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**“BREAKING BARRIERS AND BUILDING OUR FUTURE”
LATINOS WITHOUT BORDERS**

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Dedication

Este proyecto está dedicado a mis padres, mis hermanos, y a todos mis amigos y mentores. Mi gente, esto es para ustedes.

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Abstract

Although the fastest growing population, Latinos students continue to be under served within public education. Their educational opportunities continue to be limited by many different yet interconnected factors that continue to impact student experiences. While simultaneously navigating school spaces and home life, Latino students continue to be impacted by complex racialized oppressions. As educators we must continue to create educational spaces, across K-16, to help students transition from their home and community to higher educational, but also help create a better pipeline to facilitate their success. At the University of Oklahoma the creation of the Latinos without Borders program was created for that very reason, to provide school students with the necessary tools to achieve academic success after graduation. Therefore, it is important to learn and understand the Latino/a history in the United States to make sense of the obstacles and challenges Latino/a faced and how they continue to face some of the toughest educational battles to achieve higher education. The history, countless court cases, and triumphs will help validate the importance of having programs like, LWB. LWB has helped open opportunities to students that were once pushed to believe that college was not for them and is a testament of how the Latino/a history can help shape tomorrow's future leaders.

Introduction

As of July 1, 2014, the Latino population constitutes 17%¹ of the nation's total population, at 55 million. Latinos are the fastest-growing ethnic group but the most poorly educated. There are many factors that play into the education of Latino students, one of being, Latino students come from homes where parents do not speak English well – or not at all – and where parental education is low.

More than 40 percent of Latina mothers lack even a high school diploma, compared with only 6 percent of white mothers; and only about 10 percent of Latina mothers have a college degree or higher, compared with almost one-third of white mothers. There is no better predictor of how well children will fare in school than parents' education attainment.²

It makes it difficult for a student to ever reach their goals and aspirations if the child does not have the necessary tools. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), "only 14% of Latino fourth graders are reading at proficient levels and 57% are below even basic levels, often this means that students are unable to read in either English or Spanish. With the highest dropout rate, only 64% of Latino 18- 24-year-olds have completed high school."³ Latino/a

¹ "FFF: Hispanic Heritage Month 2015." FFF: Hispanic Heritage Month 2015. September 14, 2015. Accessed April 26, 2016.

<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2015/cb15-ff18.html>.

² Gandara, Patricia. "Membership." Educational Leadership: Meeting Students Where They Are: The Latino Education Crisis. February 2010. Accessed March 28, 2016. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb10/vol67/num05/The-Latino-Education-crisis.aspx>.

³ Hill, Nancy E., and Kathryn Torres. "Negotiating the American Dream: The Paradox of Aspirations and Achievement among Latino Students and Engagement between Their Families and Schools." *Journal of Social Issues* 66, no. 1 (2010): 95-112.

students are constantly battling with learning a new language, on top of preserving their own. As the years progress, it becomes more of a barrier for Latino/a student when the English language is not taught effectively. Students either fail out of their courses, or tend not to perform well in one of the most important predictors of college success, the ACT.

The Latino/a struggle can be traced back to the educational segregation court cases, English only policies, and anti-immigration laws that have isolated Latino/a students from ever receiving any type of support to achieve higher education. The history of Latino/as in the United States has proven the disconnect that existed and continues to exist in providing the simplest form of guidance to students. History has also demonstrated that Latino/as have been able to win some of the toughest battles to achieve equality in the classroom, however, today, students are still not given the attention, tools and resources, and support to move forward after high school.

As the daughter of Mexican immigrants, I faced numerous obstacles on my journey to higher education. Both of my parents were limited to a middle-school education, and did not understand the U.S. education system, and how it worked. I experienced first-hand the advantage of having role models; the only authority figures in my life otherwise were individuals that doubted my ability to endure at the college level, much less be successful in doing so. I lacked assistance from my parents, peers and teachers in navigating some of the most essential processes, such as financial aid. Regardless of the barriers that I faced, as the oldest, I was expected to pave the way for my siblings to follow. I didn't have teachers or

counselors that believed in my ability to become successful and I know there are many students experiencing the same thing. My experience, along with many other Latino/a students, is a testament of the importance of providing Latino/a students the necessary information to achieve higher education. As a first-generation, Latina college student, I've become very familiar with the needs and obstacles faced by the population, and have been able to tell my narrative to students as they develop and expand their educational goals.

My narrative motivated me to be an active member at the University of Oklahoma and in Oklahoma City. I pushed myself to earn a position, where for the past three years, I have chaired a program focused on the empowerment of the Latino/a youth along with providing them the resources they need to achieve educational success in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Norman. Through Latinos Without Borders (LWB), I've helped change the lives of several young unrepresented Latino/as that were in need of positive mentorship, and contributed to the diversity on OU's campus. The Latinos Without Borders is a program that has empowered and is continuing to empower me as a mentor, a minority, and a woman. Programs like LWB are definitely needed to help students reached their fullest potential, even if they have to face some of the toughest battles.

It is through my experience that has made me realize the importance of providing Latino/a students with the assistance they may not receive in the home and in the classroom to accomplish their goals and aspirations. LWB has been able to tailor specific programs for students and parents so they can become familiar

with the educational journey, a journey many first generation Latino/a students are unfamiliar with. Through this program, countless of students have been motivated to graduate high school to attend a two or four year institution. They have broken barriers for years to be able to build the future; therefore, the key to overcoming today's barriers is by looking back and seeing how far the Latino/a population has made it to achieve equality in the classroom.

La Historia

In the 1800s, Anglos illegally entered into Texas, which was then part of Mexico, driving the *tejanos* (native Texans of Mexican descent)⁴ from their lands, forcing Mexico to fight a war to keep its Texas territory. The Battle of the Alamo, in which the Mexican forces defeated the whites, symbolized the cowardly and villainous character of the Mexicans. With the capture of Santa Anna in 1836, *tejanos* lost their land and, overnight, became the foreigners.⁵ The United States then went to war with Mexico in 1846 under the ideology of Manifest Destiny. In just two years, the United States acquired the entire Southwest, including present states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and part of Colorado.⁶ Texas became an independent republic, surviving for ten years until the United States annexed it in 1845. When the Mexican American war ended, the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, set the Rio Grande as the boundary. In “The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on Tejanos’ Land” by Sonia Hernandez, she states how the treaty left the United States with a huge amount of territory, but leaving behind a legacy of oppression and hatred.⁷ With the signing, Mexican citizens were converted into American citizens overnight.⁸ Of those who

⁴ Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands = La Frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999. 28.

⁵ Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands = La Frontera*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999. 28.

⁶ Hernandez, Sonia. "The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on Tejanos' Land." *J Popular Culture The Journal of Popular Culture* 35, no. 2 (2001): 101.

⁷ Hernandez, The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe,"102.

⁸ Hernandez, The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe,"102.

lived in Texas, they had the option to become U.S. citizens or move back over the border, many chose to return to Mexico, but those that decided to stay relied on the treaty to protect their rights. Unfortunately, because of the clash with the Anglo community, Mexican citizens were treated as second-class citizens.⁹ Mexican citizens who decided to stay relied on the treaty for basic rights such as liberty, property, and religion. Nevertheless, many Mexican Americans lost their land; their civil rights were violated, and were not represented equally in politics.¹⁰

Since the current treaty was being violated, Mexicans ratified the Treaty in February 2, 1848, and the Senate ratified it on March 10, 1848. However, President James K. Polk recommended for Article X to not be ratified because it explicitly protected land grants in the state of Texas. Article X prevented many *Tejanos* from reclaiming land that was taken away by Anglos after Texas gained its independence. Article VII states, "Mexicans now established in territories previously belonging to Mexico... shall be free to continue where they now reside,"¹¹ but many *Tejanos* were looked down as inferior people and consequently were dispossessed of their land.

According to historians David Montejano and Arnold de Leon, land crossed over to the hands of the Anglos in various ways. After the War of 1848, *Tejanos*, who helped in the Texas Revolt and fought on the American side, were seen as traitors and spies. This suspicion made it easier to blame *Tejanos* for the disputes

⁹ Hernandez, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe*, 102.

¹⁰ Hernandez, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe*, 102.

¹¹ Hernandez, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe*, 103.

and made it a lot easier to obtain their land. *Tejanos* were negatively affected by the passing of lands from owner to another. Mexicanos viewed their land as something sacred, and as part of their lives. More specifically, the South Texas *Tejanos* viewed their land tracts as “non-commercial entities”¹² and as “life sustaining gifts.”¹³ Another way was that in the 1880s, many *Tejanos* were forced to sell the little land they had to pay off debts.¹⁴ During this time, the cattle economy was declining, which resulted in many *Tejanos* losing their lands to Anglos. Although many *Tejanos* were dispossessed of their land illegally, there were a few cases of legal land dispossession, using legal measures. Using shrewd methods, many Anglos were able to force *Tejanos* in giving up their land by using authorities. The loss of physical property was impactful, but perhaps what remained with them as a group was the feeling of inferiority and subordination. *Tejanos* had lived on the land for many years, and now, they were forced to adjust to the new settlers, the Anglo or European descent settlers. By the 1900s, land grant conflicts and discrimination towards the *Tejanos* and *Mexicano* became more structured and expressed in more subtle ways.¹⁵ Mexican and Anglo communities were segregating, and were expected to pay higher prices for real estate - which many could not afford to pay. The Anglo community adopted Anglo names to several counties, which in retrospect, was an example of the continuing legacy of the Mexican American War and its concluding treaty.¹⁶

¹² Hernandez, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe*,”105.

¹³ Hernandez, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe*,”105.

¹⁴ Hernandez, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe*,”105.

¹⁵ Hernandez, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe*,”107.

¹⁶ Hernandez, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Guadalupe*,”107.

After the U.S. - Mexico War of 1846-1848, many South Texas residents continued to see Mexico as their homelands, while others, connected to U.S. politics and participated in the Civil War. By this time, Mexican immigrants comprised 1 percent of the population, however, the Mexican Revolution (1910-1929)¹⁷ led many to the United States. ¹⁸ The demographic shift caused an allotment with the national immigration policy. The Immigration Act of 1917 allowed 73,000 Mexican workers enter the United States to help with World War I labor shortages; further allotments were created through the immigration acts of 1921 and 1924.¹⁹ After 1924, limitations were set, specifically in Texas, to limit the entry of all Western Hemisphere immigrants, especially Mexicans. In that same year, the government created the “U.S. Border Patrol, a legal, political, and psychological border between Texas and the United States on one side and Mexico on the other. The Border Patrol institutionalized anti-Mexican sentiment, “alien” status among La Raza, and deportation.”²⁰ Although Mexican immigrants were unwanted, they became important to the economic growth of the United States, working mostly as farm laborers or in informal sectors.

In the late 19th century, Puerto Rico and Cuba were both acquired, experiencing different colonial status. The Treaty of Paris of 1899 allowed the United States to acquire the Philippine Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and

¹⁷ Cynthia Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed the Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009. 22.

¹⁸ Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs*, 22.

¹⁹Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs*, 22.

²⁰ Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs*, 22-23.

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.²¹ Protected from the 1898 Teller Amendment, President William McKinley was only allowed to intervene in Cuba but not establish rule. However, the United States did maintain the power to determine the “legal, civil, and political status of the newly acquired peoples.”²² Cuba was governed from 1901 to 1934, and afterwards the Platt Amendment established Cuba as American settlement to liberate them from Spanish colonialism. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 resulted in a new form of arrivals for Latinos to the United States: refugee status.²³ Cubans began to arrive to the states in four waves, all “possessing a distinct character, defying stereotypes that Cuban Americans are homogeneously well-off and members of the elite class.”²⁴ The first wave (1959-1964) of 200,000²⁵ refugees had higher educational and social levels, received economic assistance and opens arms from the U.S. government, and religious and private support from organizations. Adding to the original 200,00 refugees was a similar sized second wave, from 1965 to 1973. Additionally, the 1966 Cuban Refugee Adjustment Act²⁶ permitted any Cuban who was already in the states to remain, regardless of how they entered. The most controversial wave was the third, the Mariel boatlift of 1980. Fidel Castro declared he would empty his jails and mental institutions to fill

²¹ Carillo, Juan F, “The United States of Latinos,” *Handbook of Latinos and Education: Theory, Research and Practice*, ed. Enrique G. Murillo, Sofia A. Villenas, Ruth Trinidad Galvan, Juan Sanchez Munoz, Corinne Martinez, and Margarita Machado-Casas (New York: Routledge, 2010), 13.

²² Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 13.

²³ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 16.

²⁴ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 16.

²⁵ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 16.

²⁶ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 16.

boats leaving from the harbor. Fortunately, of the 125,000 that arrived, less than 2,500 were found to be criminals. Between 1980 and the mid-1990s, only a small percentage of Cubans were admitted each year through a visa process. The fourth and final wave was referred to as the “Rafter Crisis of 1994.”²⁷ This crisis was precipitated by the Cuban government's announcement that it would not stop individuals leaving on rafts or other forms of transportation. To halt any other form of wave, Clinton’s administration ended the 1966 policy and created in 1995 what is called the “wet-foot, dry-foot”²⁸ policy. If the Coast Guard or other authority detains a vessel before arriving to the United States, they are immediately returned to Cuba. Overall, Cubans are 4%²⁹ of the Latino population in the United States. Cuban-Americans are considered a very visible Latino group because of their atypical integration into U.S. society and control of the political, economic, and social institutions of Miami, Florida, where the majority of Cubans (60%) reside, playing an important role in the Republican Party as well.³⁰

In contrast, Puerto Rico was declared a U.S. territory, and, under the 1900 Foraker Act, the U.S. President, not Puerto Ricans, was given sovereignty to appoint the governor and heads of all of the departments of administration.³¹ The Jones Act, which was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1917, “imposed”³² U.S. citizenship upon Puerto Ricans. Many contemporary Puerto Ricans felt the need to

²⁷ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 16.

²⁸ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 16.

²⁹ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 16.

³⁰ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 16.

³¹ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 13.

³² Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 13.

decline an imposed naturalization from the United States, which required each individual to appear in a court of law if declining citizenship. In 1952, Puerto Rico was given the ability to elect its own governor, however, the U.S. Congress struck essential components of the Puerto-Rican authored Bill of Rights, including universal public education and health service. Puerto Rico, sought to escape Spanish colonial power, but instead, was giving second-class citizenship with little prospect for either independence or statehood. Although U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans had the advantage of not paying federal income taxes they were not allowed to vote in presidential or congressional elections.³³

Additionally, Central Americans migrated to the states due to the civil war, unrest, and violence caused in part by the United States government intervention in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Many Central American countries were experiencing economic instability, political persecution, and natural disaster such as Hurricane Mitch in 1998.³⁴ Acknowledging that the United States forced thousands of Central Americans to flee their homelands due to the instabilities, the United States took several policy and legal steps to ease the naturalization process of undocumented immigrants. The Refugee Act of 1980 enabled refugees from returning to their homelands due to the fear of persecution of “race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”³⁵ However, it came to light that refugees were being granted asylum

³³ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 13.

³⁴ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 13.

³⁵ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 18.

disproportionately from countries other than Central America. As a result, in 1990 Congress granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS)³⁶ to Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans who could argue that they would be killed if they returned to their homelands. In two court cases, *American Baptist Churches et al. v. Richard Thornburgh et al* and *Immigration and Naturalization Service v. Cardoza-Fonseca*, the government-limited protection for Central Americans was brought to attention. In addition, the cases contributed to the 1997 Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act,³⁷ simplifying the procedures for the application to legal permanent residency among the many undocumented Central Americans who had to flee their countries at moment's notice.

The total number of South Americans in the United States, documented and undocumented is estimated at over 2 million.³⁸ With the exception of Columbia, which has the largest number of South American immigrants to the states due to political instability, drug wars, and economic destabilization. It can be said that in general, South American immigrants, including Colombians, tend to be better educated, concentrated in white-collar positions and technical occupations and possess lower poverty rates than Central America and Mexico. Generally, South American immigrants enter the United States as volunteer economic migrants than political refugees. Many South Americans, like many Central Americans, initially viewed themselves in nationalist terms rather than being part of a larger Latino

³⁶ Carillo, "The United Status of Latinos," 18.

³⁷ Carillo, "The United Status of Latinos," 18.

³⁸ Carillo, "The United Status of Latinos," 18.

pan ethnic identity through which majority of the U.S. viewed them as. Being connected to what was seen as an American-born lower class Latino was something that disturbed new immigrant arrivers. “Eventually, the advantages of panethnicity become transparent either for political or economic reasons, or often after their first experiences of linguistic or racial/ethnic discrimination.”³⁹

“The Latinos Are Coming! The Latinos Are Coming!”⁴⁰ The United States census prediction about the growth of the Latino community was underestimated, doubling in since between 1970 and 1990 and again between 1990 and 2000. The Census projects for the Latino community to represent one-quarter of the U.S. population or nearly 103 million by 2050.⁴¹ There are many fears over the growth of the Latino population and so called “illegal-aliens”⁴² - similar to the fears over Russians invading during the Cold War. According to two historians, Joel Perlmann and Nancy Foner, “previous cycles of immigration to the United States, similar unfounded concerns over a lack of assimilation, connection to the homeland, and, in the post 9/11 world, terrorism and national security threats have resulted.”⁴³ Some Latino groups continue to learn the English language, accessing educational and economical resources, and mobility continues to be evident for most Latino populations, despite the fear that a Latino/a “underclass”⁴⁴ is being created as second generation Latinos assimilate into a segmented societal structure.

³⁹ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 19.

⁴⁰ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 22.

⁴¹ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 22.

⁴² Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 22.

⁴³ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 13.

⁴⁴ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 22.

Undoubtedly, the United States permitted economic and social exchanged between many Latino homelands, changing many of its technology and media for the current population. Hundreds of Spanish-Language newspapers, programs, and even favorite homeland *telenovelas* can be enjoyed through the different networks provided by Spanish media. Additionally, some of the current films illustrate the Hispanic immigration experience for the audience that seeks affirmation of their stories and experiences. Furthermore, mass media continues to highlight the diversity amongst Latinos within and outside of its borders, and creating their role in defining “Americanness.”⁴⁵

The United States will continue to be a desirable place for a better life, which will most likely not stop the influx of Latino/as. Naturally, as Latino/as continue to develop their identities in an American society, the United States will develop into defining another story. The Latino/a experience throughout history resembles the many hardships this population experienced to reside in the United States. Understanding the Latino experience through history enables community members to understand the obstacles that were once faced to get to where we are today. “There are many struggles and battles to be fought and many historical lessons to be learned. The future is at once promising and layered with challenges that require a pooling of immense resources that are available to the omnipresent Latino community.”⁴⁶ In addition, learning about the Latino/a experience enables community members unravel the historical layers that continues to impact the

⁴⁵ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 22.

⁴⁶ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 23.

future of the Latino/a community in the United States. It is therefore important to learn and reflect upon the Latino history, a history often untold and unknown to many members. Learning the hows and whys of the Latino/a experience take us (community members/leaders) to further analyze different tactics and outreach programs to better understand the needs of the community.

La Frontera

During the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), thousands of Mexicans fled Mexico and entered the United States, at which it was a time of turmoil. During this time, there was no law that prohibited Mexican citizens from entering the United States. Due to the heavy migration in the early 1920s, Southwest public school official began to see the “Mexican problem”⁴⁷ as a way to force children to be educated in separate facilities.⁴⁸ According to Aguirre, a study found that 70% of the Mexican American children attended Mexican segregated elementary schools.⁴⁹ The lawsuits of *Mendez* and *Brown*, which will be discussed later, challenged the racist educational system through the courts to only benefit their children and all other children. Racism has been a prominent issue against Latino/a immigrants but has been overcome or resolved largely through the courts. As you will read, both *Mendez* and *Brown* leave behind a legacy where society has evolved into a more inclusive space but still taking into account that the battle for an equal educational space continues to be fought today.

In the late 19th century, most immigrant restrictions targeted Asians, but the 20th century legislation was broadened, culminating the Immigration Act of 1921, followed by the more famous Johnson Reed Act of 1924. “The Immigration Act of 1924 as the Reed Act is also called, established quotas for the number of

⁴⁷ Aguirre, F. P. "Mendez v. Westminster School District: How It Affected Brown v. Board of Education." *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* 4, no. 4 (2005): 322

⁴⁸ Aguirre, "Mendez v. Westminster School District," 322.

⁴⁹ Aguirre, "Mendez v. Westminster School District," 323.

people arriving from European and Asian countries.”⁵⁰ However, Mexico and other Western Hemisphere countries were exempted from the numerical quotas. As established by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexicans were racialized as White, and thus were exempted from the 1924 Act’s exclusion of immigrant arrivers⁵¹ racially ineligible for citizenship. The protection within the 1924 Act⁵² for Mexican immigrants and agricultural demands from the U.S. farmers maintained the border legally open between the United States and Mexico. It was not until the late 1920s when the U.S. State Department used its’ tactics to restrict immigration. The Act instituted deportation as a measure that could be used without a waiting period, which also helped create the Border Patrol to monitor the long Canadian and Mexican borders. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, Mexicans, whether citizens or residents were sent back over the border in ruthless raids of housing and places of employment. “Over 400,00 were repatriated to Mexico, an estimated 20% of the entire Mexican U.S. population.”⁵³ Shockingly enough, by the 1940s Latino workers were welcomed back, either from Puerto Rico (although U.S. citizens) and Mexico.

The Second World War labor shortage led the U.S. Congress to pass the Migrant Labor agreement, commonly known as the *bracero program*. Under the program (1942-1964), 4.6 million⁵⁴ male contract workers from Mexico were allowed to enter the United States as agricultural employers and were guaranteed

⁵⁰ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

⁵¹ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

⁵² Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

⁵³ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

⁵⁴ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

transportation, housing, food, and given a set wage. These male temporary workers would work in the United States for periods between six weeks and six months and return to Mexico after fulfilling their contracts. Word leaked about the bracero program in Mexico and within a week, thousands of potential workers were lined up ready to apply. The U.S. War Manpower Commission informed the State Department in 1943 about their severe shortage of labor in the railroad industry. The demand of labor in the United States required the *braceros* program to expand. “By the end of 1944, more than 80,000 men had been contracted to work on the railroads, having undergone the same recruiting procedures as those braceros destined to work on farms.”⁵⁵ However, the recruitment for the railroad industry ended in August of 1945 but many braceros did not return to Mexico at the end of their contracts. At the end of war, agricultural wanted to terminate the Bracero Program, but the U.S. government extended it until 1949. The government decided to pass down the recruitment, transportation and other *bracero* agreement to the employers, which led to the exploitation and abuse of the guest workers. The conditions the employers worked under was miserable, wage contracts were often violated, which often lead many bracero members to return or desert their contracts, entering the United States as undocumented migrants.⁵⁶ The bracero program contributed to marginalizing Mexicans, excluding them from entering mainstream American society. The consequences of the bracero program lead to

⁵⁵ Mandeel, Elizabeth W, “The Bracero Program 1942-1964”, American International Journal of Contemporary Research, 2014, 172.

⁵⁶ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

the rise of illegal immigration from Mexico, called the “wetback invasion.”⁵⁷ During the invasion of the 1940s and 1950s, thousands of Mexicans came to the United States illegally. Furthermore, an initial agreement with the Mexican government, excluded Texas, Arkansas, or Missouri because of their “discriminatory and segregated “Jim Crow” practices against Mexicans. The need of employers in the southwest to hire works, legal or illegal, resulted in thousands of *mojados* (wetbacks), who could be paid minimal wages and possessed no rights because they were undocumented, entering the United States.”⁵⁸ Alarmed over the number of illegal migrants from Mexico, “Operation Wetback”⁵⁹ was created in 1954, which returned hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers. By 1964, changes in technological agriculture (i.e. mechanization of cotton and sugar beet harvesting) contributed to a decreased demand for Mexican workers and the bracero program closed. This was perfect timing as the Civil Rights era steered in a political and legal context in which new Mexican residents or Mexican American citizens were no longer willing to tolerate unjust and discriminatory labor practices.

The Hart-Celler/Immigration Act of 1965⁶⁰ was passed to abolish national origins quotas. Furthermore, the act permitted families to migrate in large numbers to the United States. In 1968, a numerical quota was placed on immigrants arriving from Central and South America, and its unintended effect was to increase undocumented arrivals. In fact, from 1965 to 1985, it was labeled

⁵⁷ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

⁵⁸ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

⁵⁹ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 15.

⁶⁰Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 17.

as “an era of undocumented migration” and a “de facto guest worker program”⁶¹ which brought young undocumented males from Mexico to work in the United States. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986⁶², attempted to stalk the tide of undocumented workers and allowed Mexico to send more migrants, granted amnesty citizenship to undocumented workers who had lived in the United States since 1982, and other measures, resulting in 2.4 million undocumented individuals applying for and receiving legal status.

In 1978 the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy was created for the purpose of studying U.S. immigration. After a few years of studying the immigration laws and policies, the Commission reported the need to revamp immigration laws in order to control illegal immigration.⁶³ The Commission recognized the importance of continuing legal immigration, but they also believed that U.S. immigration law should impose sanctions on employers who “knowingly hire”⁶⁴ illegal aliens. This contradicted pre-IRCA immigration laws, as employer’s action in hiring an alien was not illegal, even though the alien’s presence in the United States was illegal and punishable for deportation. These aliens were often willing to work for lower wages because the job opportunities in the states were often better than the ones they could find in their home countries. The fear of deportation, eagerness to work, and the relatively lower working conditions of

⁶¹ Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 17.

⁶² Carillo, “The United Status of Latinos,” 17.

⁶³ Sandstrom, Linda. "Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986: Who is Known to the Government, The." *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* 12.1 (1989): 152

⁶⁴ Sandstrom, “Immigration Reform and Control Act,” 153.

their home countries placed these group of people at the mercy of the U.S. employers.⁶⁵ The Commission created a few recommendations to alleviate the problem of illegal immigration: “1) employer sanctions for hiring illegal aliens, 2) a legalization program for those aliens who have become an integral part of U.S. society, and 3) improvement of the temporary worker program by controlling the supply of workers and thereby lessening the burden of immigration reform on American industries.”⁶⁶ These issues became the basis of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

On March 17, 1982 Senator Simpson submitted the original IRCA where the house and the senate would debate about the bill. In June 1984, the House approved its version of the bill and met with the Senate to resolve the differences. Congress reached no final resolution, but the Senate produced a conference report, which the House finally passed on October 15, 1986 and on October 17, 1986.⁶⁷ IRCA became one the most comprehensive immigration reform in the United States since 1952. The requirements to qualify for legalization, “Temporary Resident Status,”⁶⁸ states that an attorney has the responsibility to adjust the status of an alien as a temporary resident if the alien met four basic requirements: “(1) timely application, (2) continuous unlawful residence since before January 1, 1982, (3) continuous physical presence since enactment, and (4) admissibility as

⁶⁵ Sandstrom, “Immigration Reform and Control Act,” 153.

⁶⁶ Sandstrom, “Immigration Reform and Control Act,” 153.

⁶⁷ Sandstrom, “Immigration Reform and Control Act,” 154.

⁶⁸ Sandstrom, “Immigration Reform and Control Act,” 155.

an immigrant.”⁶⁹ For an alien who entered the United States with a nonimmigrant visa, they must at least prove their unlawful status was “known to the Government”⁷⁰ as of January 1, 1982, they are eligible for legalization. As of result, approximately two million aliens became eligible for temporary resident status.

In the 20th century a federal policy originated to impact Latino/as, the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. This act carried out during an era of anti-immigrant bashing produced measures such as Proposition 187. On November 8, 1994, California passed Proposition 187⁷¹, which denied all social services to undocumented immigrants. Advocates for the proposition claimed that the 1.6 million⁷² undocumented immigrants in California have caused the state to approach bankruptcy. Proposition 187 included extreme provisions, such as identification cards for all Hispanics in California, requiring employers to verify the documentation of prospective employees, and refusing to hire those that do not meet certain requirements. A Los Angeles Board of Education member stated,

The proposition states that those "suspected" of not being legally documented will be questioned. That means anyone who looks foreign, speaks with an accent or doesn't fit into the stereotype of a blond, blue-eyed, red-blooded American. This would create conflict, paranoia and controversy.⁷³

⁶⁹ Sandstrom, “Immigration Reform and Control Act,” 155.

⁷⁰ Sandstrom, “Immigration Reform and Control Act,” 155.

