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Underprivileged School Children and the Assault on Dignity

Policy Challenges and Resistance

Edited by
Julia Hall

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Every day, children living in low income communities have no choice but to grow up in a climate where they experience multiple unending assaults to their sense of dignity. This volume applies theoretical and historical insights to think through the increasingly undignified realities of life in economically marginalized communities. It includes examples of curricular challenges that low income students in the US confront today while attempting to learn. Curricular challenges are analyzed as material texts that emerge out of student lived experiences in the economically disposed neighborhoods in which schools are located, and the dynamics of the schools and classrooms themselves. Attention is also paid to educators and students who push back against these forces in an effort to reclaim voice, identity, and dignity.

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Foreword

Dennis Carlson

It would be difficult to overestimate the devastating effects of what has been happening in public education over the past several decades as the boundaries between the public and the private have been ruptured. Schools serving the new poor and working class have become basic skills factories and disciplinary apparatuses, and inequalities between suburban, still largely white schools and urban schools serving largely black and Latina/o students continue to grow. Many students face a life of diminishing options and dwindling hope. Almost a half century ago, Jonathan Kozol's first book, *Death at an Early Age* (1985/1967), about teaching in Boston's poor black neighborhood of Roxbury, presented a stinging indictment of a system that seemed "rigged" to ensure the kind of kids he taught did not have a chance to realize the US dream of getting ahead. Indeed, the system seemed almost conspiratorially set up to beat young people down and "kill" their spirit. A half century later much the same can still unfortunately be said about the education of the least privileged youth. Urban neighborhood public schools—and now urban for-profit charter schools too—have played a powerful, reproductive role in a system of domination that is deeply racist and classist.

By the early 1970s, the first effects of "post-Fordism" were being felt in the US economy. Old Northern industrial jobs were beginning to disappear quite rapidly, and so too were the vocational education tracks that prepared working-class youth for these jobs. In the global restructuring of the economy and labor force that was occurring, urban youth faced "no future at all," to borrow a line from the Sex Pistols' anthem of alienated youth rage in the UK. The new urban landscapes of the North, in the US, the UK, and elsewhere, were bleak, emptied spaces by the mid-1970s. At the same time, anti-tax movements and corporate tax loopholes, along with years of massive investment in a military industrial economy, led to a fiscal crisis of the state. This in turn provided an ideological rationale for further deep cuts in the social service, welfare, and educational apparatuses of the state and for the "out-sourcing" of public social and educational services to private contractors. Already in the Nixon administration, plans were being drawn up for a voucher system of privatized public schools in the nation's urban schools, to make them run more efficiently and "productively," and to bring

them under the "guiding hand" of the free market and the entrepreneurial spirit. Liberals generally opposed the privatization of public education, at least until the Clinton and later Obama administrations, but they did agree that disadvantaged youth needed more remedial, skill-based instruction, "targeted" toward their particular skill deficits. By the 1980s, vocational education tracks had largely disappeared, to be replaced by a "basic skills" curriculum designed to prepare urban youth with the functional literacy and math skills needed in the new service industry workforce (Carlson, 1992; Carlson & Apple, 1998).

This is the world we have inherited and continue to inhabit almost a half century after Kozol's *Death at an Early Age* was published; only now the neoliberal "machines" of urban educational reform (high-stakes testing, teacher accountability systems, and teach-to-the-test curricula) are more totalizing, and the borders between the public and the private have almost collapsed. Over the past decade or so, neoliberal reform machines (supported by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE] and the state) have also invaded teacher education programs and have begun to bring teacher education faculty under a much tighter surveillance and oversight so that it becomes more difficult to teach for social justice and equity. Even more damaging, the language of neoliberalism, that is, its ideology, is so taken for granted, so much a part of educational reform commonsense, that there seems no alternative but to continue down this road, bringing the "public" schools into better alignment with the "needs" of a globalizing economy and labor force. Because both major political parties are now neoliberal parties, the neoliberal commonsense has become hegemonic. Reforms are presented as the only logical way to run public institutions. The Bush administration's NCLB has morphed smoothly into the Obama administration's "Race to the Top"—both ironic names for school reform movements that have systematically disempowered urban youth, teachers, and teacher educators even as they claim to be about narrowing and even overcoming class and race-based achievement gaps. At the same time, the disciplinary apparatuses of urban schooling have been more closely aligned with those of the juvenile court and penal systems to construct a new "incarceration society" and prison industry (Alexander, 2012). Progressives of the early twentieth century, like John Dewey, had dared to hope that as the number of schools and libraries increased in the US, the number of prisons would correspondingly decline because they would not be needed. That has turned out to be a hollow hope, not because it was doomed from the start, but rather because the promise of a truly enlightening and liberatory democratic public education has not been kept.

If democratic progressives are to reclaim the hope and promise of democratic public education— and that is now a task that confronts us with some urgency, as the authors in this volume attest—what might be the basis for hope? Ironically, I think part of the answer is that now the old

system has been dismantled and largely privatized, we at least have the chance to start over, picking up some of the pieces of public education to forge something new and different that finally serves those it has always claimed to serve. But that will take a new democratic commonsense, to use Antonio Gramsci's (1971) term—a new way of thinking about what is possible, what public education should be all about in a democratic society, and what currently stands in our way. Only such a new progressive commonsense discourse on educational renewal and human dignity will get us beyond the blockages and contradictions, the stuck points, of neoliberalism to open up new democratic possibilities, to imagine what democracy and democratic public schools could be in a profoundly new age. That is what I find so hopeful and useful about this volume. That new democratic commonsense must, first of all, situate the renewal of public education within the context of a broad-based movement for the fundamental democratization of public life, involving the democratization of the economy and the workplace, the elimination of poverty, and a concerted movement to confront racism as a living legacy. In such a movement, the democratic renewal of public education is only part of what is needed and not really doable outside of the broader democratization of public life, the economy, and the state. Nor is it outside of commitments to the struggles of people of color and the working poor to be treated with dignity as fully human, deserving of full human rights (including the right to livable jobs and an environment that is sustainable and not toxic to young people).

In the re-founding of democratic public education, I think it is important to remember what Marx and Engels had to say about capitalism, that its alternative—the society that would transcend capitalism's limits and contradictions—would emerge out of capitalism and the forces of mass production. Now the forces of capitalism have been globalized, creating a global (if yet largely unaware and unconnected) working class. The very technologies of the new information age—the global web, social networking, the networked organization, and digital media—are the tools or machines that more and more of these workers are "schooled" in, on the job so to speak. These are the machines that also can and are being used to mobilize resistance to neoliberalism, to get people and groups connected in acts of protest. The emergence of the "multitude," as the Marxist theorists of neoliberalism Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri refer to it (2000, 2004), is currently one of the major forms of resistance to the priorities of neoliberal restructuring and demonstrate just how much the tools of the master can be used to strike back against the empire. Occupy Wall Street [OWS] is perhaps the best-known recent example of the power of the multitude to organize itself as a great swarm, suddenly appearing out of nowhere, and dispersing again only to reappear in different form elsewhere. In education, the 2010 occupation of the Wisconsin capital by citizens in support of public employee unions, including teachers, when they were under attack by the governor is a

good case in point (Kersten, 2011). The swarm at the capitol dome was able to disrupt political business as usual in the state for several months, although it did not accomplish its immediate objectives of blocking anti-union legislation. The problem with multitudes is that like swarms of bees, they do not have much staying power in any one fixed spot. Furthermore, without any coherent organizational structure or leadership, without any long-range plan to govern, multitudes are fundamentally limited in resisting the forces of neoliberal restructuring in education and elsewhere.

The new information and digital technologies have to be used for another purpose for that to happen. They need to be used to build a new democratic, progressive power bloc and grassroots movement capable of taking back control of the state from neoliberal hegemony. In the US today, I believe that means working to take back control of the Democratic Party from the neoliberal centrists who now control it and/or working to build a new progressive party with a bold agenda for change organized around a new commonsense way of framing educational problems and solutions. It means taking up the long, hard work of building a new system from the ashes of the old, attuned to the new globalizing cultural terrain—a democratic, networked system of public education that establishes the basis for what Guattari, Sheed, and Cooper (1984) have called a "molecular revolution." Constructed out of a multitude of local movements and actions, each is like a molecule linked in a global network and matrix of other molecules to produce something greater than the sum of its parts. Gramsci would, I think, see much promise in the new social movements like OWS. But he would also argue that the multitude does not and cannot establish a counter-hegemony in itself. Without control of the state, through a political party and power bloc, and with organic intellectuals to articulate the interests of the multitude, molecular revolutions may not pose a serious challenge to the current neoliberal hegemony. Consequently, the imperative for progressives today is to mobilize the multitude as a political power bloc around and within a genuinely democratic political party capable of leadership.

The relationship between the multitude and the genuinely democratic party must be a dialectical one, with the party serving as an apparatus for translating the hopes, discontents, fears, and desires of the multitude into a counter-hegemonic leadership discourse and set of policy initiatives. It must lead the multitude toward a deeper and fuller understanding of what it will take to democratize public life and public education. Perhaps only through such a process is a multitude able to become a counter-hegemonic agent of a democratic will to power, capable of taking control of the state from neoliberal and neo-conservative forces. If such a dialectic between the multitude and the party can be achieved, then perhaps the new global and local resistances will not be futile for they would propose a discourse of democratic governmentality rather than critique and resistance alone.

What might such a democratic governmentality mean for public education? Certainly, any system of public education that is rebuilt out of the ashes must be something much different from the corporate bureaucratic system of schooling that has left its stamp on the educational imagination in the US since the early twentieth century. It would need to be a radically de-centered and networked system, situating both teachers and students within evolving, transitory, transversal, and polyvocal learning communities which emerge around pragmatic actions and projects and then disappear again into the environment. The school and the university would become nodes on a matrix, linking teachers and students to ever-expanding communities that bring the local and the global together. This implies, I believe, support for some system of public charter school networks and alliances, with teachers and students linked in synergistic ways to educate for social justice, human and animal rights, equity, and diversity (Carlson, 2011). Teaching would need to be reconfigured within a set of relationships and networks in which knowledge is no longer unified or predetermined, but rather constructed and reconstructed within diverse language games and networks of dialogue and action. Public schools, as sites for the induction of young people into interpretive communities and networks, would be situated within overlapping fields of local, regional, national, and transnational governmentality, and they would bring teachers and students together across overlapping political and cultural contexts (Luke, 2004). At this point, networks of fully funded, public, nonprofit charter schools might provide a counterspace for the development of such new forms of governmentality and dramatically new approaches to curriculum and pedagogy attuned to the changing times. Teachers unions and professional associations might even organize networks of charter schools and learning communities—both virtual and material—to experiment with new forms of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment t0hat are more student-centered and culturally relevant. However, these changes must remain only a possibility so long as they must address widening income gaps and a corresponding decline in real equality of opportunity.

In a system of deepening injustice it hardly makes sense to talk about democratic public education as something realizable now. As Jacques Derrida argued, in such a context it is only possible to talk of a "democracy to come," as a promise we make to the future, even though "the event of the promise takes place here, now, in the singularity of the here-now" (Derrida, 2002, p. 180). Here and now progressives can argue that genuinely to overcome achievement gaps, leave no child behind, and to treat all children with dignity, we will have to do much more than come up with better standardized tests, or more effective methods of weeding out incompetent teachers. We will need to challenge the material structures, the relations of power, and the commonsense beliefs that produce achievement gaps that ensure millions of young people continue to be left behind.

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1 Introduction

Julia Hall

"Chicago Public School Teachers Finally Putting Students First!" was a typical headline across the US not too long ago when it was announced this group of 29,000 educators had signed a contract after a five-day walkout. Surrounded by pressures from many sources, the teachers ended up settling for far less than they had requested. In ending negotiations, the mainstream political class and media drew a heavy sigh of relief, as in their view, "*the selfishness has ended*." If however we were to pan back to the lived realities of the students in the classrooms taught by these teachers, and then back further to the everyday experience of growing up in marginalized communities, it would reveal much. We would see schools and neighborhoods in which silencing, limitations, despair, and lack of dignity are "normal" parts of life. We would gain a much clearer understanding that the majority of teachers who organized did so out of the hope they would be better able to meet the needs of these otherwise bright students who have been denied so much by their democracy. The lives of these underprivileged school children in Chicago have a lot in common with marginalized students everywhere. This book is about those lives. By drawing upon both critical education and interdisciplinary research, it presents a more dimensional and dynamic understanding of how the dignity of youth is being eroded. The cultural space of a school is examined as co-produced within a larger community inside an ever-evolving economic moment.

STATEMENT OF AIMS

Every day, children living in economically and racially marginalized communities in the US have no choice but to grow up in a climate in which they experience unending and multiple assaults to their sense of dignity.[1] "Dignity," as implied, refers to the right to be treated like a human being, with worth and respect. Here I employ theoretical and historical insights from my ongoing interdisciplinary work to think through the increasingly undignified realities of life in racially and economically marginalized communities (Hall 2008, 2012, 2013). Emphasis is squarely placed on those who are

disenfranchised economically *and* by race, as low income members of the dominant culture have a better chance of geographic mobility. Under consideration are the curricular challenges such underprivileged students in the US confront while attempting to learn. Curricular challenges are analyzed broadly—as material, "alive" texts that emerge out of student lived experiences in the dispossessed neighborhoods in which schools are located and the dynamics of the schools and classrooms themselves. Children should not have to grow up and try to learn in conditions that undermine their sense of worth. Importantly, therefore, in this collection attention is also paid to educators and students who push back against these forces in an effort to reclaim voice, identity, and dignity. The volume consists of the following three sections of contributing chapters: (1) an exploration of ways in which the assault on dignity of underprivileged school children takes shape on the ground, at the level of household and community; (2) how neoliberal policies find their way into schools, reshaping curricular spaces and curriculum to align with the privatized dictates of the economy; and (3) the way teachers and students push back against these forces in an effort to reclaim voice, identity, and dignity.

A TROUBLED SYSTEM ON ITS COURSE OF DEVELOPMENT

In contemporary society life is characterized by jarring lurches from one economic crisis to the next. Many families have no choice but to be pulled along on this perpetual string of calamities. Throughout the evolution of capitalism, market and/or state-sponsored tinkering with the system has exclusively been used in attempts to avoid crises. These limited strategies have resulted in expanding negative aspects of the power and reach of this system. Various earlier proponents of this model did not envision it as requiring a steady stream of government intervention. Adam Smith for instance reasoned that, tempered by the forces of supply and demand, individual greed would on its own transform into public good. Critics at that time and today however point to the cornerstone of the system—the unequal nature of the employer-employee relationship—as the obstacle in the development of any significant "public good." In this relationship, "the employer," or corporate leadership, has an inordinate amount of power. As history has demonstrated, in an effort to extract maximum value, in this system, workers are never paid the true value of their labor. People therefore are not able to buy back all the goods and services they produce. As capitalism developed over time, this in part resulted in powerful corporate leaders seeking out cheaper labor forces and raw materials and new markets. This took on brutish forms everywhere, especially in the Southern Hemisphere (e.g. Harvey, 2003; Kloby, 2004; Wolff, 2010).

Reflecting upon the growth of this economic blueprint throughout the colonial era and beyond, Wolff (2010) points out the consolidation of

pockets of wealth for ever-smaller groups. At the same time, little public good was actualized as an outcome. The system itself was also in chaos and at times on the verge of collapse in the never-ending quest for more profits. This has become more clearly visible for even the relatively privileged in the now latter neoliberal arc of the development of this economic arrangement. Take for instance the trend among corporate leaders over the past several decades of outsourcing production to less regulated areas in an attempt to increase realized value. This weakens Northern economies as masses of people become unemployed/underemployed and as such they also cannot afford to buy those goods and services, thus leaving profit unrealized.[2] The economy then stagnates and may slip into recession or depression. Given the intrinsically unstable nature of the system, economists (notably Keynes in the earlier decades of the 1900s) and others thought large government intervention was the needed solution. However, as Wolff (2010) maintains, as history has shown, no matter what the size, without a reorganization of the inequitable employer-employee relationship, government involvement in stabilizing the economy results in policies that over time strengthen corporate power. The chaos and threats of collapse then repeat.

At first glance state intervention often appears to be focused on the public good. For example, the setting of a "minimum wage" sounds like a government policy initiated to protect and empower workers. As a concept many would think it is a great idea. But this wage point has always been extraordinarily low and not connected to cost-of-living or inflation indices. Thus it can also be seen as adding another layer of realized value to the point of purchase of goods and services. If in certain instances enacted state reform (or aspects of it) has the potential of threatening profits, given the disproportionate imbalance of power in the employer-employee relationship, corporate power typically immediately sets to work to circumvent that reform. This usually involves delegitimizing the reform and eventually eroding it, such as the minimum wage example, in which ongoing attempts to draw attention to its disconnection from any real cost of living have predictably been undermined (Kloby, 2004; Wolff, 2010). Undercutting involves the argument that employers, and especially small business owners, would be unable to stay afloat with a wage hike. The contention is that lazy, unskilled, and unmotivated workers are a byproduct of state dependency and have been the undoing of the US economy since World War II.

According to Wolff (2010), as long as the fundamental imbalance in the employer-employee relationship remains untouched, even large-scale, progressive government intervention in the economy ultimately enhances profit for those at the top. For example, the 1929 stock market crash resulted in an economic and social crisis that was in part "solved" by Keynesian New Deal state capitalism. It was thought at this juncture direct government involvement in the manipulation of the money supply would prop up demand in times of economic emergency. Examples of policy include job creation programs and various regulations. For instance, the Works

Progress Administration [WPA] resulted in the US government becoming the largest employer in the nation. The Social Security Act was also implemented as well as the Fair Labor Standards Act. Still, seen in another way, these policies were temporary methods to keep a flailing economic system afloat and to keep masses of people from revolt. Such programs were criticized by many corporate operators as bringing the nation perilously close to replicating communism. As predicted this entailed turning the situation into an opportunity to forge new profitable pathways. As soon as World War II opened up avenues for corporate profit generation in part through production, such programs underwent a process of erosion. This involved delegitimizing reform and eventually eroding it. This history has repeated time and again. It however has taken on a powerful new turn in subsequent decades to reflect the emergence of neoliberalism and its supportive policy networks.[3]

Neoliberal thinking has increasingly influenced the evolution of capitalism in recent decades. Recession in the 1960s and early 1970s was once again an excuse to characterize the state—and government-sponsored programs and policies—as the cause of economic crisis. The Cold War backdrop helped to bolster the argument capitalism was the only democratic counterpoint to communism. In order to avoid the peril of Soviet takeover, it was believed obstacles that impede its growth must be removed (e.g. forms of regulation). Manufacturing leaders increasingly consolidated and outsourced production to other parts of the world. At the same time, there was growing outrage among the public against the US wars in Southeast Asia, which although immensely profitable for some discrete manufacturing sectors, were viewed by many as unjust. Due to the ongoing silencing of many cultural voices, high unemployment, continued inflation, and growing anger over the wars, many were mobilizing and demanding that government respond. As a result, an expanded public sector was then realized as part of Johnson's vision for a "Great Society." This resulted in state policies and programs such as Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Community Action Programs (Marx, 2013). Once implemented, the programs, however, were predictably positioned as the cause of the economic crisis in the first place. They were described as a drain on the tax base and as encouraging a culture of laziness, dependency, and lack of innovation. Schools and teachers, it was purported in the early 1980s, had put our nation at risk. We were losing our industrial base as corporations were forced to seek out labor with a stronger work ethic and better skills in other nations. Given this, it was asserted obstacles that stand in the way of the "natural" workings of the economy must be dismantled (Kloby, 2004; Wolff, 2010).

