

# Association of Mexican American Educators Journal

---

A peer-reviewed, open access journal

Volume 10 Issue 1

**2016**

**AMAΕ Open Issue**

## **Editors**

Patricia Sánchez

*The University of Texas at San Antonio*

Antonio J. Camacho

*AMAΕ, Inc.*

## **Associate Editors**

Julie L. Figueroa

*Sacramento State*

Lucila D. Ek

*The University of Texas at San Antonio*

Journal Website: <http://amaejournal.utsa.edu>

**Lessons from the Educational Borderlands: Documenting the Pedagogies of Migration of Chicana/o, Latina/o Undocumented Immigrant Students and Households**

**Corina Benavides López**

*California State University, Dominguez Hills*

**Abstract**

This theory-building research, based on analysis of oral history interviews and written family ethnographic papers, attempts to develop the theoretical framework, pedagogies of migration, centering the learning that takes place in Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant households, i.e. *educación*. Through the layering and intersecting of the frameworks, Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit), pedagogies of the home, community cultural wealth and *educación*, pedagogies of migration may serve as a lens to illuminate and validate the lessons Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrants learn from crossing physical borders to the United States, and the way these experiences support their children as they encounter the borderlands of U.S. educational institutions. The theory pedagogies of migration centralizes the daily-lived experiences faced by Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant students and their households. Centralizing the *educación* embedded in undocumented immigrant households promotes an assets-based analysis of their experiences and moves us away from deficit-based views of these communities. Moving away from deficit constructs that blame the community's culture, race, status, and class for school failure encourages one to rethink accepted processes of incorporation of Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant students in educational institutions. Pedagogies of migration may help illustrate how the lessons learned from the home directly support the educational attainment of children of undocumented immigrant households.

## **Introduction to Pedagogies of Migration an Emerging Model**

Chicana/o and Latina/o<sup>1</sup> undocumented immigrants experience a systemic exclusion in U.S. education due to deficit frameworks that blame the individual's culture, race, immigration status, and class for school failure (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Educators must make an attempt to incorporate the experiential knowledge and be more inclusive of this population in their everyday practices. This discussion focuses on the emerging theoretical framework pedagogies of migration. The concept is presented as a tool to support educators who work and interact with Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant students, their families and communities. The objective is to provide a theoretical and analytical discussion that explores and illuminates answers to the research questions:

1. Why and how do Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant families share or not share their immigration history with their children?
2. How does immigration status impact the educational trajectories of Chicana/o, Latina/o students?
3. How does learning or knowing about their family's undocumented immigration history impact the educational aspirations and outcomes of Chicana/o, Latina/o students?

The emerging framework, pedagogies of migration, emerges through the analysis of interviews conducted with UCLA students. The data is triangulated with analysis of oral history family ethnographic papers written by the same students. The goal is to 1) document the educational and immigration experiences of the research participants, and 2) to capture the strengths and areas of challenge the emerging framework pedagogies of migration provides.

## **Conceptualizing a Pedagogies of Migration Model**

In this section I begin to develop the theoretical framework, pedagogies of migration, which centers the teaching and learning that takes place in Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant households and communities. In conceptualizing the framework, I lay out a Latina/o

---

<sup>1</sup> I acknowledge that many new migrants, especially indigenous migrants, may not self-identify as Chicana/o, especially in the first generation. All study participants in this research are self-identified Mexican, Mexican American, and/or Chicana/o. As a result, Chicana/o is used as an identity term. In addition, Latina/o Critical Theory, a pan-ethnic theoretical framework that provides a lens for understanding pan-Latina/o experiences is central in the theory-building aspect of the paper. As a result, both Chicana/o and Latina/o are used together and interchangeably depending on the discussion throughout the paper.

Critical Theory (LatCrit) in education framework (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a, b). In doing so, I illustrate the role LatCrit plays in pedagogies of migration, and how it helps link the concepts of pedagogies of the home (Delgado Bernal, 2001), *educación* (Reese 1995, 2002; Reese, Kroesen, & Gallimore, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999), and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006, 2005). I posit linking these concepts allows us to theorize about a Chicana/o, Latina/o immigrant epistemology, or way of teaching and learning, in response to U.S.-Mexico border relations and immigration policy.<sup>2</sup> My purpose is to shift the lens away from deficit theories that focus on negative educational outcomes that fail to account for structural forces of discrimination faced by members of this population.

### **Latina/o Critical Theory: A Framework for Developing Pedagogies of Migration**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) roots itself in civil rights and legal scholarship that dates back to the early 1970s (Delgado, 1995). CRT is a theoretical tool applied in research to account for the systematic racism faced by People of Color (i.e. African Americans, Asian Americans, Latina/o, Native Americans) in U.S. society (ibid). CRT provides a critical lens to identify and challenge multiple forms of subordination based on race, class, gender and sexual orientation in order to reach equality (ibid).

Important to the discussion about equality is providing a definition of race and racism. For the purposes of this research, race is defined as social construction and is assigned specific meanings for People of Color influenced by social perceptions held regarding phenotype as well as historical, geographical, and social contexts (Haney López, 1996; Omi & Winant, 1994; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001a, b). Racism, on the other hand, is defined by scholars as an inherent belief of superiority of one race over all others and thereby allowing for social dominance, exploitation, and discrimination of People of Color while privileging whites (Lorde, 1984; Marable, 1992; Memmi, 1968; Solórzano, 1998).

By centering the theoretical framework of CRT in understanding race and racism, as it exists in educational structures, the many historically silenced voices from the margins come to

---

<sup>2</sup> The goal here is not to essentialize and collapse all immigrant experiences (indigenous, Central American, Mexican, rural, urban, etc.) together. It is an opportunity to explore how U.S. immigration policies and relations to the U.S.-Mexico border may inform immigrant and, more specifically, Latina/o undocumented immigrant experiences in how they may navigate U.S. educational systems. Thus, it is an opportunity to inform a lens that may be diversified depending on historical context, nation-sending relations, and one's closeness or removal from the border.

life. In the field of education, Solórzano and Yosso (2001a) provide a comprehensive outline of the basis of CRT with the description of the five tenets of the framework: 1) the intercentricity<sup>3</sup> of race and racism with other forms of marginalization; 2) the challenge to dominant ideology; 3) the commitment to social justice; 4) the importance of experiential knowledge; and 5) the use of interdisciplinary perspectives. Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit) serves as an extension of and roots itself within the framework of CRT and expands the discourse of to address issues specific to Latina/o communities such as language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, phenotype, and sexuality and history of colonization (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). LatCrit in education creates an avenue to help shed light on how pan-Latino communities face multiple forms of subordination. For the purpose of this study, LatCrit serves as a tool to illuminate the multiple forms of oppression faced by Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrants and their families in education. Specifically, it may help develop an understanding on the oppression faced by immigrant and U.S.-born Chicanas/os and Latinas/os in the intersection of nativism and racism (i.e. racist nativism).<sup>4</sup>

Figure 1 begins to illustrate the emerging model pedagogies of migration. The intention is to begin construction of a model that shows LatCrit as the overarching framework. My attempt is to apply a LatCrit theoretical lens and highlight the links between the concepts of *educación*, community cultural wealth, and pedagogies of the home to explore the possibility of an immigrant way of learning and teaching constructed in Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant households. Recognizing that within Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant households, one may find a diversity, the point here is to utilize the theoretical framework, pedagogies of migration, to build possible explanation of these diverse experiences faced by members of one family. The following section continues to build the concept pedagogies of migration through *educación*.

