than children from high-income families (Luster & McAdoo 1080-94). This is consistent with Mickelson & Smith (289-303).

Mann suggests that families with few social supports tend to have children with poor academic performance. Both middle and low-income African American families value achievement. A contrast is that many low-income African American families have few social and community support whereas middle-income African American families tend to have great social and familial support. Tatum (214-33) noted that middle and upper-income African American families may experience isolation based upon race. When affluent African Americans reside in predominantly white neighborhoods, they may not connect with their immediate environments; therefore, the social aspects of the neighborhood in addition to the actual physical conditions of the neighborhood can affect academic performance.

Another consideration is the quality of school in African American communities (Ogbu 234-50). Many African Americans reside in low-income communities with educational resources inferior to those available to affluent communities.

In such instances African American children have less success than their European American counterparts.

Given the strong correlation between family income and academic achievement, it is predictable that African American children in poverty would have lower academic achievement when compared to other children. However, of concern is whether like children are being compared. If low-income children are compared to children with greater familial resources, bias in favor of more affluent children would confound the findings. Therefore, in an effort to reduce bias in terms of income, it is necessary to study both low and high-income African Americans, otherwise pre-severation of existing stereotypes of African American and low academic achievement continues.

Collectively these studies point to the need to examine several contextual factors that could be associated with the academic achievements of African American and European American adolescents. The contextual factors include, but are not necessarily limited to, maternal characteristics, family structure, home environment, and community conditions. While other factors such as adolescent characteristics, parenting style, age and gender of the adolescent are contributing factors in academic achievement, it is the aim here to study various contextual factors beyond the adolescent which may influence academic achievement.

The introduction of ecological models has improved the study of children and families (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci 568-86); however few studies address ecological validity: the extent that comparisons can be made across groups. Luster and McAdoo (1980-94) studied African American children in an effort to apply an ecological model. Their study challenged the monolithic view of the cultural ethnocentric school that suggested that all African American children are at risk of academic failure and demonstrated the diversity within the African American culture and that in the absence of poverty African American children have academic achievement within and/or above the average range.

In an effort to expand the work of Luster and McAdoo and others this study examines the ecological model and its application to African American adolescents as well as measuring the extent to which the findings can be generalized across eth-

nic groups.

### **Diversimilarity**

The limitations of the Cultural Ethnocentric, Cultural Relativity and Ecological models identified above, provide impetus for the development of a new paradigm, the Diversimilarity Approach. The Diversimilarity approach is characterized by a systematic search for and emphasis on both the differences and similarities between and among African American, European American, and other ethnic groups. Several researchers from different perspectives have laid the foundations for this approach. Luster and McAdoo (1980-94) point out that research on African American children and families tends to focus on problems and therefore has contributed to continued stereotyping of African American children. To advance the field, they suggest examining how the contexts of African American children rated highly on cognitive and academic competence differ from children experiencing problems. Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis (1993), suggest that European Americans experiencing post-divorce family circumstances would be well served if they adopted similar strategies and coping mechanisms that many African American families have developed over the years.

This article uses the Diversimilarity perspective to study several contextual factors associated with academic achievement of African American and European American adolescents. The primary question raised in this study is: What are the similar and different factors that contribute to the success or failure of both African and European American adolescents? This study will examine the academic achievement of African American and European American children using the Diversimilarity approach. The Diversimilarity approach emphasizes the need to focus on both differences and similarities among and between culturally diverse individuals. We expect that for African American and for European American children there will be some similar and some different contextual factors that will contribute to academic achievement and cognitive competence. Given improvements in technology and increased exchanges between ethnic groups, it is imperative that research move beyond recognition of diversity. Adequate

understanding of similarities can lead to effective identification and remediation of social phenomena affecting several groups.

### **Methodology**

Based upon the review of the literature, maternal characteristics, family structure, home environment, and neighborhood conditions can impact academic performance in adolescent children. The hypotheses in this study address the issues of similarity and difference of the impact of these factors for African American and European American adolescents.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There will be no difference in the impact of maternal characteristics on academic performance for African American and European American adolescents.
2. There will be no differences in the impact of family structure on the academic performance of American and European American adolescents.
3. There will be no difference in the impact of home environment on the academic performance of African American and European American adolescents
4. There will be no difference in the impact of neighborhood conditions on the Academic performance of African American and European American adolescents.

### **Research Design**

This is a cross-sectional study involving secondary analyses of data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Hierarchical multiple regression was used to examine the relationship between academic performance and contextual features associated with academic performance.

### **Sample**

The sample for this study is selected from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY). The NLSY began in 1979

with a sample of approximately 6,282 women ranging from age 14 to 21. Data has been collected on the children of these women every two years and on the mothers annually. The current sample is comprised of 6,266 adolescents and their mothers from the 1992 assessment period (See Table 1). Of the 6,266 children, 854 are between the ages of 13 and 17. Of the 854 adolescents, 666 are African American and European American. For this study, the 666 African American and European American children are used. 400 of the children are African American and 266 are European American. Approximately 51% of the children were male and 49% were female. The sample of mothers used in this study were 639: 380 African American and 259 European American. The majority of the subjects reside in urban areas. This sample is used to maintain consistency between this study and the Luster and McAdoo study (1994).

## **Variables**

### *Academic Performance:*

The dependent variable for this study, academic achievement, is measured with four achievement tests: The "Reading Recognition", "Reading Comprehension", and "Math" portions of the Peabody Individual Achievement Test and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Each has a standardized mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15.

### *Maternal Characteristics:*

Three variables, age of first birth, maternal education level and maternal IQ are used to reflect maternal characteristics. Maternal IQ was measured with the "Armed Forces Qualifying Test" which has a maximum score of 1030 and assesses overall academic ability required for successful completion of basic military training.

### *Family Structure:*

Two variables, marital status and number of children, are used to reflect the family configuration.

### *Home Environment:*

The home environment is reflected by three variables, the

perceived home environment and adolescent relationships with the father and mother. Home environment is measured with a 39- item observational tool used to measure the overall cognitive stimulation and emotional support found within the home. To determine adolescent relationships with mothers and fathers, an index was developed based upon adolescent responses to three items pertaining to their relationships with their parents. The items assess parental time spent with adolescents and closeness adolescents feel towards each parent.

### **Data Analysis**

On the first step of the hierarchical multiple regression variables pertaining to maternal characteristics are entered into the model; on the second step family structure variables are entered; on the third step home environmental variables are entered into the model. Finally neighborhood condition variables are entered into the model. This format was selected to allow consistency between this study and the previous study by Luster & McAdoo.

### **Results**

As a first step in our analysis we assessed the relationship between the independent variables in the study using a correlation matrix. This is reported in Table 2. The correlations among the predictors generally ranged from low to moderate in magnitude lending additional support for a ecological investigation of the data.