On its course toward maturation, capitalism is now ever more guided by the economic ideology of neoliberalism. In order to stop further economic weakness, it is loudly argued the state must altogether cease interfering in the economy. The repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act and the passage of the Financial Services Modernization Act [FSMA] in 1999 were groundbreaking

acts of legislation which exemplify this point. At the same time, in the post-Cold War era characterized by the global spread of unfettered free market ideology, the US has had to acknowledge new competitors for control of resources (e.g. India and Brazil as economic players and China and Russia in the economic and military sense). With serious contenders for access to natural resources and lacking an industrial base, we are in a vague state of permanent war and its corresponding defensive set of ideologies (e.g. war on terror, war on drugs, war on crime, and war on values). Given this ongoing sense of menace to safety and "our way of life," instead of mass resistance, people are acculturated to equate suppressed wages and underemployment with "enjoying our freedoms," which we are told are constantly under attack from both abroad and within our own borders. We are encouraged to blame other relatively powerless groups as the cause of our struggles. In this climate, forms of libertarianism are on the rise as the state in any of its manifestations is portrayed as the cause of economic weaknesses and "un-American." Remaining public spaces are being privatized with often little mainstream outcry. The concept of the "public good" is being obliterated altogether (Kloby, 2004; Wolff, 2010).

ASSAULT ON DIGNITY ON THE GROUND IN HOUSEHOLDS, COMMUNITIES, AND SCHOOLS

Growing numbers of people—including economically and racially marginalized children—are struggling in multiple ways in the context of current economic conditions. This is greatly impacting their ability to learn in school and thus future outcomes. What are the layers of how this is experienced on a daily basis today? In one example, the protection agencies and bodies that report to work on behalf of families and communities are often not protecting (e.g. Consumer Protection Affairs, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], the Food and Drug Administration [FDA]). The majority of such agencies exist in name only, having lost any real ability to block destructive capitalist practices due to corporate power. Still, the shells of these agencies remain, thus "appearing" to exist and protect. Consider broadly the "role" of the EPA to regulate and safeguard life on the ground across the nation. It is accurately the case that the physical spaces children and families inhabit are highly noxious. Crucial to this is the fact those living in economically *and* culturally marginalized communities are exposed to by far higher concentrations of toxins in their homes, neighborhoods, schools, and places of employment as compared to others. In this reality African American families experience by far the most environmental assaults (e.g. Bullard, 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2007).

In these physical sites families are economically sinking. The existence of "underprivileged communities" as a normative concept in itself is reflective

of the lack of dignity for all at the heart of the economic arrangement. Declining wages since the 1970s have resulted in present day gaping disparities in wealth. In order to survive in spite of sharply increasing inflation, more members of families have gone to work and have been working longer hours at more jobs (Kloby, 2004). According to the Economic Policy Institute, half of the population in the US is now battling to make ends meet at the end of every month. In 2009, while children from all cultural groups were experiencing an increase in numbers of those in poverty, almost one-third of Latino/a children (33.1%) were living in these conditions. The picture is even more troubling for African American youth, with more than one-third (35.7%) now reaching this threshold (Shierholz & Gould, 2010).

At present more of those from the middle classes persist in losing their jobs, health insurance, homes, and savings. Those who have been privileged by race and gender are now teetering on the financial edge and are one disaster away from ruin. For instance, in spite of the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (which was instantly discredited and eroded by corporate representatives at the idea stage), each year the percentage of those in the US under 65 covered by employer-sponsored health insurance continues to fall (Gould, 2012). Those who can afford to purchase health insurance from private providers struggle to afford the exorbitant costs although most go without. State-funded healthcare programs for vulnerable populations such as low income children, the elderly, and/or those with disabilities are gouged and privatized in additional ways (Morrissey, 2007). Although the predatory mortgage arm of the larger deregulated consumer lending industry has had a devastating impact on many groups, African American and Latino/a customers held twice the number of subprime mortgages this past decade compared to those of the dominant culture (Rothstein, 2012). In order to keep the largest banks from going under during what was portrayed as a "mortgage-meltdown," once again dramatic state intervention in economic crisis was enacted. This time intervention took the fully neoliberal shape of taxpayer-funded corporate bailouts.

Given the escalating climate of unemployment, underemployment, suppressed wages, and skyrocketing inflation, corporations have sought out creative new ways to sell even basic goods and services to families. Desperate to afford food, medicine, and rent and having drained shared resources, families have few options today but to borrow from the increasingly rapacious credit card industry. Profit generation for the credit card plank of the consumer lending sector depends on people who cannot make their earnings stretch. Many have no choice but to resort to credit cards that over the past decade have been increasingly charging "hidden" fees and loan-shark-like interest rates for late payments. Tactics used to trap people into being late include periodically changing the payment date/time, setting payments due on holidays or Sundays when banks are closed, and holding payments in electronic "processing" queues just long enough to make them past due. The Credit Card Reform Act of 2009 is just another example of

state intervention that "looks" as if its purpose is to protect the public. By the time the act was signed into effect, it resulted in a discrete set of regulations which the industry instantaneously went into action devising ways to circumvent. Potential losses were recouped (and then some) with the proliferation of new products, such as unrestricted debit cards, prepaid credit cards, and new transaction processing order algorithms (Bergman & de Granados, 2009). The act therefore has done little to help people from being further gouged, but a lot to increase profits and legitimize the notion that government acts transparently to protect rights.

Another growth area of the consumer lending industry is the "payday" lender. Payday loan centers are most often located in urban communities populated by culturally and economically marginalized families. Loans from such lenders are used as an advance on wages by desperate borrowers and are meant to be paid back the next payday (i.e. in two weeks). The transaction involves a borrower writing a personal check postdated after the date of their expected check. For this short-term loan, payday lenders charge sometimes over 500% in interest. It is no surprise these borrowers often find themselves ensnared in a lifetime of chasing interest. Given that stagnant wages have been seriously outpaced by inflation for decades, payday loans are becoming the norm for the survival of many strained families. Importantly, the 2005 Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act ushered in a new set of provisions making it harder for many to file for bankruptcy. The economic struggles of those trapped in the debt cycle have opened up other new markets. For instance, collection agencies that specialize in purchasing overdrawn payday accounts from debt brokers are a rapidly growing part of the lucrative debt recovery industry (Bergman & de Granados, 2009; Halpern, 2010).[4]

Exhausted, frustrated, bitter, sick, and scared, many families are feeling the tensions of life in such circumstances along with increasing alienation from self and others. Some may blame themselves for their debt, lack of employment or underemployment (e.g. "I did not try hard enough in school"), and what they have come to think as their own general poor choices. According to Weis (2004, 2007), families have shifted gears to that of economic survival, leaving former extended family and community networks that may have served as pockets of retreat and resistance, in a shambles. State and local governments have been rendered obsolete as sites of collective trust and participation. Public parks, libraries, and community centers are crumbling. Set up to compete for scarce resources, many have begun to suspect each other at every turn. In these communities, children endure cumulating strands of assault on dignity in their home life and communities before they even enter a classroom.

Growing up in the middle of such situations, children still may somehow start their schooling career with a sense of excitement and purpose. The ugliness of racial segregation and social class sorting however soon take over. Schools for young people today might resemble the overcrowded,

underresourced, and uninspiring hulks of racial and social class inequality from the investigative work done by Kozol in the 1990s. They perhaps also represent more renovated, tidy, and orderly forms of the same racial and social class degradation. With punitive standardized tests, school-to-prison pipelines, metal detectors, zero-tolerance policies, surprise searches, and other forms of surveillance and criminalization, more efficient ways to perpetuate apartheid conditions prevail (e.g. Kozol, 1991, 2005). The curriculum itself is inscribed with Western narratives that normalize and naturalize the commodification of culture and present a positivist view of knowledge. These materials also emphasize patriotism, militarism, European supremacy (e.g. Carlson, 2012; Hursh, 2008; Pierce, 2007; Saltman, 2005, 2007; Saltman & Gabbard, 2003), and patriarchy that together shape school culture and the educational experiences of students. This makes opportunities in which educators and students may open up critique outside of market dictates exceedingly difficult. This curriculum—as taking on dimension within/across household, neighborhood, school, and classroom—impacts the educational experiences of students and their sense of hope and promise for the future.

VOLUME OVERVIEW

School experiences can no longer be thought of as shaped within a particular economy without a much more thorough understanding of life on the ground for children in their homes and communities. To do so disregards the multiple and unending assaults on dignity experienced especially by underprivileged young people in their homes, streets, and neighborhoods. Students bring these internal battles and stressors to school with them. In order better to understand what it is really like for students as they attempt to negotiate their schooling, in this volume foundations scholars are joined by those from other fields who also advocate in critical ways for young people. Those working in the areas of environmental justice, social work, social psychology, food access advocacy, and critical performance art provide evidence that life is breathtakingly complex for students. Successive chapters include examples of the layers of ways in which young people experience assault across North America, rendering no corner of the nation spared. In efforts to work toward real change, it is necessary to get a more complete sense of the problem by drawing on various related fields.

In the first section of the volume, the conversation is immediately expanded as we hear from sociologists working in the area of environmental justice, including the founding voice of this field, Robert Bullard. In this chapter, Robert Bullard, Glenn Johnson, Denae King, and Sheri Smith investigate how young people from low income families and/or those from African American, Latino/a, and/or Asian backgrounds disproportionately confront environmental threats in the form of lead in housing, water, and

soil. Forms of indoor and outdoor pollution explored include air quality compromised by toxins from surrounding industry, proximity to power plants and refineries, and emissions from closeness to highways and heavy traffic. In addition, the authors discuss how these communities are also often set apart by the glaring absence of parks and green space and the presence of "sick schools" and housing. Poor air quality in schools has been linked to higher absenteeism and increased respiratory ailments, lower teacher and staff productivity, lower student motivation, slower learning, lower test scores, increased medical costs, and lowered lifelong achievement and earning. As the authors indicate, there are serious racial implications regarding these issues. Crucially, the authors question the dominant environmental protection paradigm which trades human health for profit.

Nicole Simon and Gary Evans then examine the cumulative effects of environmental stress on children from underprivileged backgrounds, from their perspective in the field of environmental and development psychology. They consider the characteristics of the physical environment that influence child development, including the many layers of assault. In particular, they explore psychosocial and physical risk factors facing low income children and youth outside of school that can influence socialization and academic achievement. Areas of scrutiny include behavioral toxicology, noise, crowding, housing and neighborhood quality, neighborhood dangers involving deteriorating municipal services and infrastructure, and the quality of local day care settings and schools. Socio-emotional, cognitive, motivational, and psycho-physiological outcomes in children and youths are reviewed. Protective factors among low income youth that can buffer some of the cumulative risks such children are exposed to are additionally considered. Necessary methodological and conceptual advances are introduced as well.

In addition to exposure to pollutants in water, air, food, and literally all spaces of life, young people from underprivileged backgrounds also must contend with the juvenile justice system in their neighborhoods. Drawing on her extensive research in the field of social work, Rosemary Sarri investigates the major problems in this system, including the overrepresentation of youth of color and those in poverty. Importantly, there is some good news regarding recent changes on these issues. As Sarri reports, after a decade of declining violence in the US (with the exception of gun violence) attention in juvenile justice in many states is becoming focused on statutory changes as well as new policies and programs that emphasize community-based intervention rather than incarceration in closed institutions. As outlined by Sarri, three important Supreme Court decisions affecting the treatment of juveniles have also focused attention on human rights issues and the fact that juveniles are categorically different from adults. As a result there have been reductions in the trying and charging of juveniles as adults. Another factor leading to a drop in incarceration is dissatisfaction with its high cost and ineffectiveness. This chapter examines these hopeful trends along with

a review of the key policies and programs that have been found to work instead in the best interests of youth. Although there is still much work to be done, as Sarri indicates, interest is now growing in implementation of positive youth development programs.

Adding to the cumulative assaults experienced by youth in their communities, the spotlight is next placed on the undignified conditions underprivileged children experience in schools. David Hursh looks at US education standardized testing "reform" as shaped within broad structural bodies arranged within the logics of neoliberalism. Guided by the needs of transnational corporations and their policy networks, the purposeful discrediting and displacing of local, critical voices in relation to student needs is explored as a major part of this process. Included is an analysis of connections between policy making at the national and individual state level, as it occurs as an interaction between philanthropists—such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Walton Foundation, or the Broad Foundation—as well as entrepreneurs—such as KIPP schools or Teach for America—and federal policy makers, including Arne Duncan and Barack Obama. By undertaking such an analysis, Hursh demonstrates how decision making has become less democratic as control has shifted from the local and state levels to the national and global. This has severe ramifications in particular for those communities and children who are already socially and politically marginalized.

Public schools are today also a place for silencing and erasing of identity in classroom materials. Using postcolonial theory, Mary Christianakis and Richard Mora look into what they find to be the highly "selective" traditions of how women and/or those from culturally marginalized groups are depicted in social studies textbooks adopted in the state of California. Findings indicate African Americans and Native Americans are portrayed uncritically and as contributors to and beneficiaries of the American dream. In these materials, these group members simply reach goals through hard work, determination, and by believing in themselves. Many became "the first" also due to the kindness and justice of caring members of the dominant culture. For instance, Natives in these texts were able to preserve their culture and improve their health due to the introduction of European practices. An overarching message is although we derive from many different backgrounds, we all share a national identity. Latinos/as were resoundingly underrepresented in this series, which is shocking, as they comprise such a large percentage of the population in California and throughout the nation.

This chapter is followed up by Dennis Carlson, who contributes a case study of a team of progressive educators from an urban school in the Midwest serving overwhelmingly low income African American and Appalachian youth. In this chapter, he documents the promise and challenges confronted by these teachers in creating and implementing what they hope are more meaningful forms of schooling for marginalized youth. In light

of the limitations of neoliberal school reform, Carlson traces how critical teachers attempt here to use the small-school movement to create a critical space for learning outside of the Eurocentric, low-level curriculum and testing regime. Findings indicate initial success in the first year of this program in terms of student engagement. However, high-pressure insistence by state and school administration upon test scores and heavy-handed classroom management proved to be too overwhelming a force. The progressive direction of the program was eventually worn down to align with the larger goal of presenting low-level knowledge and thus preparing these marginalized youth for a future of service sector work.

Given the overwhelming market forces that silence voices and limit opportunities for youth, the last section is essential. The contributors here importantly consider voices of resistance from inside schools and across communities. Catherine Lalonde, an academic and food activist, begins by uncovering the absence of critique about the politics of healthy nutrition access among marginalized youth. In the context of US and global food politics, the impact of the lack of access to healthy and affordable food among P-12 school children is a serious issue. In working with mostly culturally marginalized low income teens at an after-school cooking course in a community center, Lalonde uses food theory to inform the design and execution of this intervention. Findings suggest the youth are critical about gendered perceptions of interest in food preparation and openly discuss this issue. These students say although they are curious about such issues and the community-based site they inhabit is an ideal location for such conversations to take place, they nevertheless have little to say about the concept of justice and food access. Attention is placed in this chapter on how this circumstance constricts the physical development and academic performance of many youth.

Bronwen Low and Reenah Golden, the latter a critical performance artist, next consider slam poetry and the power of the spoken word in schools as a formidable change agent. Slam poetry is a youth-driven social movement, a close cousin to Hip-Hop culture with which it shares the values of community, performativity, and social critique. When brought into school curriculum, slam can pose a powerful counter to repressive school cultures and practices, with its emphasis on youth self-expression and empowerment. The authors explore the possibilities and challenges of slam poetry as a form of resistance to mainstream curriculum and relations of authority in education. The reader is brought into the heart of several classrooms that have flipped the script, in Hip-Hop terms, of the business as usual of schooling. Qualitative data were collected over the course of academic years in English classes in high schools in an urban school district. This district was progressive in that artists-in-residence and slam poets were integrated into English classes and a number of teachers were exceptionally committed to the uses of slam poetry as a form of critical expression. Although several administrators were arguably not on board with this curriculum and the

type of voice it might encourage among students, in general this research points to the potential of this cultural form of critical pedagogy.

In the last contributing chapter, Brad Porfilio, Debangshu Roychoudhury, and Lauren M. Gardner illustrate how young people in three youth-led organizations situated in Canada and the US fuse Hip-Hop culture, technology, and activist messages into critical forms of pedagogy. Such efforts are in response to the reality that over the past decade in North America, educational institutions have increasingly propagated a spate of neoliberal policies, curricula, and practices, such as high-stakes examinations, zero-tolerance policies, and commercialized textbooks. The authors explore how this has been in part responsible for why youth disengage from the schooling process or are "framed out" of schools entirely. Fortunately, youth who have experienced debilitating forms of schooling are frequently channeling their alienation into generating pedagogical initiatives and formal organizations that give youth a sense of agency, hope, and understanding. These pedagogies enable participants the opportunity for an empowering and socially transformative education.

CONCLUSION

This book presents an investigation of how the economic and cultural realities of neoliberalism are undermining the dignity of underprivileged young people. Every day in the US and elsewhere, children living in low income, racially marginalized communities have no choice but to grow up in a climate saturated with multiple assaults to their systems. These cumulative assaults shape life at home, in neighborhoods, and in schools. All of this together constricts the future for these young people. It is clearly the case that economically marginalized African American families and those from other culturally dominated groups experience the most assaults on dignity. These take place in terms of percentages living in poverty, numbers of those living in polluted communities, particular methods of targeting by the justice system, payday lenders and other arms of the consumer lending industry, and so forth. Due to institutional racism, these families have fewer options to move to other geographical locations compared to their white peers.

The conversation on childhood injustice is expanded in this volume as we hear what some working from outside the critical education literature are concerned about. Contributors first explore the struggles underprivileged school children experience on the ground in their homes and communities. In other chapters authors consider how with inherent disregard for human dignity, neoliberal policies find their ways into schools, regrouping curricular spaces to align with the privatized dictates of the political economy. The most pernicious forms of this agenda are typically found in schools serving underprivileged youth. In these sites, market interests often

dominate as educator-student engagement is tightly controlled through the imposition of highly managed structural arrangements and top-down pedagogical styles. This volume concludes with the authors looking at examples of resistance against market forces within schools and communities in an effort to reclaim voice, identity, and dignity. Given these resistant voices, it is clear youth want to engage in discussion on issues related to justice in deep, structural ways that extend far beyond the classroom. These and other forms of bottom-up resistance must be nurtured and encouraged.