---

<sup>3</sup> “Intercentricity of race and racism with...” is defined as the centrality AND intersectionality of race and racism with other forms of subordination such as class, gender, sexuality, immigration status.

<sup>4</sup> Racist nativism is the belief that People of Color (immigrants or not) are seen as non-native to the U.S. while whites (immigrants or not) are seen as native to the U.S. therefore allowing them to practice dominance over People and Immigrants of Color (Perez Huber, Benavides López, Malagon, Velez, & Solórzano, 2008). This system of domination is evidenced through the creation and implementation of anti-immigration reform legislation and policy aimed toward specific racial groups.

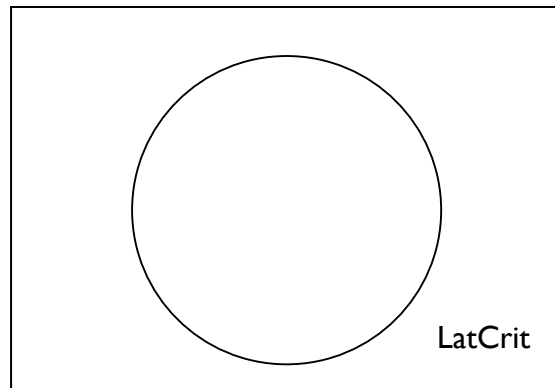


Figure 1. A LatCrit Framework: Toward a Pedagogies of Migration Model

## Educación

*Educación* is defined as, not only one's formal education but is inclusive of the moral, cultural, and community upbringing and caring of a child (adapted from Reese 1995, 2002; Reese, Kroesen, & Gallimore, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). *Educación* includes but is not limited to lessons of right and wrong, good behavior, manners, and respect for family and community, including lessons of resistance and survival as People of Color in the U.S. (ibid). The concept of *educación* is helpful in understanding the educational achievement and/or experiences of Chicana/o, Latina/o students because it shifts the lens away from traditional schooling practices that may deem their cultural and educational traditions within deficit ideas.

Important to note here, is the conceptualization of family and family unity and how learning occurs in these systems. As a traditional social construct, family and family unity privileges the family structure that follows heteronormative ideas centered on the formation of a father figure, mother figure, children, and a nuclear home system based on biological connections. When centering the experiences of undocumented Chicana/o, Latina/o immigrants, one must acknowledge that for many, family separation for short or long periods of time or permanently is a reality resulting in diverse family and home structures. Thus, extended family members in addition to community members that may make up the household/home are acknowledged as part of the family system.

Adapting Reese (1995, 2002), Reese, Kroesen, & Gallimore, (2000) and Valenzuela's (1999) framework on Latina/o education and their homes, *educación* is more specifically defined for this study as:

- (1) The values and morals of teaching one's children of the "good path" or *buen camino* directly connected to cultural, social, religious, spiritual expectations, and systems of caring.
- (2) The value of family unity, including parents, community folk and elders which all directly impact and influence educational aspirations, expectations, and outcomes.
- (3) The rules of the home, which directly connects to value of family unity but includes understanding of right and wrong resulting in some or greater "control" of a child's academic trajectory.
- (4) The rules of the community, which directly connects to the learning that takes place outside the home influencing the child's academic trajectory.

The idea of *educación* is that family can always turn to these values. Furthermore, the concept validates that learning takes place not only in traditional schooling spaces, but also within one's home and community.<sup>5</sup>

In Figure 2, *educación* intersects with the LatCrit framework. Through intersecting the two concepts, *educación* provides an opportunity to extend our theoretical model to encompass the learning that occurs when elders and other family members teach valuable lessons that may result in awareness and survival skills in society and in educational settings. Furthermore, by adding *educación* to the model it pushes the framework to begin discussing the educational experiences of Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant households leading us to the following concept, pedagogies of the home.

---

<sup>5</sup> This is not an attempt to romanticize Latina/o homes or community or to take away from the reality that social and cultural forces such as racism, poverty and family separation amongst other issues may impact some Latina/o, Chicana/o immigrant households resulting in negative home and community experiences.

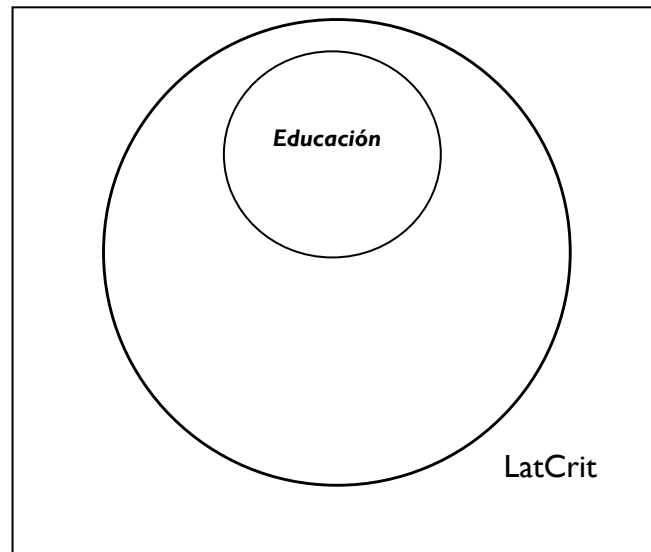


Figure 2. LatCrit & Educación: Toward a Pedagogies of Migration Model

### **Pedagogies of the Home**

Delgado Bernal's (2001) concept of pedagogies of the home analyzes the borderlands and the space of *nepantla* (Anzaldúa, 2002) or in-between and transitional space that many Chicana/o, Latina/o students raised in undocumented homes may experience. Delgado Bernal (2001) defines pedagogies of the home as learning that comes from the communication, practices and daily-lived experiences that occur in the home and community.<sup>6</sup> The concept pedagogies of the home sheds light on the assets Chicana/o, Latina/o students may own based on lessons they take from their homes and community via their consciousness, awareness, and social connections. This awareness and consciousness roots itself in a mixture of traditions that straddle cultures, races, languages, nations, sexualities, and spiritualities (Delgado Bernal, 2001). Pedagogies of the home serves as a cultural knowledge base supporting Chicana college students as they negotiate and resist sexism, racism and class discrimination (Delgado Bernal, 2001). The resistance is evidenced on how Chicana students negotiate and embrace their bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities and spiritualties all learned through lessons in their homes (Delgado Bernal, 2001).