Next we examined the relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variables for the combined sample of African American and European American adolescents. The outcome variables are the scores on Peabody Individual Achievement Test for math, reading comprehension and reading recognition scores, and scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 3.

All four regression equations were significant at the  $p < .01$  level. The adjusted R squares for the four equations were .241 (PIATM); .254 (PIATRC); .225 (PIATRR), and .347 (PPVT). The results of the regression equation indicate that for the combined sample, maternal IQ, the home environment, and

neighborhood conditions were the major determinants of the academic achievement of adolescent youth.

Consistent with the Diversimilarity Approach we developed regression models to separately examine the relationships between the various contextual factors and academic performance. Specifically we examined whether similar contextual factors and different contextual factors are associated with the academic performance of African American and European American adolescents. The results are presented in Table 4. All eight regression equations were significant at the  $p < .01$  level, with adjusted R-squares ranging from .143 (PIATM Math for African American adolescents) to .321 (PPVT for European American adolescents).

The results indicated that maternal characteristics played an important role in the academic performance of both African Americans and European Americans. In particular the IQ of both African American and European American mothers (measured by the AFQT.) was significantly related to the level of academic achievement of adolescents. Also the maternal age at first birth appeared not to influence the academic achievement of adolescents. However maternal education level appeared more significant for African American adolescents than for European American adolescents. Thus the hypothesis pertaining to maternal characteristics and academic performance was rejected.

An interesting result of this study is that for both African American and European American adolescents (Table 4) family structure was significant in their academic achievement. This is very interesting in the light of the body of literature that attributes the low level of academic achievement of some African American youths to the lack of father figures and type of family structures. The absence of differences pertaining to family structure and academic performance allowed the hypothesis to be accepted.

With regard to impact of the home environment on academic performance parental relationships with adolescents was not significant. However cognitive stimulation and emotional support were significant for African American adolescents in contrast to European American adolescents. The hypothesis of no difference was rejected.

Finally, parental income was not a significant factor with regard to adolescent academic performance. Neighborhood condition was significant for European American adolescents. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

## **Discussion**

The current study supports the Furstenberg assumption that adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to have later success provided they have sufficient parental support in overcoming barriers to academic success. In addition this study suggests that factors such as poverty, neighborhood conditions, and family structure may be more important in early childhood than in adolescence.

Building on the Luster & McAdoo study and also other studies that have advocated the need to study inter-cultural research by looking at both similarities and differences, this study adopts the Diversimilarity Approach. Specifically it tries to identify contextual factors that are similar and those that are different when we look at the academic performance of African American and European American. From a similarity perspective this study finds that the maternal IQ significantly impacts the academic achievements of both African American and European American adolescents. Family structure and relationships to mother and father are not significantly related to the academic achievement of adolescents. From a difference perspective, this study finds that the academic achievement of African Americans was affected by the level of maternal education and the home environment while European American youth were impacted by neighborhood conditions.

One explanation of this difference may be the role of African American parents. As African Americans have a sub-culture differing from European Americans, negotiation of both cultures and development of social and academic skills may be integral components of African American parenting. Because European American adolescents more closely identify with the majority culture, they may rely upon peers for socialization to a greater extent than African American adolescents. Likewise, African American adolescents may rely upon family for socialization rather than upon peers. This may be particularly true for high-income African American families. As suggested by



Tatum (214-33), social class continues to be a struggle for middle and high income African Americans. African American families from these groups may become isolated because they reside in wealthier communities with fewer African American peers. Adolescents from these families may be isolated from other African American adolescents resulting in reliance upon family for support and guidance.

Academic excellence may more readily equate with improved income and social status for European American adolescents than for African American adolescents in later life. The results indicate that neighborhood conditions are important for European American adolescents with regard to academic performance. These results may be indicative of the relationship these adolescents observe between their current academic endeavors and later life status. As no such connection between community and school is present with the African American adolescents, academic achievement may be seen as a less viable avenue for later life successes. Inequitable earning capacity based upon race is a stark reality for African American adolescents. Therefore familial support remains important for African American adolescents and perhaps adults as a coping mechanism for status as a member of a racial minority. Education for European American adolescents may be an avenue for improved status, but for African American adolescents education may be a means of escape from low-income status but not necessarily from low-social status.

Several important implications arise from this study. First, this study specifically advocates the need to identify similar and different contextual factors that impact the academic achievement of other African American and European American adolescents. On a more general level, this study calls for a more systematic focus on the cultural and demographic similarities and differences among people from different ethnic backgrounds: paying attention to similarities may help minimize the often negative stereotyping of African American that some researchers have; paying attention to the differences may help highlight the cultural and historic differences.

In past research the tendency has been not to take into account the strengths of the survival and coping mechanisms associated with the specific behaviors of African American fam-

ilies (Dodson 67-82). The cultural relativists approach plays an important role in shifting research from the pathological and deficient approach to identify the strengths associated with the African American families (Alston & Turner 378-82; Scala 184-94). The cultural relativists, however, tend to stress the unique and inherently African structures of the African American families. In the process there is a negation of the similarities of behaviors that are associated with families of different ethnic backgrounds being impacted by the same ecological environment. As Crosbie-Burnett & Lewis (43) indicate, as European American families undergo an increase in post divorce families, they find themselves increasingly struggling with many of the same issues that African American families have had to struggle with for centuries, and child-focused definition of the family and the use of similar coping mechanism and strategies of African American families can be helpful to European American families facing the same issues.

The social deterministic approach emphasizes the impact of the social environment in the determination of the family behavioral patterns. The social determinist would stress that if one controls for social conditions such as poverty, there would be basically no differences between the families of the different ethnic groups. Such an approach however downplays the persistence of racism and its very systemic nature that places African Americans, no matter their social class or income, at a disadvantage. The social deterministic approach also fails to account for several factors such as the impact of white privilege and the fact that a disproportionate number of African American families live below the poverty line.

The limitations of the three approaches identified above can be mitigated by the adoption of the Diversimilarity Approach. By focusing on the differences, the different historical and current differences that the different ethnic groups have can be accounted for. By valuing the difference, such an approach would see the different familial patterns of different ethnic groups not from the standard of the dominant ethnic group's standards. There would be an appreciation of the strengths associated with the different styles and methods associated with the different ethnic groups. By focusing on the similarities, there would be an appropriate recognition of the impact of

social class and environment of the parenting patterns with the acknowledgment that there may be major similarities in styles and methodologies.