⁷¹ Schuler, Kristen M. "Equal Protection and the Undocumented Immigrant: California's Proposition 187." *Boston College Third World Law Journal* 16.2 (1996): 276

⁷² Schuler, “Equal Protection and the Undocumented Immigrant,” 278.

⁷³ Schuler, “Equal Protection and the Undocumented Immigrant,” 280.

Opponents of the Proposition claimed that it was racist, and would eliminate undocumented children from schools, and that denying medical care to undocumented immigrants would lead to the spread of disease. Despite the many rational objections against the Proposition, the support for the Proposition continued to be garnish by many politicians. However, former Republican leaders from the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and Secretary of Education, claimed that it was unconstitutional and “un-Republican,”⁷⁴ and that it fostered racism. After several proponents articulated their right to exercise their voice for keeping Proposition 187, only one portion of Proposition 187 remained valid, Section 2.

“Section 2 which provides for a five year sentence or \$75,000 fine for those convicted of selling false immigration documentation has not been challenged and has therefore become part of the penal code.”⁷⁵

Many immigrants have chosen to sell/purchase fall immigration documents because of the inability to work in the United States. Illegal, yes, but it was justified by the countless anti-immigration laws that prevent the community from even stepping outside of their front door. Proposition 187 was not the end of anti-immigration policy. The undocumented population of California continued to be bombarded with anti-immigration laws, altering their ability to receive an education. In June of 1998, the anti-immigrant white supporters passed Proposition 227.⁷⁶ This was intended to significantly amend the ways in which the

⁷⁴ Schuler, “Equal Protection and the Undocumented Immigrant,” 279.

⁷⁵ Schuler, “Equal Protection and the Undocumented Immigrant,” 286.

⁷⁶ Stritikus, Tom and English, Bonnie, “Language, Culture, Policy, and the Law,” *Handbook of Latinos and Education: Theory, Research and Practice*, ed. Enrique G.

state's English learners are taught - eliminating bilingual classes for students with limited English proficiency. Proposition 227 is still in effect.

The discriminatory laws did not stop there; on April 19, 2010 the Arizona State Legislature passed one of the toughest illegal immigration laws, the "Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act." The bill was enacted due to Arizona being one of the gateway states into the United States. Arizona is the home to approximately 460,000 illegal immigrants, data even shows that Border Patrol agents have made 990,000 arrests of immigrants crossing the Arizona state border illegally.⁷⁷ The turning point to illegal immigration restrictions was an incident where an Arizonian was murdered, and it was assumed that it might have been an illegal immigrant. This incident inflamed conservatives in the state legislatures and the public. However, the public and government had supported various illegal immigration restrictions for years, this incident just motivated them to move forward with such restrictions. The bill proposed that if an "alien"⁷⁸ was convicted in violation of state or local law, he or she was to be transferred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Border Protection. The bill also allowed police officers to arrest a person without a warrant; if the officer had "probable cause"⁷⁹ to believe the individual had committed an offense. Additionally, the bill also

Murillo, Sofia A. Villenas, Ruth Trinidad Galvan, Juan Sanchez Munoz, Corinne Martinez, and Margarita Machado-Casas (New York: Routledge, 2010), 408.

⁷⁷ Kraybill, Jeanine E, "Examining the Deliberative Process of S.B. 1070: "Arizona's Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act," 2012, 2. -look up citation

⁷⁸ Kraybill., "Examining the Deliberative Process," 8.

⁷⁹ Kraybill., "Examining the Deliberative Process," 8.

required individuals to be able to provide proof of their legal status. It was also illegal to conceal, harbor, or shield an alien from detection in the state and required all employers to utilize the e-verify program when determining an individual's legal status in the United States.

An estimated 100,000 unauthorized immigrants left the state because of S.B. 1070 and they mostly went to other states that have Hispanic communities and lower unemployment rates than Arizona" Nowrasteh stated. "We know many moved to Texas, Virginia and New Mexico and subsequently improved the economy in those states.⁸⁰

The misfortunes of having SB 1070 in the state of Arizona has separated countless of families and pushed many away. Many leave their home countries for more opportunities, and the type of treatment received by a state that is supposed to be part of the land of opportunities is disheartening.

Discrimination did not stop in Arizona, since SB 1070 was passed; Arizona became the forefront of the anti-immigrant movement. Six states, Arizona, Utah, Indiana, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina legalized using racial profiling, discrimination, and the necessary harassment for Latinos (immigrants and United States citizens) as a means to exploit them.⁸¹ Six additional states are considered copycat bills and 18 states attempted but failed to pass copycat bills in 2011. One of the harshest immigration laws is Alabama's HB 56. HB 56 terrorized families

⁸⁰ De Luna, Benitez Lily, "Somebody Else's Problem Now – Is Arizona's Immigration Law Sending Immigrants To Bordering States?," *For Univ. of New Mexico News Bureau and Talk Radio News Service*, 2012, 2.

⁸¹ Romero, Sylvia and Williams Romero, Melissa, "The Impact of Immigration Legislation on Latino Families: Implications for Social Work," *Advances in Social Work* Vol 14 No.1, 2013, 230.

and children who are now afraid to go to school, since schools are required to check on the immigration status of the students.⁸² Additionally, immigration documents were required to be carried around, and if a person did not have a state ID, that person was denied water service. Immigration and civil rights advocates have considered HB 56 the most punishable form of anti-immigration law.

The struggle to the United States, and the difficulty to stay was a challenge the Latino/a community faced upon arrival. They were needed during a difficult time, but were seen as inferior. Although they were unwanted, the trip to the states and the journey to stay is one that helped initiate *el movimiento*, a movement where the Latino/a community hoped for change.

⁸² Romero, "The Impact of Immigration Legislation on Latino Families," 230.

El Movimiento

Jason Irizarry, cites an array of reasons critics of immigration desire to deport undocumented immigrants and have the government effectively shut the border between the United States and Mexico. One of the dominant narratives suggests that undocumented immigrants are using the resources of U.S. citizens (welfare, Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance of Needy Families programs).⁸³ The reality is, most immigrants do not qualify for welfare programs unless they are legal permanent residents. Most undocumented immigrants work and put money back into the economy, but are not eligible for the benefits that most working citizens receive. In fact, “on average, immigrants generate public revenue that exceeds their public costs over time, approximately \$80,000 more in taxes than they receive in state, federal and local benefits over their lifetimes.”⁸⁴ Another fact about undocumented immigrants is that many do want to become citizens of the United States. The cost and time to accomplish this goal makes it hard for many lower-income undocumented residents to apply for citizenship. Many would love to become citizens to shed away from the stigma and exploitation that comes with being undocumented. Most undocumented immigrants fear a significant amount of anti-immigrant violence carried out by individuals and independent so-called border patrol groups. For example, Arizona recently passed State Bill 1070, which

⁸³ Irizarry, Jason G. *The Latinization of U.S. Schools: Successful Teaching and Learning in Shifting Cultural Contexts*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2011, 108.

⁸⁴ Irizarry, *The Latinization of U.S. Schools*, 109.

allowed police officers to question anyone they suspect of being illegal to prove their citizenship status.⁸⁵ Bills like 1070, push undocumented immigrants from stepping out of the shadows, fearing every single moment they decide to do something out of their household.

It is estimated that 800,000 migrant workers and families are residing in the United States who follow the harvest seasons to sustain the U.S. economy.⁸⁶ The majority of Latino/a students attend schools in urban areas, but those that do attend rural schools have limited opportunities to learn. Migrant families tend to move throughout the country because as migrant workers, they obtain seasonal or temporary work in agriculture and fishing. The Latino/a educational pipeline is difficult to manage, but it is especially challenging for families who are constantly moving, having no real sustainability. On top of non-stop moving, children struggle to learn the English language, making it difficult to be familiarized with the public school system. Similar to migrant students, undocumented immigrant students face challenges related to language barriers and unfamiliarity with U.S. school systems. In 2005, an estimate of 11.5 to 12 million undocumented people lives in the United States.⁸⁷ In other words, there are a significant number of undocumented Latino/a students in schools throughout the country whose mere

⁸⁵ Irizarry, *The Latinization of U.S. Schools*, 109.

⁸⁶ Burciaga Rebeca, Huber Perez Lindsay, and Solorzano Daniel G, "Going Back to the Headwaters, Examining Latina/o Educational Attainment and Achievement Through a Framework of Hope," in *Handbook of Latinos and Education: Theory, Research and Practice*, ed. Enrique G. Murillo, Sofia A. Villenas, Ruth Trinidad Galvan, Juan Sanchez Munoz, Corinne Martinez, and Margarita Machado-Casas (New York: Routledge, 2010), 426.

⁸⁷ Burciaga, "Going Back to the Headwaters," 427.

presence is often unacknowledged. Research has found that undocumented students status in the United States arise while in high school, when a social security is needed for work, college and financial aid applications.⁸⁸ As such, undocumented students face post-secondary educational challenges. Some of these challenges include lack of information about undocumented rights to campus resources and a hostile campus climate. However, one of the greatest barriers to postsecondary education for undocumented students is ineligibility for state and federal financial aid. Despite the countless obstacles, undocumented students have the opportunity to apply for private funding from local or national scholarships, along with support from the institution if connected with the correct individuals.

DREAMers have been described as young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children, who have lived and gone to school here, and who in many cases identify as American. This term originated from the bill in Congress, the Dream Act. The Dream Act or the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act were introduced in 2001. The Dream Act would provide a path to legalization for certain undocumented students. Undocumented students must have graduated from high school, are determined to have good moral character and who came to the United States, as children are eligible to earn citizenship. "Under this piece of legislation, undocumented students could receive permanent residency, completed a college degree or served two years in the military, they could become citizens."⁸⁹ Students who failed to earn a degree or

⁸⁸ Burciaga, "Going Back to the Headwaters," 427.

⁸⁹ Irizarry, *The Latinization of U.S. Schools*, 110.

serve in the military, they would lose their residency status and could be deported. Another important piece about the Dream Act is that it would allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition for public colleges and universities. Since undocumented students do not qualify for federal or state financial aid, having in state would make it less difficult to attend college. To date, the bill has not passed, however in December of 2010 the bill passed in the House of Representatives but had no support in the Senate to break the Republican filibuster and move to a vote. By denying the undocumented youth access to higher education, the world would be missing out on their talents. Giving undocumented students the opportunity to take use of the DREAM Act would allow them to continue to work hard in a nation that would only fabric from their hard work.

Being undocumented in the United States can stop student's dreams and ambitions from coming true, along with the everyday fear of deportation. In an effort to face some of the challenges that the undocumented youth face, in 2012 the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that certain people who arrived to the United States as children and met several guidelines would be given the opportunity to have a work permit. Some of the guidelines to be eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) include:

an applicant must have come to the United States before the age of 16; be between the ages of 15 and 31 as of June 15, 2012 (though people who are younger than 15 may apply once they reach that age); have continuously lived in the United States since June 15, 2007, and were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012; have no serious criminal history; and have either completed high school or obtained a GED, are currently in

school, or have been honorably discharged from a branch of the armed services.⁹⁰

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) has allowed many undocumented individuals feel safe in a country many call home. Persons granted DACA are protected from deportation for two years and provided with a work authorization permit, social security, and driver's license. These federal laws are needed for undocumented students to earn degrees or certificates. The fear of deportation is a fear that undocumented students have to face every single day. "Undocumented" is part of their identity, but in the eyes of society, it is a social stigma that holds specific characteristics that lead others to avoid, shun, reject, or ostracize them. Nevertheless, DACA represents a victory for undocumented youth and their allies. In it's first year, more than 573,000 people have applied and more than 430,000 people received deferred action.⁹¹ Latino/a immigrants leave their home country for a better future, a future with an education. An education that is dependent upon the educators to fulfill. Education is the key to success, success that can only be accomplished through the support, guidance, and mentorship of educators. Whether educators decide to segregate Latino students or not, it truly determines the success of many Latinos.

For years, the Latino/a community has undergone several anti-immigration laws, which many are still in place. Although DACA has benefited thousands of

⁹⁰ Wong Tom K. Garcia Angela S, Abrajano Marisa, FitzGerald David, Ramakrishnan Karthick, and Le Sally, "Undocumented No More, A Nationwide Analysis of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA," *Center for American Progress*, 2013, 8.

⁹¹ Wong, "Undocumented No More," 1.

undocumented youth, it does not solve the oppression many Latino/a students and parents experience inside and outside of the classroom. In the next section, el movimiento towards equality in the classroom and the strategies that were created to make change for the Latino/a community will be discussed.

The history of the Latino community has only proven the insubordination that continues to remain present. They have only been provided with limited access to separate, inferior, subtractive and non-academic instruction. Their multiple needs to succeed in the public schools were ignored, often focused on the assimilationist ideology and deficit perspectives. These perspectives were interpreted in ways that the differences brought by these children had to be eliminated. The patterns seen throughout the endless battles to accessing equitable education reflect the marginalization and conformist intentions.

Although some Latino students attended integrated schools, they were often enrolled in separate classrooms or separate school facilities. State officials played an enormous role in the expansion of school segregation by funding local requests for increased segregation. There were no legal statutes that mandated school segregation, as was the case with African Americans, it continued to increase through the years. Local authorities and administration would develop several reasons for segregating the Mexican children. Many argued that these children had lice, were dirty, or were irregular in attendance because of migration.⁹² Others mentioned that segregation was necessary because

⁹² San Miguel, Guadalupe Jr, and Donato Ruben, "Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America," *Handbook of Latinos and Education: Theory, Research and*

immigrants were inferior to white children. And many continued to argue that Mexican children slowed instructions of English speakers and had a language. Latino children in general received inadequate supply of school equipment, and per public expenditures were extremely low.⁹³ By good fortune, a few schools were equal in much respect to those found in Anglo communities.

In the city of Phoenix, Arizona, Mexican “Arizonans” were considered “white” for census calculations, even though they possessed a different heritage and culture. To reconcile these differences, Arizona courts allowed school districts to segregate groups of students for pedagogical reasons as long as the children’s educational opportunities were equal. Adolpho “Babe” Romo, sued Tempe Elementary School District No. 3 in October of 1925, because his four children, Spanish speakers, were not allowed to be in the same classroom as the white students. The district was sued because many parents, including Romo, believed that their students were not receiving an equal education under the law. Moreover, the district was also not employing certified teachers to meet the needs of the students, another reason why parents were frustrated because students were not being treated fairly. Judge Jenckes enforced a 193 Arizona Civil Code that required school districts to provide all children with the same education, including the employment of qualified teachers. Although the district continued to segregate

Practice, ed. Enrique G. Murillo, Sofia A. Villenas, Ruth Trinidad Galvan, Juan Sanchez Munoz, Corinne Martinez, and Margarita Machado-Casas (New York: Routledge, 2010), 30.