Those in schools though cannot be burdened with solving such vast problems forged by the economy in isolation. As part of widening this discussion, the voices of foundations scholars are contextualized in this volume within the arguments made by those working in the areas of environmental justice, psychology, social work, food access advocacy, and critical performance art. There is much to be learned from hearing these voices in combination. Cross-disciplinary collective action has the potential to be a powerful change agent. For instance, as Rosemary Sarri reports, there have been recent positive strides made in the juvenile justice system. It is useful to all to understand how and why these shifts in ideology and practice have come about in that field. Not only are they part of the wider landscape but this movement serves as a lesson regarding how to help bring about additional change. Importantly, voices in the pursuit of change ought to combine to include families in communities, critical educators, and those working across a spectrum of disciplines.

NOTES

1. Although the focus in this volume is on the US, these are global issues. The neoliberal direction in the development of the economy is relentless and continues to meet the ever-growing needs of the market. The reality descends upon lives across the world as transnational corporations and their reactive policy networks configure worker safety standards, environmental regulations, and human rights in accordance with profit margins (e.g. Barlow, 2007; Goldman, 2006; Harvey, 2003). The daily routines for especially the poorest, particularly in the Southern Hemisphere, take on an increasingly dehumanizing dimension. For example, because of IMF/World Bank indebtedness, many governments cannot afford vital services, such as basic healthcare, access to safe drinking water, and literacy instruction. Although less acutely, an assault on dignity along these lines is also felt in the industrialized North (Hall, 2013; Kloby, 2004).
2. Given their paltry wages, workers in these less regulated areas also cannot afford the market price of such products and services (e.g. Kloby, 2004).
3. Just as corporate power continues to gain strength over time so too do its supportive policy networks. Such policy networks increasingly direct, reroute, and strengthen economic objectives in ways that avoid crisis. Today solutions to crisis are mostly sought from the private sector, including its constellation of "star-power" transnational policy networks, forms of philanthropy, and micro-initiatives (e.g. the World Bank, IMF, WTO, the World Economic Forum, the Clinton Global Initiative, and the Broad Foundation). In this

present moment of economic development policies are commodities to be bought and sold (e.g. Ball, 2012; Ball, Macguire, & Braun, 2012; Goldman, 2006; Saltman, 2010).

4. Payday loans are illegal among military personnel and in several states (Bergman & de Granados, 2009).

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Part I

The Assault on Dignity in Households and Communities

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2 People of Color on the Frontline of Environmental Assault

Robert D. Bullard, Glenn S. Johnson, Denae W. King, and Sheri L. Smith

Despite significant improvements in environmental protection over the past several decades, millions of those in the US continue to live in unsafe and unhealthy physical environments. Many impoverished communities and their inhabitants are exposed to greater health hazards in their homes, on the job, and in their neighborhoods when compared to their more affluent counterparts (Bryant & Mohai, 1992; Bullard, 1992, 1994). To be poor, working class, and a person of color often means bearing a disproportionate share of the country's environmental problems (Bullard, 2000a). This chapter lays the historical foundations and social context of the environmental justice movement in the US. It also provides a critique and analysis of government policies and industry practices that endanger the health and safety of African Americans in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and playgrounds. Discussion also examines the role of grassroots groups, community-based organizations, and black institutions in dismantling the legacy of environmental racism.

Just four decades ago, the concept of environmental justice had not registered on the radar screens of environmental, civil rights, or social justice groups (Bullard, 1994). Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. went to Memphis in 1968 on an environmental and economic justice mission for striking black garbage workers. The strikers were demanding equal pay and better work conditions. As is well known, Dr. King was assassinated before he could complete his mission.

Another landmark garbage dispute took place a decade later in Houston, when African American homeowners began a bitter fight to keep a sanitary landfill out of their suburban middle income neighborhood. Residents formed the Northeast Community Action Group [NECAG]. The Northeast Community Action Group and their attorney, Linda McKeever Bullard, filed a class action lawsuit to block the facility from being built. The 1979 lawsuit, *Bean v. Southwestern Waste Management, Inc.*, was the first of its kind to challenge the siting of a waste facility under civil rights law. The landmark Houston case occurred three years before the environmental justice movement was catapulted into the national limelight in rural Warren County, North Carolina, an area populated by mostly African American families (Bullard, 1983).

The environmental justice movement has come a long way since its beginning in Warren County, North Carolina, where a polychlorinated biphenyl [PCB] landfill ignited protests and over 500 arrests. The Warren County protests provided the impetus for a US General Accounting Office (1983) study, *Siting of Hazardous Waste Landfills and Their Correlation with Racial and Economic Status of Surrounding Communities*. That study revealed three out of four of the off-site, commercial hazardous waste landfills in Region 4 (which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) happen to be located in predominantly African American communities, although African Americans made up only 20 percent of the region's population. More important, the protesters put "environmental racism" on the map. The protests also led the Commission for Racial Justice (1987) to produce *Toxic Waste and Race*, the first national study to correlate waste facility sites and demographic characteristics. Race was found to be the most potent variable in predicting where these facilities were located, more powerful than poverty, land values, and home ownership.

In 1990, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* chronicled the convergence of two social movements—social justice and environmental movements—into the environmental justice movement (Bullard, 2000a). The book highlighted African American environmental activism in the South, the same region that gave birth to the modern Civil Rights movement. What started out as local and often isolated community-based struggles against toxics and facility siting blossomed into a multi-issue, multi-ethnic, and multi-regional movement. *Dumping in Dixie* was the first book on environmental justice to document racial dynamics involved in the location of municipal landfills, hazardous waste sites, incinerators, lead smelters, refineries, and chemical plants (Bullard, 2000a).

The 1991 First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was the most important single event in the history of the environmental justice movement. The summit broadened the movement beyond its somewhat narrow anti-toxics focus to include issues of public health, worker safety, land use, transportation, housing, resource allocation, and community empowerment (C. Lee, 1992). The meeting also demonstrated it is possible to build a multi-racial grassroots movement around environmental and economic justice (Alston, 1992).

Held in Washington, DC, the four-day summit was attended by over 650 grassroots and national leaders from around the world. Delegates came from all 50 states including Alaska and Hawaii, as well as Puerto Rico, Chile, Mexico, and as far away as the Marshall Islands. People attended the summit to share their action strategies, redefine the environmental movement, and develop common plans for addressing environmental problems affecting people of color in the US and around the world. On September 27, 1991, summit delegates adopted 17 "Principles of Environmental Justice." These principles were developed as a guide for organizing, networking, and

relating to government and nongovernmental organizations. By June 1992, Spanish and Portuguese translations of the principles were being used and circulated by nongovernmental organizations and environmental justice groups at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The publication of the *People of Color Environmental Groups Directory* in 1992, 1994, and 2000 further illustrates environmental justice organizations are found in the US from coast to coast, in the District of Columbia, and in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Canada. Groups have come to embrace a wide range of issues, including public health, children's health, pollution prevention, facility siting, housing, brownfields, community reinvestment, air pollution, urban sprawl, land use, worker safety, public participation, transportation discrimination, smart growth, and regional equity (Bullard, 2000b).

THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PARADIGM

As stated earlier, many economically impoverished communities and their inhabitants are exposed to greater health hazards in their homes, on the job, and in their neighborhoods when compared to their more affluent counterparts (Bryant, 1995; Bryant & Mohai, 1992; Bullard, 1993a, 1993b; Calloway & Decker, 1997; Collin & Collin, 1998; US EPA, 1992). From New York to Los Angeles, grassroots community resistance has emerged in response to such practices, policies, and conditions that residents have judged to be unjust, unfair, and illegal. Some of these conditions include (1) unequal enforcement of environmental, civil rights, and public health laws; (2) differential exposure of certain populations to harmful chemicals, pesticides, and other toxins in homes, schools, neighborhoods, and the workplace; (3) faulty assumptions in calculating, assessing, and managing risks; (4) discriminatory zoning and land-use practices; and (5) exclusionary practices that limit some individuals and groups from participation in decision making (Bullard, 1993a; B. Lee, 1992).

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies (US EPA, 1998).

During its 43-year history, the US Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] has not always recognized that many government and industry practices (whether intended or unintended) have adverse impacts on poor people and people of color. Growing grassroots community resistance emerged

in response to practices, policies, and conditions that residents judged to be unjust, unfair, and illegal. The EPA is mandated to enforce the nation's environmental laws and regulations equally across the board. It is required to protect all—not just individuals or groups who can afford lawyers, lobbyists, and experts. Environmental protection is a right, not a privilege reserved for a few who can "vote with their feet" and escape or fend off environmental stressors.

The current environmental protection apparatus manages, regulates, and distributes risk (Bullard, 1996). The dominant environmental protection paradigm institutionalizes unequal enforcement; trades human health for profit; places the burden of proof on the "victims" and not the polluting industry; legitimates human exposure to harmful chemicals, pesticides, and hazardous substances; promotes "risky" technologies; exploits the vulnerability of economically and politically disenfranchised communities; subsidizes ecological destruction; creates an industry around risk assessment and risk management; delays cleanup actions; and fails to develop pollution prevention as the overarching and dominant strategy (Bullard, 1993b, 1993c).

A growing body of evidence reveals that people of color and/or low income persons have borne greater environmental and health risks than the society at large in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and playgrounds (Johnson et al., 1992; National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, 1995). On the other hand, the environmental justice paradigm embraces a holistic approach to formulating environmental health policies and regulation, and developing risk reduction strategies for multiple, cumulative, and synergistic risks. The focus is on ensuring public health, increasing public participation in environmental decision making, building infrastructure for achieving environmental justice and sustainable communities, and facilitating interagency cooperation and coordination. Other goals include developing innovative public/private partnerships and collaboratives, creating community-based pollution prevention strategies, encouraging community-based sustainable economic development, and devising geographically oriented community-wide programming.

The question of environmental justice is not anchored in a debate about whether or not decision makers should tinker with risk assessment and risk management. The environmental justice framework rather rests on developing tools and strategies to eliminate unfair, unjust, and inequitable conditions and decisions. The objective is to uncover the underlying assumptions that may contribute to and produce differential exposure and unequal protection. It brings to the surface the ethical and political questions of "who gets what, when, why, and how much?" The environmental justice paradigm adopts a public health model of prevention (i.e. elimination of the threat before harm occurs); shifts the burden of proof to polluters/dischargers who do harm, discriminate, or do not give equal protection to vulnerable populations; allows disparate impact and statistical weight

or an "effect" test, as opposed to "intent," to infer discrimination; and redresses disproportionate impact through "targeted" action and resources. In general, this strategy focuses resources on areas where environmental and health problems are greatest (as determined by some ranking scheme but not limited to risk assessment) (Bullard, 1996).

In response to growing public concern and mounting scientific evidence, on February 11, 1994 (the second day of a national health symposium), President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." This order attempted to address environmental injustice within existing federal laws and regulations. This order reinforced the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, which prohibits discriminatory practices in programs receiving federal funds. The order also focused the spotlight back on the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA], a law that set policy goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment. The goal of the NEPA is to ensure a safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing environment for all (Council on Environmental Quality, 1997).

The NEPA requires federal agencies to prepare a detailed statement on the environmental effects of proposed federal actions that significantly affect the quality of human health. The executive order calls for improved methodologies for assessing and mitigating impacts on health from multiple and cumulative exposure, the collection of data on low income and minority populations who may be disproportionately at risk, and an analysis of impacts on subsistence fishers and wildlife consumers. There are many people who remain subsistence fishers, who fish for protein and who basically subsidize their budgets, and their diets, by fishing from rivers, streams, and lakes that are polluted. These subpopulations may be underprotected when basic assumptions are made using the dominant risk paradigm. The executive order encouraged participation of the impacted populations in the various phases of assessing impacts—including scoping, data gathering, alternatives, analysis, mitigation, and monitoring (Council on Environmental Quality, 1997).

LAND-USE ZONING AND POLITICS OF RACE

Land-use zoning has shaped much of the urban built environment. Zoning is probably the most widely applied mechanism to regulate urban land use in the US. Zoning laws broadly define land for residential, commercial, or industrial uses, and may impose narrower land-use restrictions, for example, minimum and maximum lot size, number of dwellings per acre, and square feet and height of buildings (Haar & Kayden, 1999).

Zoning laws and regulations influence land use and in turn have important environmental justice implications (Bullard, 2007). Local land-use and

zoning policies are the "root enabling cause of disproportionate burdens and environmental injustice" in the US (Maantay, 2000, p. 572). A 2003 National Academy of Public Administration report, *Addressing Community Concerns: How Environmental Justice Relates to Land Use Planning and Zoning*, found most planning and zoning board members are men; more than nine out of ten members are white; most members are 40 years old or older; and boards contain mostly professionals, and few, if any, non-professional or community representatives.

Zoning ordinances, deed restrictions, and other land-use mechanisms have been widely used as a "NIMBY" [not in my backyard] tool, operating through exclusionary practices. On the one hand, exclusionary zoning (and rezoning) has been a subtle form of using government authority and power to foster and perpetuate discriminatory practices—including environmental planning. Exclusionary zoning has been used to zone against something rather than for something. On the other hand, "expulsive" zoning has pushed out residential uses and allowed "dirty" industries to invade communities (Rabin, 1999, pp. 106–108). Largely the poor, people of color, and/or renters inhabit the most vulnerable communities. Institutional racism in the form of zoning laws are often legal weapons used to segregate by allowing certain groups (immigrants, people of color, and/or poor people) and operations (polluting industries) to be excluded from areas.

Land-use planning is a job primarily for local, regional, and state jurisdictions. Generally, residents look to their local government to address land-use problems. Nevertheless, some federal government decisions impact local and regional land use—from zoning regulations to the construction of transportation systems (highways vs. public transit and other alternatives to driving) that respond to regional needs—to comply with the federal Clean Air Act. For example, the January 2001 United States EPA report, *EPA Guidance: Improving Air Quality through Land Use Activities*, supports this point:

> In recent years, many of EPA's stakeholders have explored using land use activities as strategies for improving air quality. These stakeholders, including state and local planning agencies, have suggested that EPA improve guidance on how to recognize land use strategies in the air quality planning process that result in improvements in local and regional air quality. (p. 1)

The EPA issued the guidance "to inform state and local governments that land use activities which can be shown (through appropriate modeling and quantification) to have beneficial impacts on air quality, may help them meet their air quality goals" (US EPA, 2001, p. 2). Some regional authorities have used land-use zoning by taking action regarding buffer zones. For example, the South Coast Air Quality Management District in Los Angeles [SCAQMD], the air pollution control agency for all of Orange County

and the urban portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties, requires buffer zones for sensitive receptors. Schools for instance are considered sensitive receptors here and thus are protected against the risks posed by toxic emissions from high-impact sources (ICF Consulting, 2005/2007). The SCAQMD guidance provides suggested policies school districts can use to prevent or reduce potential air pollution impacts and protect the health of students and staff.

The objective of the guidance document is to facilitate stronger collaboration between school districts and the SCAQMD to reduce exposure to source-specific air pollution impacts.[1] With or without zoning, deed restrictions, or other devices, various groups are unequally able to protect their environmental interests. More often than not, a disproportionate share of low income neighborhoods are "zoned for garbage" and deemed compatible with industrial use (Bullard, 2005a). They also get shortchanged in the neighborhood protection game (Pastor, Sadd, & Hipp, 2001). Zoning, whether local, regional, or federal, has been ineffective in protecting some communities and populations from environmental threats. No amount of zoning has insulated the most vulnerable communities from the negative health impacts of industrial pollution (Bullard, 2005a).

FROM CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING TO HEALTHY HOMES

The Centers for Disease Control [CDC] and Prevention's 2009 *Fourth National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals* cites the reduction in childhood lead poisoning as a major public health success story. Child blood lead levels continue to decline in the US, even in historically high-risk groups for lead poisoning. The lead threat has been especially problematic for poor children, children of color, and/or children living in inner cities, especially in the Northeast. Children with elevated blood lead levels, ≥10 μg/dL, decreased from 8.6% in 1988–1991 to 1.4% in 1999–2004, which is an 84% decrease. Still, some children continue to be at a greater risk for exposures to lead than others. From 1988 to 1991 and 1999 to 2004, children's geometric mean blood lead levels declined in non-Hispanic black (5.2 to 2.8 μg/dL), Mexican American (3.9 to 1.9 μg/dL), and non-Hispanic white children (3.1 to 1.7 μg/dL). Still, the greatest risk factors for high lead levels were older housing, poverty, age, and being non-Hispanic black (Jones, Homa, Meyer, Brody, Caldwell, Pirkle, & Brown, 2009).

In 2001, the water authority in the District of Columbia switched from chlorination to an alternative water-disinfection technology known as chloramination. The goal was to reduce the potentially carcinogenic byproducts of chlorinated drinking water. However, an unintended consequence of this technique was the sudden release of lead into the drinking water that serves the nation's capital—resulting in a "lead crisis" that

persisted for several years, until water engineers found a way to fix the chloramination process. Lead concentrations increased in many children after the local water authority altered the treatment used to disinfect drinking water. Children in the nation's capital were dosed with potentially dangerous amounts of lead which could have impacted somewhere between four and seven IQ points. Failure to protect young children from exposure to lead-tainted drinking water is a crime against children (Raloff, 2009).

Recent studies suggest a young person's lead burden is linked to lower IQ, lower high school graduation rates, and increased delinquency (CDC, 2000). Lead poisoning causes about two to three points of IQ lost for each 10 μg/dL lead level (Montague, 2005). The CDC considers 10 μg/dL to be the "level of concern," even though recent studies have shown there is evidence of adverse health effects in children with blood lead levels below 10 μg/dL. Environmental and medical interventions are recommended at ≥20 μg/dL (CDC, 2005). No threshold for these effects has been found. Thus, childhood lead poisoning is not only a health, environmental, and housing problem—it is also an education problem.

A US House of Representatives subcommittee investigating CDC performance uncovered that more than twice as many children living in DC (as previously reported by federal and local health officials) had high levels of lead in their blood amid the city's drinking water crisis. Children who lived in neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of lead in the water—Capitol Hill, Columbia Heights, and northern sections of Ward 4—were much more likely to have elevated lead in the bloodstream (Leonnig, 2009).

Other recent studies are finding renovations, repairs, and painting in proximate areas to be major sources of new lead poisoning cases. A study of New York State children (excluding New York City) found such activities were important sources of lead exposure among children with blood lead levels ≥20 μg/dL, constituting over 14% of all new cases (CDC, 2009). Another study of new cases in New York City found that despite notable progress, children of color still suffer disproportionately from lead poisoning with 85% of children identified with this form of poisoning being black, Hispanic, or Asian, and most new cases being Hispanic and black children (New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2009).

According to the CDC, by the end of fiscal year 2010, blood lead levels of 10 μg/dL or higher in the US were expected to be eliminated as a public health problem. Because of this dramatic reduction in childhood lead poisoning and because many factors influence health and safety in homes, the CDC launched a broad "Healthy Homes" initiative to address and improve health conditions inside homes in the US, especially among low income families. The emphasis was placed on homes as they are the source of a number of health-related conditions, including childhood lead poisoning, respiratory disease, unintentional injuries, and radon-related illnesses that

can be mitigated, eliminated, or reduced by appropriate intervention (US DHHS, 2009). The Surgeon General's 2009 *Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes* outlines "a society-wide comprehensive and coordinated approach to healthy homes that will result in the greatest possible public health impact and reduce disparities in the availability of healthy, safe, affordable, accessible, and environmentally-friendly homes" (US DHHS, 2009, p. 4).