### **Conclusion**

A limitation of this study is the absence of data pertaining to fathers. It would be helpful to determine, beyond the absence or presence of a father in the home, the impact of paternal characteristics on academic performance in adolescents. Of great importance is the study of the relationship between African American fathers and their male children. While this study did not find that family structure or adolescent relationships with parents significant in terms of academic performance whether or not fathers impart valuable support and encouragement in academic endeavors remains an important avenue for future study. It would be helpful to determine beyond the absence or presence of a father in the home the impact of paternal characteristics on academic performance in adolescents. Of similar importance is the study of the relationship between African American fathers and their male children. Some have argued that the absence of meaningful, male role models has been the demise of the African American community. This study challenges that assumption in that support from rather than the presence of parental figures is indicative of later success for African American adolescents.

The Diversimilarity Approach, a systematic analysis of the differences and similarities of ethnically diverse groups, is applied to the study of the contextual factors associated with the academic achievement of African American and European American adolescents. The maternal IQ appears to play an important role in the academic performance of both African American and European American adolescents. There are important differences, with the home environment and maternal educational level appearing to affect the academic performance of African American adolescents while the neighborhood conditions appear to impact the academic performance of European American adolescents. The Diversimilarity Approach is suggested for both social care providers and researchers as a way to alleviate stereotyping and highlight the cultural distinctiveness of ethnically diverse individuals.

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## **Yoruba Girl Dancing and the Post-War Transition to an English Multi-Ethnic Society**

**Helen Lock**

This paper exemplifies the insider/outsider binary in a nation's shift towards a multi-ethnic society. The writer gives insight into the African Diaspora within England in her exploration of *Yoruba Girl Dancing*.

Simi Bedford's *Yoruba Girl Dancing* tells the story of Remi Foster, a small Nigerian girl who is uprooted in the early 1950s from her large and ebullient Yoruba family and transplanted to England. There she attends an exclusive English boarding school and spends vacations in suburbia with her step-grandmother's white relatives. Remi's is the story of a reluctant pioneer in the post-war process whereby urban England gradually became a multi-ethnic society and received the arrival of increasingly large numbers of former colonials. *Yoruba Girl Dancing* provides an illuminating picture of the transformations that took place at the beginning of this process—transformations that affected both the new and the established resident and the insider as well as the outsider. These transformations



eventually would lead to a resistance and hardening of attitudes among the established population when previously imperceptible changes became more glaring as the trickle of newcomers swelled to a wave. For the earlier arrivals, however, the lines were less sharply drawn, and thus the experience more subtle.

Remi's story begins in Lagos with a portrait of the large and varied Foster household consisting of grandparents, nine foster children (the offspring of poor relations), assorted aunts and uncles with assorted prospects, three nannies, many servants, and Remi herself, who is on "permanent loan" from her parents as was the custom with the eldest grandchild (9). As the favorite of this warm and demonstrative family and the sole focus of the three nannies' attention, she leads a comparatively privileged existence, underwritten by her grandfather's wealth. While reveling in Yoruba culture and tradition, the household also has incorporated eclectic customs and values stemming from the influence of colonialism. The family adopted Christianity, and Remi explains, "Grandma hated heathenism. She said it was the mark of the savage and that superstitious practices by which we all knew she meant juju would on no account be tolerated in our house"(17). The family also absorbed European customs into traditional celebrations such as weddings and especially in their veneration for the value of an English education, many of the adults spending their college years in England. Hence the reluctance to wait for this favored child to reach adulthood: at six years old she leaves to experience the "great opportunity" of an English (45) boarding school education, escorted by her white step-grandmother, Bigmama (45).

From this point on the narrative focuses on Remi's experiences as the first black child everyone she encounters has met, the changes that occur in herself and others as she both attempts and resists assimilation, and her final recovery of a social identity as part of London's growing multi-ethnic community. The changes are what I want to focus on here, as they are indicative both of the mutual accommodations that have to be made in the formative years of a multi-ethnic community and the mutual benefits that can result. These mutual benefits last at least until flexibility begins to be perceived as a danger-

ous weakness threatening a community's self-perception. In this telling of the story Remi's own transformation is ultimately a matter of accretion and expansion rather than diminishment—a journey toward, rather than from, a full and authentic identity.

Accustomed to the bustling heterogeneous Foster household, Remi finds it hard to adjust to the homogeneity of the English boarding school, where instead of being cosseted by nannies she is tyrannized by Matron. Remi is greeted by the other girls with curiosity fueled by misconceptions and/or ignorance. On meeting her roommates for the first time she says "Until now we could not have imagined each other"(84). Although this prejudice exists, the only open hostility comes from Anita, not on the grounds of race but through jealousy of Remi's instant celebrity. Anita is quick to exploit the racial issue, however: "'The black comes off,' she declared in a voice of doom. 'If you touch her the black will rub off on you and very soon you will be black all over too'"(86). Since this idea accords with all the children's preconceived notions of Africans and of blackness—it explains why Remi's palms are pink, for instance—it gains rapid currency until finally quashed by a French teacher. "I didn't blame Anita," says Remi, "in fact I could not help admiring her for the blackness trick, it was smart; had the situations been reversed and we had been in Lagos, I would have done the same and so would Yowande" (88).

Remi encounters similar problems among the working-class children with whom she plays during vacations. They invite her to join their gang in order to "lend a unique authenticity to the Tarzan games which were played . . . after Saturday morning pictures. Gerald, who is part of the gang, says to her with kind intentions

Just think, we would have the real thing, a genuine African savage. When the occasion demanded it, I could double up as a Red Indian, savages being the same the world over. You'd like that; wouldn't you? (89-90)

Not very much, it turns out: the hapless native bearers she is called upon to play seem "exasperatingly accident-prone...they've lived all their lives in the jungle, you'd think

they'd have learnt a few tricks by now,' and she is baffled as to why Tarzan would rather live among animals than with the "darkies," although Gerald reassures her, "It's just that English people are daft about animals, everyone knows that (116, 117, 90)."

Her problem, then, in school and out, is to change the other children's perceptions of her and of Africans in general. She does this by a skillful manipulation of the class differences between the two groups, using what she has learned from one group to reinvent herself in the eyes of the other. She projects in each case an identity that is no more authentic than the one they have projected upon her, but is at least self-generated. She begins to take control, in other words, of her environment and the role she is prepared to play in it with the limited options available. At school, for example, once past Anita's "blackness trick," she takes advantage of the fact that no one else at Chilcott Manor does anything so proletarian as attend Saturday morning pictures. She finds that the Tarzan films that only she has seen "prove[s] invaluable" in creating an identity for herself that simultaneously appeals to her listeners' innate snobbery and makes blackness exotically appealing rather than threatening:

By and by my father metamorphosed into a tribal chieftain whose frequent duty it was to leave his house in Lagos in order to make ceremonial visits to his ancestral village deep in the heart of the jungle.... Papa would have been amazed to hear, as I sat by the fire toasting crumpets, how frequently he led his villagers out on a leopard hunt with only his spear to protect him. Mama, Grandma, and Patience would have been equally astounded to hear that only the day before they had been sitting in the open around a snake stew supper (91).