⁹³ San Miguel, “Latino Education,” 30.

Mexican children until the 1950s, it employed certified teachers to help meet some needs.

In July of 1930, the trustees of the Lemon Grove School District believed they had a situation that required immediate action because of the overcrowding as well as sanitary and moral disorders that was developed by Mexican children. Seventy children of Mexican descent were instructed to attend a two-room barn, which was in the “Mexican side of town.”⁹⁴ Without a doubt, parents were angered and all they wanted was for their children to remain at their former school site. The parents had no power or voice, so they quickly organized neighborhood meetings. This case was taken to the Superior Court of San Diego County on February 24, 1931 where the board members denied the allegations against them. They believed that they were in the right by sending the Mexican children to a facility, which claimed to be new, where the children deficiencies would be corrected. Many defendants argued that a separate school for the Mexican students was necessary because it would protect them from unnecessary competition with White students. Slowly but surely, the trial revealed that “the board’s action had little to do with the children’s welfare and safety insofar as the school’s locale placed White as well as Mexican children at risk because members of both groups had to cross the busy main boulevard to attend their respective schools.”⁹⁵ On the 30th of March 1931 the group of Mexican and Mexican-American parents and their children from the Lemon Grove community won a major victory in the battle

⁹⁴ E. Micahel Madrid, “The Unheralded History of the Lemon Grove Desegregation Case,” 2008, 15.

⁹⁵ Madrid, “The Unheralded History,” 18.

against school segregation. Although this case is low profile, it is a case that does matter. This case served as a testimony to the bravery and courage of Latino parents. This victory marked the beginning for the fight against segregation and Americanization.

Besides the happenings in the Lemon Grove incident, cases like *Independent School District v. Salvatierra* (1930) and *Westminster School District v. Mendez* (1947) also confronted segregation of Mexican American children. Educators argued that Mexican American children had certain limitations, such as their English language deficiency, intellectually inferior and part-time enrollment that lead them to the creation of separate but equal facilities. In *Independent School District v. Salvatierra*, the court accepted that the Mexicans differences made them inferior, approving segregation “based on language and migrant worker status”⁹⁶ On the other hand, in *Westminster School District v. Mendez*, the court held that segregating Mexican children was against the laws of California, also violating the Fourteenth Amendment.

Furthermore, Mendez who was born in Mexico attended integrated public schools in the early 1920s and became a U.S. Citizen. Along with his wife, from Puerto Rico, they had three children who were born in the United States and were fluent English speakers. Mendez children were rejected from attending public school with the white students, implying that there was separate school for Mexican American children. Mendez reached out to David C. Marcus, an attorney that had recently won a civil rights case for Mexican Americans (*Lopez v.*

⁹⁶ Carillo, “The Costs of Success,” 648.

Seccombe, 1944). Marcus advised Mendez that California had no law that required having separate schools for Mexican American children, the only groups that were legally separated by state law were Native Americans and Japanese, Chinese, or Mongolians. The lawsuit was filed on March 2, 1945. During the hearing, community members who attended the schools were asked to testify about the extreme nature of the segregation. On April 14, 1947, the decision was made that it was lawful to segregate Mexican American children, that such segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment right to the equal protection of the laws. This decision created a foundation to *Brown v. Board of Education*. *Mendez* was the first federal court case to be determined that it was unconstitutional to separate children, building a strong foundation for the *Brown* case. Although, *Mendez* is not cited in *Brown*, “the NAACP filed a friend-of-the court brief in *Mendez* and used *Mendez* as a test case to attempt to topple the separate but equal doctrine in public education.”⁹⁷

In 1948, *Delgado v. Bastrop Independent School District* case was sought to do for Texas what *Mendez* had done for California - bring an end to school segregation. The District Court ruled that segregation of the Mexican American students was illegal and it violated the student’s constitutional rights as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. The only setback with the District Court ruling was that it allowed the school district to “segregate first-grade Mexican American students who had English-language deficiencies in separate

⁹⁷ Aguirre, "Mendez v. Westminster School District," 322.

classrooms, but not in separate schools.”⁹⁸ The decision was not taken seriously throughout Texas school districts; it actually created a complex bureaucratic system of grievances and redress. Mexican Americans became disheartened in their quest for school desegregated.

Interesting enough, these cases in the late 1940s formed a foundation for *Hernandez v. Texas* and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). In *Hernandez*, the United States Supreme Court found that the refusing Mexican Americans from jury service based on race was violation of the equal protection clause. Although this case dealt with jury service, it was important to the issue of school desegregation because it provided evidence that Mexicans were considered “distinct and inferior.”⁹⁹ In *Brown*, public schools were desegregated and African American children were guaranteed quality education, comparable to white children. However, this case left Mexican Americans wondering if this decision applied to them or only to African Americans. The uncertainty remained for sixteen years, and was not resolved until 1970, where *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District* Mexican Americans were finally recognized and became the first federal court to recognize Mexican Americans as an “identifiable protected group”¹⁰⁰ and were given the same protection as African American schoolchildren.

⁹⁸ Valencia, Richard R. "The Mexican American Struggle for Equal Educational Opportunity in Mendez v. Westminster: Helping to Pave the Way for Brown v. Board of Education." *Teachers College Record Teachers College Rec* 107, no. 3 (2005): 412.

⁹⁹ Carillo, "The Costs of Success," 650.

¹⁰⁰ Carillo, "The Costs of Success," 650.

In *Lau v. Nichols*, Chinese-American students attending San Francisco public schools did not receive the proper education when being taught in a language they did not understand. Students found them assigned to classes, which were, conducted in English, limited them from learning what children are supposed to learn in school. Chinese Americans were excluded from the mainstream of American life. *Lau* represented only the tip of the iceberg. Many students came from poor backgrounds, whose home language is not English, and who not speak English at the time they enter public school. Many lived in urban areas, others are isolated in rural areas, particularly in the Southwest. For those that live in these areas, the home language is Spanish. The principal argument in *Lau* is that the San Francisco's school district's "English-only" policy denies non-English speakers equal protection of the laws. The district court found this argument unpersuasive, concluding that school districts have a uniform policy of teaching in English. "The majority in the court of appeals observed "every student brings to the starting line of his educational career, different advantages and disadvantages" which may affect his educational career "apart from any contribution by the school system."¹⁰¹ Schools felt that as long as every student was receiving the same treatment, the schools were not acting in a discriminatory fashion, which in this case was false. Non-English speakers were at a disadvantaged compared to English-speaking children. An "English-only" space is not designed to educate students who are

¹⁰¹ Sugarman, Stephen D., and Ellen G. Widess. "Equal Protection for Non-English-Speaking School Children: *Lau v. Nichols*." *California Law Review* 62, no. 1 (1974): 157.

foreign to a language they did not learn growing up. The decision to conduct classes only in English discriminates against non-English speaking children on the basis of nationality and race. Essentially, the public schools expected non-English speaking children to learn English by the time they started school, a task found very difficult for immigrant families. An “English-only” policy can stigmatize and isolate non-English speaking children and be denied the opportunity to experience a meaningful educational program to succeed in the future. The high illiteracy and dropout rates of non-English speaking students reflect the injustice that “English-only” policies can do to the educational attainment of these students. The Supreme Court relied on Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance to assure that students of a particular race, color, or national origin are not denied the same opportunities to obtain an education.¹⁰²

In 1967, Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas proposed a bill to provide assistance to districts in establishing programs for limited English speaking ability (LESA)¹⁰³ students. This bill recommended the teaching of Spanish as a native language, the teaching of English as a second language, allowing Spanish-speaking students the opportunity to appreciate their language and culture. Along with this bill, thirty-seven other bills merged into a single measure known as the Title VII of

¹⁰² Sugarman, "Equal Protection for Non-English-Speaking School Children," 169.

¹⁰³ Manzanares-Stewner, Gloria. "The Bilingual Education Act: Twenty Years Later," *The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Occasional Papers in Bilingual Education*, 1988, 1.

the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or the Bilingual Education Act, which was enacted in 1968. These bills took into account that LESA students had special needs and that in order to meet their interest for an equal educational opportunity, bilingual programs were required to address those needs.

In 1974, Congress passed the Equal Educational Opportunity Act, which states that no state shall deny the opportunity to an individual based on race, color, sex or national origin. The Supreme Court and President Nixon understand the importance of an education, in how it plays a fundamental role in our society. A report further indicated that the purpose of the EEOA was to provide LEP student an equal education: "As President Nixon has stated, these children will not have true equality of educational opportunity until these language and cultural barriers are removed."¹⁰⁴

In 1986, California passed Proposition 63, which amended their state constitution to declare English the official language. Legislators wanted the power to take the necessary steps to ensure that the role of the English language is preserved. However, English-only proponents have not been able to eliminate services such as bilingual voting assistance and bilingual education. Many proponents believe that by enforcing the English-only amendment, it will force immigrants to learn English, something they believe the immigrant population has not been doing. To their surprise, "98% of Hispanic parents think that knowing

¹⁰⁴ Berenyi, Jessica R, "'Appropriate Action,' Inappropriately Defined: Amending the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974," *Washington and Lee Law Review*, 2008, 647.

English is essential, and the waiting lists for English classes are tremendous, thereby indicating that legal coercion is unnecessary.”¹⁰⁵ The idea of assimilating immigrants into clones of “Americans”¹⁰⁶ is unnecessary, and it honestly it is a fear that Spanish will one day overtake English as the dominant language of the United States.¹⁰⁷

In essence, the costs of success for Mexican American students in the United States is problematic because they have to fit a structure that has been molded for white, middle-class identities. In “The Costs of Success: Mexican American Identity Performance with Culturally Coded Classrooms and Educational Achievement,” Andres L. Carrillo defines culturally coded classroom as, “an educational environment structures by the dominant culture to reflect white, middle-class values.”¹⁰⁸ In order to be successful in a space that has been formed to accommodate white students, Latino students are stripped of their culture and language to succeed. These students do not fit easily if they do not identify with the white, middle-class values of the classroom, making very tough. In order to have a decent education, Latinos must integrate, sacrificing their heritage and culture in order to succeed in white classrooms.

Devon W. Carbado and Mitu Gulati theorize that Mexican Americans in public school classroom have to “work their identities”¹⁰⁹ in ways to prove to the teacher that they are worthy. To succeed, they must value the classroom criteria

¹⁰⁵ Schuler, “Equal Protection and the Undocumented Immigrant,” 296.

¹⁰⁶ Schuler, “Equal Protection and the Undocumented Immigrant,” 296.

¹⁰⁷ Schuler, “Equal Protection and the Undocumented Immigrant,” 296.

¹⁰⁸ Carillo, “The Costs of Success,” 651.

¹⁰⁹ Carillo, “The Costs of Success,” 656.

rules, only speak English, complete assignments, study and complete tests, embracing the white middle-class curriculum. However, Mexican American students must do extra work to counter negative stereotypes that have been placed by the public school system. Unfortunately, Mexican American students must either negotiate their “sense of self”¹¹⁰ and personal happiness to achieve academic achievement or engage in behavior that will allow them to keep their identity by masking or conforming to the classroom values. Margaret Montoya describes this engagement as masking, “a way to present an acceptable face, speaking without a Spanish accent, hiding what [is] really felt - masking [the] inner [self].”¹¹¹

Masking does come with some costs; Margaret Montoya asserts that being masked is linked to cultural assimilation because assimilation requires Latinos to hide their true cultural selves.¹¹² Acculturated Latino students are seen as sellouts by other less successful Latino/as or even as “agringado” or one who has become white.¹¹³

Moreover, succeeding in school is often viewed by other Latinos as no longer being an authentic Mexican because the Latino student has assimilated and is successfully performing identity. This may result in successful Latinos being chided and ridiculed by other Latino students through “microaggressions” or put downs by members of their own race. The microaggressions may take the form of name calling such as “gabacho,” “pocho” or white-boy, all derogatory terms for acting “too white.”¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Carillo, “The Costs of Success,” 658.

¹¹¹ Carillo, “The Costs of Success,” 664.

¹¹² Carillo, “The Costs of Success,” 666.

¹¹³ Carillo, “The Costs of Success,” 669.

¹¹⁴ Carillo, “The Costs of Success,” 669.

The success of Latino/a students does not come without a cost. A student wins if they perform within the public school classroom but they lose a sense of self and a student, who does not perform, doesn't succeed but they stay true to their self. Ultimately, the success comes with costs and that is something that affected and continues to affect the identity of many Latino/a students. Mexican American history contains neglect and maltreatment. It is an experience that has affected the lives of many Mexican Americans. "Desegregation and integration were supposed to be the answer to segregation; however, integration only perpetuated the cycle of Latino underachievement by placing Latino students in classrooms that proclaimed white, middle-class knowledge as the "standard.""¹¹⁵No matter how far along Mexican Americans have come in history, they will continue to face significant costs from inside and outside spaces.

Furthermore, by the 1960s, the Mexican American population had reached six percent¹¹⁶ of the total U.S. population. Unfortunately, Mexican Americans still remained largely invisible. To gain support, some middle-class political leaders from the 1950s generation became involved in John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign, to help him attain the Mexican American vote. To their disillusion, Mexican Americans continued to be ignored after Kennedy was appointed into office. The young generation of the working-class became inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to participate in protest activities and organizations of the civil

¹¹⁵ Carillo, "The Costs of Success," 675.

¹¹⁶ Munoz, Carlos Jr, "The Chicano Movement, Mexican American History and the Struggle for Equality," *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung New York Office*, 2013, 7.

rights movement of the South due to the injustices they were facing as well.

Mexican American student activists were also exposed to more radical politics, and were also inspired by the by the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Two leaders, Luis Valdez and Roberto Rubalcava, from San Jose State College in California, joined the Marxist Progressive Labor Party. They experienced firsthand the Cuban Revolution and were inspired to produce the first Mexican American radical manifesto. The manifesto stated, "...we have traveled to Revolutionary Cuba [...] to emphasize the historical and cultural unanimity of all Latin American peoples, north and south of the border."¹¹⁷ Valdez continued his activism through the work of Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta as they advocated for farm workers. He wrote the "Plan de Delano," which was a call for a non-violent revolution and it was the first concrete call for political coalition among poor people of color in the United States.