---

<sup>6</sup> Important to note here, is that the "home" is not only the home one lives and grows up in, but it is inclusive of the community and community members that influences one.



Pedagogies of the home is a lens that provides strategies to understanding forms of resistance that challenge mainstream educational norms faced by Students of Color. Delgado Bernal's study on pedagogies of the home provides an opportunity to extend Figure 1 and Figure 2 toward a pedagogies of migration framework. By adding pedagogies of the home to the pedagogies of migration model, in Figure 3, the framework continues to support an understanding of Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant education as experienced in the home via lessons gained through intentional teachings. These lessons may result in resistance skills against unequal schooling practices. In addition to the lessons gained at home, learning also takes place via interaction with the community illustrated by the concept of community cultural wealth.

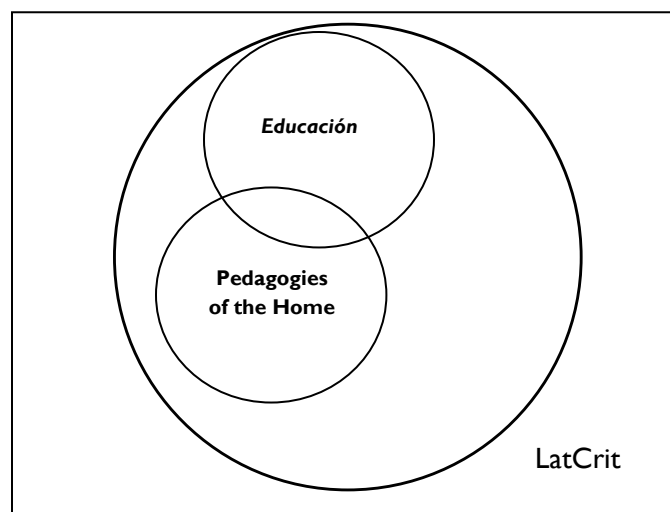


Figure 3: LatCrit, *Educación* & Pedagogies of the Home: Toward a Pedagogies of Migration Model

### Community Cultural Wealth

Yosso's (2005, 2006) concept of community cultural wealth centralizes the assets or positive attributes found in Chicana/o, Latina/o communities and families traditionally constructed as "failing" in education. Community cultural wealth pushes researchers to move away from educational deficit constructs of working class and poor Communities of Color. Through the construction of a community cultural wealth model, Yosso (2005, 2006) highlights the assets or forms of capital these communities hold that allow students to succeed in U.S.

*Borderlands* education. Community cultural wealth consists of six tenets that help to identify the assets, usually not seen through deficit frameworks, of marginalized communities:

- 1) Aspirational capital, inclusive of hopes and dreams that support educational success;
- 2) Linguistic capital, such as abilities to speak more than one language;
- 3) Navigational capital, exemplified by the abilities to navigate and understand social institutions in order to access educational resources;
- 4) Social capital or the community networks one uses in order to accomplish educational goals;
- 5) Familial capital, inclusive of the support provided by family as well as lessons of family and community history provided to help build self-awareness and identity; and
- 6) Resistance capital, which consists of the skills and knowledge, taught in order to fight against social inequality.

In further developing the pedagogies of migration model, community cultural wealth serves to illuminate the unacknowledged wealth and/or assets found within the home and community that support educational success. This wealth supports students in their navigation of and survival in the U.S. educational pipeline. By intersecting the concepts of community cultural wealth, *educación*, and pedagogies of the home within a LatCrit framework, in Figure 4, the finalized pedagogies of migration model emerges.

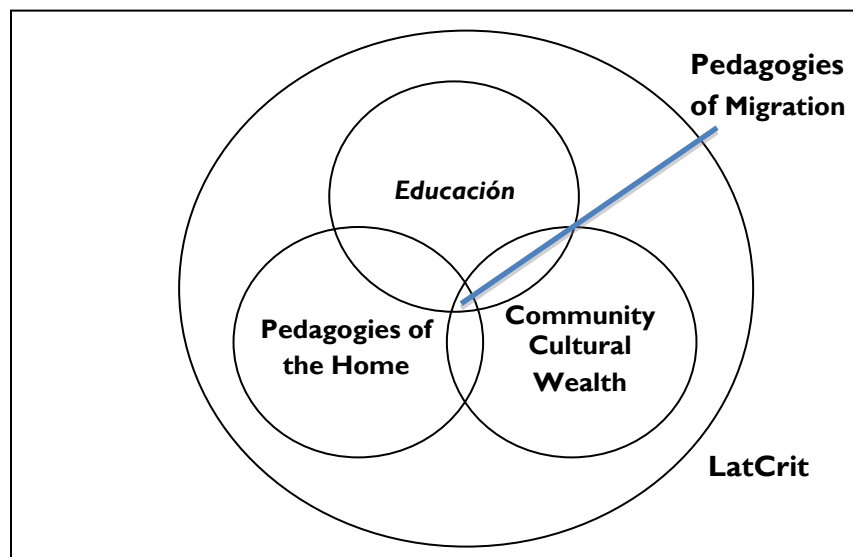


Figure 4. An Emerging Pedagogies of Migration Model

Figure 4 illustrates the model pedagogies of migration. The following section provides a further developed definition of pedagogies of migration. In working from the definition, I continue theorizing on the application of pedagogies of migration as a framework to building an understanding of Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant education.

### **Defining Pedagogies of Migration**

Defined, pedagogies of migration consist of individual, family, and community lessons used by immigrant and immigrant-identified individuals to survive and resist multiple forms of subordination. Pedagogies of migration are an (undocumented) immigrant way of teaching and learning, an immigrant epistemology that is inclusive of, but is not limited to pedagogies of: historical context, sacrifice and bravery, work ethic, immigrant surveillance, and social justice. More specifically the five elements that construct pedagogies of migration are defined as:

- *Pedagogies of historical context* consists of the historically informed social, cultural and racial awareness an immigrant or immigrant-identified individual develops as a result of familial (undocumented) immigration history intentionally and unintentionally taught by family and community.
- *Pedagogies of sacrifice and bravery* focuses on the lessons and awareness of survival gained through the struggles immigrant, immigrant families, and children of immigrants face as a result of undocumented border crossing(s), historical and personal socioeconomic status and immigration status.
- *Pedagogies of work ethic* is the knowledge gained through witnessing working class (undocumented) immigrant family and community role models as they physically labor, work toward, and aspire for academic success, self-sufficiency, and self determination.
- *Pedagogies of immigrant surveillance* speaks to the strategic and unconscious learned behavior of undocumented immigrant physical and psychological self-monitoring experienced at familial, community and personal levels in response to institutionalized systems of policing.

- *Pedagogies of social justice* derive from the lessons gained through activism toward social equity and acts of resistance an individual and/or family participates in, informed by the knowledge gained from one's (undocumented) immigration history.