Gradually the other girls are drawn to share the fantasy—"No-one else could match the glamour and excitement of my games"—and revise their impressions of "Darkest Africa" which Remi has convinced them is really "blindingly bright and sunny"(94). (Ironically, she has dispelled their notions of savagery by reinventing her family as precisely the kind of Africans that her Nigerian grandmother would have considered to be

savages.) Finally after a showdown with Estelle from South Africa, who asserts, "Africans were only employed as servants and she did not believe that my grandfather could possibly have had Europeans working for him," even Anita concurs with Remi's view. "I believe Remi, she's the one who really comes from Africa, she should know"(194, 95). Remi's exotic version of Africa has become for them the "real" Africa, a no less distorted view than their original preconceptions, but at least one in which Remi's background is valorized, enabling her to function on socially equal terms and one that she has determined herself. As Adrienne Rich contends, "The relationship to more than one culture . . . is a constant act of self-creation"(Rich 35).

Remi's strategy with the gang in Thornton Heath is rather the reverse: her imagination is precisely what she withholds. Drawing on the kind of social authority she has been exposed to at school, she brings the Tarzan games to an end—the fearless native bearer kills a charging rhino with her spear, which is not in the script. Remi also refuses further participation in the gang until they adopt new games in which she and the smallest child, Wilf, play parts equal to the others. As the gang has come to rely on her creativity in supplying the refinements of their games, they capitulate and agree to substitute games of King Arthur and Martians from Outer Space. "[Wilf] and I both knew that he would never be King Arthur but he could be a knight which all the books said was a noble thing to be, and, as for Martians, well there was no reason for Doreen to look in my direction. Martians, as everybody knew, were green"(121). Here again her strategy reverses the one used at school: instead of investing the role of the Other, which she is compelled to play, with kudos and authority, here she divests herself of that role altogether, deflecting it onto an even more alien Other.

Remi's survival among these English children, then, forces her to take control of and make changes in the way she is perceived, while her very presence forces the adults she encounters to make changes of their own. The music teacher who immediately assigns her to the school choir, for example, is finally forced to acknowledge that Remi is tone-deaf and that not all people of color can sing as well as Paul Robeson. Her white relatives, too, have to re-evaluate their position with

respect to the rest of society, especially on a seaside holiday when they virtually compel Remi to go out on the beach and “enjoy herself,” and she becomes the object of taunts from children and intrusive curiosity from adults. As a result of having their family suddenly become the focus of unwelcome scrutiny, they begin to see the world from Remi’s perspective, and finally take a stand accordingly. “The poor kid’s had a lot to put up with on that beach. We’ll give them all a shock when the weather eases up. In the future they’re going to get as good as they give”(115). The point is, of course, that they recognize and face the fact that their stalwart defense of Remi is perceived as “shocking” by society at large.

While Remi’s friends and family find themselves having to reorganize their world in order to fit Remi into it, she herself is far from untouched. Almost imperceptibly, while others are revising their perceptions of Africans, she is revising her perception of herself as an African. With the passage of time she has become less of a novelty and more closely assimilated into the world of school. It is her relatives in Thornton Heath who first notice the change when she is on the verge of adolescence: “You’ve been here as long as you been there [Africa],” says Gerald. “You’re not a savage any more, it’s simple”(122). Recognizing in a confused way some such change in herself, she makes a vow of good behavior on her return to school: “From now on I am going to behave as Miss Bowles says I should, as a perfect ambassador for my race. Except, of course, that I am English now”(123). In fact, without realizing it, she has gradually become more English than the English, developing a superior elocution that her relatives find both intimidating and hilarious and the kind of polite manners that cause her father and uncle to be completely taken aback when, after six years, the family arrives to visit. The two men, having been shown into the school drawing room, Remi greets them with, “How do you do, which one of you is my father?” Remi “preside[s] grandly over the teacups and pass[s] the plates, showing off in front of her visitors, who stare in disbelief.... ‘She has become an Englishwoman,’ her father says.... ‘The transformation has been too complete,’ says Uncle Yomi, both laughing hysterically” (130,131).

The transformation is not complete, of course, even in her

father's eyes when he realizes that this is the sum total of her accomplishments, and she still has not received the academic benefits of an English education, for which reason she changes schools. But more importantly, as she comes to realize, the transformation is largely superficial, a point brought home on a school visit to Germany where she reverts to being the object of intense curiosity—a painful reminder of how she is seen by others beyond her own circle whose perceptions she has controlled. "I told Miss Parkes that I felt I was being treated like a freak. Yes, she said, but I was being treated very nicely nonetheless" (163). Outside her immediate circle, it becomes apparent, she will always be considered primarily an African and thus never fully English. This attitude is true even of a group of Jamaican ladies who, as more established residents, impress on Remi that, unlike Africa, "It's just like England in Jamaica"(150). Remi is forced to reconsider in her own mind the extent to which assimilation in English society is either possible or desirable. It increasingly comes to seem at best an illusion, a fantasy fostered by colonialism in order both to underscore the intrinsic superiority and desirability of the "mother country" and its culture and to preserve its exclusivity. The illusion of assimilation would do such by making it ultimately unattainable to outsiders whose marginal and inferior status is thus reinforced and whose own culture is correspondingly devalued often in their own eyes, the very phenomenon that Frantz Fanon described definitively in other words. Remi notes a parallel drawn from *Othello*, which she is studying at school:

[B]ecause of my public school education and upbringing, I have grown up thinking of myself as an Englishwoman, one of you, Desdemona, but now that I'm becoming an adult I suddenly discover that I am in fact *Othello*. . . . *Othello* was destroyed . . . because his marrying Desdemona was seen as an attempt to become a Venetian, and the Venetians could not tolerate this in a black man. It has become increasingly obvious to me that if I do the same thing by trying to become one of you, I am likely to receive the same treatment. All this time I've been living in a fool's paradise and now I don't know who I am. It's a tragedy (172-173).

The reference to a “fool’s paradise” suggests that she has bought into the fantasy of English superiority and admittance to the elite, for her a “paradise” lost along with a personal identity. It would seem that, in her own mind at least, she has come up against an insurmountable invisible barrier. But as her friend says in response to the above outburst, “least now you know who you’re not you can begin to discover who you are” (173). There is, it turns out, a way around the barrier by means of redefining its dimensions. As society changes and evolves, so do definitions of what it means to be English.