By 1968, student advocates continued to voice their concerns through numerous student organizations, United Mexican American Students (UMAS) being one of them. UMAS played a significant role in organizing high school student protests against racism in segregated schools of East Los Angeles (LA).¹¹⁸ Protesters created signs protesting racist school policies and teachers and called for the hiring of Mexican American teachers and administrators, and classes on Mexican American history and culture. These signs caught the attention of the media, police, and the FBI, making the news across the country for the student's walkouts in the LA school system. The student walkouts ignited the emergence of

¹¹⁷ Munoz, "The Chicano Movement," 8.

¹¹⁸ Munoz, "The Chicano Movement," 9.

the Chicano Movement, which was not the original objective. On June 2, 1968, three months after the high school student strike, thirteen young Mexican American civil rights activist, who were identified as leaders of the emerging “Brown Power”¹¹⁹ movement, were charged by the Los Angeles Jury on conspiracy charges for their role in the high school strike. They were charged with disturbing the peace and quiet, and were characterized as members whom intentions were to radicalize Mexican American students and if found guilty, they would spent sixty-six years in prison. “The East L.A. Thirteen”¹²⁰ as they came to be known, fueled the emergence of radicalism among Mexican American students. Although all thirteen members were men, women played an important role in organizing community and campus meetings; the women essentially did the behind-the-scenes work. The student strikes in communities and on the college campuses, generated the framework for the creation of the different student activist organizations into a full-blown movement. These circumstances permitted the development of a larger Chicano civil right movement.

The Chicano Movement produced artists, poets, and writers whose work played a key role in the development of the ideology in the movement. Different radical groups produced different work to displace the movement’s quest for identity and power. Luis Valdez created the Teatro during his time spent in the farm worker movement. He left the movement to devote his time to develop the Teatro and refine his critique of the Mexican American middle class and its

¹¹⁹ Munoz, “The Chicano Movement,” 9.

¹²⁰ Munoz, “The Chicano Movement,”9.

assimilationist and accommodationist perspectives. However, the most lasting accomplishment of the Chicano movement was the establishment of Chicano Studies programs, research centers, and departments throughout the nation. These programs help produce a new generation of Chicana and Chicano intellectuals and scholars, who contributed to Mexican American experience in the United States. These accomplishments and the expansion of civil rights for Mexican Americans were possible because of the Chicano Movement. This movement opened the doors for many Latino/a community members for equal opportunity in employment and in higher education via affirmative action programs.¹²¹

Pursuing a higher education after high school is everyone's dream and goal, as for the Latino population, it is the American Dream. Latino parents leave their homelands to pursue a "better life" in the United States, a life that will ensure a better education. The different battles only state the inevitable; education is not accessible for all, especially for the Latino community. Although the different battles were fought and won, another pattern the Latino community dealt with was the curriculum. This pattern simply indicates that the curriculum for Latino children began to emphasize non-academic instruction at the expense of academic learning. The curriculum was diluted in ways that it focused on providing the Latino people more practical courses, especially vocational and general education classes.¹²² Consequently, the majority of secondary school students were provided with non-academic instruction and was trained for low or semi-skilled jobs and

¹²¹ Munoz, "The Chicano Movement," 16.

¹²² San Miguel, "Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America," 32.

minimal participation in American society. In addition, the curriculum constantly devalued, demeaned and distorted the children's linguistic and cultural heritage. A campaign against diversity emerged, which in part, led to the establishment of English only policies and the development of no Spanish-speaking. The devaluation of the Latino cultural heritage was apparent in Americanization programs established for this community and how the public school teachers, administrators, and staff felt towards the Mexican culture. The exclusion of the Mexican heritage was also apparent in the schools curricular textbooks and instructional materials - an issue still being faced today.

A few strategies were created to focus on the educational success for the Latino community. One strategy was that the Latino community was encouraged to enroll their children in Catholic, Protestant, and community-based schools. Attendance was encouraged to challenge conformist intentions and inferior or exclusionary educational opportunities. In the late 1890s, ethnic Mexicans opened a community school, El Colegio Altamirano, in Hebronville, Texas, a small rural community in the southern part of the state. The purpose of the school was to help the community maintain its cultural identity during the era of Americanization. A well-known scholar and resident of the area, Jovita Gonzalez noted that the area, "is making superhuman efforts to maintain a school, not only for its own welfare but primarily to honor the land which was given to us by the noble, liberty loving Mexican insurgents."¹²³ This effort led to opening other schools, aimed at

¹²³ San Miguel, "Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America," 33.

promoting ethnic identity and opposing the Americanization of Mexican children in the public schools and to promote their Mexicanization.¹²⁴

The second major strategy focused on promoting the inclusion of Latinos in school governance, administration, and instruction. In the community of San Felipe barrio of Del Rio, a small border town in West Texas, they established their own school district in order to ensure that they would be elected to policy making positions and would have the power to be the school's administrators and teachers. The type of work was made in Del Rio is uniquely important for two reasons. "First, it is an example of Mexican American agency in education. Second, it shows the diversity of approach to educational equality."¹²⁵ The members of the community used their determination to create a space where equality was achievable. It was these moments when legislators, educators, and community activities either developed policies or pressured school districts to hire more Latino in positions that would enable them to help the students in the classroom succeed. Furthermore, the most important piece of legislation was passed in New Mexico in 1909. This law called for the establishment of the Spanish American Normal School in El Rito, New Mexico. This school focused on the training of Hispanic teachers for Spanish-speaking children.

The third strategy focused on promoting the equitable access of students in all grade levels. Students developed organizations and initiatives to combat the issue of public education and public higher education for the Latino community.

¹²⁴ San Miguel, "Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America," 33.

¹²⁵ San Miguel, "Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America," 33.

Through the active work in the community, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) was established in Corpus Christi, Texas, in February 1929. It was created through several community groups, and many of its leaders were middle-class Mexican Americans.¹²⁶ At the time, Hispanics faced various forms of discrimination in the United States, which the organization sought to end. LULAC initially restricted membership to U.S. citizens, made English its official language, and promoted assimilation, often being considered one of the most conservative Latino civil rights group. Its efforts included English-language instruction, assistance with citizenship requirements and exams, and scholarships for education.¹²⁷ In addition, LULAC fought for equal treatment of Hispanics through negotiation with state and local leaders when possible but through the legal system when necessary. It was involved in such prominent cases as *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946), which ended the segregation of Mexican Americans in California schools.

LULAC members believed that in order to compete with other races, Mexican Americans had to acquire specific knowledge to elevate their own intellectual standards. Although LULAC condemned racism inside and outside of the classroom, they risked socializing Mexican Americans. It was then that LULAC argued that Mexican Americans were loyal citizens of the United States, and

¹²⁶ Kaplowitz, Craig A. "League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)." Encyclopedia - Britannica Online Encyclopedia. Accessed December 10, 2015. <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/1983528/League-of-United-Latin-American-Citizens-LULAC/>.

¹²⁷ Kaplowitz. . "League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)."

therefore should be granted equal protection. This work proved two things: LULAC only focused on providing equal protection to United States citizens that were admitted into the organization; and had no intention in claiming their Mexican culture, claiming that Mexican Americans were white. When the Social Security Administration decided to categorize Mexican Americans as “other races”¹²⁸ LULAC members were angered. It was this moment when they decided to claim their darkness or their affiliation as a minority group in the United States but this practice did not carry over into their cultural practices.

A response to the issues of school discrimination led to the emergence of a campaign to end discrimination in public education. Scholars have identified this movement as the quest for educational equality. The quest focused on four specific policies. First, through community newspapers, *juntas de indignacion* (indignation meetings)¹²⁹, and conferences, Mexican Americans protested and numerous amounts of discriminatory and exclusionary policies and practices. They also challenged the testing of Spanish-speaking children. One of the most important scholars that lead this initiative was George I. Sanchez. Sanchez was able to provide an extensive amount of validity, results and explanations of I.Q. tests to debunk the intelligent testing of Mexican American children. The third form of discrimination they contested was unequal funding of public education. Finally, Latinos, especially Mexican Americans, directly challenged school segregation. The

¹²⁸ Marquez, B. "The Politics of Race and Assimilation: The League of United Latin American Citizens 1929-40." *Political Research Quarterly*, 1989, 367.

¹²⁹ San Miguel, "Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America," 35.

Latino community identified segregation as the worst form of discrimination against Spanish-speaking children and as the major factor impeding the educational, social, and economic mobility of the community.¹³⁰ Mexican Americans protested, boycotted, and filed a variety of lawsuits against segregation in different states. Although Mexican Americans won most of the lawsuits, segregation practices continued to spread because of opposition from local school officials and white communities.

The history of Latinos in the United States is one of resistance, conquest, colonization, and marginalization. However, this history of oppression has led the Latino community towards making positive change in the community. Educational activism in New York City among Puerto Ricans can be seen as a conscious movement to be a voice for people who have experienced powerlessness and invisibility within the city's educational and political institution. Puerto Rican activism expressed their interests in creating an alternative institution like *Aspira* of New York, the Puerto Rican Community Development Project, the Puerto Rican Forum and *Universidad Boricua* for educational progress. The Puerto Ricans community organizations mission and practice was to commit to the "cultural self-affirmation of the Puerto Rican community, that is, a determined resistance to forced assimilation"¹³¹ The ideology to resist assimilation led to a collective effort

¹³⁰ San Miguel, "Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America," 35.

¹³¹ Mercado Carmen I, and Reyes Luis O, "Latino Community Activism in the Twenty-First Century," *Handbook of Latinos and Education: Theory, Research and Practice*, ed. Enrique G. Murillo, Sofia A. Villenas, Ruth Trinidad Galvan, Juan Sanchez Munoz, Corinne Martinez, and Margarita Machado-Casas (New York: Routledge, 2010), 30.

to assert their right to be both bilingual and bicultural in their everyday lives. Aspira's mission was to develop future Puerto Rican leaders in academia and demonstrate the importance of community service, which was a way to resist assimilation. In 1974, the Aspira Consent Decree, issued by U.S. District Court Judge Marvin E. Frankel, ordered the New York City Board of Education to implement transitional bilingual programs for students with limited English proficiency, in effect, establishing bilingual programs in New York City public schools. In 1983, the U.S. district judge ordered the New York City Board of Education to refrain from any action to implement Macchiarola's "opt-out memo"¹³² citing the board's heartless disregard for the needs of language minority students. "The coalition's deeper purpose and meaning was to rekindle the fires of the grass-roots campaign in the Puerto Rican communities of New York City for equal educational opportunity and community empowerment"¹³³ The Puerto Rican educational activists continued to respond to educational politics that do not serve Latino children and youth well. This specific moment in history is important because it was a place where Latinos from throughout the America have historically united forces in the struggle for self-determination, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Additionally, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) was created as a civil-rights and advocacy organization in the United States in the early 1960s to face some of the issues the Latino/a community was undergoing. NCLR is currently the largest national Hispanic organization, affiliated with more than 300 organizations

¹³² Mercado, "Latino Community Activism in the Twenty-First Century," 255.

¹³³ Mercado, "Latino Community Activism in the Twenty-First Century," 255.

in 41 U.S. states. NCLR can be traced back to the early 1960s, when a group of Mexican Americans in Washington DC, decided to bring all existing Latino/a groups together into a single united front. Organizing this group led to the National Organization of Mexican American Services (NOMAS), giving them the opportunity to present a proposal to the Ford Foundation, which would allow NOMAS to study Mexican Americans and the major issues they faced. A series of hearings on the status of Mexican Americans along with a second investigation of the Latino/a community were conducted. To carry out that study, Ford hired three Mexican Americans - Dr. Julian Samora, Dr. Ernesto Galarza; and Herman Gallegos. These three men traveled throughout the Southwest to meet other Latino/a activists to discuss the different strategies to help Mexican Americans. "These consultations resulted in the publication of two reports showing that Mexican Americans "faced numerous obstacles, especially with respect to poverty"; needed "more local, grassroots programmatic and advocacy organizations"; and could benefit from a sustained "national advocacy" campaign on their behalf."¹³⁴ To address these issues, the three men collaborated to co-found the Southwest Council of La Raza (SWCLR) in Phoenix, Arizona in February 1968. In the summer of 1968, SWCLR began to help establish and support in the community committed to "promoting empowerment, voter registration, leadership development, and other forms of advocacy."¹³⁵ At the end of 1972, SWCLR became a national organization and

¹³⁴ "NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA (NCLR)." Accessed March 29, 2016. <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/printgroupProfile.asp?grpId=153>.

¹³⁵ "NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA (NCLR)."

changed its name to the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) “to reflect its commitment to represent and serve all Mexican Americans in all parts of the country.”¹³⁶ The National Council of La Raza is one of many initiatives programs created to fight for the civil rights of the Latino/a community and the injustices that they face and continue to face in the United States.

The countless court cases, English-only policies, classroom inequality, and different forms of oppression provide hard evidence about the fights and battles the Latino community went through for educational equity. However, the Latino/a community did not give up, they came together as a community to figure out different strategies to stop from being pushed back. Although the war is not over, learning about the history and the form of activism that had to be created to fight for an education in the United States allow today and future leaders better serve the community.

¹³⁶ NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA (NCLR)."

Consejos

The experiences of a person of color are caused through an intersection of racism, classism, sexism and other forms of oppression. According to Dolores Delgado Bernal (2002), LatCrit “addresses the concerns of Latinas in light of both our internal and external relationships in and with the worlds that have marginalized us.”¹³⁷ Nevertheless, both CRT and LatCrit are two lenses that help understand and improve the experiences of students of color. These element can be viewed as strength to acknowledge that the life experiences of students of color are unique. Counterstories, narratives, and *testimonios* are a form of expressing student's unique life stories. A life story is used to overcome the different forms of oppressions a person of color experiences. CRT and LatCrit lenses are used to examine the epistemology of Chicanos/Chicanas experience. This epistemology challenges the historical and ideological representation of Chicanas and is grounded in the experiences of Chicanas in their community. Community and family knowledge is taught through legends, *corridos*, and storytelling. It is through these specific cultural ways of teaching and learning that knowledge is shared about “segregation, patriarchy, homophobia, assimilation, and resistance.”¹³⁸ The knowledge that is passed down by generations allows the future to survive in everyday life. My mother taught me how to be a powerful and independent woman through her own life story. As I was growing up she engraved in me the

¹³⁷ Bernal, D. (2002). “Critical Race Theory, Latino Critical Theory, and Critical Raced-Gendered Epistemologies: Recognizing Students of Color as Holders and Creators of Knowledge,” *Qualitative Inquiry*, 108.