Research shows lead poisoning is just one of many adverse health conditions that are related to housing deficiencies. In addition to lead, many low income families and children are exposed to multiple indoor hazards such as mold, vermin, pesticides, and lack of safety devices such as smoke alarms. For example, children's "exposure to neurotoxin compounds at levels believed to be safe for adults could result in permanent loss of brain function if it occurred during the prenatal and early childhood period of brain development" (Natural Resources Defense Council, 1997). A 2009 Environmental Working Group report, *Pollution in People: Cord Blood Contaminants in Minority Newborns*, found up to 232 toxic chemicals in the umbilical cord blood of ten babies from racial and ethnic minority groups. The findings represent evidence that each child was exposed to a host of dangerous chemicals while still in the womb (Environmental Working Group, 2009).

Clearly, housing conditions can significantly affect public health (Brown, 2002). By moving from a single focus on lead poisoning to eliminating multiple housing-related hazards, the CDC embarked on an initiative to promote housing factors that enhance well-being through research, surveillance, and translation of science into public health practice. The benefits of a comprehensive "Healthy Homes" initiative are many (US DHHS, 2009). They include reduction in the annual occurrence of 18,000 deaths from unintentional injuries, 12 million nonfatal injuries, nearly 3,000 deaths in house fires, 14,000 burn injuries, 590 unintentional firearm deaths, 322 deaths from carbon monoxide exposure, 240,000 cases of childhood lead poisoning, 2 million emergency department visits, 500,000 hospitalizations for asthma, and 168,000 viral and 34,000 bacterial illnesses caused by contaminated water and food (US DHHS, 2009; US EPA, 2002).

A September 2009 *New York Times* study presents clear evidence that the health of millions is at risk from lax enforcement of existing laws (Duhigg, 2009a). Nationally, polluters in the last five years have violated federal clean water laws more than 500,000 times with many violators escaping fines and punishment. About 60% of the polluters were deemed in "significant noncompliance," which translates into the most serious violations, such as dumping cancer-causing chemicals. This research shows 10% of those in the US have been exposed to drinking water that contains dangerous chemicals or fails to meet a federal health benchmark, and 40% of the nation's public water systems violated the Safe Drinking Water Act at least once.

DEADLY DUMPING GROUNDS

In 2002, the *Air of Injustice* study indicated dirty power plants are not randomly distributed across the US landscape, finding that 78% of all African Americans live within 30 miles of a power plant—the distance within which the maximum effects of the smokestack plumes are expected to occur. This is compared to 56% of whites and 39% of Hispanics. Also, over 35 million children live within 30 miles of a power plant, of which an estimated 2 million are asthmatic (Black Leadership Forum et al., 2002). In 2007, Professor Bullard and his colleagues released *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty,* a report which produced some glaring findings. People of color make up the majority (56%) of those living in neighborhoods within two miles of the nation's 413 commercial hazardous waste facilities, nearly double the percentage in areas beyond two miles (30%). People of color make up a much larger (over two-thirds) majority (69%) in neighborhoods with clustered facilities, and people of color in 2007 were more concentrated in areas with commercial hazardous sites than in 1987 (Bullard, Mohai, Saha, & Wright, 2007). Additionally, research on polluting facilities concluded that two-thirds of those living within a mile of such facilities are people of color, whereas two-thirds of those living more than two and one-half miles away are white (Pastor et al., 2007).

Downey and Hawkins (2008) conducted a study on race, income, and environmental inequality in the US in which they conclude (1) African Americans and/or single mothers with young children compose a disproportionate share of the population living in the most polluted neighborhoods; (2) African Americans are exposed to toxic concentrations of air pollution 1.45 times greater than the second-most environmentally "burdened" group; (3) low income, predominantly black neighborhoods and households suffer a much higher pollution burden than do any other neighborhood or household type; (4) blacks are exposed to toxic concentrations 2.52 times greater than Asian Americans, whose neighborhoods are, on average, the cleanest of those studied; and (5) blacks experience such a high air pollution burden that black households with incomes of $50,000 to $60,000 live in neighborhoods that are, on average, more polluted than neighborhoods of white households with incomes less than $10,000. In tracking pollution from individual companies to specific communities, the corporate environmental justice performance scorecard shows the most polluted places tend to have significantly higher-than-average percentages of people of color. They also found of the top 10 companies on the "Toxic 100" list, people of color bear more than half of the human health impacts from the toxic air released by these industries (Ash, Boyce, Change, Pastor, Scoggins, & Tran, 2009).

Substantial areas of the US lack monitoring data and among areas where monitoring data are available, low income and minority communities tend to experience higher ambient pollution levels (Miranda, 2011). Schools

located in areas with the highest industrial air pollution levels in states in which there is tracking had the lowest attendance rates—an indicator of poor health—as well as the highest proportion of students who failed to meet state educational testing standards. They also found minority students appear to bear the greatest burden. Whereas 44.4% of all white students in states attend schools located in the top 10 percent of the most polluted locations in the state, 81.5 percent of all African American children and 62.1 percent of all Hispanic students attend schools in the most polluted zones (Mohai et al., 2011). The GreenLaw report (2012) identifies eight types of air, water, and land pollution and compares them with demographic data for people living in a 14-county region in metro Atlanta. To no surprise the research demonstrates those in low income communities of color are more likely to live near and be disproportionately impacted by pollution than others. The report also uncovered that the five blocks with the most sources of pollution were in areas where there are either extraordinarily high minority densities or areas where people do not speak English as a first language.

The "chicken or egg" waste facility siting debate has nearly been put to rest because recent evidence shows disproportionately high percentages of minorities and low income populations were present at the time the commercial hazardous waste facilities were sited. Hundreds of empirical studies have found race and class disparities in the location of polluting facilities. It has been found over a 30-year period polluting facilities were deliberately sited in existing minority communities in the Los Angeles Basin rather than caused by geographic shifts in minority populations (Pastor, Sadd, & Hipp, 2001). Likewise in Michigan during the last 30 years, commercial hazardous waste facilities were sited in neighborhoods that were disproportionately poor and disproportionately nonwhite at the time of siting (Saha & Mohai, 2005).

Using data from the Americans' Changing Lives Study, Mohai and his colleagues (2009) found significant disparities in exposure to environmental hazards. African Americans and/or persons at lower educational levels were more likely to live within a mile of a polluting facility. Racial disparities were especially pronounced in metropolitan areas in the Midwest and West and in suburban areas of the South. The researchers also provide a paradigm for studying changes over time in the links to health.

African Americans and other people of color continue to be disproportionately and adversely impacted by environmental toxins in their communities. Residents in fence-line communities comprise a special needs population that deserves special attention. A 2005 study from the Associated Press reported African Americans are 79% more likely than whites to live in neighborhoods where industrial pollution is suspected of posing the greatest health danger. African Americans in 19 states are more than twice as likely as whites to live in neighborhoods with high pollution and a similar pattern was discovered for Hispanics in 12 states and Asians in

7 states. Using the EPA's own data and government scientists, the AP study revealed that in 19 states, blacks were more than twice as likely as whites to live in neighborhoods where air pollution seems to pose the greatest health danger. The AP analyzed the health risk posed by industrial air pollution using toxic chemical air releases reported by factories to calculate a health risk score for each square kilometer of the US. The scores can be used to compare risks from long-term exposure to factory pollution from one area to another (Pace, 2005).

Toxic chemical assaults are not new for many who are forced to live adjacent to and often on the fence line with chemical industries that spew their poisons into the air, water, and ground (Bullard, 2005a). When (not if) chemical accidents occur, government and industry officials often instruct the fence-line community residents to "shelter in place." In reality, locked doors and closed windows do not block the chemical assault on the nearby communities, nor do they remove the cause of the anxiety and fear of the unknown health problems that may not show up for decades.

TOXIC HEALTH THREATS TO SCHOOL CHILDREN

Much of the Environmental Justice Movement energy over the years has been spent fighting for "toxic-free" neighborhoods. Some of the most intense struggles have involved pollution threats to school children or schools constructed on or near toxic waste sites, abandoned landfills, and polluting facilities. Yet no federal law or standards exist today for locating new schools near industrial facilities that emit toxins.

Over 870,000 of the 1.9 million (46%) housing units for poor families and children inhabited by people of color sit within about a mile of factories that reported toxic emissions to the EPA ("Study," 2000). The 2001 *Poisoned Schools: Invisible Threats, Visible Actions* report found more than 600,000 students in Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Michigan, and California were attending nearly 1,200 public schools that were located within a half mile of federal Superfund or state-identified contaminated sites (Center for Health, Environment and Justice, 2001). No state except California has a law requiring school officials to investigate potentially contaminated property, and no federal or state agency keeps records of public or private schools that operate on or near toxic waste or industrial sites.

A December 2008 *USA Today* study showed that the air in 435 schools in 34 states appears worse than at a Cincinnati-area elementary school shut down in 2005 because of carcinogenic chemicals. Only 3% of the 127,800 public, private, and parochial schools ranked were within a mile of a long-term monitor set up to detect hazardous air pollutants (Morrison & Heath, 2008). On March 2, 2009, the EPA's new administrator, Lisa Jackson, announced plans to determine whether industrial pollution taints the air outside schools across the nation. On March 31, 2009, the EPA

announced it would test pollution around 63 schools in 22 states (Morrison & Heath, 2009).

In early October 2009, the EPA announced the first results from its air toxics monitoring near 63 schools. According to the EPA, "early sampling at all the schools show that levels of air toxics are below levels of short-term concern." However, EPA scientists caution the public about drawing conclusions at this point because the project is designed to show if long-term, not short-term, exposure poses health risks to school children and staff. Once monitoring is complete and the full set of results is in from all of the schools, the EPA will then evaluate the potential health concerns from long-term exposure to these pollutants (US EPA, 2009).

Over the last decade, we have seen the convergence of the Green Building Movement—which typically focuses on energy efficiency and resource conservation—and the Healthy Schools Movement. The latter movement seeks high-performance school design/construction consistent with child needs for healthy environments, the greening of existing schools, and environmental public health for children who are disproportionately affected by environmental exposure in "sick schools." The National Research Council's *Green Schools: Attributes for Health and Learning* (2006) report describes how the indoor environment affects student health and academic performance. There are no federal laws that set standards for indoor air quality or ventilation standards. There also are no guidelines for pesticides in and outside of classrooms.

Gregory Kats' *Greening America's Schools: Costs and Benefits* (2006) report details how the location and design of healthy school buildings enhance student learning, reduce health and operating costs, and ultimately, increase school quality and competitiveness. Kats found "green schools" cost on average about 2% or $3 more per square foot to build than conventional schools. However, the financial and health benefits of greening schools—which includes energy and water cost savings; greater teacher retention; and reduction in colds, flu, and asthma—are about $70 per square foot, more than 20 times the cost of going green.

The pollution threat in neighborhoods extends into classrooms. Not surprisingly, poor children in poor schools in poor environments face the highest health risk from "sick schools" (Ibata, 2009). Quite often resources play a major role in determining the health of schools, thereby exacerbating social, economic, environmental, and academic disparities. Typically, low income students of color attend schools in older, poorly maintained buildings that have multiple indoor environmental quality problems, including indoor air pollution, toxic chemical and pesticide use, mold infestation, asbestos and radon, lead in paint and drinking water, and other heavy metals (Bernstein, 2009).

People of color comprise about one-third of the nation's population. However, students of color make up about 45% of the children attending "sick schools." Students of color are concentrated at even higher numbers

in states such as Mississippi (53.5%) and Louisiana (50%). These two states are consistently considered among the "poorest" and or "most polluted" states in the country (US Census Bureau, 2011). No federal guidelines or legislation exists today to support fully the healthy schools movement.

In too many cases, the indoor environment is making school children sick. One in eight US school-aged children has asthma, resulting in an estimated 15 million missed school days. An estimated 32 million students (60% of all students) are at risk daily due solely to school conditions. Over half (57%) of schools have at least one unsatisfactory environmental factor and more than two-thirds (68%) have at least one inadequate building feature. Few states regulate air quality in schools or provide minimum ventilation standards (Healthy Schools Network, 2009). The *Sick Schools 2009* study found that 38 states offer grants for green school construction, 28 states have actually conducted some kind of infrastructure assessment, 21 states have adopted high-performance green school design, 15 states require integrated pest management, and only 8 states have green cleaning laws (Healthy Schools Network, 2009).

A number of federal initiatives have been undertaken to promote high-performance healthy schools. The 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act authorized an appropriation for the EPA of $10 million over five years for work on school environments. Energy Independence and Security Act Subtitle E, Healthy High Performance Schools, directs the EPA to promote healthy school environments by working with state agencies, by creating federal guidelines for siting schools, and by developing model guidelines for children's environmental health in schools. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 allocates funds for school renovations and directs grant funds that Title I schools can allocate to public school renovations; and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009 provides greatly expanded federal bond financing for "the construction, rehabilitation, or repair of a public school facility, or for the acquisition of land on which such a facility is to be constructed" (US Department of Education, 2009). Although healthy schools are mentioned as a goal in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, no funds were appropriated to help school districts implement them (Adler, 2009).

THREATS FROM "DIRTY POWER" PLANTS

Environmental health scientists have documented the ill health effects of fossil fuel. Fine particles, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons [PAHs], sulfur and nitrogen oxides, benzene, and mercury emitted from dirty coal-fired power plants along with diesel- and gasoline-powered vehicles all have been linked to infant mortality, lower birth weight, respiratory symptoms, childhood asthma, developmental disorders, and cancer (Grandjean & Landgrigan, 2006). Children are hit especially hard by "dirty power." Fine

particles, ozone, diesel, and PAHs are known or suspected contributors to childhood asthma (Etzel, 2003; Strachan, 2000). These health effects represent a major societal and public health challenge (Perea, 2008).

More than 68% of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant—the distance within which the maximum effects of the smokestack plume are expected to occur. In comparison, 56% of whites and 39% of Hispanics live in such proximity to a coal-fired power plant. Over 35 million children live within 30 miles of a power plant, of which an estimated 2 million are asthmatic. Coal-burning power plants are the major source of mercury pollution, a neurotoxin especially harmful to children and developing fetuses. About 8% of women of childbearing age are at risk from mercury pollution. Power plants are also responsible for about 40% of all human-induced carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions, the most significant greenhouse gas, emitted from burning fossil fuels in the US—placing power plants at the center of the debate on climate change and climate justice. SO_2 emissions from power plants also significantly harm the cardiovascular and respiratory health of people who live near the plants. More than 23,600 US deaths occur each year from dirty power plants (Black Leadership Forum et al., 2002).

Much of the mercury from power plants stays airborne for two years and spreads around the globe. Because a lot of the mercury falls within 100 miles of its source, utilities that buy credits instead of installing controls could worsen local mercury "hot spots" found around the country (Levine, 2004). In 2005, over the objections of environmentalists, the EPA introduced a weak "cap-and-trade" rule, which would have allowed power plants to either reduce their own mercury pollution or buy pollution credits from other plants. In February 2008, a federal appeals court ruled the EPA's approach to power plant mercury emissions violates the Clean Air Act and vacated this regulation. The 12 states, or "dirty dozen," with the heaviest concentrations of the dirtiest power plants or in terms of total tons of CO_2 emitted are Texas (five of the ten dirtiest plants), Pennsylvania (four), Indiana (four, including two of the top ten dirtiest plants), Alabama (three), Georgia (three, including two of the top three dirtiest plants), North Carolina (three), Ohio (three), West Virginia (three), Wyoming (two), Florida (two), Kentucky (two), and New Mexico (two) ("Mercury Emissions," 2008).

Even with talk about the nation going green, "green jobs," and the "green economy," dirty energy still follows the "path of least resistance," allowing low income families, people of color, and indigenous people's communities to become environmental "sacrifice zones." These areas are "dumping grounds" for all kinds of health-threatening operations, including landfills, incinerators, dirty coal-fired power plants, oil refineries, petrochemical plants, and mountaintop removal mining of coal—often called "strip mining on steroids." Mountaintop mining in the southern Appalachians has damaged more than 1,200 miles of streams and turned more than 400,000 acres of forested mountains into lunar landscapes (Feffer, 2009).

Nationwide, Native American lands are grossly underserved by electricity services. According to a recent Energy Information Administration report, an average of 14.2% of tribal households in the country are without electricity. This is ten times the average for the rest of the country. Ironically, 20% of the energy resources in the US are located on Native land, which combined together occupies land areas equal to the size of Texas (US Energy Information Administration, 2001).

COPING WITH DISASTERS: LESSONS FROM NEW ORLEANS

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina laid waste to New Orleans, a city built mostly below sea level and whose coastal wetlands, which normally serve as a natural buffer against storm surge, had been destroyed by developers (Colton, 2007; Pastor et al., 2006). Katrina has been described as one of the most devastating, costly, and deadly disasters in US history—a disaster that is still ongoing (Brunsma et al., 2007; Dyson, 2006; Heerden & Bryan, 2006; Horne, 2006; Mann, 2006). A September 2005 *Business Week* commentary described the handling of the untold tons of "lethal goop" as the "mother of all toxic cleanups" ("The Mother," 2005). However, the billion-dollar question facing New Orleans was which neighborhoods would get cleaned up, which ones would be left contaminated, and which ones would be targeted as new sites to dump storm debris and waste from flooded homes.

Cleaning Up Toxic Neighborhoods

Flooding in the New Orleans metropolitan area largely resulted from breached levees and flood walls (Gabe et al., 2005). A May 2006 report from the Russell Sage Foundation, *In the Wake of the Storm: Environment, Disaster, and Race after Katrina*, found these same groups often experience a "second disaster" after the initial storm (Bullard, 2005b). Quite often the scale of a disaster's impact, as in the case of Hurricane Katrina, has more to do with the political economy of the country, region, and state than with the hurricane's category strength (Hartman & Squires, 2007; Jackson, 2005). It also has to do with the social class and racial backgrounds of victims. Quite often measures to prevent or contain the effects of disaster vulnerability are not equally provided to all (Bullard, 2005b). Typically, flood-control investments provide location-specific benefits, with the greatest benefits going to populations who live or own assets in the protected area. Thus, by virtue of where people live, work, or own property, they may be excluded from the benefits of government-funded flood-control investments (Boyce, 2000).

Hurricane Katrina left debris across a 90,000-square-foot disaster area in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama (Luther, 2006). According to the

Congressional Research Service, debris from Katrina could well top 100 million cubic yards compared to the 8.8 million cubic yards of disaster debris generated after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Ten months after the storm, FEMA had spent $3.6 billion to remove 98.6 million cubic yards of debris from Katrina (Jordan, 2006). This is enough trash to pile two miles high across five football fields. Still, an estimated 20 million cubic yards littered New Orleans and Mississippi waterways—with about 96% or 17.8 million cubic yards of remaining wreckage in Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Washington, and Plaquemine parishes. Louisiana parishes hauled away 25 times more debris than was collected after 9/11 (Shields, 2006).