Kwame Anthony Appiah has remarked in reference to Remi’s fellow Nigerians, Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe, that their works reveal “the ways in which even those children who were extracted from the traditional culture of their parents and grandparents and thrust into the colonial school were nevertheless fully enmeshed in a primary experience of their own traditions” (Appiah 7). Isolated and surrounded by deeply ingrained assumptions about the savagery of Darkest Africa, Remi has herself assumed that her own primary experience can have no place in any viable adult identity that would enable her to function in contemporary English society. More specifically English national self-identity seems at variance with her own ethnic identity, and thus she has suppressed, often reluctantly, the part of herself that is rooted in Yoruba tradition. But while Remi has been cocooned in the closed environments of school and family, changes have been taking place in the broader society, changes that will fundamentally change what it means to “become one of you.” London in particular has seen an influx of new immigrants from all over the Commonwealth, many of them young people in search of a college education who subsequently stay on and settle in England. When Remi arrives to start college herself, she finds herself sharing a house with old friends from Nigeria, plus “Parminder from India, Shirin from Persia and Sylvianne from Belize,” all of whom hang out with “mostly Nigerian young men except Jamsher who was Indian, and Kamran from Persia.” They do everything as a group, forming households as eclectic in influence as Remi’s childhood home in Lagos (183, 182). These later arrivals, many of them far less anglicized than Remi, provide a community in which one’s primary experience, whatever it

might be, is considered an integral and valuable component of self identity. "After years of being outsiders the thrill of belonging made us irrepressibly lighthearted"(184). What they belong to precisely is a multi-ethnic society. It is not limited to or barring any specific ethnicity but celebrates the very diversity and difference that has set them indelibly apart from the indigenous population and thus creates a new category of "Englishness" in which one's ethnic origin is both acknowledged and valued and does not preclude full participation in national identity—whatever the rest of the population may think. (The existing, established population is, of course, itself composed of various ethnic groups, a circumstance that the passage of time has tended to obscure.) As Stuart Hall among many others has claimed, everybody is essentially a hybrid. For Remi it becomes possible to be English without relinquishing her formative Yoruba background, with which she finally feels free to reconnect and re-experience. "The wheel had come full circle," she says at the end at a party with her fellow students as she once again becomes a "Yoruba girl dancing" (185).

Her story ends at this point, but it would be a mistake to interpret this as a "happy ever after" ending. While Remi here finds a way to be fully herself, all of herself, in the heart of a formerly alien culture that has ceased to be foreign, she will encounter numerous others for whom she will never cease to be foreign. The more obviously and irrevocably society, especially urban society, becomes multi-ethnic and the more national attention finds itself drawn to this development, the more resistance hardens toward the inevitable change in self-definition (a resistance so far from unique to England as to be almost universal, of course). Hence the need for those of what might be called nontraditional ethnic backgrounds, in English terms, to form their own communities on their own terms, as Remi does, but as a consequence, to remain marginalized for decades. The story told in *Yoruba Girl Dancing* takes place before the polarization of attitudes has really hardened, but it affords us a glimpse, from a child's perspective, of the genesis of this resistance: it grows out of the necessary changes in perception that I have described as an integral part of Remi's interactions and that have the capacity for mutual enrichment before the point is reached where difference is perceived as



threatening and the accommodation of difference as loss of control. In small and subtle ways changes in children's games and in adolescent notions of savagery, not to mention adult notions of musicality, exemplify how an established culture does not simply absorb and neutralize an interpolated cultural element, itself remaining intact and unchanged, but is gradually and fundamentally transformed by the encounter. From such small seeds resentment and prejudice grow but so also do opportunities to reinvigorate an austere postwar environment by embracing the infusion of vital new perspectives. As far as the final outcome is concerned, this particular wheel is still in motion.

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## Book Reviews

**Maria del Carmen Boza. *Scattering the Ashes*. (Tempe:Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingue, 1998). 387 pp., \$ 15.00 paper.**

Because of the relatively recent Elian Gonzalez political controversy, whether he should be returned to Cuba to be with his father and grandparents or be allowed to stay in the US, Maria del Carmen Boza's book is timely. Elian's mother drowned while fleeing Cuba for the same political and socio-economic reasons that Boza's parents did, except that Boza's parents arrived in Miami by airplane in 1960.

Boza's book unfurls around the burial of her father who committed suicide. This major event allows Boza to be vivid and expressive as she encapsulates Cuban immigrants' life in the US. This is done by interweaving political/social factors in the dynamics of the strained relationships between the US and Cuba, the attempts at replicating Cuban traditions, and the glorification of Cuban historical events. Boza describes her mother's explanation of her father's suicide, the preparations for his funeral, the funeral and the anniversary of his death, while using second-by-second descriptive accounts to highlight her childhood Cuban school and neighborhood experiences. This book vividly explains the power of Cuban exiles' love/hate emotions for their homeland as Boza explains that her father committed suicide on May 19, 1989, and died on May 20, 1989, with the first date commemorating the death of Jose Martí and the second Cuba's Independence Day. Boza's father chose Martí as his hero since they were both exiles in countries where the languages spoken were foreign to them, and they were both journalists.

This book is lengthy with a slow-paced narrative that

recounts Boza's past in Cuba and Florida, and readers may surmise that Boza's writings are autobiographical in nature. In an effort to analyze her struggles coming to grips with her adulthood, her Cuban identity, and her relationship with her parents, readers learn of her visits to various psychiatrists. The poignant account of Cubans' relationships in Florida ranges from Boza's discussing her father's friends, members of the Colegio de Periodistas, the Cuban journalists' association, who paid for his wake, to her extended family who are now socially distant from her. Readers also learn of Boza being spoiled by her father in Cuba and her mother's jealousy of that relationship. In Miami her father is disappointed with her academic pursuits. This culminates in a strained adult relationship between Boza and her parents, made evident when her parents are not invited to her nuptials. At times readers may respond to Boza with enormous empathy, at other times with extreme impatience, but through it all the reality of her experiences are indubitable. Boza makes the point that regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity, it is evident that respect, compassion, and love are what all humans desire most.

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**Rey Chow. *Ethics after Idealism*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998). 264 pp., \$29.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.**

I am largely sympathetic to Rey Chow's stated purpose of bringing together cultural studies with critical theory. Chow is critical of the gap that has been created between the two. She accuses critical theorists of believing that theory is superior to cultural studies and suggests racialization is implicit in this claim. But her real ire is reserved for cultural theorists who, in the name of recognizing and celebrating "otherness," reject theory and idealize and thus reify non-Western cultures. She argues that we need to portray non-Western cultures with the same kind of complexity and theoretical analysis as Western cultures. This means that we have to be able to take a risk and

critique these cultures, exploring what is exploitative, coercive, or manipulative in these so-called oppositional discourses. Chow refers to this as an “ethics” of cultural analysis. I agree with Chow that there is a version of cultural studies that is overly simplistic and reductionist, although I would hesitate to go so far as to say, as Chow does, that this is fascistic.