¹³⁸ Bernal, “Critical Race Theory, Latino Critical Theory,” 113.

importance of an education because she did not have the opportunity to earn a degree. Her life experience allowed her to educate me to learn the different forms of oppression that could potentially harm my everyday life.

Guided by Chicana feminist theorizations, *consejos* (advice) and *testimonios* (testimonials) help construct knowledge through narratives that originate from personal experiences, which help Latino/a student's challenge social injustices. *Testimonios* in educational research helps us understand the oppression that exists within educational institutions by showcasing the sort of biases that otherwise go unnoticed.¹³⁹ Mexicans define *consejos* as the telling about values, symbols, and ways of thinking and knowing, something that is done through storytelling.¹⁴⁰ Stories are an unpacked *consejo* utilized to teach lifelong lessons. These tools are very important to the Latino/a culture, emphasizing the importance of *familismo* along with respect. *Familismo* is very important in the Latino/a culture, ensuring that students receive all of the *consejos* at home. Latino/a parents utilize storytelling as a way to educate their children. Stories help the community develop tools and strategies for the daily battles. Latino/a students are oppressed daily by society because of the color of their skin, culture and their inability to speak the "native tongue." If it wasn't for my mother's *consejos* I wouldn't of been able to understand the world outside of my home.

¹³⁹ Esparaza, Elizabeth. "'Como la Gente': A Personal Testimonio of Effective Pedagogies of the Home Devalued by Mainstream Education," *McNair Scholars Journal*, 14.

¹⁴⁰ Bernal, Dolores. *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006. 31.

Parents may not have the tools to help their child (ren) navigate the school system, but the teaching and learning of the home allow Latino/a to draw on their own cultures and sense of self to resist oppression. The knowledge that is passed from one generation to the next helps future generations survive in everyday life, by providing certain situations and explanations of why certain things play out the way they do. Dolores Delgado Bernal states, “Chicana college students demonstrate that they learn from the home how to engage in subtle acts of resistance by negotiating, struggling, or embracing their bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, and spiritualities.”¹⁴¹ The knowledge that is provided from the home not only give Latino/a students the chance to view their experience through a different lens but it helps them appreciate the type of tools that they are supplied, tools that look differently in other cultures. The Latino/a culture focuses on the importance of home knowledge, allowing parents to educate their children through a different approach. The lack of educational background deters parents to provide tools in a space where they have zero experience, but the tools that can be provided are those that will help their children survive outside of the home.

Parents have historically advocated for their children’s educational future. They have endured some of the toughest battles to provide their children with wisdom and *consejos* in how to maneuver the world outside of the home. As the oldest of four, I expected to struggle through my academic journey because I had nobody to lean on; all I had were the tools and values that my mother taught me. Now, I provide my three younger siblings and the community with the tools and

¹⁴¹ Bernal, *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life*, 115.

information that they all need to succeed. Myself, along with other Latino/a students are testaments of the importance of providing Latino/a parent's and the community different ways to be involved in the journey of the student.

The University of Oklahoma, Latinos Without Borders Program

At the University of Oklahoma, the Latinos Without Borders (LWB) Program was created to combat the exact issues that were raised in the previous sections. The program is an initiative to connect undergraduate students with high schools to provide them guidance, tools, and empowerment, essentials not always provided at the home or in the classroom. The following section, the history, the importance, and necessity of LWB will be explained.

The Latinas Without Borders Program was dedicated to raising high-school Latinas' awareness of the importance of education, a college degree, and of self-empowerment. By empowering these young ladies, they will have the strength and skills needed to overcome the cultural barriers that tend to hold Latinas back. In its first year of operation, the Latinas without Borders Program has been able to reach approximately 200 young girls from the Oklahoma City area through two conferences held at OU, a summer institute program, and school visits. As we worked with students and teachers we realized that a one-day conference is a great way to start building a relationship with these young ladies, but more is needed in order to truly make a lasting impression in their lives. This is where the idea for a summer institute came from. By inviting these ladies back to OU and engaging them in various workshops and activities that support what they learned during the one-day conference, we will have a better chance of changing, what many times is a negative perception of themselves.

The program started out as a one-day conference. In our first year, we were able to host 75 young women, three teachers and 25 volunteers. In our second

year, we had approximately 90 students, 20 volunteers, and seven teachers. The response to our one-day conference was overwhelming. Both students and teachers alike have responded to the program material and workshops in a positive and encouraging manner. After we surveyed the conference participants, 95% of students indicated that their interest in college has changed for the better after attending the Latinas without Borders Conference. One student responded by stating, “My interest in going to college changed because I know how that are no obstacles that I can’t overcome.” Another student responded by saying, “My interest in attending OU has changed. Before, I would always tell people I wasn’t going to OU Because it’s too big. I believe this conference changed that. I may go to OU!”¹⁴²

To stay connected with the young ladies, the first Latinas without Borders Summer Institute took place June 1st - June 3rd, 2012. After the camp, 100% of participants indicated that they felt more empowered to openly discuss and tackle the problems they were facing at home and in the community. Since our first year, we have opened the conference up to male participants and increased to 250 students from more Oklahoma schools. Our camp has moved to the fall semester and, this past fall 2015, we opened the camp to male students. Additionally, we have added various parent outreach activities including ‘Parent Nights’ for camp participants, parent workshops and end of camp parent banquet. We know that is vital to student’s success to have their parents receive the same information in regards to higher education. By creating a team within the family, our conference

¹⁴² Latino Student Life, The University of Oklahoma, 2012.

participants are more likely to achieve their higher education goals. On top of that, we wanted to continue providing our students with more tools after the camp, thus, the team decided to create a 'Special Projects' position to provide monthly tools and activities to further assist them in their academic journey. Today and tomorrow's goal is to ensure that the needs of the community are met and will be accomplished by adjusting the services Latinos Without Borders provides.

As mentioned, the Latinos Without Borders Program goal is to educate high-school Latino/as about the importance of education, a college degree, and self-empowerment. Fifty-three high-school Latino/as were given the opportunity to attend the Fall Camp, which was held on October 16th, 2015 - October 18th, 2015 at the OU campus. The camp allowed the committee and volunteers more time to connect with the participants while providing more resources that will help them on their journey to college and a successful future.

The Latinos Without Borders team sent out a survey to all sixty campers to evaluate their camp experience. Of those 53 campers, 30 have taken the survey. Of all 30 responses, they all had an empowering camp experience. The campers were asked to evaluate the workshops/activities, facilities, and materials between 0(poor) and 5(excellent). See appendix A. The second portion of the survey included a series of short answer questions to further evaluate the success of the camp. Below you will find the questions along with a few responses. See Appendix B. Appendix B provides only a few of many positive remarks from the 2015 campers. Although we did not receive all fifty-three responses, the survey still indicated the success of the 2015 camp. We hope to continue furthering our

services outside of the camp and conference to ensure that high school students are given the necessary resources throughout the year.

Furthermore, for years, Latino/a students have been deprived of the most valuable tool in the United States, an equal chance to earn an education. Through numerous battles of segregation, “English-only” policies, and assimilation, Latino/a students have proven time after time their desire to earn a degree. Latinos Without Borders is therefore important, because its’ role is to ensure that students are mentored, educated, and empowered to reach a goal/dream after high school graduation. Whatever that goal may be, we instill in them the options they have as members of the community. LWB is unique because it is student led, and as students that were once part of the system, we understand the difficulty of undergoing a process that is created for marginalized students to fail. Living an experience unique to the Latino/a history, has allowed many to pave the way for the future of many students that were once told that they were not going to make it to college. As leaders, we have impacted numerous students who have allowed us to tell our stories, allowing many students to believe in their own stories.

Immigrants’ students have also struggled to accomplish their academic goals due to their illegal status, financial burdens, preparation for higher education, and family ties. In the court decision of Plyler v. Doe in 1982

upheld the rights of both documented and undocumented immigrant parents to send their children to American public schools. This law made illegal (a) asking parents for documentation of citizenship status or social security numbers when registering their children in K-12 public schools. (b) Schools sharing knowledge of a child’s

immigration status with other individuals or government agencies that enforce immigration laws.¹⁴³

Because of this court decision, both documented and undocumented students are allowed to pursue an equal education like everybody else in this nation. This decision is one reason for pushing Latino/a students to graduate high school so they can pursue a baccalaureate degree. Many students would be the first in their families to pursue postsecondary education. While, anxieties, dislocations, cultural as well as social and academic transitions are all new to them, but their drive and passion will not stop them from achieving their goals. It is extremely important to have Latino/as at the University level due to the numerous sacrifices their Immigrants parents had to make to pursue the American Dream. But what can be done to ease some of the endeavors Latino/as face? In states like Oklahoma, multiple programs, like LWB, exist to educate, empower, and inform high school students about the importance of a college degree. It is the responsibility of professionals and educators to provide resources to students of color, not only because of the limitations that are placed in front of them but because they need guidance toward achieving their goals.

Latino/a students in the United States find themselves in schools with limited resources, poor schooling conditions, tracked into remedial programs and feel teachers do not care about their well-being, let alone their academic success.

¹⁴³ Lad, Kaetlyn and Braganza, Desiree, "Increasing Knowledge Related to the Experiences of Undocumented Immigrants in Public Schools," *Educational Leadership and Administration: Teaching and Program Development*, 2013, v24, 2.

¹⁴⁴ “Forty-six percent of Latinas and 49% of Latinos were pushed out of school before graduating from high school, compared to just 16% of White women and 17% of White men in 2000.”¹⁴⁵ Latino students are pushed out of school, when the school is ineffective in retaining the student. Many Latino/a student’s debate about staying or leaving due to the mere fact that they feel disengaged and alienated from the school, teachers, staff, and school administrators who have low academic expectations for this group of students. The unequal accesses to educational opportunities for Latino/a student’s limit them from being college ready. In essence, the costs of success for Mexican American students in the United States is problematic because they have to fit a structure that has been molded for white, middle-class identities. Despite the numerous challenges and obstacles, Latino/a student’s aspire to beat the odds and pursue higher education. On the other hand, students who are pushed away may never find the motivation to pursue a higher education. The Latinos Without Borders Program hopes that by targeting students as freshmen and sophomores in high school, they will aspire to move beyond the negative perceptions and expectations that are set for this specific group.

The percentage of Hispanic high school graduates that enroll in college has historically been lower than any other racial or ethnic group. However, recent data

¹⁴⁴ Burciaga, Rebeca, Huber Perez Lindsay, and Solorzano Daniel G, “Going Back to the Headwaters, Examining Latina/o Educational Attainment and Achievement Through a Framework of Hope,” *Handbook of Latinos and Education: Theory, Research and Practice*, ed. Enrique G. Murillo, Sofia A. Villenas, Ruth Trinidad Galvan, Juan Sanchez Munoz, Corinne Martinez, and Margarita Machado-Casas (New York: Routledge, 2010), 429.

¹⁴⁵ Burciaga, “Going Back to the Headwaters,” 429.

shows that Latinos are now enrolling in college at a higher rate than any other group. 70% of recent Latino high school graduates had enrolled in college; this is only true for 66% of Whites and 56% of African Americans.¹⁴⁶ The problem now is that they are not graduating. Despite the high enrollment rate, less than 1 out of 10 Latinos has earned a bachelor's degree.¹⁴⁷ This low number can be attributed to the simple lack of knowledge faced by many Hispanic families. Many of these Latinos are first-generation students so neither they nor their parents are fully aware of what is needed to go to college. Many do not have access to information regarding deadlines or scholarship opportunities so college success becomes less attainable. Other dominant issues leading to college dropout include family gender roles, low self-esteem, marriage, economic status, and undocumented status. The Latinos Without Borders committee is confident that by targeting this population as soon as they enter high school, the likelihood of them dropping out of high school is lowered. By providing valuable resources, showing them the value education, and teaching them how to make positive and responsible decisions, this population will be more likely to complete high school and graduate college. Many of the committee members and volunteers come from similar backgrounds, so they can better relate to what these students are going through and the challenges they face in order to further support them. By demonstrating this relationship to these young students, we can show them that college graduation is an attainable goal.

¹⁴⁶ Santiago, Deborah A, Galdeano Calderon, Emily, and Taylor, Morgan, "The Condition of Latinos in Education: 2015 FactBook," *Excelencia in Education*, 2015, 7.

¹⁴⁷ Santiago, "The Condition of Latinos in Education."

The lack of substantial support from postsecondary institutions has also lead minority students to leave college at a higher rate. Research shows that there are a number of variables that leads to the odds of students reaching success in college. Zamani's research found variables that affected the success of minority students, which included:

(1) personal characteristics (motivation, previous achievement, and intellectual ability), (2) demographic characteristics (age, gender, and race), (3) cultural characteristics (ethnic background and socioeconomic status), (4) institutional characteristics (campus site, regional location, selectivity, control, curriculum, and enrollment), and (5) institutional climate (student-faculty interaction, student activities, commuter or residential campus).¹⁴⁸

The lack of financial resources, poor study habits, full-time employment, and parents with low levels are other factors that lead to higher student dropouts.