The goal of pedagogies of migration is to provide a lens that allows for research to move away from deficit-based frameworks that focus on negative Mexican and Chicana/o undocumented immigrant educational outcomes (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Specific to this research, pedagogies of migration may help illuminate how the *educación*, gained through knowing and understanding one's undocumented immigration history impacts the educational attainment and aspirations held by Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant students and their families.

### **Developing a Pedagogies of Migration Model**

In this section the goal is to provide examples through data to illustrate the application of pedagogies of migration. The focus of the study builds on the immigration and educational experience of twelve UCLA students. The research participants include:

- A) Three undocumented women: Amadis, Dolores, and Josefina;
- B) Three undocumented men: Ricardo, Alex, and Raul;
- C) Three U.S.-born citizen women: Paulina, Maria, and Nayeli and;
- D) Three U.S.-born citizen men: Jose, Enrique, and Pancho.

The UCLA student research participants were selected for the study based on the following specific categories:

- 1) Male or female adult of Mexican descent;
- 2) A) Immigrants who are currently is or previously were undocumented; or  
B) U.S.-born citizen who's family member/s (parent/s and/or sibling/s) who currently are or previously have been undocumented immigrant/s;
- 3) Community college student who transferred to UCLA via the Academic Advancement Program, Transfer Summer Program (TSP);
- 4) As a TSP student enrolled in the Chicana and Chicano Studies course, *History of Latino Immigration and Identity*; and

- 5) Conducted research and wrote an oral history paper on their family's immigration experience as part of the TSP Chicana/o Studies course.

By the finalization of the study, all the students had completed their Bachelor of Arts degree, but this was not a requirement to participate in the study.

## Research Method

The data collection and analysis of this research followed *adapted* grounded theory methods (GTM) (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). I utilized Grounded theory methods as a guide, I did not follow the traditional principles of GTM which calls for entering the field without pre-existing theoretical frameworks or a literature base (ibid). For this study, the emerging theoretical framework, pedagogies of migration, played a significant role in how I explored and analyzed data for this study.

The data included one, thirty minute to one hour semi-structured, in-depth oral history interview with each of the twelve UCLA student research collaborators focusing on their undocumented immigration history, identity, and educational experiences. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Yow (2005) states oral history, as a method, is important: 1) because it follows the basic principle of grounded theory methods allowing for in-depth data collection and for themes and categories to emerge; 2) because oral history as a method allows for the revealing of the daily life at home and at work that rarely gets recorded; and 3) because it lends itself feasibly to recording family history through, stories, feelings, and motivations. As a research method, oral history allowed for the application of the emerging theoretical framework pedagogies of migration.

Oral history interview methods promote the use of creative tools such as art, images, old family pictures, music, historical images, and other tools to conjure memory and feeling (Yow, 2005). For this study I made use of the famous *corrido*, or traditional country Mexican music with a story, *La Jaula de Oro* (The Golden Cage) (Los Tigres del Norte, 1984). The song *La Jaula de Oro* speaks to the daily and life-long struggle Mexican undocumented immigrants face in the U.S. as members of society, trapped in a cage of gold without real freedom as the "American Dream" promises.

In addition to the use of the song *La Jaula de Oro*, I also shared a small 1x2 inch image of a painting by Los Angeles-based Chicana Artist, Lilia Ramirez,<sup>7</sup> “*Paletas Si, Migra No*,” (“Popsicles Yes, Border Patrol/Homeland Security No”). The image is of a Latino *paletero* (popsicle/ice cream man) running in terror away from his ice cream cart as *migra* officers approach him. It is an image that depicts and captures the terror experienced by many undocumented Latino people in their communities when they come face to face with *migra* agents who raid worksites, streets, homes, and their safety.

I began each interview playing the song *La Jaula de Oro* and showing the image, “*Paletas Si, Migra No*,” to each participant before I began recording our interaction. None had personally seen the image before. The purpose of showing them the image and playing the song as part of the protocol was to help the process of recalling personal and family stories, memories, feelings and insight about their own undocumented immigrant experience, and/or that of their family members as “triggered” by the art and music.

In addition to the oral history interviews, the research participants were asked to submit their research papers based on their family’s immigration history they produced in the summer transfer program course *History of Latina/o Immigration and Identity*. The project is a 15-20 page written paper based on library literature review and research interviews they each conducted with family members. The object of the assignment is for students to place their family’s immigration story in a U.S. historical context. Once the twelve students participating in the study were identified I requested permission to collect their written oral history papers produced for the course. Ten students agreed to submit their oral history research papers. The oral history papers were analyzed and coded for emerging themes as related to the research questions and triangulated with the oral history interview data.

## Findings

The analysis of the twelve oral history interviews and ten family history papers resulted in the following sections that continue to illustrate the conceptual building of the model pedagogies of migration: 1) Pedagogies of Historical Context; 2) Pedagogies of Sacrifice and

---

<sup>7</sup> Lilia Ramirez is a Los Angeles-based Chicana artist producing art since 1995. She holds a B.A. from UCLA in World Arts and Cultures. Her art is an expression of what she experiences as a first generation, Los Angeles, CA Chicana.

Bravery; 3) Pedagogies of Work Ethic; 4) Pedagogies of Immigrant Surveillance; and 5) Pedagogies of Social Justice.

### **Pedagogies of Historical Context**

The first building block, historical context as a component of pedagogies of migration, supports the recognition of how history informs personal, familial, and community identity development. Pedagogies of historical context require the understanding of oral histories as a process of teaching and learning. This process of teaching and learning is a form of rediscovery and unearthing of history and one's past in order to understand the present and prepare for the future (Brandon, 2004). In linking to the tradition of Critical Race Theory and LatCrit (Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso 2001a, b) pedagogies of historical context allows for the illumination of the many counterstories Chicana/o undocumented immigrant households share as a means to surviving social subordination. These counterstories challenge the stories of those in power as a "natural" part of the dominant discourse or the "majoritarian story" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001b).

Within the element of pedagogies of historical context, the data informed the themes: 1) Self-Awareness through History; 2) Healing through Oral History; 3) Humanizing Family History; and 4) History: An Avenue toward Educational Empowerment. Furthermore, the oral history papers written by the students for their Chicana/o Studies course exemplified the value and importance of oral history as a teaching tool for Chicana/o undocumented immigrant families and an avenue for promoting self-awareness and documenting family history.

In the following excerpt Amadis, a currently undocumented immigrant woman, speaks to the impact interviewing her family members and writing about her family's immigration history had on her as an incoming transfer student at the university.

... So it was really hard cause like just the process of connecting the... social context, political and everything with my family it was a little hard. But it was also very exciting...Because a lot of research I've done, it doesn't even have to do with me at all... I think through...writing the paper I was able to learn a lot from ...my family just about ...who am I and I think I was able to understand my parents... that they did have a role. Like even just the fact that they decided to come here to this country it was first because they wanted a better life and education was always part of the plan, even

though they didn't know how to help us. ...I think this paper was very empowering... cause I feel like if we don't know who we are sometimes we really don't know...what we want for the future...It's like how can you really want if you don't know who you are?