In addition to wood debris, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality officials estimated 140,000 to 160,000 homes in Louisiana would have to be demolished and disposed of (US EPA & Louisiana DEQ, 2005). More than 110,000 of 180,000 homes were flooded in New Orleans, and half sat for days or weeks in more than six feet of water (Nossiter, 2005). Government officials estimate as many as 30,000 to 50,000 homes citywide would need to be demolished. An additional 350,000 automobiles had to be drained of oil and gasoline and then recycled; 60,000 boats needed to be destroyed; and 300,000 underground fuel tanks and 42,000 tons of hazardous waste had to be cleaned up and properly disposed at licensed facilities (Varney & Moller, 2005). Government officials peg the numbers of cars lost in New Orleans alone at 145,000.

In March 2006, seven months after the storm slammed ashore, organizers of the "A Safe Way Back Home" initiative, the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Dillard University, and the United Steel Workers undertook a proactive pilot neighborhood cleanup project—the first of its kind in New Orleans. The cleanup project, located in the 8100 block of Aberdeen Road in New Orleans East removed six inches of tainted soil from front and back yards, replacing soil with new sod, and disposing of contaminated dirt in a safe manner. Residents who chose to remove the topsoil from their yards—containing sediments left by flooding—found themselves in a "catch-22" situation. The problem was the insistence by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and the EPA that the soil in their yards was not contaminated and the refusal of local landfill operators to dispose of the soil because they expected it to be contaminated. This bottleneck of what to do with the topsoil was unresolved a year and a half after the devastating flood (Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, 2006).

Although government officials insisted the dirt in the yards of residents was safe, Church Hill Downs Inc., the owners of New Orleans' Fair Grounds, felt it was not safe for its thoroughbred horses. The Fair Grounds is the nation's third-oldest track. The owners hauled off soil tainted by Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters and rebuilt a grandstand roof ripped off by the storm's wind (Martell, 2006). The Fair Grounds opened on Thanksgiving Day 2006. Certainly, if tainted soil is not safe for horses, surely it is not safe for people—especially children who play and dig in the dirt.

The "A Safe Way Back Home" demonstration project served as a catalyst for a series of activities that attempted to reclaim the New Orleans East community following the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina. Although it is the government's responsibility to provide the resources required to address areas of environmental concern and to ensure the workforce is protected, residents were not waiting for the government to rescue them and clean up their neighborhoods ("New Pollution Data," 2006). The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Dillard University and the United Steel Workers coalition received dozens of requests and inquiries from New Orleans East homeowners associations to help clean up their neighborhoods block by block. State and federal officials labeled the voluntary cleanup efforts as "scaremongering" (Simmons, 2006).

EPA and Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality officials said they tested soil samples from the neighborhood in December and found there was no immediate cause for concern. According to Tom Harris, state toxicologist and administrator of the environmental technology division of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the government originally sampled 800 locations in New Orleans and found cause for concern in only 46 samples. Generally, the soil in New Orleans is consistent with "what we saw before Katrina," says Harris. He called the "A Safe Way Back Home" program "completely unnecessary" (Williams, 2006).

To dramatic effect, a week after the voluntary cleanup project began, a Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality staffer ate a spoonful of dirt scraped from the Aberdeen Road pilot project. The dirt-eating publicity stunt was clearly an attempt to disparage the proactive neighborhood cleanup initiative. Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality officials later apologized. Despite barriers and red tape, Katrina evacuees continued to move back into their damaged homes or set up travel trailers in their yards. One of the main questions returning residents had was: Is this place safe? They were receiving mixed signals from government agencies. In December 2005, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality announced there was no unacceptable long-term health risk directly attributable to environmental contamination resulting from the storm. Two months later, in February, the Natural Resources Defense Council test results came out with different conclusions (Solomon & Rotkin-Ellman, 2006). The Natural Resources Defense Council analyses of soil and air quality after Hurricane Katrina revealed dangerously high levels of diesel fuel, lead, and other contaminants in Gentilly, Bywater, Orleans Parish, and other New Orleans neighborhoods (2005).

Although many government scientists insisted the soil was safe, an April 2006 multi-agency task force press release distributed by the EPA raised some questions. Despite claiming that the levels of lead and other contaminants in the soil were "similar" to soil contaminant levels in other cities,

it also cautioned residents to "keep children from playing in bare dirt. Cover bare dirt with grass, bushes, or 4–6 inches of lead-free wood chips, mulch, soil or sand" (US EPA, 2006). Instead of cleaning up the mess that existed before and after the storm, government officials were allowing dirty neighborhoods to stay dirty forever. In August 2006, nearly a year after Katrina made landfall, the federal EPA gave New Orleans and surrounding communities a clean bill of health, while pledging to monitor a handful of toxic hot spots (Brown, 2006). EPA and Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality officials concluded Katrina did not cause any appreciable contamination that was not already there. Although EPA tests confirmed widespread lead in the soil—a pre-storm problem in 40 percent of New Orleans—the EPA dismissed calls from residents to address this problem as outside the agency's mission.

Three years after Katrina, nearly one-third of residents of New Orleans had not made it back home (Liu & Plyer, 2008). The road home for many Katrina survivors has been a bumpy one, largely due to slow government actions to distribute the billions in federal aid to residents to rebuild. The Louisiana Road Home Program for Homeowners is distributing $10.5 billion in federal funds plus $1 billion in state funds to Louisiana homeowners numbering about 160,000 applicants whose homes were devastated in 2005 by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita or the subsequent flooding. Eighteen months after the Louisiana Road Home Program began, it had closed 90,000 grants, but some of those were still waiting for disputed award money and another 70,000 still had not received any funding. ICF International, the program's lead contractor, has been widely criticized for the slow pace of getting money to displaced homeowners (Hammer, 2008).

Health Threats from Toxic FEMA Trailers

Right after Katrina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] purchased about 102,000 travel trailers for $2.6 billion or roughly $15,000 each (Spake, 2007). Surprisingly, there were reports of residents becoming ill in these trailers due to the release of potentially dangerous levels of formaldehyde. In fact, formaldehyde is the industrial chemical (found in glues, plastics, building materials, composite wood, plywood panels, and particle board) that was used to manufacture the travel trailers (Babington, 2007). In Mississippi, FEMA received 46 complaints from individuals who indicated they had symptoms of formaldehyde exposure which include nausea, skin rashes, sinus infections, depression, swollen mucus membranes, asthma attacks, headaches, insomnia, intestinal problems, memory impairment, and breathing difficulties, as well as eye, nose, and throat irritation (Spake, 2007).

Even though FEMA received numerous complaints about toxic trailers, the agency only tested one occupied trailer to determine the levels of

formaldehyde in it (US House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 2007). The test confirmed the levels of formaldehyde were extraordinarily high and presented an immediate health risk to the displaced occupants. Unfortunately, FEMA did not test any more occupied trailers and released a public statement discounting any risk associated with formaldehyde exposure.

FEMA deliberately neglected to investigate any reports of high levels of formaldehyde in trailers so as to bolster its litigation position just in case individuals affected by their negligence decided to sue them (Babington, 2007). More than 500 hurricane survivors and evacuees in Louisiana began pursuing legal action against the trailer manufacturers for being exposed to the toxic chemical formaldehyde. In July 2007, FEMA stopped buying and selling disaster relief trailers because of the formaldehyde contamination. In August 2007, FEMA began moving families out of the toxic trailers and finding them new rental housing. Testing of FEMA travel trailers for formaldehyde and other hazards began in September 2007 (Treadway, 2007). The CDC was assigned as the lead agency in developing parameters for testing the travel trailers.

In February of 2007, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry [ATSDR] released a health consultation entitled "Formaldehyde Sampling at FEMA Temporary Housing Units" in which 96 unoccupied trailers were tested for formaldehyde and other volatile organic compounds (ATSDR, 2007). The study found nonventilated trailers had readings higher than 0.3 ppm (at the time ATSDR stated that 0.3 ppm was the level of concern for sensitive individuals) and levels dropping below this level for trailers that were adequately ventilated. According to the report, the air was safe to breathe and the contamination would not reach a "level of concern" as long as they kept the windows open.

In October of 2007, ATSDR issued a report that replaced the previous health consultation released in February 2007. The previous health consultation dated February 1, 2007, contained insufficient discussion of the health implications of formaldehyde exposure, and some language may have been unclear, potentially leading readers to draw incorrect or inappropriate conclusions. Additionally, analyses of formaldehyde levels by trailer type and by daily temperature were not conducted (US DHHS, 2007). The follow-up report also used the same 0.3 ppm standard used on the first study, but according to ProPublica, an investigative journalism organization based in New York City, ATSDR should have utilized a 0.03 ppm standard. The larger standard is only used for one-time exposure. For longer terms, i.e. 8–24 hours, the researchers should have applied the lower standard. The use of the wrong standard caused exposure levels of residents to be 10 times higher than acceptable (Sapien, 2008). At levels so high, formaldehyde can cause respiratory problems and irritation within two hours of exposure. In October of 2008, the US House of Representatives Committee on Science and Technology published a report detailing their investigation into the trailer issue. The report states:

> ATSDR's reaction was marred by scientific flaws, ineffective leadership, a sluggish response to inform trailer residents of the potential risks they faced, and a lack of urgency to actually remove them from harm's way. Most disturbingly, there was a concerted and continuing effort by the agency's leadership to both mask their own involvement in the formaldehyde study, and to push the blame for their fumbling of this critical public health issue down the line to others. The health consultation itself, conducted at the request of FEMA's Office of General Counsel because of expected litigation concerns, was scientifically flawed and omitted critical health information. (pp. 4–5)

The Congressional report also states ATSDR failed to serve the public by not using the best science, by not taking responsive public health actions, and by not providing trusted health information to prevent harmful exposures and disease related to toxic substances (US House of Representatives, 2008).

A December 2008 report by The Children's Health Fund [CHF] reviewed the medical charts of 261 children living in a FEMA village in Baton Rouge and discovered shocking health outcomes:

- 41% of children younger than 4 years of age had iron-deficiency anemia, which causes fatigue, attention-deficit disorders, and skin problems.
- 55% of these displaced children exhibited learning or behavior problems.
- 42% developed allergic rhinitis, also called hay fever, and upper respiratory infection.
- 24% developed a cluster of ailments affecting the skin and upper respiratory tract, including allergies. (p. 4)

According to the report, for affected kids, their health level had actually declined since the storm (CHF, 2008). More than 10,800 toxic trailers were sold by the General Services Administration from July 2006 to July 2007 to the public after Katrina survivors and communities refused them. The trailers, which on average cost $18,600 each, were sold to anyone for 40 cents on the dollar. After suspending the sale of trailers, FEMA offered to buy back the toxic trailers purchased by the public and Katrina evacuees. In January 2008, more than 40,000 FEMA trailers were still being used as emergency shelter along the Gulf Coast, with the vast majority of the trailers located in Louisiana (Kaufman, 2008). In December 2008, more than 9,300 families were still living in temporary trailers and an additional 1,600 lived in hotel rooms throughout the Gulf Coast region (CHF, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Grassroots environmental groups have always centered their focus on public health—especially the health of vulnerable populations such as low

income families and/or people of color. However, many of the environmental health challenges facing these populations have slipped between the cracks of various local, state, regional, and federal agencies, including the EPA (Duhigg, 2009b).

Despite significant improvements in environmental protection over the past several decades, millions continue to live, work, play, and go to school in unsafe and unhealthy physical environments (Bullard, 1992; Mohai & Bryant, 1992; Wernette & Nieves, 1992). Over the past three decades, the EPA has not always recognized that many of our government and industry practices (whether intended or unintended) have adverse impacts on poor people, people of color, and children. Discrimination is a fact of life in the US. Racial discrimination is unjust, unfair, and also illegal. Nevertheless, discrimination continues to deny millions their basic civil and human rights.

Eliminating environmental and health disparities will make us a much stronger nation as a whole. We are becoming a more diverse nation each day. As those from culturally dominated groups will be in the majority in the coming decades, eliminating environmental and health inequality is not something that should be ignored or glossed over. Shifts in demographics also represent changing cultural values and political priorities. To ignore or marginalize these historic trends and their potential impact is not in the best interest of keeping the nation competitive in the world. The question is: Will adequate resources be committed to erasing the glaring environmental and health disparities that currently exist in the nation? Government and private foundations have established expanded research and intervention programs to address a range of health issues, including healthy homes. Still, much work is needed to eliminate environmental health and racial disparities in the US.

NOTES

1. See South Coast Air Quality Management District, *Air Quality Issues in School Site Selection: Guidance Document*. Los Angeles: SCAQMD, June 2005 (rev. 2007).

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3 Poverty and Child Development
Beyond the Schoolyard Gate

Nicole S. Simon and Gary W. Evans

Teachers are the single most important school-level factor in student learning (McCaffrey, Koretz, Lockwood, & Hamilton, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). In recent years, this has led the US public, politicians, and policy makers to make improving teacher quality the centerpiece of educational reform (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Rockoff, & Wyckoff, 2008; US DOE, 2012). However, this unprecedented focus on transforming schooling for historically underserved students has largely ignored a fundamental fact: Most of the variation in student achievement outcomes—over 80%—is predicted by non-school-based factors (Creemers & Reezigt, 1996; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Although teachers play an essential role in student learning, non-school components of children's lives are far more potent predictors of success in school. Among the most powerful of these out-of-school factors is economic disadvantage. Teachers alone cannot be expected to make up for the multitude of disadvantages children face when growing up in poverty. But it is important for teachers, the public, and policy makers to learn about the lives of students outside of school because they profoundly affect students in the classroom—and beyond.

FRAMING THE CONVERSATION: AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH TO STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

As Bronfenbrenner (1977) explained, children grow up in a complex ecosystem and, like all humans, are shaped by the confluence of forces that act upon them simultaneously. It is vital, therefore, that educators understand how factors outside of school converge to affect cognitive and socio-emotional development and the academic success of low income children. This chapter is organized into two sections—psychosocial factors (at home, in neighborhoods, and in society at large) and physical factors (at home and in the neighborhood). In general, the focus is on income as a predictor of risk factors that affect child development, but where available, studies on other socioeconomic factors, like parental education, race, ethnicity, and

immigration status are discussed because these variables are strongly correlated with poverty. Each section explains how these risk factors contribute to a range of outcomes that affect the performance of students in school.

Although this analysis centers on individual risk factors (e.g. experiencing violence, living in a toxic environment), it is important to note low income children rarely experience such conditions in isolation. Many adverse psychosocial and physical conditions co-vary, and as a result, low income children are disproportionately exposed to far more adverse conditions than their higher income peers (Evans, 2004). This cumulative exposure to stressors is a potentially critical aspect of the environment of childhood poverty—and may play a particularly important role in precipitating the developmental disarray associated with poverty.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK FACTORS

Risk Factors at Home

Stable Parenting

Because economic resources are a strong predictor of stable parent relationships (McLanahan & Beck, 2010), low income children are more likely than their peers to be raised by single parents—and most commonly, by single mothers (Ellwood & Jenks, 2004; McLanahan & Beck, 2010; Reichman, Teitler, Garfinkel, & McLanahan, 2001). Racial differences in single motherhood are stark. Less than one-quarter of white children are born to single mothers, compared with over two-thirds of African American children and nearly one-half of Hispanic children (McLanahan & Percheski, 2008). Although most unmarried parents are romantically involved at the time the child is born, over 60% of such relationships dissolve within five years after their child's birth (McLanahan & Beck, 2010). Among low income parents who are married or in long-term partnerships, conflict over economic issues is also common. Couples facing constant financial pressure generally experience stress in relationships (Conger & Elder, 1994). Low income children are therefore substantially more likely than non-poor children to experience divorce (Kreider & Ellis, 2011) and to endure the turmoil that accompanies the process of parental separation. When parents separate, over a third of non-cohabitating fathers disappear from their children's lives (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008). In addition, parents frequently begin new relationships, which contribute to the instability that low income children experience (McLanahan & Beck, 2010).

Living apart from a biological parent is associated with an array of outcomes that impinge on children's performance in school and on their transition to adulthood. Compared with children who grow up with both biological parents, children raised apart from their fathers are more likely to

exhibit behavioral and psychological problems, and to earn lower standardized test scores and poorer grades in school (Pong, Dronkers, & Hampden-Thompson, 2002; Thomson, Hanson, & McLanahan, 1994). This might be due to a diminished sense of self-efficacy regarding school: Children raised apart from their fathers frequently see themselves as having less academic potential than their peers (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004). At every stage, they are less likely to complete academic milestones—finishing high school, enrolling in college, and earning a degree (DeLeire & Kalil, 2002; Krein & Beller, 1988; McLanahan, 1985; Wojtkiewicz, 1993). In large part, these effects are similar across gender, racial, and ethnic groups. Ultimately, being raised in a precariously structured family impedes children's ability to climb out of poverty.

Parental Socio-Emotional Health

Struggling to make ends meet is associated with numerous emotional problems for parents, including depression, anxiety, feelings of uncertainty, and loss of control (Bradley, 2003; Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Grant et al., 2003; Wadsworth et al., 2014). Psychological distress is especially prevalent among single parents who frequently face a simultaneous succession of negative events, including financial instability, social isolation, and overwhelming parenting responsibilities (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002). In some studies, high concentrations of stress positively correlated with punitive parenting approaches (Steinberg, 2001; Suchman & DeCoste, 2012). The pressures of economic struggle also increase a child's risk for exposure to parental psychopathology such as depression, substance abuse, and inter-parental and family conflict (Wadsworth, Raviv, Reinhard, Wolff, Santiago, & Einhorn, 2008). Components of family violence have been linked to higher levels of stress hormones, like cortisol, which influence learning, memory, and immunity (Jones, Yudron, Pisciella, & Eidelman, 2012).

Parental Responsiveness

Parents living below the poverty line often contend with far more stress than their higher income counterparts, and this takes a toll on parenting. It is widely documented that beginning as early as infancy, low income parents are often less responsive to their children than parents living above the poverty line (Bradley, 2003; Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Grant et al., 2003). They also tend to exhibit harsher, more coercive parenting styles, characterized by physical punishment, restrictions, and an emphasis on obedience. In addition, when low income parents punish their children, they are less likely to explain their reasoning (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002). Miller and Davis (1997) found that the longer the duration of poverty, the stronger these links become. Responsive parenting is a critical element of healthy cognitive and socio-emotional development (Feldman, 2012).

Cognitive Stimulation

Low income parents—who tend to have limited education—generally offer less stimulation and enrichment to their children than do higher income parents. They speak less often and in less sophisticated ways to their young children, and as their children grow older, low income parents are less likely than middle income parents to engage with their children in literary activities, such as reading out loud, going to the library, or having sustained conversations (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Hoff, 2006). As an illustration, a nationally representative US data set of children demonstrated that low income homes contained fewer books, toys, and other developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for children beginning at birth through age 17 compared to middle and upper middle income homes (Bradley et al., 2001). Poor relative to non-poor children under age three differed by approximately 20% in whether they had more than ten books in the home, were read to at least three times per week, or had no age-appropriate toys in sight during a home visit by a trained observer. Trends were similar for older children as well, and similar income correlates of home stimulation have been uncovered in developing countries throughout the world (Bradley & Putnick, 2012). In their national study, Bradley et al. (2001) also examined family activities for older children in relation to household income. Among three to six year olds, for example, stark differences were uncovered in frequency of visits to museums, taking the child on an outing such as shopping or to a park, and in the amount of time the TV was on regularly. In an extraordinary study, Hart and Risley (1995) found professional parents, in comparison to parents receiving welfare benefits, said more than three times the number of words to their children during home visits from birth through 36 months.