The root to the issue has been detected, however, little focus has been given to formulate a program to seek the successes of minority students. Increasing retention and college completion for all students is essential, especially for the Latino/a population. Because every state faces unique challenges to support Latino/a students, it is important to focus not only on our Latino Oklahomans but all minority students to bridge the current the gap that exist in educational attainment. Vincent Tinto worked on a framework to explain student-leaving behavior from higher education. The Tinto retention model proposes that minority student drop out rate is based off a positive or negative experience through

¹⁴⁸ Zamani, Eboni M, "Sources and Information Regarding Effective Retention Strategies for Students of Color," *New Directions For Community Colleges*, 2000, no. 112 (Winter2000 2000), 96.

individual intentions and commitments.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the greater the student's level of integration into the social and academic systems of the college, the greater is his or her subsequent commitment to the college and the more positive the retention rate. Astin believes that the more committed to the institution, the higher likelihood of success. Social and academic integration is therefore key to greater success of students being retained.¹⁵⁰

Marcos Pizarro mentions the importance of mentoring in, *Chicanas and Chicanos in School*, stating that encouragement from a mentor leads to academic success.¹⁵¹ In the study that he conducted, the most successful students all had a mentor who not only guided them toward achieving their educational goals but also helped them understand that the hostile racial-political climate they experienced could be challenged by their educational achievement. These mentors help the students make sense of the painful world they lived in, while also focusing on the students' work on obtaining academic success. Mentorship is one of Latinos Without Borders focus because studies like the one performed in, *Chicanas and Chicanos in School* prove that mentorship is essential in ensuring the success of a student. As mentioned, the team has lived experiences that only a first-generation student without mentors would understand, equipping them with the knowledge to mentor future first-generations. It is satisfying to see many of the LWB alumnae

¹⁴⁹ Seidman, Alan. "Minority Student Retention: Resources for Practitioners." *New Directions for Institutional Research* 2005, no. 125 (2005): 10.

¹⁵⁰ Seidman, "Minority Student Retention," 11.

¹⁵¹ Pizarro, Marcos. *Chicanas and Chicanos in School: Racial Profiling, Identity Battles, and Empowerment*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005. 63.

attending either a two or four year institution, pursuing a higher education. Many of the alumnae credit LWB for the significant amount of guidance and mentorship that was provided to them during their journey to college. Not only does mentorship provide encouragement to achieve academic success, it also helps create strong relationships with individuals one never imagine having - it helps build bridges. We build bridges with these students to help them create a future, a future they have only dreamt about. Many Latino/a student's believe their goals are not achievable and that is only because of the lack of positive relationships. The Latinos Without Borders ensures students are aware of the mentorship we can provide, because just like them, we were once on the same bus facing similar barriers and struggles.

The needs of the community continue to increase, due to this need, the Latinos Without Borders team established a new position the fall of 2016. Vice-President of Special Projects was created to continue to provide workshops, resources, tools, and community building time after the conference and camp. In *School Kids/Street Kids*, Nilda Flores-Gonzalez mentions the importance of finding a niche, a safe space.¹⁵² The support that is provided by these niches provides students with avenues to succeed academically, connect with community members, and develop other identities. Nilda Flores-Gonzalez found that students who are involved in co-curricular programs have lower dropout rates than those

¹⁵² Flores-González, Nilda. *School Kids/street Kids: Identity Development in Latino Students*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2002, 75.

who do not participate. Other studies show that the dropout rate was lower among at-risk students who had participated in extracurricular activities¹⁵³, however, not all programs affect student retention. Furthermore, co-curricular participation also has a positive effect on school performance, having lower absentee and tardiness and a lower incidence of trouble with peers and staff, along with maintaining good academic standing.¹⁵⁴ Another important factor of co-curricular activities is the option of an alternative route to achievement for students who are not high academic achievers. Students who are given opportunities to excel outside of the classroom, allow them to feel a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem. Through LWB, we provide students opportunities to engage outside of the classroom, whether it is volunteering on the weekend, ACT preparation, cook outs, or college/tech resource fair, we give them the ability to see their options outside of the classroom. Many first generation Latino/a students are misinformed or not well informed about their options outside of the classroom, and for many, school may not be for them. Therefore, it is important to engage students outside of the classroom to showcase not only what's available out in the world, but to allow them to see the opportunities available to them are endless. This is one of many reasons why LWB is important in the community - it engages students after the programs, ensuring that all students know about the options available to them.

¹⁵³ Flores-González, *Kids/street Kids: Identity Development in Latino Students*, 84.

¹⁵⁴ Flores-Gonzalez, *Kids/street Kids: Identity Development in Latino Students*, 84.

In addition, LWB also created the family engagement program, to supply the parents the resources they need to know about how to stay engaged in their child(ren) educational journey. Whether it is in high school or in college, parental involvement plays an important role in the lives of many Latino/as. Parents want to be active in the lives of their children to ensure that they receive the proper education. However, parents are often confused by the school structure and implicit expectations. Parental involvement in schools fosters students' academic success and is prominent for establishing positive relationships between the teacher and the parents. It may contradict the fact that Latino parents want the best for their children by not being active, but that is only because immigrant families carry hope about U.S. schools and value education as a tool for advancement.

Marcos Pizarro found that parents were often Latino/a students' strongest supporters or motivators for school success. One type of familial support they value is observational influences. Students find motivation and strength from seeing the struggle and commitment made by their family members. Additionally, parents who are setting an example of hard work and commitment has an important effect on their children, as they are seen as a motivation. Although parents may not have the answers to all of the questions, their commitment, hard work and willingness to support their children through an unknown journey pushes many students to achieve academic success. The Latinos Without Borders Program researches and surveys the different programs that as a team, we can provide to them. As students, we do not know what it means to raise a child or how

to parent one, but as students who have undergone the different educational struggles, we are equipped with the background experience to inform parents. We feel confident that by establishing a relationship between the parent and child, it will allow all parties to better understand the process, the difficulty, and the challenges that one must go through to make college a dream come true.

The Latinos Without Borders program provides an opportunity for Latina/o high school students across the state of Oklahoma to visit the University of Oklahoma and access resources that promote higher education, youth empowerment, and mentorship. The program is not perfect, and although it can use more direction and structure, its' goal to empower the youth is one that has benefited hundreds of students across the state. Today, the team is constructed of past LWB participants and first generation students who struggled through the educational pipeline. The LWB team is passionate and dedicated towards ensuring that higher education, youth empowerment, and mentorship are being fulfilled in the programming we construct. Personally, this experience has been life changing, and I am humbled that many of the participants who apply and enroll at the University, attributes this to their participation in the program. As the person who made the initiative to make certain changes in the program, I am proud to leave behind a legacy that will ensure the success of the program to make an everlasting difference in our future community leaders.

El Futuro

Studies have proven that parents with low educational attainment or none at all, are less likely to successfully support or help their children achieve their goals or passions that they wish to pursue. The different stories in Putnam¹⁵⁵ do not illustrate the Latino/a experience in how parental education, socio economic, family structure, human and social capital play a role in the level of education the child will achieve. I stopped and thought about my own narrative in how my parents are not educated. The highest level they achieved was the 9th grade, but is still working toward ensuring that their children are given the opportunities to succeed after graduation. Although my narrative is one different than other Latino/a students, the experience that we face as a marginalized population in a space that has oppressed us for decades is one that is hard to progress in. The classroom, human and social capital, income and poverty, and educational and professional attainment, will help illustrate the importance of outreach programs like, Latinos Without Borders (LWB). By focusing on these five points, it will help analyze the current imbalance that exist inside and outside of the classroom that prevent many Latino/a students from achieving academic success after high school. This imbalance will conclude the importance of having outreach programs in the community to work together as community members to ensure the success of the student after high school.

¹⁵⁵ Putnam, Robert D. *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*.

The lack of teacher preparation is one factor in low parental involvement. Bracke and Corts note that “many teacher education programs do not provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to interact with families in their field experiences, meaning that a teacher candidate may have had little practical experience in working with parents – and thus may be hesitant to work with parents.”¹⁵⁶ Teachers are well prepared to teach in the classroom, but as Bracke and Corts mentioned, teachers are not provided with the necessary field experience to understand the disconnect that exist between teachers and parents. Unfortunately, the lack of parental involvement yields to teachers’ inability to effectively engage with parents. Interesting enough, teachers and counselors tend to believe that Latino parents are not active in the lives of their children because they do not care. Latino parents assume that school-based involvement is not a part of their role and instead assume that it is the teacher’s role. Along with believing that school-based involvement is solely the responsibility of the teacher, Latino parents have barriers that limit their participation: low socioeconomic status, parents’ knowledge, skills, time, and energy; and family culture. Though teachers have negative perceptions of Latino parents, researchers have found Latino/a parents to value education because they perceive it as a means to obtain well-paid jobs for their children.

¹⁵⁶ Bracke, Deborah, and Corts, Daniel, “Parental Invovlement and the Theory of Planned Behavior,” *Education* 133, no. 1, (Fall 2012), 191.

Therefore, teachers play a huge role in the lives of students, especially to Latino immigrants who are learning to navigate the education system and who are barely learning English. In the 2003-2004 school year, only 6.2% of the United States teachers were Latino.¹⁵⁷ “Teachers often fail to consider the diversity among Latinos, at times peaking about different cultures interchangeably and referring to Latino students, collectively, as “the Mexican students,” thereby undermining students’ sense of connection to the school.”¹⁵⁸ History has proven how Latino/a students have been pressured to learn the English language. If the student does not know the language, he/she may not succeed in the American schools and system. However, the classroom model in the United States has been set-up for only the Anglo community to succeed. Since the Latino/a population is growing in numbers, taking over the K-12 public schools, the model should be changed to ensure the success of not only the Latino/a student but also all marginalized communities in the United States. Teachers must stay attuned to the needs of their students and to their classroom realities, ensuring that he/she creates a curriculum that will help them succeed. The idea of creating curriculum that will benefit the student is acceptable, but watering down the curriculum would only degrade and disrespect the student.

Parents may not have the tools to help their child (ren) navigate the school system, but the teaching and learning of the home allow Latino/a to draw on their

¹⁵⁷ Hill, Nancy E., and Kathryn Torres. "Negotiating the American Dream: The Paradox of Aspirations and Achievement among Latino Students and Engagement between Their Families and Schools." *Journal of Social Issues* 66, no. 1 (2010): 95-112.

¹⁵⁸ Hill, "Negotiating the American Dream," 98.

own cultures and sense of self to resist oppression. The knowledge that is passed from one generation to the next help the future generations survive in everyday life by providing certain situations and explanations and why certain things play out the way they do. Dolores Delgado Bernal states, “Chicana college students demonstrate that they learn from the home how to engage in subtle acts of resistance by negotiating, struggling, or embracing their bilingualism, biculturalism, commitment to communities, and spiritualities.”¹⁵⁹ The knowledge that is provided from the home not only gives Latino/a students the chance to view their experience through a different lens but it helps them appreciate the type of tools that they are supplied, tools that look differently in other cultures. The Latino/a culture focuses on the importance of home knowledge, allowing parents to educate their children through a different approach so they can survive outside of the home.

Schools, Families, and Communities, by James Coleman and Thomas Hoffer, explains the differences between human and social capital. According to the authors, human capital instills in individual’s certain skills and abilities to make them more productive. On the other hand, social capital can be described as the weakness of links between family members as well as the disconnect that exist among the institutions of the community. James Coleman and Thomas Hoffer indicate several benefits schooling provides to the person, “the person who invests

¹⁵⁹ Bernal, Dolores Delgado. *Chicana/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006, 115.

the time and resources in building up this capital reaps its benefits, in the form of a higher-paying job, more satisfying or higher work status, or even the pleasure of greater understanding of the surrounding world.”¹⁶⁰ The school's goal is to provide the student with the necessary resources to achieve higher education, building them into successful professionals. Unfortunately, a family member can possess a great deal, or a small amount, of human capital but if it is not complemented by social capital, it is irrelevant to the child’s educational growth. According to the “expectation theory,”

higher expectations and standards will be held by teachers for those students from families with high-status, while those students from low-status families will be stigmatized with the reputations of their parents, low expectations for their achievement will be held by teachers, and adult members of the community outside the school will treat them differently.¹⁶¹

Having certain expectations for specific groups of students lashes determinant factors for their success. As educators, they must remain neutral, solely focusing on ensuring the student is receiving all that they need to become successful.

Educators must take into account their background and necessities as students have different needs. One model should not be created, but a number amount to ensure the needs of the students are met. Additionally, the reading states that a student from a disadvantaged background may do less well in a school surrounded by strong functional communities, but evidence also indicates that social capital is valuable for young persons from families in which the social capital or the human

¹⁶⁰ Coleman, J., Hoffer, T, “Schools, Families, And Communities,” *The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education*, Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications, 1987, 64.

¹⁶¹ Coleman, “Schools, Families, And Communities,” 67.

capital of the parents is weak. Challenges arise when students step into a space where they are expected to succeed but at the same time, it is unknown to them. A student can be placed in a space with all of the strong functional communities in hopes that they will gain social and human capital but they can be pushed away if they are unable to create strong ties with those that do not look like them.

“Exceptions to the Rule: Upwardly Mobile White and Mexican American High School Girls,” by Julie Bettie, conducted a study of working-and middle-class white and Mexican American girls, which illustrated the importance of human and social capital in relationship to color and race/ethnicity. The experience of Luisa is one fairly similar to many first generation Latino/a students.

I think it is harder for Mexican American students because I think most white people have like money, like their parents, they went to college, and they have money. They have an education. They white students don't understand because, you know, their parents got to go to college, you know, had an education, they all have jobs.¹⁶²

Some to most parents may have little to no education, lacking benefits most white middle-class individuals possess. Most Mexican-American girls in the study understand what it means to be poor and without an education, which is why they identify their motivation to escape the real hard labor. Although these girls did not have a community, they did not want to give up. As mentioned, they wanted to escape the real hard labor that their parents experience, a motivation to succeed even if placed in a space where they did not feel comfortable. I have no doubt that

¹⁶² Bettie, Julie, “Exceptions to The Rule: Upwardly Mobile White and Mexican American High School Girls,” *The Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education*, Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications, 2002, 361.

second and third generation Latino/a students will succeed in the current structure for academic attainments. Non-educated and disconnected parents do not know where to start when it comes to their children's academic journey towards higher education, but those students that are willing to make certain sacrifices for the benefit of tomorrow's future will be instilled in them the importance of human and social capital.