Evident in the example is the self-awareness and sense of empowerment Amadis gained as a result of documenting and historicizing her family's immigration history. As expressed by Amadis, the majority of the students participating in the study also shared the value of incorporating oral histories in their research process to building relevancy in the curriculum. Figure 5 illustrates the tenet of the model pedagogies of migration.

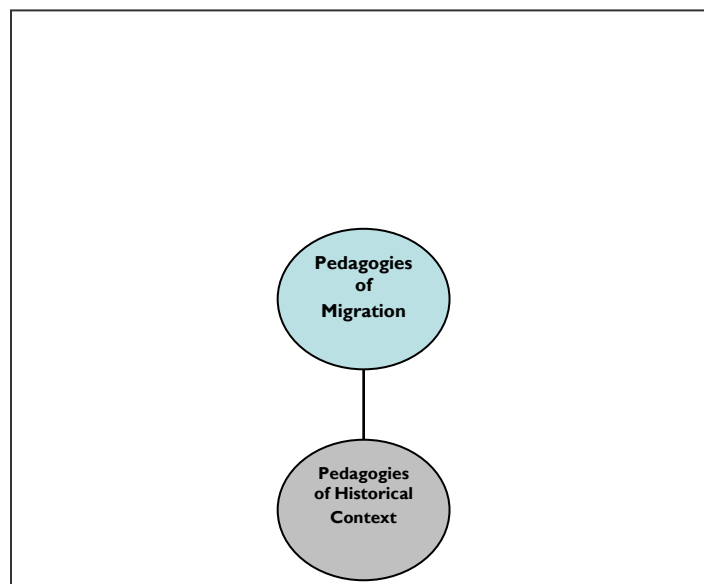


Figure 5. Pedagogies of Historical Context: Step One toward a Pedagogies of Migration Model

### **Pedagogies of Sacrifice and Bravery**

The analysis and discussion of historical context directly links to sacrifice and bravery as a component of pedagogies of migration. Sacrifice and bravery promotes the recognition of struggle undocumented immigrant families face as they endure multiple forms of subordination in societal settings, educational institutions, work settings, and in the community. The following themes emerged in the data that speak to the component pedagogies of sacrifice and bravery:



1) Sacrifice and Bravery at the Border; 2) Sacrifice and Bravery: Fuel for Academic Aspirations; and 3) Bravery and Sacrifices within Academic Borders.

Crucial to the component of sacrifice and bravery is the necessity to take note of autobiographical accounts based on personal stories written and shared by People of Color. While elusive at times, sacrifice and bravery replicates itself in autobiographical accounts written by prominent Scholars of Color such as W.E.B. Du Bois (1984/1940, 1999/1903, 1999/1920), Patricia Hill Collins (1991), Patricia Williams (1991), Kenji Yoshino (2006) and Gloria Anzaldua (1987). The work of such scholars challenges mainstream ideas of acceptable scholarship while opening up doors for those at the margins. Within this tradition, the students were required to document their family's story. Consequently, they captured examples of sacrifice and bravery endured by their family through their oral history papers.

In the following excerpt Nayeli expresses, through emotions and crying, the theme of sacrifice and bravery in sharing her need to honor her mother's sacrifices through her academic success.

Every time I think of all the stuff she's gone through... that's the reason I'm here [UCLA] [voice cracks with emotion]. If it wouldn't have been for her I don't know what would have happened and then after my dad died, it was like, she did everything by herself. She raised us by herself and I owe everything to her [crying]... I know my mom will always be there... It's not just school to me, to me it's more, it's like validating her struggles in a way.

As we see in the passage above, for Nayeli the lesson she took from witnessing her mother's struggle was, "if my mom sacrificed and made it, then I can sacrifice and make it in school." Thus, for Nayeli, to not succeed academically would be a sign of failing her mother. Witnessing their parents' sacrifice and learning or knowing about their acts of bravery also influenced students to parallel such actions in their own lives. For some of the students these acts of sacrifice and bravery were economical, some were about the choices they made in everyday life, and others academic. With that said, the data informs the following discussion of work ethic as connected to immigrant experiences. Figure 6 illustrates the development of the model pedagogies of migration.

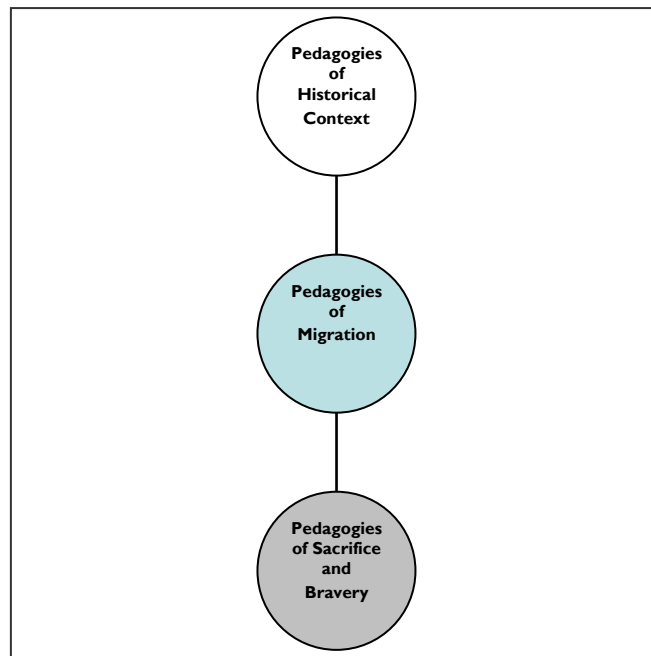


Figure 6. Pedagogies of Sacrifice and Bravery: Step Two toward a Pedagogies of Migration Model

### **Pedagogies of Work Ethic**

Pedagogies of work ethic, the third building block of pedagogies of migration, helps illuminate and explore the themes: 1) Working to Belong; 2) Children at Work; and 3) Laboring toward Academic Success. The element of pedagogies of work ethic is informed by, and acknowledges, the long historical tradition of labor relations between the U.S. and Mexico. History illustrates there exists a tenuous and many times unacknowledged push and pull relation that exploits the labor of Mexican immigrant men and women in the U.S. (Foley, 1997; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Ngai, 2004; Sánchez, 1993; Stephen, 2004). More current U.S. foreign policy exemplifies the implications of the 1994 North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).<sup>8</sup> As a result of NAFTA historical massive displacement of poverty-

---

<sup>8</sup> According to a report by the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch (2004), Mexican nationals, specifically farmers, faced economic hardship as a result of NAFTA. The trade agreement resulted in massive cuts in government-sponsored farm-subsidy programs forcing many farm owners off their land and forcing them to migrate into urban sectors. Furthermore, the price of corn-processing increased elevating the cost of basic food stuffs such as tortillas. The study also argues that Mexican women experienced a hike in poverty post NAFTA.

stricken villages and towns in Mexico and Latin America continues today (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). NAFTA also resulted in a rise in unauthorized Mexican migration to the U.S. (Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, 2004). In addition, the policy inadvertently continues to promotes the “unofficial” recruitment and sponsored deportation of Mexican migrants for labor purposes, a phenomenon which dates back to the early 1900s to 1920s with the era of *el enganche* (the hook) (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002).