In order to avoid the idealism that she so describes, Chow suggests we apply critical theory to our analysis of non-Western cultures. She attempts to model this in the body of her text. She begins by giving an overview of the history of cultural studies, which I found helpful, and then through a reading of Slavoj Zizack and Gayatri Spivak she explores issues of ideology, deconstruction, naming, history, and politics. This makes for particularly dense and difficult reading. The problem that Chow runs into is that in order to follow her argument, the reader needs to be well versed in the particular theories which she describes, because these theories have their own language and reference points.

Where Chow is at her best is when she roots her theoretical analysis in specific case studies. For example, she examines the film *M. Butterfly*, doing a number of alternative readings of this film in order to avoid reproducing a reductionist orientalism or homosexual erotics. I found these readings of the film thought provoking and enriching, although I had a hard time following part of her analysis because I am not well versed in Lacanian theory. I found more interesting and accessible Chow’s gender analysis of Franz Fanon. Her argument is that his masculine and nationalist discourse is threatened by women of color, who represent multiplicity and variability which he is unable to contain. I also found Chow’s analysis of the film *The Joy Luck Club* enriching, especially her Foucauldian attempt to deconstruct this as an “ethnic film.” Instead, in her typically unorthodox way, Chow compares it to the movie *Jurassic Park*, suggesting that both films are interested in origins.

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**Pellegrino D' Acierno, ed. *The Italian American Heritage: A Companion to Literature and Arts.* (New York and London: Garland, 1999). liii, 790 pp. \$100 cloth.**

While D'Acierno's book may mark the high water level of contemporary academic Italian American studies, it is not "the" Italian American heritage reference volume. There are some insights, but this anthology does not capture the dynamic potential of Italian American studies.

From my perspective as a trans-Atlantic scholar of Italian and Italian American studies, the articles by Barolini, Gardaphe, Bona, and Viscusi are the most helpful to a student trying to understand both the past and the promise of this ethnic group. The promise, however, is only glimpsed, because few poets, playwrights, and writers in the vernacular stream are included. Representing the editor's notion of feminism, Camille Paglia is featured, but Paglia does not discuss the pre-history nor the women's history of Italy.

One innovation of the book is the listing in each genre of books that are in the "canon." In its present form the "canon" appears to be editors' unchecked and unbalanced decisions for inclusion or exclusion. There is a good deal of superficial generalizing, e.g., reference to Catholicism without noting the wide and deep pagan substratum of popular Catholicism. There are fleeting references but no sustained analysis of the significance of Antonio Gramsci (no discussion of his very important essay on the Southern Question), Ernesto di Martino, Luisa Muraro, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Dacia Maraini, et al. for the relevance of Italian to Italian American culture.

This gazette of Italian American experience sometime borders on the banal e.g., including Susan Molinari's keynote address to the Republican convention in 1996 while omitting the cultural significance of *comari*, defining *cucina casalinga* as "the" Italian equivalent of "soul food." The editor's attempt to understand Italian American women ambles close to the inane by entrusting the subject to Richard Gambino and Robert Orsi. Fastened to the outdated and irrelevant genre of the Italian "contribution" to American culture, this anthology's avowed purpose to show how Italian American customs "have helped to shape the American character" evokes questions. What Italian

American customs? What American character?

Pointedly absent are contemporary Italian American scholars who are overturning traditional analysis of western civilization and pointing to a just world. Among them are L. Luca Cavalli Sforza's studies of DNA and the Y male chromosome, confirming African origins of everyone and confirming feminist scholarship on signs of the dark mother of pre-history and Emmanuel Anati, whose archeological findings locate the oldest sanctuary in the world (40,000 BCE) in the path of migrations out of Africa into the Sinai. Also missing are the younger Italian Americans who come out of Italy's deepest traditions of justice. Where IS Mario Savio? Where are the probing questions: Who is an Italian? Who is an Italian American? Who is a European? What is an Italian American vision of the future? What is a definition of ethnicity that can survive what is now confirmed in science and cultural history? I feel that this book could have benefited from touching on some of these questions and issues.

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**Gustavo Leclerc, Raúl Villa, and Michael J. Dear (eds.). *Urban Latino Cultures: La Vida Latina en L A.* (Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999). Vii, 214 pp., 29.95 paperback.**

Throughout the twentieth century (and now the twenty-first), the specter of a Latina/o past, present, and future has haunted the myth of Los Angeles as a sunny, bucolic paradise. At the same time it has loomed behind narratives of the city as a dystopic, urban nightmare. In the 1940s Carey McWilliams pointed to the fabrication of a "Spanish fantasy heritage" that made Los Angeles the bygone home of fair señoritas, genteel caballeros and benevolent mission padres. Meanwhile, the dominant Angeleno press invented a "zoot" (read Mexican-American) crime wave. Unlike the aristocratic, European *Californias/os* of lore, the Mexican/American "gangsters" of the

1940s were described as racial mongrels. What's more, the newspapers explicitly identified them as the sons and daughters of immigrants—thus eliding any link they may have had to the *Californias/os* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or to the history of Los Angeles in general.

*Urban Latino Cultures: La Vida Latina en L. A.*, edited by Gustavo Leclerc, Raúl Villa and Michael J. Dear, interrupts and explodes what Mike Davis has termed the “sunshine” and “noir” narratives of Latina/o Los Angeles. Acutely aware of the erasure of L.A.'s Latinas/os from discursive, social, and physical spaces, the editors have gathered photographs, autobiographical essays, film and video stills, scholarly articles, poems, cartoons and performance pieces that reinsert Latinas/os into the Los Angeles landscape. The Latinas/os who emerge from this insightful collection are not only *Californio* ranchers, but tough *cholas*, poets, activists, born-again Christians, *paleteros*, *chacha boys*, musicians, and, among other things, spies posing as maids.

*Urban Latino Cultures* succeeds as a fresh and illuminating study of late twentieth-century Latina/o Los Angeles because of its multi- and interdisciplinarity. Its contributors work within and, at times, between an array of fields, including architecture, art, geography, and journalism. The text's emphases include Mission revivalism and restoration; L.A.'s underground Chicana/o music scene; the significance of the front yard in producing and maintaining social relations among residents of East L.A.; and one woman's very personal struggle to foster a sense of community among the tenants in her East Hollywood apartment building. In addition, the essays jump between L.A., Tijuana, Havana and Mexico City, and between English, Spanish Spanglish and Caló. As a result, the collection provides kaleidoscope glimpses of Latina/o life in Los Angeles and beyond.