Considerable research links a lack of exposure to cognitive stimulation in early childhood to future success in school (Bradley, 2012; Bradley & Putnick, 2012; Duncan, 2012). For example, Korenman et al. (1995) found emotional support and cognitive stimulation in children's homes account for nearly one-half of the disadvantages in reading, verbal, and math skills among chronically poor children in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. Importantly, however, some of the co-variation between income and cognitive development is mediated by cognitive enrichment. Analyses of several national data sets have indicated that the positive relation between poverty and multiple indicators of cognitive development from birth through adolescence is partially mediated by cognitive stimulation in the child's home (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Guo & Harris, 2000; Linver, Brooks-Gunn, & Kohen, 2002; Power, Jefferies, Manor, & Hertzman, 2006; Smith, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1997).

Parent Involvement in Schooling

Parental involvement in school activities is strongly linked to income. In a national survey, 59% of parents above the poverty line were involved

in three or more school activities on a regular basis; this contrasts with 36% of parents below the poverty line (US DHHS, 1999). Although low income parents often want to be more engaged in their children's schooling they commonly face barriers to doing so because of heavy and inflexible work schedules (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Warren, 2005). In rural areas, it is also likely parents lack access to transportation which inhibits them from getting to their children's school. In addition, because low income parents have often completed minimal schooling themselves and might cite negative experiences in schools, they may feel unequipped to partake in their child's education (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Lareau, 1996). This is not surprising, given the most salient predictor of parental involvement is a parent's confidence in her or his own intellectual abilities (Eccles & Harold, 1996). Similarly, parents who have immigrated from countries where it is culturally inappropriate to question teachers are often unlikely to engage with their children's teachers (Carlock, 2011).

It is especially unfortunate that parents of poor children are least likely to be involved in their children's schooling. Parental involvement is a strong predictor of children's achievement at all levels of schooling. Numerous researchers have demonstrated that for children, parental involvement is linked with early success in school, including language and academic skills and social competence (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Similarly, in a longitudinal study that followed 463 adolescents from seventh through eleventh grade, Hill and colleagues (2004) found parental involvement is associated with academic achievement and aspirations for the future. The research is clear that schools can encourage parent participation—and when they do, low income children benefit (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004; La Paro, Kraft-Sayre, & Pianta, 2003; Warren, 2005).

Risk Factors in the Community

Neighborhoods shape children's lives on several dimensions and effects are most profound during early childhood and late adolescence (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; McBride Murry, Berkel, Gaylord-Harden, Copeland-Linder, & Nation, 2011). Poverty-stricken neighborhoods—especially those in urban areas—are often replete with crime, residential instability, and physical hazards. Risk factors including drug trafficking, prostitution, theft, unemployment, gang activity, and violence often contribute to the physical and social disorder that make marginalized communities unsafe, stressful environments.

Concentrated Poverty

In the US, roughly one-third of low income children live in areas of concentrated poverty, and as income inequality has risen in recent years,

residential segregation has increased as well (Harding, Gennetian, Winship, Sanbonmatsu, & Kling, 2010). Public housing and a history of restricted neighborhoods have promoted further segregation along racial and ethnic lines (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Massey, 1990). Among low income families, roughly 45% of African American children are raised in high-poverty communities, compared with 29% of Native American children, 24% of Latino/a children, and 12% of white children. Children of immigrants (14%) are also more likely to live in poor enclaves, compared to those of US-born parents (9%) (Casey Foundation, 2012). For these reasons, Andrulis (1997) posits that residents of culturally and economically marginalized neighborhoods—who often share more in common with those in developing countries than they do with other residents in their own cities—experience an "urban health penalty."

Crime and Violence

The impact of childhood exposure to crime and violence has been documented extensively (Osofsky, 1995; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Low income children—especially those living in areas of concentrated poverty—experience far more violence than their more financially stable peers (Evans, 2004). This has critical implications for feelings of security and safety among children and can dramatically affect parental desire to restrict their children's independence. In addition, bearing witness to chronic community violence is related to a host of outcomes that affect children at all stages of development. Some effects include post-traumatic stress and depressive symptoms (e.g. heightened anxiety, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, trouble concentrating). Children who experience violent events often also exhibit developmental regression and, like adults, frequently grieve (Margolin & Gordis, 2000; Osofsky, 1995, 1998).

Social Capital

Economically disadvantaged neighborhoods have less social capital than more economically stable areas. Across multiple urban sites with representative samples, residents of low income communities in comparison with their more advantaged counterparts (e.g. percent unemployed, percent in poverty, percent with inadequate housing, percent single head of household) have weaker social ties, experience less interpersonal trust and norms of reciprocity, and perceive lower levels of instrumental support and mutual aid (Kawachi, 1999; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Sampson et al., 1997). Low income parents often have fewer organizational involvements, far smaller social networks, and less frequent contact with social network members compared with others (Evans, Boxill, & Pinkava, 2008; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988). One effect of a lack of social ties is that economically marginalized parents frequently do not have the professional

employment networks that higher income parents generally depend on when seeking employment (Reisig & Cancino, 2004).

Perceived social support also relates to poverty. Unemployment is associated with lower social support within the family (Atkinson, Liem, & Liem, 1986), and familial social support is inversely related to income and parental education level (Conger & Elder, 1994; Wright, Treiber, Davis, Bunch, & Strong, 1998). Importantly, a number of studies have long documented that, on average, African American families may benefit from more social support than do white families. African Americans commonly report they rely upon vast extended family and kinship networks as a vital source of support for youth (Jarrett, 2000; Taylor, Casten, & Flickinger, 1993; Wilson, 1989). Such social supports can serve as moderators of negative life stressors, which enhance parenting practices and, in turn, diminish the effects of poverty on children (Ceballo & McLoyd, 2002). However, buffering effects may be limited. In a study of African American single mothers and their seventh- and eighth-grade children, Ceballo and McLoyd (2002) found the positive influences of social supports on parenting behaviors were severely diminished in poorer, high-crime neighborhoods. These findings are congruent with earlier research which found social support was less powerful in buffering young African American women from the stress associated with chronic economic adversity, in contrast to the distress associated with isolated negative life events (Dressler, 1985).

Peer Relationships

Children's own social experiences are also influenced by poverty. In a national longitudinal survey, Dodge, Pettit, and Bates (1994) found children growing up in low income households experience greater instability in peer relationships from preschool through third grade. Likewise, in their large sample of preschool and primary school children in Britain, Newson and Newson (1976) assert that 22% of children whose parents were unskilled laborers did not have friends come over to play in their home, compared with 4% of children from professional families. In a study with older children, Bo (1994) found adolescents from low income backgrounds have smaller social support networks and are more dependent upon their peers than adults for social support. As an illustration, among 16-year-old boys, social class was negatively associated with social network size and time spent with parents and positively related to time spent with peers.

Peer relationships are markedly influenced by neighborhood wealth. Contact with aggressive peers is related to socioeconomic status [SES] at various developmental stages. In a study of preschoolers in three US metropolitan areas, Sinclair, Pettit, Harrist, Dodge, and Bates (1994) found that lower- relative to middle-class two to four year olds interact with aggressive peers 40% more often in their neighborhood, 25% more often in child-care settings, and have 70% more contacts with friends who are aggressive.

Early aggression has been linked to later peer rejection (Coie, Dodge, & Kupersmidt, 1990), subpar academic achievement (Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000), antisocial conduct (Loeber, 1991), and risky behavior (Brook & Newcomb, 1995).

Among pre-adolescents, neighborhood disadvantage is associated with affiliation with deviant peers (Brody et al., 2001) and in early adolescence it has been linked to delinquent and criminal behavior (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). In addition, youth living in poverty are more likely to be socialized by older peers to partake in risky activities. Consequently, low income adolescents experience a higher rate of arrest and gun violence (Bingenheimer, Brennan, & Earls, 2005). Aggression also has cyclical effects. In a series of studies of African American males, researchers found that aggression influences how young boys and adolescents perceive the behavior of their peers. More aggressive adolescents are more likely to attribute hostile intent in interpersonal interactions and feel more angry toward their peers more often than their non-aggressive peers (Graham & Hudley, 1994; Hudley & Graham, 1993). These results fit well with research by Chen and colleagues (2004) that indicates lower SES adolescents are more likely to perceive neutral interpersonal encounters as threatening which, in turn, leads to elevated physiological stress.

Sexual Risk

Across large-scale studies and national data sets, neighborhood poverty is also associated with a variety of sexual risk behaviors. In a sample of 11–16 year olds in Chicago, Browning, Burrington, Leventhal, and Brooks-Gunn (2008) found even when controlling for family SES, concentrated neighborhood poverty was positively correlated with early sexual initiation. In a national sample of adolescent males, neighborhood income poverty was positively associated with frequency of intercourse and negatively associated with the use of contraceptives (Ku, Sonenstein, & Pleck, 1993). These findings are not surprising, given that nationally the rate of teenage parenthood is higher in low-resource communities (Driscoll, Sugland, Manlove, & Papillo, 2005), as is the rate of HIV/AIDS (Browning, Leventhal, & Brooks-Gunn, 2005).

Institutional Resources

The presence, affordability, accessibility, and quality of institutional resources in a community can influence development and cushion children and their families from some of the influences of poverty. Museums, libraries, literacy resources, and family resource centers can help parents—even those with limited education—prepare their children for school and complement the formal education of those who are older. Yet when comparing four Philadelphia communities, Neuman and Celano (2001) uncovered

dramatic differences in opportunities for access to print in relation to community income levels. For example, middle income communities had twice the number of environmental features conducive to reading in public spaces (e.g. available seating, adequate lighting). The quality of library resources dramatically differed as well, and middle income areas had three times more places selling print media for children and youth. Other recreational offerings, including parks, little league programs, supervised youth centers, and structured extracurricular offerings, also have the potential to contribute to children's physical and socio-emotional well-being and reinforce—or compensate for—formal schooling. Such opportunities are more readily available to higher income communities (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2008).

For adolescents, participation in after-school activities may be especially important. In a longitudinal study, Roeser and Peck (2003) found teenagers who began high school significantly at risk for school dropout were twice as likely to graduate and begin college if they routinely participated in a positive extracurricular activity during eleventh grade. Opportunities for internships and employment can also serve as important socialization experiences. In addition to helping young people explore future career options, such experiences can lead to an increase in school engagement and a decrease in resistance to authority. Community-based resources that provide advice about college and other post-secondary options may also help students explore pathways to education—and out of poverty. Unfortunately, low income communities frequently experience a dearth of such institutional resources (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Parsad & Greene, 2003).

One benefit of participation in community-based extracurricular activities is exposure to adults in the community who can serve as role models. For low income youth, relationships with positive role models predict resiliency and have been linked to a variety of positive psychosocial outcomes that protect children from the effects of poverty. For example, in a recent study of 13–16 year olds, Chen, Lee, Cavey, and Ho (2012) found that poor adolescents who reported having a supportive adult role model employed better mechanisms for coping with stress and, ultimately, exhibited fewer physiological symptoms related to stress. For marginalized youth, role models may diminish the effects of "stereotype threat" (Steele, 1997)—a subconscious process through which students conform to a stereotype others have about them, which can have a debilitating effect on a student's motivation and ultimate performance (Dee, 2005; Steele, 1997).

Risk Factors in Society at Large

Children growing up in low income households are disproportionately affected by current social policy and by the larger legacy of historical inequity in the US. This section addresses several societal risk factors that low income children are prone to experience.

Stigma of Poverty

The US public has widespread antipathy toward the poor, often attributing poverty to character flaws and laziness (Fiske, 2010). Poor children are most often aware their families struggle to make ends meet. In interviews with 40 children from low income communities in Europe, young children knew when their families lacked money for necessities. Older children were more acutely aware of the financial distress their families faced. Teenagers reported worrying about whether they would have the means to socialize with their peers. They also reported having fewer opportunities to enjoy time off with their families and they were more reluctant to invite friends over (Walker, Crawford, & Taylor, 2008). Along similar lines, Fuller-Rowell and colleagues (2012) recently found some of the co-variation between childhood poverty and elevated physiological stress in youth was partially explained by feelings of stigmatization among 17 year olds.

Racism

Because there is a strong relationship between race and poverty in the US, more than half of low income children simultaneously cope with the experience of being a person of color and with being poor (US Census Bureau, 2013). Most research on how young people experience institutional racism has been conducted with African American adolescents, and repeatedly, studies indicate racial discrimination imposes powerful challenges on child development (Mays, Cochran, & Barnes, 2007; Williams et al., 2010).

Longitudinal studies have linked perceptions of discrimination to a host of internalizing symptoms among African American youth (including depressive symptoms) and externalizing behavior (including disruptive behavior). In addition, African American adolescents often worry about future racial discrimination, which affects psychological well-being during adolescence, and as such, they frequently exhibit an "inner vigilance" that contributes to stress and tension (Brody et al., 2006, p. 1171). These reactions may also influence reactions to discrimination. It is important to note although African American youth report experiencing discrimination in both neighborhood and school, school contexts appear to be more predictive of experiences with racism. Experiences of racism from classmates predict increased depressive symptoms and diminished self-esteem. In both neighborhoods and in schools, African American youth who were in the minority reported more experiences with racism (Seaton & Yip, 2009).

Immigration Status

Today, a quarter of children in the US are immigrants or children of immigrants, and that rate is expected to increase significantly by 2050 (Passel, 2011). Of these children, 30% currently live below the poverty line (Borjas,

2011) and many more live just above it. Researchers posit the experience of leaving one's native country and moving to the US as "one of the most stressful events a family can undergo" (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 70), in part because the immigration process is often marked by traumatic border crossings, violence, separation from parents, and the shock of assimilation—all which may have long-term effects on family members. Whereas some immigrant children benefit from social capital and other resources available in ethnic enclaves, others do not (Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011). In a five-year longitudinal study of 400 children who immigrated from five different countries, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) found children's physical and psychological health declined as they acclimated to the US. The more assimilated children became, the more they engaged in problematic behaviors such as unprotected sex and substance abuse.

The stress of immigration is compounded when children and/or their parents are undocumented. These children often have extremely limited access to healthcare and their parents frequently have little education and few monetary resources. Depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] symptoms are common among children and parents who worry constantly about the severe ramifications of their legal status (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011). In a qualitative longitudinal study of 150 undocumented Latino/a young adults (ages 16–29), Gonzales (2011) found these young people often experience a turbulent transition to adulthood. At this stage, problems emerge related to social exclusion, dashed aspirations, and frustrated identity formation processes. Along with policies that limit access to higher education and work, these experiences take a severe toll on the well-being of those who endure them.

PHYSICAL RISK FACTORS

Risk Factors at Home

Housing Quality

The physical conditions of low income housing are substantially worse than those available to middle and upper income families. Low income families reside in homes that may likely be characterized by structural and maintenance deficits, physical hazards, and difficulties with climatic conditions. This is especially the case regarding adequate heating in colder climates. Homes lived in by families making under $30,000 per year are twice as likely to have serious structural defects and are 66% more likely to have heating problems relative to households making more than $100,000 per year (Adamkiewicz et al., 2011). Whereas 5.4% of all US households

with children live in inadequate housing, the rate is more than double—12.2%—for low income families who rent (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2007). A recent World Health Organization [WHO] report on environmental health inequalities in Europe found low relative to middle income countries have four times the number of households without indoor plumbing and are six times more likely to lack a bath or a shower (WHO, 2012). Amenities such as washing machines or air conditioning are also much less common in low relative to middle income homes (Federman et al., 1996). Similar patterns are found in other nations (Bradley & Putnick, 2012).

Poorer temperature and humidity regulation in the home elevates asthma in children, which is among the most prevalent causes of school absenteeism (EPA, 2010). Low income children are exposed to higher levels of allergens in the home, such as dust mites and cockroaches (Leaderer et al., 2002; Rauh, Chew, & Garfinkel, 2002; Sarpong, Hamilton, Eggleston, & Adkinson, 1996). In New York City, asthmatics are five times more likely than non-asthmatics to live in public housing (Corburn, Osleeb, & Porter, 2006). Low SES households also tend to have higher levels of interior pesticide exposures (Griffith, Tajik, & Wing, 2007; Stehr-Green, 1989). Poorer quality housing is also directly associated with the prevalence of childhood injuries (Matte & Jacobs, 2000) and partially accounts for the well-documented inverse relation between income and pediatric injuries such as falls and burns (Shenassa, Stubbendick, & Brown, 2004). Moreover, housing costs are a frequent contributor to financial strain among lower SES families because that is where such a large proportion of income goes (Leventhal & Newman, 2010).

There is abundant evidence to suggest that poor quality housing is associated with mental (Evans, Wells, & Moch, 2003; Leventhal & Newman, 2010) and physical health in children (Braubach, Jacobs, & Ormandy, 2011; Matte & Jacobs, 2000). Coley and colleagues (Coley, Leventhal, Lynch, & Kull, 2012) found changes in children's psychological well-being over a six-year period were a function of housing quality. Some work also suggests adverse academic outcomes are associated with poor quality housing (Evans, 2006). Although too much of the evidence is cross-sectional, most studies incorporate statistical controls for SES and evidence is consistent with longitudinal studies of housing (Thomson, Petticrew, & Morrison, 2001). Recent work also suggests living in poor quality housing may be stressful for children, raising levels of the stress hormone cortisol (Blair et al., 2011).

Housing and School Instability

In addition to poorer quality housing, low income children face higher levels of residential transiency, which often leads to school instability (Evans, Eckenrode, & Marcynyszyn, 2010). Residential instability is created by

a complex of issues including financial volatility, less reliable landlords, and turbulence in family composition (e.g. parental separation). Frequent changes in residence disrupt familial social support networks (Leventhal & Newman, 2010) and are associated with adverse developmental outcomes (Adam, 2004). Student turnover in schools is more common among low income children and has been linked to academic achievement (Evans et al., 2010). Rates of teacher turnover are also much higher in schools populated by low income families (Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Moreover, in a national assessment of school facilities, lower income schools were found to be strikingly deficient in terms of facilities (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000).

Crowding

Families with more wealth generally have more living space. People per room in the house is the most robust indicator of crowding with consequences for children's well-being (Evans, 2006). Several studies have shown evidence for elevated levels of people per room as a function of income or SES (Evans, Eckenrode, & Marcynyszyn, 2010). For example, the average number of occupants per 1,000 square feet in US households making under $24,000 annually is 2.78 whereas for those making more the average is 1.82 occupants per 1,000 square feet (Adamkiewicz et al., 2011). Households in low income European countries are three times more likely to be overcrowded than their middle income counterparts (WHO, 2012). Poor families with children under 18 years old are nearly 30% more likely to have more than one person per room compared to their more advantaged peers (Children's Defense Fund, 1995).