Pedagogies of work ethic emerges as the research participants express what it means and how it impacts them to witness their father, mother, and other family members physically labor and work as they struggle to provide for their family. There also emerged the theme of constant struggle for their family's work to survive and to “*sacar la familia adelante*” (loosely/literally translated—bring the family forward toward success).

In the following passage from her oral history paper, Amadis shares the difficulty of witnessing her father work in the streets struggling to make ends meet. He would work about fifteen hours a day, seven days a week.

Behind the clean streets, beautiful lawns, and gardens lies the hard work of people like my father whose job is often seen as low skilled. In addition, my father had continued selling shrimp cocktails to make ends meet. He works under the rain and those hot days in which it feels [like] the sun would toast your skin. He not only suffered the harshness of climate but also the hostility of people. He is a street vendor... People just don't understand that he is [a] father who works, pays taxes, and lives for his children.

Illustrated in the excerpt, Amadis captures the struggle undocumented immigrant men endure as they work to provide for their family by laboring in the margins of society. She humanizes the experience and provides a critique of how society devalues the work of working class laborers such as gardeners, constructions workers, day laborers, and street vendors by considering this work “unskilled” (i.e. unimportant).

Furthermore, even in the face of massive deportations and in the constant reality of fear and terror, due to possible family separation, the parents and families of these students struggle and labor physically and emotionally toward self-sufficiency, self-determination, and socio-academic success. This day-to-day survival and evading possible deportation brings us to the

following discussion of pedagogies of immigrant surveillance. Figure 7 illustrates the next step in the development of the model pedagogies of migration.

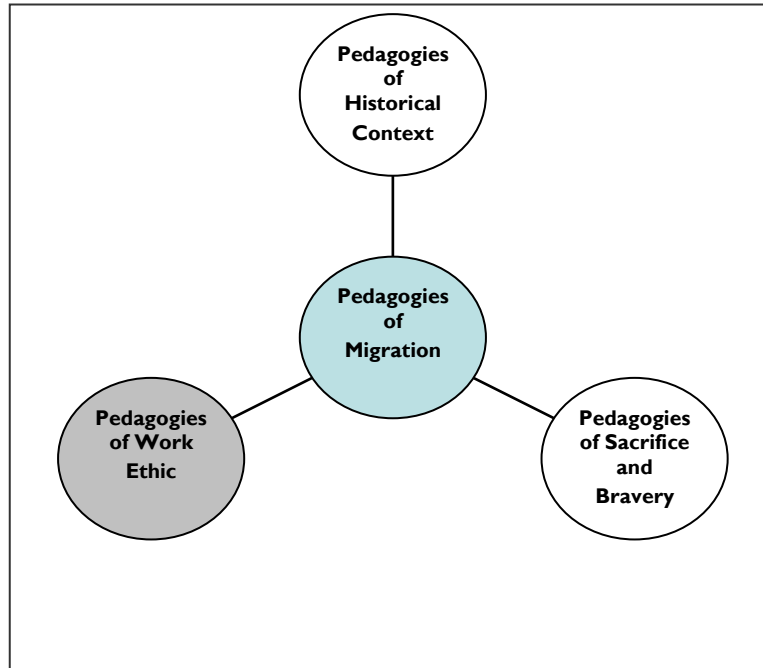


Figure 7. Pedagogies of Work Ethic: Step Three toward Final Pedagogies of Migration Model

### **Pedagogies of Immigrant Surveillance**

Pedagogies of immigrant surveillance promote the recognition of how racist nativism (Perez Huber, Benavides López, Malagon, Velez, & Solórzano, 2008) is experienced in a unique manner by those who are currently or who may have been undocumented. While diverse facets of society can experience surveillance or policing, because undocumented immigrants lack actual authorization paperwork to live and work in the U.S., the possibility of deportation has real consequences that can result in family separation and long-term detention (De Genova, 2002, 2006). Thus, surviving immigrant surveillance may have a direct impact in educational outcomes for students and families who are undocumented. Several themes emerged from the data within the pedagogies of immigrant surveillance lens: 1) Lessons of Fear and Terror; 2) Strategies to Surviving Immigrant Surveillance; 3) History as Protection; and 4) Freedom of Surveillance.

The marginalization process that undocumented immigrants face on a daily basis, may result in many times internalizing a sense of self-surveillance, covering and self-monitoring in order to survive the anti-immigrant backlash (Katanski, 2005; Yoshino, 2006). On the flipside, juxtaposed to this silencing may be the nuanced lessons of survival gained from living in constant internal and physical surveillance. One example is the identification, creation and navigation of networks. These networks of resistance are counter-hegemonic in nature (Covarrubias, 2005). The networks may be familial ties, connections to past activism, organizational connections, networks of encouragement, networks of favors (Covarrubias, 2005). In addition, the outcome of learning how to navigate and survive immigrant surveillance and massive anti-immigrant policy may be the possible development of life skills.

In the following excerpt, Pancho shares the painful reality of his mother “covering” and “self-monitoring” in order to prevent detection as an undocumented immigrant and finally having the freedom to reclaim it once the family gained legal status.

There was a lot of things that my parents were facing and a lot of that they withheld from expressing their cultural roots, like even talking *Zapoteco* or ... any of that stuff that was the essence of Mexico, they didn't even want to talk about it. They didn't even want to wear their folklore colors, like the traditional stuff or even *huaraches* (sandals)... because they were like, “We don't want to be marginalized anymore.” I think the biggest difference is in eighty-six, eighty-seven... When they got their residency card and they were able to apply for citizenship, I think that was the biggest turning point in my family because like I said before there's always been this, “We need to be a part of this community. We need to establish ourselves.” When they got those documents, my dad till this day doesn't want to apply for citizenship, he still wants to stay strongly connected to Mexico. But my mom on the other hand, she applied right away because she knew that at the end of the day she was going to be able to do a lot more with that citizenship. And it changed her mentality because once she attained [citizenship]... When she got it is when she started talking more *Zapoteco* and she started talking more about the tradition of Oaxaca. I think that was the first time we all took a trip to Oaxaca... So she became more like, “Now I don't have to hide anymore.”

The theme of living life without hiding, as illustrated by Pancho, emerged continuously with the students whose parents had gained legal status through various means.

By understanding how families like Pancho's survived or continue to survive immigrant surveillance, may help facilitate positive methods of incorporating these experiences in education and society. As a result of living and/or growing up in the U.S. applying survival tactics such as covering and self-monitoring, awareness around social justice may develop. This awareness and consciousness regarding oppressive social forces may lead to pedagogies of social justice discussed in the following section. Figure 8 continues to illustrate the continual development of the model pedagogies of migration.