In particular, *Urban Latino Cultures* charts Mexican and Chicana/o Los Angeles from multiple perspectives—among them the past, present and future. The collection's most apparent shortcoming is that it could—and should—have devoted more attention to L.A.'s growing Central American population, which has begun and will continue to play an increasingly important role in city and regional politics (as well as in

“Chicana/o,” ethnic and American studies). Nonetheless, *Urban Latino Cultures* reclaims Los Angeles for the Latinas/os of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries by stressing that the village once known as El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Porciúncula (now known simply as “L.A.”) is more palimpsest than *tabula rasa*. The collection is a valuable contribution to American, Chicana/o, ethnic and urban studies and is an exciting addition to the burgeoning fields of Latina/o cultural studies.

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**Rachel C. Lee. *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999). xi, 205 pp., \$49.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.**

Rachel C. Lee acknowledges that understanding Asian American experiences merits the study of transglobal migrations of persons and capital. Rather than criticize this scholarly trend in Asian American studies (and, I would add, in ethnic studies more broadly), Lee integrates into them a greater attention to gender. Like much of historical and social scholarship, works on the Asian American diaspora tend to neglect gender. By examining how gender figures into the various ways in which four Asian American writers imagine “America,” Lee reminds us that gender, like race, always matters.

Lee first analyzes *America Is in the Heart*, Carlos Bulosan’s semi-autobiographical novel first published in 1946. Often read-and taught-as a progressive text for its resistance to racism and classism, Bulosan’s novel also emphasizes fraternal bonds threatened at several junctures by women’s sexuality. While the novel’s famously upbeat conclusion affirms the possibility of a unified America, the narrator’s vision comes only at the expense of acknowledged and celebrated difference, including that of gender.

Lee similarly complicates our understanding of Gish Jen’s



contemporary novel, *Typical American*, which satirizes American obsessions with individualism and commerce through a Chinese immigrant couple's attempts to succeed in America without becoming too American. According to Lee, "Jen suggests that power inequities between groups differentiated by race and gender are thickly woven into the fabric of America's national narrative of 'opportunity'" (71). Lee finds Jen's humorously satirical novel largely successful in its depiction of the complicated ways in which race and gender interact.

The author turns next to Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*, which, although set in the Philippines, critiques America through its characters' obsession with Hollywood. The intrusion of American political and cultural hegemony into the Philippines provides a force against which Hagedorn's characters resist. Demonstrating that the leadership of women and of gay men bears as much (or as little) legitimacy as that of straight men, the novel represents an alternative intersection of politics and gender. Lee's book includes two appendices, which enumerate the plots and quoted materials, respectively, found in *Dogeaters*.

Finally, Lee argues that Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, set in Brazil a hundred years from now, decenters both America and Asia. Because Lee must argue that this novel bears upon her study of America as imagined by Asian American writers, however, this chapter treats gender in a manner one step removed from the chapter's critique of capital's devastation of environment. The result is a less forceful analysis than previous chapters offer.

Perhaps Lee's most important accomplishment in her engaging attempt to complicate Asian American studies' preoccupation with nationalism and transnationalism lies in her resistance to any narrative, whether in fiction or in criticism, that claims to offer a singular truth. Her book, which includes extensive endnotes, a list of works cited, and a fine index, admirably contributes to the goal of Asian American studies "to envision and effect a better world" by turning a "self-critical lens to Asian American criticism" (146).

David Goldstein-Shirley  
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**Alaina Lemon. *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Post-Socialism.* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press). ix, 308 pp., \$18.95 paper.**

When most people hear the word “Gypsy,” images are automatically conjured up of nomadic caravans of colorfully attired, swarthy-complected romantic souls, accompanied, of course, by the mournful strains of a violin. Others think of fortune tellers, confidence swindlers, even nefarious home improvement crews, painting driveways with black paint and charging for blacktopping. Whichever stereotype comes to mind, it is the conjurer’s assertion that this is the real thing, the authentic reality of Gypsy life.

Perhaps we could be forgiven for thinking that in the former Soviet Union such stereotypes wouldn’t be perpetuated without the commercial media industry that often feeds the image-making machine in the “free world.” This was not the case, as Alaina Lemon so ably depicts in *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romanic Memory from Pushkin to Post-Socialism*. Her years of fieldwork with various groups of Rom in Russia detail a century’s worth of image crafting based upon stereotypes held by both Russian “audience” and Rom “actor.” The result is a laudable volume on the twin meanings of the term “performance” in the contemporary experience of the groups Lemon studied.

The Moscow Romani Theater is the centerstage of this drama, a setting for Rom intellectuals to perform works acceptable to the old Soviet regime. That the intellectuals and indeed most of the informant groups in Lemon’s book have not been nomadic since well before settlement became the law in the 1950s underpins her premise. Many of the Rom of *Between Two Fires* have more in common with other Russians than they do with stereotypic Gypsies of romantic plays. However, a number express the Russian view that settled Rom who do not maintain the old customs are not authentic Gypsies.

The basic theme of the book is that phenomenon known as “negotiating ethnicity.” The Romani who wished to have economic security under the socialist system could do so by playing up to the notions Russians had of them. Although

Russian society held Gypsies of this type in contempt, they could enjoy Rom enacting a contrived culture for their entertainment. Lemon notes in the introduction that this closely parallels the experience of African-Americans in past decades whose only entre to success in the dominant culture was through entertainment or athletics.

The Rom of the Moscow Romani Theater also seem to have much in common with the Yiddish Theater tradition, with the exception that Yiddish theater was directed at an Eastern European Jewish audience. Likewise, in the negotiation of Rom cultural identity it appears the closest parallel in the U.S. is that of the Native American. Even today there remains a prejudice that those American Indians who do not look or act Indian (in highly stereotypic terms) are somehow not authentic.

Given the "performance" (i.e. dramaturgy) context of *Between Two Fires*, this book should appeal to a variety of ethnic studies scholars. It gives a unique insight into a little-understood group and offers food for thought about the role of projecting image for virtually any ethnic minority.

Cynthia R. Kasee  
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**Jan Lin. *Reconstructing Chinatown: Ethnic Enclaves and Global Change*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). Xix, 248pp., \$49.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.**

In contemporary economic globalization with its cross-border flows of labor and capital, advanced and less advanced economies have become more integrated, and in certain respects the former have become more similar to the latter. For example, major American and European "global cities" such as New York and London have seen the growth of a lower economic sector of low paying, labor intensive manufacturing and service work alongside an upper economic sector of international financial and corporate activity. This dual conceptualization of cities is the framework Jan Lin uses to examine the influence of macro level global forces on economic and social

change in a specific urban micro context, the ethnic enclave of New York Chinatown. The key to Lin's approach is that Chinatown itself contains both upper and lower economic sectors, in particular transnational banking and high-end real estate investment as well as garment sweatshops, restaurant workers, and street traders.