Crowded housing is negatively associated with school performance (Evans, 2006), including evidence from rigorous research designs (Goux & Maurin, 2005). Moreover, these effects endure over time. Utilizing a nationally representative data set and controlling for SES, Conley (2001) found childhood crowding predicted levels of completed schooling by age 25. Children in crowded housing also get sick more often, which affects school attendance. Parent-child social interactions are also frayed under more crowded conditions, including elevated conflict as well as less parental responsiveness (Evans, 2006).

Noise

Levels of ambient exposure to noise—at home and in the neighborhood—are correlated with SES (Evans, 2004; Evans et al., 2010). Studies in Germany, Britain, and the US reveal children growing up in lower SES conditions are more likely to suffer higher noise exposure from proximity to busy streets or airports (Green, Kim, McLaughlin, Ostro, & Smorodinsky, 2004; Haines, Stansfeld, Head, & Job, 2002; Hoffmann, Robra, & Swart, 2003).

Noise elevates physiological stress in children (Evans, 2006; Paunovic, Stansfeld, Clark, & Belojevic, 2011). However, the most ubiquitous correlate of ambient noise levels is reading deficits, although studies including mathematics often report similar findings. Data supporting the noise/reading connection include cross-sectional comparisons with controls for SES, longitudinal studies with changes in noise levels over time, and in a few instances, changes in noise levels arising from sound attenuation interventions. It is important to note these noise effects on children's achievement are not produced by hearing loss. In most cases ambient levels are not loud enough to damage hearing. Instead, chronic noise exposure appears to alter children's cognitive processing of auditory stimuli. Children in noisy settings seem to adapt a strategy of ignoring or tuning out auditory stimuli. Unfortunately, this coping strategy is indiscriminate and children tune out speech as well as noise (Evans, 2006).

Chaos

Low income children are more likely to grow up in chaotic settings typified by high levels of noise, crowding, and instability in conjunction with a lack of daily structure and routine (Evans et al., 2010). This phenomenon is largely due to external forces most parents do not control. For example, as noted above, crowding and noise are frequently higher in low income residential settings. It is also very difficult to create structures and routines when parents are working jobs with irregular hours and depending on unreliable transportation. Chaotic situations are likely exacerbated when parents are forced to count on less reliable, lower quality day care (Evans, 2004) and have less stable housing situations. In addition, more frequent changes in family composition also contribute to higher levels of chaos in low SES households.

About one in ten US workers have variable weekly schedules, and among unskilled workers, rates are considerably higher. An astounding 40% of working single mothers have unpredictable work schedules (Presser, 2003). To illustrate the link between income and chaos, families below the poverty line were about 15% less likely to have regular mealtimes (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & Garcia-Coll, 2001). In another large sample, parents who were high school graduates were more likely (58%) than high school dropouts (44%) to offer regular meal, nap, and bedtime routines for infants and toddlers (Britto, Fuligni, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002).

Considerable evidence reveals chaotic settings harm children by adversely affecting cognitive development, psychological well-being, and progress through school (Ackerman & Brown, 2010; Adam, 2004; Fiese, 2006; Fiese & Winter, 2010). It is important to note chaos is not simply a surrogate index of poverty. Chaos has negative developmental impacts independent of SES. What chaos can do, however, is help explain the well-documented negative developmental sequelae of early childhood poverty.

For example, data indicate the adverse impacts of early childhood poverty on multi-methodological indices of physiological stress and motivation are mediated, in part, by chaotic home living environments (Evans, Gonnella, Marcynyszyn, Gentile, & Salpekar, 2005).

One important reason why chaos can affect children is because it disrupts critical developmental processes. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) noted the fundamental building block of healthy development is effective proximal processes, which consist of the exchanges of energy between the developing child and the persons, objects, and symbols in his or her immediate living environment. In order to be effective, these exchanges of energy need to occur on a regular basis over extended periods of time. They also must be reciprocal between child and environment and become increasingly complex as the child matures. Developmentally effective proximal processes are much less likely in chaotic environments. Moreover, the interfering effects of chaos on proximal processes are likely accentuated among children with fewer resources such as positive temperament, above-average coping skills, or a strong social support network (Wachs, 2010).

Risk Factors in the Neighborhood

Neighborhood Quality

Despite what appear to be a large number of studies on neighborhood quality and child development (e.g. Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000), nearly all of this research defines neighborhood quality in socioeconomic terms using variables such as the proportion of a census tract living in poverty. Very little work has examined the physical quality of neighborhoods. The basic infrastructure in low income neighborhoods is often lacking, with a significant presence of abandoned buildings and substandard housing (Bartlett, 1999; Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 1999) and inadequate municipal services such as garbage collection and police and fire response times (Wallace & Wallace, 1998; Wandersman & Nation, 1998).

One reason why low income children tend to be more obese compared to others is likely because they lack access to healthy places to play and to supermarkets and restaurants selling healthy food at affordable prices. Low income neighborhoods are often described as "food deserts" (Evans, Wells, & Schamberg, 2010) because residents lack access to fresh produce and other healthy foods. Instead, such communities often have an overabundance of fast food chains. For example, the number of McDonald's locations per 1,000 persons in the poorest quintile neighborhoods relative to the most advantaged quintile neighborhoods is five times greater (Cummins, McKay, & Macintyre, 2005).

Access to parks and other forms of open green space along with safe places to play are markedly missing in disadvantaged communities, which

might also explain the inverse association of income and childhood obesity. Sherman (1994) found the amount of park space per child was more than double for non-poor compared to poor children. For every 100% increase in the proportion of community residents with a college degree, the number of recreational and fitness facilities doubles (Gordon-Larsen, Nelson, Page, & Popkin, 2006). In addition, even in neighborhoods with parks and nature, low income children have to contend with more street traffic which is dangerous, leads to parental restrictions on play opportunities, and is a source of ambient pollutants (Macpherson, Roberts, & Pless, 1998). Data also suggest the development and maintenance of social ties among neighbors is inversely related to the level of street traffic (Appleyard & Lintell, 1972).

Both children and adults find natural settings more restorative because they reduce cognitive fatigue and enhance positive affect (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Children residing in public housing more proximate to natural outdoor spaces (i.e. trees, grass) evidence better attention and emotional self-regulation ability (Faber Taylor et al., 2002) and engage in more complex play in outdoor spaces containing more nature than those in non-green areas (Faber Taylor et al., 1998). Nearby nature also appears to buffer some ill effects of chronic stressor exposure on psychological distress among children (Wells & Evans, 2003).

Toxins and Pollutants

The influence of several behavioral toxins, particularly lead, mercury, and PCBs, on children's cognitive development is well documented (Hubbs-Tait, Nation, Krebs, & Bellinger, 2005; Koger, Schetteler, & Weiss, 2005; Moore, 2009). Emerging evidence suggests ambient air quality can also influence the cognitive performance of children (Mohai, Kewon, Lee, & Ard, 2011). It also is a factor in respiratory health, including asthma, which is markedly more problematic among poor children (Wigle, 2003).

Low SES children, and particularly low income African American and Latino/a children, have higher body burdens of lead and other toxins, live in communities with higher levels of ambient air pollutants, and reside closer to hazardous waste facilities (Brulle & Pellow, 2006). American children below the poverty line are 2.8 times more likely to exceed the CDC standard for safe body burdens of lead (Jones et al., 2009). For example, 42% of low income American one to five year olds have blood levels exceeding CDC safe thresholds. The percentage of those above the poverty line is 18% (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2007). For low income adolescents, the average blood lead level is 2.3 μg/dl-compared to 1.2 μg/dl for middle income adolescents (Fadrowski et al., 2010). Low income families are three times more likely to live within one mile of a hazardous waste facility than they are to live beyond 1.5 miles from such facilities (Bullard & Wright, 1993). And 16.4% of US counties noncompliant for small particulates (PM2.5) are headed by high school

dropouts compared to 12% of counties with high school graduate heads of households. Comparable rates for white, black, and Latino/a heads of households are 9.7%, 15.2%, and 26.6%, respectively. Similar trends are also present for ozone, the principal toxic component of smog (Yip, Pearcy, Garbe, & Truman, 2011). In Montreal, the median household income per neighborhood and the unemployment rate are highly correlated with ambient levels of nitrogen dioxide (Crouse, Ross, & Goldberg, 2009). Surveys in Germany reveal similar inverse associations between parental education level and children's exposure to multiple ambient pollutants (Heinrich, Mielck, Schafer, & Mey, 2000). In Britain residents of the lowest income decile are exposed to 80% of the total carcinogenic emissions from factories (Friends of the Earth, 2001).

The picture for indoor air quality is similar. For example, the concentration of volatile organic compounds [VOCs] is associated with income, education, and race (D'Souza et al., 2009; Wang, Majeed, Chu, & Lin, 2009). Indoor levels of nitrogen dioxide are substantially higher in public housing relative to average US residential settings, with 40% of kitchens in one study exceeding EPA standards (Zota, Adamkiewicz, Levy, & Spengler, 2005). Sadly, there are even parts of the US where access to safe drinking water is related to income (UN Commission on Human Rights, 2011) and the global situation is considerably worse (UNICEF Clean Water Campaign, 2013). Although our focus is primarily on poverty and SES, it bears repeating that the risk of adverse exposure to toxins among minority children in the US is even more horrific (Brulle & Pellow, 2006). To illustrate, in US national 1992–1994 data, low income African American children had nearly a 15 times greater likelihood of exceeding CDC standards for safe levels of lead burdens in their blood compared to low income white children (Dilworth-Bart & Moore, 2006). The indoor air quality of schools is also linked to SES and race. For example, compared to white school children, African American and Latino/a children in Los Angeles public schools have between 10 and 15% greater excess risk of exposure to carcinogens and respiratory risks inside the school (Morello-Frosch, Pastor, & Sadd, 2002).

Cumulative Risk Exposure

One of the most robust findings in child development is that the more risk factors children are exposed to, the worse the impact across a wide array of critical developmental outcomes. Such outcomes include mental and physical health, cognitive development, and academic achievement (Evans, Li, & Whipple, 2013; Kraemer, Lowe, & Kupfer, 2005; Sameroff, 2006). The effects of cumulative risk exposure generalize across age, ethnicity, and gender. Many children can withstand the impact of exposure to a singular risk factor, but when exposures accumulate, coping defenses break down. The cumulative risk research fits well with Bronfenbrenner's theory of child

development. The immediate settings children inhabit have the most impact on their development because that is where proximal processes occur. As children mature, the number and variety of settings they spend time in expand, offering more opportunities for greater exposure to both risks and resources that can work synergistically to affect development. As an example of how multiple setting exposures can influence children's well-being, the adverse impacts of household crowding on the cognitive development of preschoolers is exacerbated if they also attend a crowded day care facility (Maxwell, 1996). Moreover, proximal processes can be directly influenced not only by the immediate micro-settings children inhabit but also more indirectly by characteristics of settings more distal from the child. To illustrate this principle from Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development, low SES parents tend to be more authoritarian and less supportive of autonomy in their children. An important contributor to these SES-related parent-child interactions is the extent of autonomy and decision making the parent has in his or her own job and life (Evans et al., 2005).

The role of cumulative risk exposure is highly germane to this analysis of the role extra-school environments play in student performance in school. Low SES children across the age spectrum, beginning in infancy through elementary school and on into adolescence (Evans & Kim, 2013), are confronted by dramatically higher levels of cumulative risk exposure. These studies have also shown that some of the adverse effects of childhood poverty are explained, in part, by cumulative risk exposure. In other words, one of the major reasons why poverty is bad for children is because of the confluence of risks that it presents. As noted earlier in this chapter, there is also abundant evidence the parents of low SES children also encounter a variety of psychosocial and physical stressors associated with financial strain which, in turn, affect their parenting.

CONCLUSION

The effects of growing up in poverty are very real, and more often than not, they influence developmental trajectories throughout children's lives. When low income children enter kindergarten, their academic and socio-emotional skills already trail those of their higher income peers. As children progress through school, these gaps widen. As argued, the environment of poverty that pervades children's lives outside of school is by far the most potent predictor of this phenomenon. However, as Bronfenbrenner explained, schools are an important component of the complex, dynamic ecological context in which children develop. As noted earlier, they play a significant role in academic success. As with virtually every other institution that low income children experience, the psychosocial and physical conditions of schools are strongly impacted by the socioeconomic profile of the students they serve. The well-documented fact that poor children are apt to attend subpar schools

that employ a disproportionate number of inexperienced administrators and teachers who leave as they gain experience (Balu, Beteille, & Loeb, 2009; Ingersoll, 2004; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012) contributes further to the pervasive income-achievement gap among children. Although schools alone cannot be expected to make up for the adverse effects of poverty, inadequate schools are an important contributor to the accumulation of risk factors that many low income children encounter.

There is hope, however. The research is clear that some resources have the capacity to disrupt the ill effects of cumulative risk (Obradovic, Shaffer, & Masten, 2012; Pressman, Klebanov, & Brooks-Gunn, 2012). The damaging effects of risk exposure, particularly when cumulative, are far stronger than the protective effects of resources such as quality housing, robust extracurricular offerings, and strong schools. However similar to risk, when resources accumulate, they have the capacity to protect young people from the adversities they face. Schools alone cannot possibly undo the realities students face outside of the classroom. But, if they work in tandem with parents and with the community at large to minimize students' exposure to risk and to maximize their exposure to resources, the potential of schools to be the "great equalizer" (Mann, 1848) may just stand a chance.

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4 Juvenile Justice in a Changing Environment

Rosemary C. Sarri

More than a century has elapsed since the establishment of juvenile courts and the juvenile justice system that was designed to address the behavior and needs of at-risk dependent and delinquent juveniles, separately from those of adults. Many events have occurred since then which have profoundly influenced the development and evolution of this important social institution. The principles underlying the creation of the juvenile justice system were that children were developmentally immature and required protection, supervision, and treatment. Another widely held assumption was that children were malleable and that with adequate care and nurturance, they could be habilitated or rehabilitated (Tanenhaus, 2002). The juvenile court was granted exclusive jurisdiction over individuals below the age of 18 who were charged with violating laws in most states. The court also had jurisdiction over decision making regarding abused and neglected children. Because the court focused on treatment and rehabilitation, hearings were informal and judges had wide discretion in decision making.

Nevertheless, as the alternatives for disposition were limited and had to be developed for juveniles, judges were hampered in their choices for treatment (Tanenhaus, 2002). In fact, many children were institutionalized for long periods of time in custodial facilities with little regard as to the seriousness of their delinquency because it was thought the experience would be rehabilitative. Furthermore, dependent children also often ended up being placed in residential programs that were damaging to their health and well-being, setting the stage for patterns that still exist today linking the care systems for dependent and delinquent children (Tanenhaus, 2004). In contrast, youth of color, particularly African American youth, were treated as offenders in the adult criminal justice system where their needs were ignored (Ward, 2012).

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, all states except Maine and Wyoming had established juvenile courts, but their accessibility varied widely, with youth in urban areas having much great access than in rural areas. For example separate courts and programs for juveniles were more likely to be established and accessible in urban counties whereas juveniles in rural areas continued to be processed with adults. In addition,

the courts were creations of the state legislatures; they were not established as constitutional entities so provisions as to age of jurisdiction, coverage, court authority, and procedures varied widely among the states and were subject to frequent change. Still today there exist no universally accepted standards for detailing and guiding provisions for jurisdiction and services for at-risk youth.

FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN JUVENILE JUSTICE AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Views about delinquency as well as juveniles' rights, needs, and characteristics have evolved over time in almost a cyclical pattern. The juvenile justice system remains complex and fragmented with a conflict perspective that at times supports programs to prevent and divert juveniles from system involvement. At other times it is supportive of legislation for punitive intervention and even placement in adult criminal justice facilities. During the twentieth century the juvenile justice system vacillated between periods of emphases on punishment and control versus treatment. The widespread variations among the states continued and resulted in variations in the programs and services that were established. This characteristic of frequent change also affected the civil liberties and due process rights of juveniles from state to state with the exception of Supreme Court decisions in selected areas. Influenced by the Human Rights and Civil Rights movements of the 1960s, many states and the Supreme Court acknowledged the civil rights of juveniles and changes in court due processes were implemented.[1] These changes also led to many significant social policy changes at the federal and state levels. A series of national commission reports revealed the positive impact of extending human rights along with policies of decriminalization, deinstitutionalization, and diversion. By the 1970s, the first landmark federal juvenile justice legislation, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 [JJDPA], funded state efforts to reduce institutionalization and to increase local community-based programming.[2] But again service access varied among states and communities. Decriminalization, deinstitutionalization, and diversion became principles many communities sought to achieve as a response to the prevalence of delinquency because it was recognized that the majority of offenses by juveniles were not serious felonies.

The progress of the 1960s and 1970s was dramatically reversed in the 1980s and early 1990s with the passage of federal and state legislation that emphasized crime control, punishment, and incarceration. Also emphasized were the withdrawal of the distinction between juveniles and adults as far as certain crimes were concerned and the criminal justice processing of juveniles as adults. The US also witnessed a substantial increase in juvenile crime between 1980 and 1993, especially in serious violent crime which culminated in the passage of punitive laws in 46 states to try, convict, and

punish juveniles as adults with long sentences in adult prisons.[3] Because of provisions in the laws, juvenile judges in many jurisdictions had little authority to respond to the needs or circumstances of youth, many of whom were sentenced to long terms or life in adult prisons even at ages as young as 12 years. In fact, some states had no lower age limits to processing juveniles as adults (Redding, 2008). Prosecutors had increasing authority to initiate action to try juveniles as adults. This change in juvenile justice was also accompanied by increased emphasis on custody and punishment in juvenile facilities such that the goals of the JJDPA of 1974 to emphasize community-based intervention, diversion, and deinstitutionalization were thwarted. This pattern of emphasis on trying juveniles as adults declined in the late 1990s with the drop in almost all juvenile crime, and the prediction of the emergence of thousands of "super-predators" did not occur.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Beginning in 1993, there was a dramatic decline in juvenile crime (especially in serious and violent crime) which has continued through 2013 (Snyder, 2012). This decline has not been uniform across the US and has resulted in wide variations in the responses of state and local government. Arrests and adjudication of juveniles did not decline as rapidly as the crime rate, a reflection of the lag in justice system policies and practices. For example, between 1993 and 2007, juvenile violent crime declined by 74% to the level observed in the 1980s (Snyder, 2012). As of 2011 there were 1,649,300 juvenile arrests, more than half of which were for public order and status offenses, also a substantial decline since 2005.[4] Although most juveniles who are arrested are involved in the justice system only once, a minority of youth have multiple entries and may experience many years on probation and in correctional institutions. These youth are disproportionately male urban youth of color who are further disadvantaged by their socioeconomic status: poverty, poor housing, substantial educational barriers, and exposure to drugs and crime in the neighborhoods in which they reside. Also, there is a noted interaction between the role of gender and juvenile justice processing, reflecting differences in delinquent behavior between males and females as well as differences in the response of the justice system to males versus females. Arrests by females have been increasing, but as of 2007 females made up only 27% of the youth processed by the juvenile court (Sickmund et al., 2008).