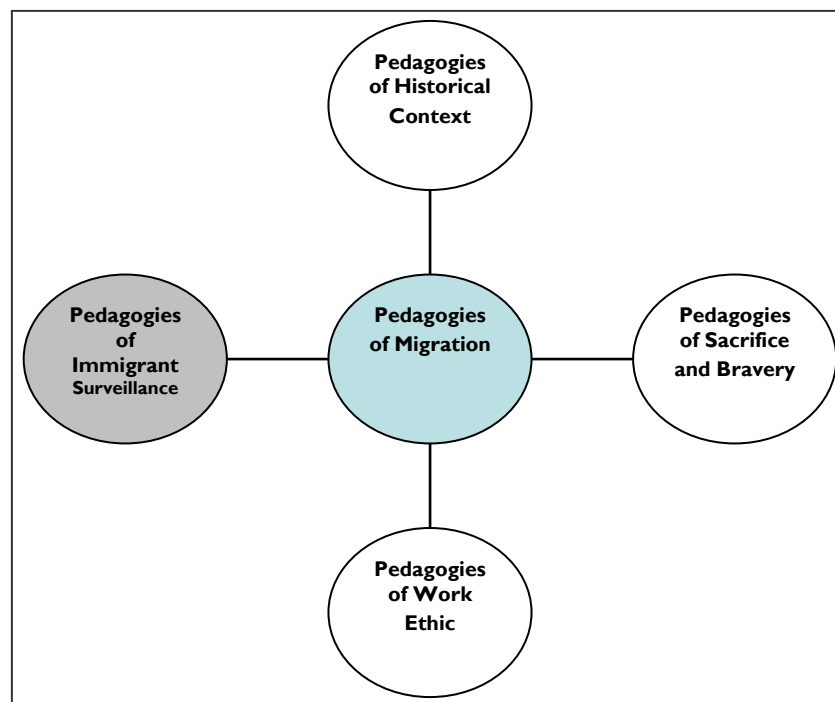


Figure 8. Pedagogies of Immigrant Surveillance: Step Four toward a Final Pedagogies of Migration Model

### **Pedagogies of Social Justice**

Pedagogies of social justice, the final component of pedagogies of migration, honors the unacknowledged internal and external forms of transformational resistance that individuals, families, and communities engage in as response to systems of subordination as they work toward social equity (Covarrubias, 2005; Covarrubias & Tijerina Revilla, 2003; Solórzano &

Delgado Bernal, 2001; Tijerina Revilla, 2004). Pedagogies of social justice allows for the illumination of the themes in the data: 1) Belonging to Community, and 2) Honoring Family through Academic Activism. Furthermore, pedagogies of social justice helps capture the various levels of direct or indirect activism individuals participate and the impact it on their social consciousness (Covarrubias & Tijerina Revilla, 2003; Velez, Perez Huber, Benavides López, De la Luz, & Solórzano, 2008).

For the student research participants, pedagogies of social justice, provided by their family's undocumented immigration history, helped the students identify a sense of urgency toward social equality and academic success. Activism emerged in different forms, from taking on a Chicana/o Studies major, to becoming involved in student organizations or agencies of transformational resistance that promoted social equality and access to education and finally to choosing a career path that could support community empowerment (Covarrubias & Tijerina Revilla, 2003; Tijerina Revilla, 2004). Most importantly, connecting to their immigration history supported them in finding a calling to create change toward social justice and equality.

For example, when I inquired how interviewing her mother for her oral history paper impacted her, Dolores shared her newfound desire to "get involved." Dolores states, "...Like getting involved. Like trying to change a policy...some way... I'm not going to go change the whole world but... (pause)." In the interview Dolores goes on to share how before learning about her mother's immigration story and struggles, she never thought about others other than, "about me." The newfound knowledge resulted in a passion, love and motivation for her community and her education.

Like Dolores, getting involved and understanding a larger community context as a result of learning about her family's undocumented immigration history and struggle was also expressed by Josefina. Josefina states, "...Before I remember...my whole idea of going to college was like get the heck out of this Latino community go to... a white affluent neighborhood and just...be at peace." Josefina in her interview continued by sharing the consciousness she gained after reconnecting to her own and her parent's immigration history. By realizing the struggles her parents faced in order to survive as undocumented immigrants, Josefina gained a consciousness of how she was part of the Latina/o community that she attempted to escape. She realized the level of exploitation the Chicana/o community experienced historically, and as a result, developed a desire and need to change this situation.

She and the other students experienced a process of “conscientization” or process of critical consciousness *a la* Freire (1994/1970). This consciousness as a result of knowing their family’s undocumented immigration history and the many struggles faced is what many of the students shared was the fuel that pushed them toward academic success. Figure 9 illustrates the final step in the development of the model pedagogies of migration.

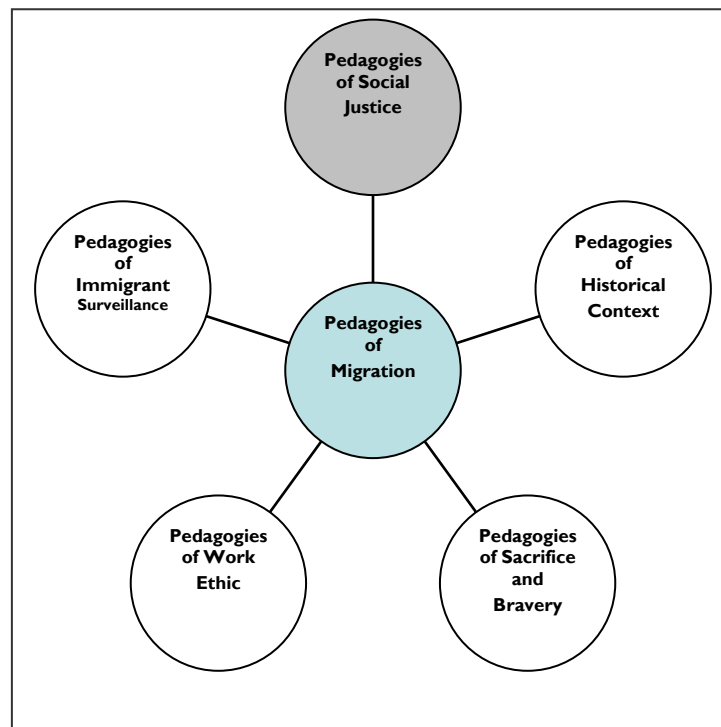


Figure 9. Pedagogies of Social Justice: The Final Step toward a Pedagogies of Migration Model

### A Final Discussion on Pedagogies of Migration

Moving away from deficit theories that focus on negative educational outcomes for undocumented immigrant students and families, the concept pedagogies of migration may serve as a lens to illuminate the teaching and learning that takes place in Chicana/o undocumented immigrant households. Furthermore, pedagogies of migration as a theoretical tool may support illustrate the *ventajas y conocimientos* (Rendon, 2014) that support lessons of survival against oppressive forces learned in these physical, social, and epistemological counterspaces (Yosso & Benavides López, 2010).