It has been determined that low-income students as a group have performed less than high-income students on most measures of academic success - "including standardized test scores, grades, high school completion rates, and college enrollment and completion rates."¹⁶³ To fully understand the growing income achievement gap, it is necessary to look at the social history in the United States. First, income inequality has changed dramatically, making the gap in income between high-income and low-income families much greater. This means that high-income families have far more resources, in comparison to low-income families, to invest in their children's development and schooling. Secondly, upward social mobility has become more difficult, partly because of declining economic growth. While the economy was growing in the 1950s and 1960s, the majority of the children in the states (white children) grew up in families where their parents were more financially stable than what their parents ever experienced growing up. Third, education success has become essential to economic success. The economy has become into a low-skill, low-wage sector, and high-skill, high-wage

¹⁶³ Reardon, Sean F, "The Widening Income Achievement Gap," *Structure of Schooling: Readings in the Sociology of Education*, Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications, 2013, 288.

information sector that without an education there is no economic success. Fourth, the educational success has changed in the past few years, centralizing it all around test scores. As the importance of testing increases, the less likelihood parents of low economic backgrounds will be able to provide their children with the necessary resources. Finally, children in high-income families are usually raised by two parents, both with college degrees, while children of low-income are more likely than ever to be raised by a single mother with a low level of education. Family income plays a direct correlation in how families are able to provide resources to their children's development.

What can be done to help students? The U.S. schools are thought as equalizers, striving to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to learn, develop, and thrive. However, it is unrealistic for an institution to conduct programs and strategies on their own to eliminate today's disparities in academic success. Sean F. Reardon suggests three specific areas where school-based strategies may be more effective: 1) devote resources and efforts to earlier grades, 2) more time in school (year around, after-school or summer programs) and 3) stimulate curriculum and instruction, and adequate school resources.¹⁶⁴ Unfortunately, schools have become segregated based on income, meaning that school districts can work against this by developing student assignment systems that promote socioeconomic diversity.

A challenge Latino/a students find while in college is the difficulty of leaving their home, fearing that they may not find a home some place else. Creating

¹⁶⁴ Reardon, "The Widening Income Achievement Gap," 292

a space for Latino/as to call home, a space where they can go to when they need help and support is needed for students to build community. This would be a great way to retain students - students are more likely to enjoy their undergraduate experience if they have a space where they can call home. The need for more Latino/a faculty and staff is also needed to retain the Latino/a student population. The demand for Latino/a faculty and staff at institutions is needed and required for the success of Latino/a students. I truly believe that if Latino/a students found community by members that looked like them, they will feel inclined to succeed because they have the support of someone that has also graduated from an institution and is working in a position they enjoy.

The demand for Latino/a students to earn their bachelor's degree or even a higher, is essential for the success of future generations. As we pave the way for the future, we will suffer, we may fail, and we may want to give-up, but one thing to keep in mind that one time, long ago, Latino/as suffered to ensure the success of today's future. As the Latino/a increases, so does the demand of more Latino/a teachers, faculty/staff, U.S. Representatives, and policy workers to focus on the needs of the Latino/a population. As a White America, it has been structured to only serve the Anglo population, but as the Latino/a numbers increases, the need for more representation is needed so students know that reaching "unrealistic" goals are actually realistic due to the countless representation.

Barriers exist, and will exist for every community, but as a community, we must work together to ensure the success of not only the Latino/a community but of all. Regardless of the barriers that the Latino/a community faces, they have

proven to break barriers to build a bright future. I, along with other Latino/a students are testaments of the determination and courage to break barriers to build our future.

En Conclusion

In conclusion, Latino/as in the United States have fought and earned their place in the classroom. The immigration wave to the states, countless lawsuits cases, anti-immigration laws, and today's barriers only prove the desire of the Latino/a population be in a country of countless of opportunities, opportunities not found in their home countries. Many Latino/as are in the United States because the United States needed them for labor purposes, and when the Latino/a population realized the opportunities they had were not going to be found at home, they decided to stay in hopes of a better life. Although they did not have a life they had hope for, their determination and courage pushed them to fight the battles needed to be fought to achieve equality. As I write this, I come to the conclusion about the importance of the Latino/a narrative. Our history, our stories, and our experiences prove that even though we may not be financially stable, have educated parents, or have the necessary tools to succeed, we, today's future, must build the foundation so the future Latino/a students do not face the same educational barriers. The war is not over and it may never be, but the experiences of the Latino/a student play a significant role in proving that with determination and hope, one can succeed.

I, therefore, recommend Latinos Without Borders as a source to help the community build off what they currently have to ensure the success of the student because as a daughter of Mexican immigrants, I have faced these challenges. With English being my second-language I knew that it would bring forth a few challenges in college. As a first generation Latina, I was afraid of letting my family

down due to my English language limitation. I was therefore unsure of my ability to perform well academically. My first semester of college was a semester that brought forth my fear of letting my family down. My academic performance was poor due to my limitation. However, I knew that my father wanted me to be successful, and I did not want his hard work to go in vein.

As a Latina, who experienced K-12 in a system that was not created for me to successfully reach my goals, I can say that I can prove the importance of having programs like LWB in the community. I didn't have LWB as a high school student and I know if I did, I would've had a different educational journey. Then again, not having LWB has allowed me to value the importance of positive mentorship, education, and the importance of empowering tomorrow's future. We provide resources and tools that many teachers, administrators, and or parents are not aware of and are important for the success of the student. My experiences inside and outside of the classroom has motivated me to focus on providing students with the assistance that may not be provided in the home and in the classroom to reach their goals and aspirations. As the chair alongside with my team, we were able to make all the necessary changes to make a difference in the community. I see the importance of an education and how an education can help an individual move towards reaching their educational or non-educational goals.

Although we may not have the same experiences, the one thing we have in common is the desire to earn a higher education. Just like many, I did not have a mentor or someone that believed in my abilities to be successful, although it would've made a difference to have a support system, I did not let certain setbacks

stop me from accomplishing my goals. Students that are participants of the LWB program have said the importance of having role models in their life because their older siblings did not attend college - they did not have someone to help them or guide them through their different available to them. LWB is a small program at the University of Oklahoma, but has been able to extend its resources and tools beyond the Norman community to provide the necessary help to make a difference. The number one goal of the program is to increase retention and I believe that we have. Through the various services and resources offered through the program, students should and are empowered to believe that they are capable of achieving their academic and professional ventures.

To be clear, I am not accusing the teacher, the parent, or even the United States for the disadvantages a student may have, but rather stating how the disconnection should not prevent a student from moving forward. We are where we are today because of the difficult road the Latino/a population had to take to make strives. Outreach programs are created and important to help society and the community give their students as many tools as possible for their toolbox. Working together, as a community is the key to help the child succeed, which is the end goal for all communities. As a community, we do not have all of the answers but if we work together, as a community, we will be able to help the student achieve all that they want to achieve. As an advocate for public schools and outreach programs, I have no doubt that collaborative work will only give the Latino/a student all of the essentials to achieve their goals and aspirations.

I remember reading once that “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” The empowerment of youth through mentorship enables students to feel confident about furthering their education. Positive and effective mentorship allows students to feel competent about achieving their academic goals. As I step down as Chair of the Latinos without Borders Program, I can leave at peace knowing that I have seen live proof of that impact. Twenty of my previous participants and maybe even more have been admitted to attend the University of Oklahoma, which definitely brings joy to my heart. We did not give up on their dreams and hopes, and neither did they.

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Appendix A

Latinos Without Borders Camp 2015

University of Oklahoma

Student Questionnaire

1. As a direct result of the Latinos without Borders Camp, how familiar are you with:

	VERY	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT		
ALL University enrollment procedure?	5	4	3	2	1
Financial aid	5	4	3	2	1
Resources for Latino students?	5	4	3	2	1

1. Please rank the following items:

	5	4	3	2	1	
	EXCELLENT				POOR	
Facilities	5	4	3	2	1	
Materials	5	4	3	2	1	
Too Cool for School	5	4	3	2	1	
ACT Prep	5	4	3	2	1	
Learn to Lead	5	4	3	2	1	
Student Panel	5	4	3	2	1	
Battle of Our People	5	4	3	2	1	
Conquering Fears	5	4	3	2	1	
Battle of the Sexes	5	4	3	2	1	
Telling Your Story	5	4	3	2	1	

Get Real Activity 5 4 3 2 1

Were the activities appropriate for your age group? If not would they be suited for a younger or older group?

Do you think the conference activities were beneficial and important for Latinos your age? Please explain.

How successful was this conference in addressing issues facing Latinos today? Please explain.

Has your interest in attending college changed as a result of the Latinos without Borders Conference?

Would you recommend the Latinos without Borders Conference to other Latinos your age? Why or why not?

What areas or issues, that were not mentioned today, would you like the Latinos without Borders conference to discuss in the future?

Age _____

Which ethnicity best describes you?

___ Mexican, Mexican American

___ Puerto Rican

___ Dominican

___ Cuban

___ Central American

___ South American

___ Other-please specify _____

Please use this space for additional comments about your conference experience.

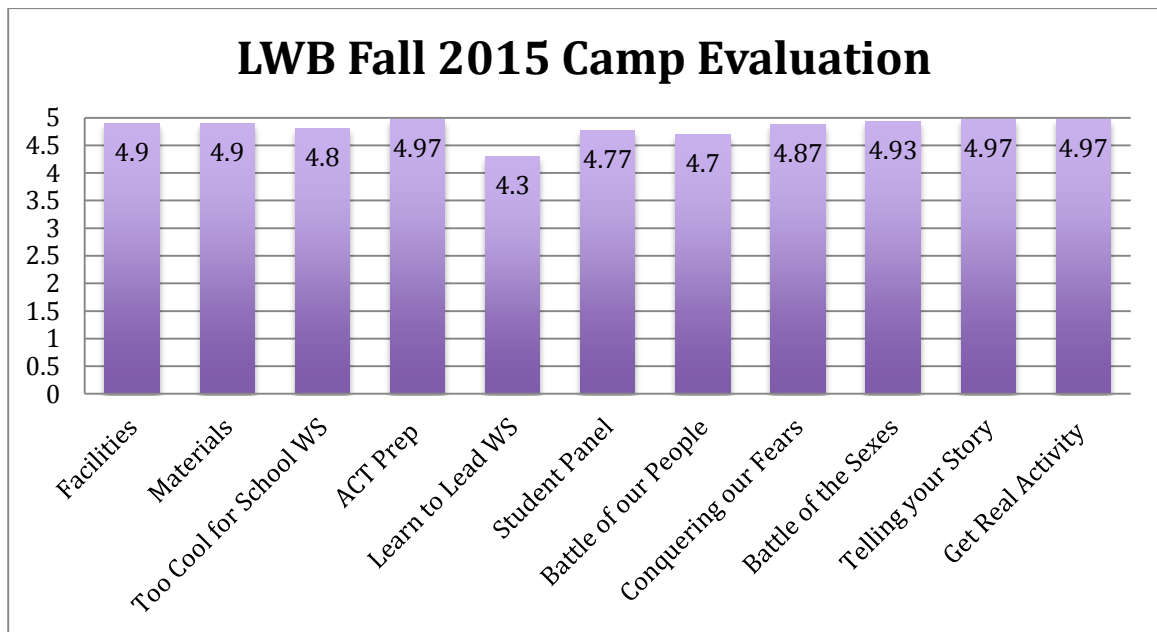
Appendix B

Latinos without Borders 2015 Camp Evaluation

The Latinos Without Borders Program goal is to educate high-school Latino/as about the importance of education, a college degree, and self-empowerment. Fifty-three high-school Latino/as were given the opportunity to attend the Fall Camp, which was held on **October 16th, 2015 - October 18th, 2015 at the OU campus**. The camp allowed the committee and volunteers more time to connect with the participants while providing more resources that will help them on their journey to college and a successful future.

The Latinos without Borders team sent out a survey to all fifty-three campers to evaluate their camp experience. Of those 53 campers, 31 have taken the survey. Of all 31 responses, they all had an empowering camp experience.

The campers were asked to evaluate the workshops/activities, facilities, and materials between 0(poor) and 5(excellent).



The second portion of the survey included a series of short answer questions to further evaluate the success of the camp. Below you will find the questions along with a few responses.

1. Were the activities appropriate for your age group? If not would they be suited for a younger or older group?
 - a. "The activities were definitely of our age group. I think that they all spoke to us even if we were of different ages/grades."

- b. "The activities were appropriate for our age group. We talked about some topics that needed to be discussed regardless of age."
 - c. "Yes the activities were appropriate for our age group. Because we got to come close to people from different places and coming a big family together."
- 2. Do you think the camp activities were beneficial and important for Latin@s your age? Please explain.
 - a. "Yes, because it was extremely important for us to know many things we didn't know previously and be informed of all of the requirements we needed for seeking help."
 - b. "The camp activities were incredibly beneficial. I learned so much and I was reminded that some things are okay. I have a greater understanding of who I am as a Latina because of this camp. Being able to play games with our family and against the boys is something I will never forget."
 - c. "Yes. I believe it helps Latinos/Latinas know they are not alone and that they are not the only ones struggling in their lives and there are people who care for them who are wanting them to be successful."
- 3. How successful was this camp in addressing issues facing Latin@s today? Please explain.
 - a. "If I were to rate it, I would give it a 15/10. It was amazing. It definitely addressed all of the issues we face and how we can change this and brighten our future. I would say that I learned that the only barrier from going to college is oneself. We can do it."
 - b. "It did a fairly good job. During the get real workshop I learned that everyone struggles with something other than racial injustice for example suicide, losing a family member, gang violence, child abuse, etc.. But it was during the Battle of the Sexes and the seminar with the professor where I learned the problems facing Latinas/Latinos. All the standards and stereotypes we have to meet in order to be "beautiful" in the eyes of society and how school keeps our history away from us."
 - c. "The camp was pretty successful addressing the issues Latinos face today. Latinos are always being underestimated, and the camp showed us how awesome we Latinos are."
- 4. Has your interest in attending college changed as a result of the Latinos without Borders Camp?
 - a. "I have always wanted to go to college but I always felt a little doubtful like what with money, grades, and everything else involved BUT every time I attend a program like this it gives an extra push to try my absolute best. After hearing all these stories I definitely believe that I can do it. I know more about my majors, scholarship, housing options, and where I want to go to college. Even though people still keep telling me that only "the rich and the white" get into college that is not going to stop me from going to OU."

- b. “Latinos without Borders made my dream come true of receiving a scholarship my junior year. Winning the scholarship has made me realize that going to college will be costly because I am undocumented, but I can attend college. Now my goal this year is to help at least three seniors enroll into college. I want to help people more now, who means my major and degrees will change.”

These are only a few of many positive remarks from the 2015 campers. Although we did not receive all fifty-three responses, the survey still indicates the success of the 2015 camp. We hope to continue furthering our services outside of the camp and conference to ensure that high school students are given the necessary resources throughout the year.