In separate chapters Lin describes the history and development of Chinatown economy, labor struggles in the garment and restaurant industries, the influx of overseas Chinese capital and its effects on Chinatown, nearby satellite Chinatowns, community-level politics, community relationships with federal and city governments, and cultural representations of Chinatowns and Chinese Americans. To cover this ambitious breadth of topics, Lin effectively uses multiple sources of information, such as demographic and labor statistics, financial data, experience as a participant observer in Chinatown organizations, and formal interviews with community leaders and city officials.

The highlight of Lin's book is his extensive analysis of capital flow from the Far East and effects on the banking industry and land market development in Chinatown. Also noteworthy is his discussion of government influences on the pace and direction of globalization, for instance, New York City's economic and land use politics. City policies that intrude on Chinatown's economic activity or built environment may provoke collective community reactions, including demonstrations and lawsuits. These collective community responses, which similarly target workplace and other issues, in turn have helped promote the ascendance of a new generation of activist leaders and organizations that have challenged the hegemony of an older Chinatown elite. While Lin is correct in depicting Chinatown as factionalized with periodic solidarity apparent in community-wide actions, his analysis of the structure and dynamics of internal community power and conflict is limited and is the weakest part of his book.

Urban Chinatowns often have been stereotyped as isolated, homogeneous, and unified enclaves inhabited by mysterious and very foreign immigrants. Lin's Chinatown is more accurately characterized by economic inequality, social diversity, political conflict, and the impacts of international economic

forces and government policies. *Reconstructing Chinatown* is a significant contribution to the literatures on globalization, urban political economy, and Asian American communities. More important, it is a milestone in the recent trend of investigating ethnic community change within broad parameters.

Russell Endo  
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**Chon A. Noriega. *Shot in America: Television, the State, and the Rise of Chicano Cinema.* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Xi, 328 pp., \$19.95 paper.**

*Shot in America* provides the reader with a complex historical examination of the representation and exclusion of Chicano filmmakers within the American film and television industry. This comprehensive study covers a forty-year period of political activism by Chicano media makers. Noriega's powerful analysis begins with the relationship between Chicano "poetic consciousness" and social movements, the state, and mass media; follows the protests against the Frito Bandito commercials in the 1960s, the media reform movement, the emergence and decline of Chino public affairs programming, and the rise of Chicano professionalism within the independent sector; and concludes with a brief overview of the effects of the digital revolution and the global media on contemporary Chicano media. The detailed descriptions of the strategies used by Chicano media activists and the subsequent methods employed by the mainstream industry to regulate their level of participation greatly contribute to our understanding of "cultural politics," racial and ethnic identity, the civil rights movement, and the wider social policy implications of exclusionary tactics and stereotypes within the entertainment industries.

Of special interest within the field of race and ethnic studies are the third and fourth chapters in which the author examines the effects of negative media portrayals and stereotypes on racial discrimination and increasing social unrest during the 1960s and 1970s. Noriega insightfully illustrates the link

between the Kerner Commission's *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (1968) and the protests that were initiated by Chicano groups in Los Angeles, Washington D.C., and San Antonio. Of significance is the fact that the Kerner Commission's "critique of stereotypes exposed a set of power relations reinforced by and existing within mass communication"(29). Consequently government could no longer ignore what Chicano groups and others had been pointing out for years. Of equal importance are his analysis of inter and intragroup relations within the context of the state and his discussion of the role of women in independent film and video.

The inclusion of notes, photos, filmography, and an extensive bibliography, makes this book informative and useful for students. Noriega's work makes major contributions to the history of race relations, media studies, and race and ethnic studies. My only recommendation is that the conclusion could have included a brief summary of the author's findings and a discussion of lessons learned and possible courses of action in the future. These are important because they would serve the purpose of helping the reader tie issues and themes together at the end and more importantly, give the audience a sense of other areas that need further study, lessons to be gleaned from past Chicano media activism, and the author's thoughts on where we go from here.

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**Stewart E. Tolnay. *The Bottom Rung: African American Family Life on Southern Farms.* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999). 232 pp, \$19.95 paper**

Stewart E. Tolnay has a message to deliver. In his excellent historical treatise on the family life of African American sharecroppers he counters current belief that rural Southern blacks who migrated North brought with them a dysfunctional family structure, a view espoused today by scholars as politically disparate as the liberal Daniel Patrick Moynihan and the

conservative Charles Murray. Through the use of interview data gathered from the New Deal's Federal Writers Project and with statistical analysis of U. S. Census data, Tolnay's seven chapters and epilogue span the years 1910–1940 from the post-Slavery period and the era of Jim Crow through the Great Depression to the dawn of WWII. His epilogue is essentially a reflection on preceding chapters but with an updated analysis of African American family life in the contemporary urban North. Tolnay's conclusion is that the lifestyles of crime and illegitimacy in the black inner city are largely a function of social and economic determinants and not cultural pathology or moral failings.

Tolnay employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to rigorously test his hypothesis that the influx of migrants from the rural South did not destabilize northern black families nor did they bring with them a dysfunctional culture characterized by desertion, divorce, illiteracy, and illegitimacy. Each of the first six chapters, though slightly repetitive, blazes a push-from-the-South/pull-to-the North dynamic that has led to some of the dismal present-day circumstances affecting significant portions of urban black families. This contemporary view is captured brilliantly in the final chapter and the epilogue. In the preceding chapters we are reminded of the physical and political violence endured by black farm families in the South. The social roles of women and children are addressed. Comparisons between housing conditions, marriage patterns, access to jobs outside the home as a result of economic upturns and downturns, years of schooling allowed, fertility rates, family size, divorce and separation patterns, and desertion are qualitatively and quantitatively compared by race and region.

My only criticism, and it admittedly is a weak one, is the employment logistics regression models using micro-Census data from 1910 and 1940 by race and sex. I'm not entirely confident in the reliability of those early data collection methods. My questioning does not take away from the author's overall analysis or conclusion, however. The interviews culled from the Federal Writers Project provide a much richer and deeper understanding of black/white relationships in the South and in America. We are left with a needed underpinning for the American dilemma, and more, its racist consequences.

Tolnay's *The Bottom Rung: African American Family Life on Southern Farms*, is highly recommended reading. The socio-historical format and the author's almost in-your-face conclusions are needed in this day when academics and pundits are embraced for their blame-the-victim attitude toward impoverished blacks who struggle to survive in a system that has failed them.

Clarence Spigner  
University of Washington



# ETHNIC STUDIES REVIEW

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