I do not argue the findings of this study are all telling of Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant students, families, and communities nor that they should be generalized to the population. The point of this analysis is to open up dialogue while acknowledging the diversity within these communities. Do we as educators include discourse and analysis of undocumented students, families, and communities in our scholarship, teaching, and practice, if so, how? Furthermore, a pedagogies of migration lens may also serve to shed light as to how educational policies marginalize undocumented Latina/o immigrant populations. In the end, to apply the conceptual framework pedagogies of migration in future research, teaching, and policy formation may further open doors to additional questions about the educational aspirations, experiences, and outcomes for Chicana/o, Latina/o undocumented immigrant students, families and communities and how we, as educators and scholars serve this population.

### Notes

A special *gracias* to the students whom openly and willingly shared their educational and immigration struggles with me for this research. Each of you and your *familias* have such an inspirational story of success and endurance. *Gracias* to Dr. Daniel G. Solórzano for your support and guidance during the various stages of this research, your mentoring is priceless and forever appreciated.

## References

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands la frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute.
- Anzaldúa, G. (2002). "Now let us Shift...the Path of *Conocimiento*... Inner Work, Public Acts." In G. Anzaldúa & A. Keating (Eds.), *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (pp. 540-578). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brandon, L. T. (2004). W/Righting history: A pedagogical approach with urban African American learners. *Urban Education*, 39(6), 638-657.
- Collins, P. H. (1991). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Covarrubias, A. (2005). *Agencies of transformational resistance: Transforming the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality oppression through Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) and praxis*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Covarrubias, A., & Tijerina Revilla, A. (2003). Agencies of transformational resistance. *Florida Law Review*, 55 (Sixth annual LatCrit conference), 457-477.
- De Genova, N. (2002). Migrant 'illegality' and deportability in everyday life. *Annual Review in Anthropology*, 31, 419-47.
- De Genova, N. (2006). The legal production of Mexican/migrant "illegality." In S. Obler (Ed.), *Latinos and citizenship: The dilemma of belonging* (pp. 61-90). New York, NY: Palgrave.
- Delgado, R. (Ed.). (1995). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Learning and living pedagogies of the home: The Mestiza consciousness of Chicana students. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(5), 623-639.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1984). *Dusk of dawn: An essay toward an autobiography of a race concept* (With new introduction by Irene Diggs). London: Transaction Publishers. (Original work published in 1940)
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1999) The souls of black folk. In H. L. Gates, Jr. & T. H. Oliver (Eds.), *The souls of black folk: Authoritative text, contexts, criticism*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company. (Original work published in 1903)
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1999) *Darkwater: Voices from within the veil* (With introduction by Manning Marable). New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc. (Original work published in 1920)
- Foley, N. (1997). *The White scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and poor Whites in Texas cotton culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Glasser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction.
- Haney López, I. F. (1996). *White by law: The legal construction of race*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Katanski, A. (2005). *Learning to write "Indian": The boarding -school experience and American Indian literature*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch (2004). *Another Americas is possible: The impact of NAFTA on the U.S. Latino community and lessons for future trade agreements*. Washington, DC: Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch.
- Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Los Tigres del Norte (1984). *La jaula de oro (The golden cage)*. On *Los Tigres del Norte: Jaula de oro* [CD]. Fonovisa, Inc.
- Marable, M. (1992). *Black America*. Westfield, NJ: Open Media.
- Massey, D., Durand, J., & Malone, N. (2002). *Beyond smoke and mirrors: Mexican immigration in an era of economic integration*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Memmi, A. (1968). *Dominated man: Notes toward a portrait*. New York, NY: Orion Press.
- Ngai, M. (2004). *Impossible subjects: Illegal aliens and the making of modern America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Omi M. & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Perez Huber, L., Benavides López, C., Malagon, M, Velez, V., Solórzano, D. G. (2008). Getting beyond the "symptom," acknowledging the "disease": Theorizing racist nativism. *Contemporary Justice Review: Issues in Criminal, Social and Restorative Justice*, 11(1), 39-52.
- Reese, L. (1995). The concept of *educación*: Latino family values and American schooling. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 23(1), 57-81.
- Reese, L., Kroesen, K., & Gallimore, R. (2000). Agency and school performance among urban Latino youth. In R. Taylor & M. Wang (Eds.), *Resilience across contexts: Family, work, culture, and community*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Reese, L. (2002). Parental strategies in contrasting cultural settings: Families in Mexico and "el norte." *Anthropology & education quarterly*, 33(1), 30-59.
- Rendon, L. (2014). *Ventajas/assets y conocimientos/knowledge: Leveraging Latina/o strengths to foster student success*. San Antonio, TX: Center for Research and Policy in Education, The University of Texas at San Antonio.
- Sánchez, G. (1993). *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, culture and identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Solórzano, D. G. (1998). Critical race theory, race and gender microaggressions, and the experience of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 121-136.
- Solórzano, D. G., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, 36(3), 308-342.
- Solórzano, D. G. & Yosso, T. (2001a). Maintaining social justice hopes within the academic realities: A Freirean approach to critical race/LatCrit pedagogy. *Denver University Law Review*, 78(4), 593-621.

- Solórzano, D. G. & Yosso, T. (2001b). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling Chicana and Chicano graduate school experiences. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(4), 471-495.
- Stephen, L. (2004). The gaze of surveillance in the lives of Mexican immigrant workers. *Development*, 47(1), 97-102.
- Tijerina Revilla, A. (2004). Muxerista pedagogy: Raza womyn teaching social justice through student activism. *The High School Journal*, 87(4), 80-94.
- Valencia, R. R., & Solórzano, D. G. (1997). Contemporary deficit thinking. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice* (pp.160-210). Washington, DC: Routledge Falmer.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Velez, V., Perez Huber, L., Benavides López, C., De la Luz, A., & Solórzano, D. (2008). Battling for human rights and social justice: A media analysis of Latina/o student youth activism in the wake of 2006 anti-immigrant sentiment. *Social Justice*, 35(1), 7-27.
- Williams, P. J. (1991). *The alchemy of race and rights: Diary of a law professor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Yosso, T. (2005). Who's culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 8(1), 71-93.
- Yosso, T. (2006). *Critical race counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Yosso, T. & Benavides López, C. (2010). Counterspaces in a hostile place: Applying critical race theory to frame a critical race analysis of campus culture centers. In Patton, L. (Ed.), *Culture Centers in Higher Education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Yoshino, K. (2006). *Covering: The hidden assault on our civil rights*. New York, NY: Random House
- Yow, V. R. (2005). *Recording oral history*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press