In addition to declines in the numbers of youth arrested, there were also declines in the numbers of youth incarcerated in juvenile institutions since 1997. Between 1997 and 2010 there was a 33% decline in the number of juvenile offenders in institutions, from 105,055 to 70,793 (US Dept. of Justice, 2013). Again, as might be expected, interstate variations stand out. In California, the confinement of juveniles in state facilities declined by

83.6%, from 9,572 to 2,568. This followed with the passage of legislation that provided block grants of $117,000 per youth per year if the youth was retained in the county or returned from a state facility (Schiraldi, Schindler, & Goliday, 2011). In contrast, only South Dakota had an increase in the confined population rate per 100,000, from 533 to 575 (Sickmund, Sladky, Kang, & Puzzanchera, 2011).

There also has been a dramatic decline in the numbers of juveniles transferred to the adult courts since 1995, for which the US Supreme Court decisions between 2005 and 2012 have had a significant influence. In 1995 with *Roper v. Simmons* the Supreme Court decided execution for the commission of homicide as a juvenile was unconstitutional and that the youth had to be otherwise sentenced. In 2010 the decisions of *Graham v. Florida* (2010) and *Sullivan v. Florida* (2010) stated that it was unconstitutional, cruel, and inhuman punishment to sentence a juvenile to "life without parole" for an offense that did not involve homicide. Then, most recently in 2012, the decisions in *Miller v. Alabama* and *Jackson v. Hobbs* stated that "life without parole" was also unconstitutional for youth who had a homicide conviction. In all of these cases, one of the key rationales was that juveniles were less culpable than adults because of their age and development. Justices also referred to the fact that the US in its criminal justice processing of juveniles was far more punitive than other developed countries. These court decisions have had both direct and indirect effects on other parts of the juvenile justice system, moving toward greater emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation for which the juvenile court was originally established. Nonetheless, there is still a substantial lag in reducing the level of juvenile incarceration in the US.

DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONFINEMENT [DMC]

Today, the disproportionate number of youth of color in all stages of the justice system is probably the most important issue that needs to be addressed. To attempt to understand this issue, one needs to go back to the Child Saving Movement of the nineteenth century, a precursor of the current juvenile justice system. In that era, the preferred race profile was reserved exclusively for white and immigrant children whereas youth of color, especially African American youth, were wholly ignored and segregated by the majority white population (Ward, 2012). In fact, in 1909 Theodore Roosevelt is believed to have said the juvenile justice movement was organized to "reproduce a white democracy" (Holl, 1971, p. 9). The period between 1900–1920, when the juvenile justice system was being developed, was another low point within the African American community (Ward, 2012). The majority of African American youth lived in the South where all institutions were segregated (including prisons) until the 1960s, so youth were processed and placed within the same institutions as adults

of color. They were not educated, were forced to do hard labor, and were offered little or no support for social development. Today, the situation has changed substantially, but still the overriding issue in the juvenile justice system is the disproportionate representation of youth of color.

As noted previously, although there has been an overall decline in arrest rates, detention, and incarceration for juveniles, the disproportionate representation of youth of color continues to be pronounced in many studies of DMC (Bishop, 2005). Particularly noteworthy is the finding that African American youth are more overrepresented in the early stages of processing such as arrest, detention, and referral to court. They are also more likely to be placed in residential facilities rather than in community settings, to be transferred to adult courts, and to be sentenced to prison (Knoll & Sickmund, 2010). In a recent report of youth in custody it was shown in every state but one (Vermont) that the custody rates for African American youth exceeded those of whites. In half of the states the ratio of overall minority custody rate to nonminority custody rate exceeded 3.5 to 1 (US Dept. of Justice, 2013). Of the number in residential institutions, 87% were males, and the rate for African American males was 606 per 100,000 as opposed to 228 for Hispanic youth and 128 for white youth (Sickmund et al., 2011). Moreover, the level of disproportionality increased for youth of color over the previous decade. As a response to the increasing disparity, in 1988 the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act was amended to require states receiving federal funds to make plans for reducing disproportionate representation of youth of color [Sec.223(a)(23)]. Unfortunately, there has been little positive impact of these provisions on reducing this racial imbalance despite numerous efforts to reinforce the provisions.

THE SOCIETAL CONTEXT

Much of the discussion and existing literature examining the evolution of the juvenile justice system neglects the changes in the societal structure in which it operates today. Garland (2001) and Beckett and Sassoon (2000) point to the increasing culture of control in the past half century and the declining provision of social welfare benefits for the population at risk in the justice system. Family structure has undergone and is undergoing substantial changes that have profound negative effects on children. Increasing numbers of children are growing up with single parents who are often unable to provide necessary care, supervision, and support. Recently, this situation has received public attention with respect to the plight of young children (Heckman et al., 2010). But supervision and support are also needed in the critical adolescent years. Single women are the mothers of the majority of juveniles in the child welfare system. They are charged with neglecting their children because they usually must work outside the home, and their children are placed in the child welfare system when

they are charged with inadequate care and supervision. All too often, the youth drift to the juvenile justice system when they are adolescents due to the lack of appropriate services in child welfare (Ryan, Williams, & Courtney, 2012).

More significantly, adolescents previously involved in the child welfare system are at increasing rates entering the juvenile justice system, especially when they "age out" of the child welfare system at age 18, as they have had little or no preparation for independent living and have not been reunited with family. The increasing rates of poverty, the decline of public school education, the persistent high rates of unemployment, the lack of physical and mental healthcare, and the changing economic structure in which well-paying jobs are unavailable for young adults have had profound effects on vulnerable youth. Millions are spent on institutionalization and crime control but little is available to prepare working-class youth for a successful transition to adulthood (Osgood et al., 2005).

Several other events have influenced juvenile justice policies and practices recently. First, knowledge of brain development during adolescence has grown significantly and research indicates children at risk for persistent delinquency can be identified early in life (National Research Council, 2013). However, there are some distinct behaviors and characteristics associated with the period between childhood and adulthood. For example, adolescents have poor self-control, lack mature capacity for self-regulating behavior, are willing to engage in risky behavior, and are particularly sensitive to social influences of peers (Steinberg, 2009). Second, adolescents have been affected by school policies with respect to their behavior. For example, the "zero-tolerance" policies in schools, especially in neighborhoods serving poor and racially marginalized youth, have resulted in thousands of suspensions and expulsions, many of which have fallen disproportionately on youth of color (US Dept. of Education, 2012). It is well known that many ethnic minorities who perceive racial discrimination in school policies and practices may disengage or become involved in resistant behavior. Nationally, juvenile court judges have prioritized dismantling the "school to prison pipeline" by resisting defining school discipline problems as appropriate for juvenile court action (Teske & Huff, 2011).

These various events have precipitated public discussion and concern in many states and have led to the emergence of efforts to effect major changes in the juvenile justice system. Generally change efforts have been influenced by the desire to reduce expenditures in the justice system because in many state budgets the costs of corrections have far exceeded those of higher education and some human services. Mendel (2011) reports that an estimate of the total expenditures nationally for juvenile justice exceeded $6 billion annually, with the average direct cost of incarcerating one juvenile at $88,000 annually. In California, the annual cost of incarcerating one youth in state juvenile facilities in 1996 reached $252,000. When youth were detained in counties, the costs in 2008 declined to $36,000 (Schiraldi,

Schindler, & Goliday, 2011). With more than 70,000 youth still in juvenile justice residential care nationally, the bill is sizeable and does not produce positive outcomes according to most research. The experience in Illinois and other states shows that incarceration was correlated with reduction in school completion and increases in adult incarceration (Aizer & Doyle, 2013).

MODELS FOR CHANGE

Explored in the remainder of the chapter are three models for change in the organization of juvenile justice services at the state level and in one case at the local level. Butts and Evans (2011) have identified them as the three principal models of change that are or have been implemented in several states.

Resolution

State leadership and managerial action have produced dramatic reductions in public state correctional institutions for juveniles. Massachusetts over the period 1970–1975 closed its large state institutions and developed smaller community-based programs. An evaluation by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency [NCCD] ten years later reported more positive outcomes for youth in the community-based open programs than had been achieved in the large institutional facilities (Krisberg & Austin, 1998). A second and more recent example of "resolution" is in Missouri, which also closed its large state facilities and opened a series of small residential facilities statewide. There are four key elements of the program: (1) case management including the family, (2) decentralized small residential facilities, (3) a peer-centered treatment model, and (4) a positive treatment-centered environment (Huebener, 2013). Although the state has reported improved recidivism rates, there has been no systematic evaluation of the program.

Reinvestment

States provide financial incentives to local jurisdictions to reduce incarceration of juveniles in state facilities. Examples of reinvestment include Wisconsin (1981), Ohio (1993), North Carolina (1998), Illinois (2004), Florida (2004), and Texas (2007). "Redeploy Illinois" provides a model for examination (Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative, 2008). In 2004 implementing legislation for "reinvestment" was passed by the Illinois legislature to provide for local responsibility, financial support, and authority for planning and implementing services to reduce incarceration by 25%. The state provided limited support to counties to treat youth in the least restrictive manner and to develop a continuum of services to address public safety, accountability, and restorative justice. By the second year after implementation, the 15 counties in which the program was piloted not only achieved

a 44% reduction in state commitments and saved more than $11 million, but it also led to 7% fewer commitments statewide and a 35% reduction in length of stay in detention. Thus there were unanticipated positive results in other parts of the state, not just in the pilot counties. The program has now been implemented statewide.

Realignment

Under "realignment" organizational and structural modifications are effected to alter system behavior. The two examples of this strategy are Wayne County, Michigan (2000), and California (2007). The change is still underway in California because it provides for closing nearly all state facilities for juveniles and subsidizing counties to furnish services for all of its delinquent youth with state financial support. In 1996 California had 9,572 juveniles in juvenile correctional facilities, and under the new realignment policies the number declined to 2,568 in 2008—a reduction of 83.6%. The state pays counties $117,000 for each youth returned to or retained in the county (Schiraldi, Schindler, & Goliday, 2011). The program in Wayne County, Michigan, has now been implemented since 2000 and because detailed information about the results is available they are examined here in detail.[5]

The Wayne County, Michigan, Realignment Model

The Environmental Context

Throughout the 1990s Wayne County faced significant challenges and was overwhelmed with various juvenile justice issues, most of which were not under the county's control. For instance, youth who were adjudicated as delinquents came under the control of the state and were incarcerated for long periods of time in distant facilities within Michigan and out of the state. Residential placement was the model for both serious and minor offenders because the latter were often escalated for technical violations. There were also unnecessary convictions and residential placements of troubled adolescents supposedly to get "help" which was often nonexistent. The county moreover lacked community-based placements for these youth and there were inadequate public school programs, particularly for after-school and evening periods when youth drifted and got in trouble. When youth returned to the community after residential placements of two or more years, they were wholly unprepared to deal with home life, high crime and substance abuse in their neighborhoods, schools that rejected them, and overall poverty and lack of employment options. Thus, it was no surprise that recidivism rates often exceeded 50%.

Funding for juvenile services was available almost exclusively for residential services controlled by the state, but the county was required to share 50% of the costs. Although the serious juvenile crime rate declined in

Michigan and Wayne County after 1996, laws had been passed by the state that favored out-of-county and out-of-state placements. During the late 1990s the county and state spent up to $150 million annually as their share of institutional program costs. With these costs constantly rising, it was little wonder that local officials looked for new options. In addition, the county detention facility was regularly in crisis and threatened by the US Department of Justice with closure because of overcrowding and extremely poor physical conditions. Often as many as 500 adjudicated youth were held awaiting disposition and placement. That meant there were many youth on the streets who could not be detained pre-trial.

To add to the dire situation, the Michigan auditor general issued a report that criticized the state's management of juvenile justice services statewide because of ineffective intake and placement services, lack of quality assurance in residential programs, ineffective contracting for private residential services, lack of risk assessment policies to guide resource utilization, and lack of re-entry services. Because it was the county with the largest child population, Wayne County was particularly scrutinized for system effectiveness and targeted for criticism.

Although serious crime by juveniles declined steadily after 1996, petty crime associated with homelessness, substance abuse, and gangs continued for many youth. In addition, more and more juvenile offenders were diagnosed with serious emotional disturbances. These youth were often denied access to services by the Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency. Thus, placements had to be found for these youth in the juvenile justice system, adding substantially to the costs of services. At one point the easiest way for an emotionally disturbed youth to receive mental health services was to be processed into the juvenile justice system. Youth were also impacted by the declining economic and political situation, particularly in the city of Detroit, which had the largest youth population in the county.

Last, there was incessant political pressure that grew from the local newspapers with horror stories about the experiences of juveniles in various facilities. The public at large was also angry because of high recidivism and because they saw so many adolescents on the streets engaged in illegal behavior and without access to legitimate activity. Government officials were repeatedly challenged to create a more comprehensive and effective local juvenile justice system. Initially, the citizens responded favorably to a proposal for a 1/10 mill tax set aside for improving juvenile services, including a new detention facility and some funds for community-based and prevention services. However, these funds were seriously insufficient for what was required. There was no support for greater spending for delinquents from many of the cities in Wayne County. Wayne County is made up of 33 cities, 10 townships, and 1 village. There are 41 school districts and 43 police departments in this area. In addition to the one Circuit Court Family Division, juvenile services constitute several district and probate courts that have some responsibility for juvenile services. Thus, the design and implementation of a juvenile justice program for the county provided

many challenges. During the decade of the 1990s, the suburbs of the county gained population as Detroit declined. The situation was also exacerbated by racial discrimination. Detroit was 85% African American whereas the suburbs were primarily white and of higher socioeconomic status.

The Crisis

The crises converged in 1997 with a dispute between the state and the county over a payment of $45 million to the Child Care Fund. Both entities claimed the other entity was liable. The Michigan Supreme Court ruled against the state so county officials met with the governor and the state budget director to resolve the claim. Wayne County officials demanded an alternative to the existing state-administered juvenile justice system. In the mid-1990s a proposal for a changed funding structure of block grants to counties for juvenile justice services was proposed by the Michigan Federation of Private Child and Family Agencies in order to transfer authority for delinquency services from the state to county government. Wayne County however did not adopt this option at that time. Instead, a compromise was agreed to whereby the state would create legislation to grant large counties local control, responsibility, and accountability for their juvenile offenders. In return the county would not press the state for disputed dollars, and the state would be relieved of all administrative and programmatic responsibility for Wayne County's delinquent youth.

The permissive legislation was passed and implemented. Governor John Engeler, Wayne County Executive Edward H. MacNamara, and the Juvenile Division of the Wayne County Circuit Court negotiated a memorandum of understanding. This memorandum specified the standing authority and roles of the Circuit Court, the Family Independence Agency (now the Department of Human Services or DHS), and the Wayne County Child and Family Services Agency for the operation of juvenile justice services.[6] The legislation was passed in 1997 to take effect in 2000 because all of the county youth in various locations and facilities had to be transferred from state to county jurisdiction. Initially, the state payment was a block grant of $70 million per year. But that was insufficient relative to what had been the prior expenditure, so the full share of the Child Care Fund was utilized and the "cap" on it was removed, first for Wayne county and later for all counties in Michigan. Wayne County also provided $10 million of "start-up" money which was essential and critical to the successful implementation of the new model.[7] The state eliminated its juvenile justice infrastructure of staff and buildings in Wayne County, which saved millions of dollars.

The Transition

The mission for the Wayne County Juvenile Justice program was to treat each individual as a person in need of opportunities and resources rather than one with a societal disease that needed to be contained. Under the leadership of

the director of community justice along with the active participation of the county executive, strategic partnerships were developed with the following:

- The Family Division of the Circuit Court to consider the processes and decisions that influence the level and type of care, period of jurisdiction, and the costs of services
- The prosecutor to consider detention alternatives, including home detention with tether, pre-trial diversion, and prevention programs
- The Department of Community Health to increase access to mental health treatment services for youth
- The Michigan Department of Human Services to collaborate on transfer of youth from state programs to the county and to arrange for contracting with the county for Title IV-E funds

The transition strategy also included three key components and goals:

- Review and transfer of some 3,000 cases from the state Department of Human Services to county jurisdiction and responsibility
- Reduction of unnecessary use of detention and creation of lower-cost options such as home detention with tether
- As a longer term component development of services and programs that prevent or reduce youth penetration into the justice system

Instead of initiating a range of individual treatment and services programs for juveniles, the county adopted a realignment and reinvestment strategy. This strategy involved the transfer of responsibility and authority for all mandated juvenile justice services to Wayne County (codified in an interagency agreement). It also included the reduced use of unnecessary high-cost institutional placements and reinvestment in services and programs to divert youth away the justice system. The long-term strategy was to transform the service delivery system and infrastructure, as summarized in the following table.

Table 4.1 Reform Strategy

Move Away from Historic Practices	*Move to System Reform*
Congregate care institutions	Continuum of service options, based on needs and risks
Geographic isolation and separation	Services located close to families
Supervision based on obedience and conformity	Cognitive-behavioral interventions for youth when needed
State financing of institutions	Reinvestment in a community-based menu of services and incentives for local responsibility
Bureaucratic entrenchment	Contract-based nonprofit services network, focused on adaptability and resiliency

Implementation of these strategies included several key elements, such as the creation of a structure for contracted management and services provision by local private nonprofit agencies. Program evaluation focused on outcomes rather than process is also of central importance. Additionally included is the administration of risk-based assessments in order to determine the need for residential care to restrict eligibility for secure placement and to redirect funding for prevention and diversion programs so as to prevent unnecessary entry into the justice system. The screening of youth for substance abuse, mental health concerns, and for re-offense potential both initially and periodically during service delivery is another central component. A further crucial factor is the provision of a continuum of community-based services from prevention and diversion to probation to short-term residential programs. The development of an online management information system that includes active participation by the providers to aid in achieving accountability is also included.

By 2000, the structure of the Wayne County juvenile justice program was operative, but new programs were added throughout the decade. The basic format included the headquarters of Wayne County Child and Family Services with the following main structures:

- Juvenile Assessment Center [JAC]. This is a single entry point which provides uniform assessment services, independent utilization management, payment authorization, and periodic assessment of outcomes of service providers. Its mandate includes the following functions: determination of eligibility for services and registration of all cases in the data base; service as the liaison to the Circuit Court; assignment of cases to a care management organization by zip code; clinical, social, medical, and psychiatric evaluation; initial risk and security level assessment; application of Wayne County's managed care policy to care management organizations [CMOs] for better resource utilization and system disenrollment; substance abuse screens and lab operations; diversion assessment; and outcome evaluation, dissemination, and reporting.
- After negotiations with Wayne County Community Mental Health [CMH] every juvenile is now screened for behavioral health issues. The JAC can contract with CMH for support of mental health services for Medicaid-eligible youth and are authorized to refer juveniles diagnosed as seriously emotional disturbed [SED] for services from authorized CMH providers. The JAC is the single gateway agency for juveniles to enter the mental health system. It is an approved children's mental health provider. Since 2000 when the JAC began, this agency has greatly increased its responsibilities. It also collaborates with the Children's Division of the Wayne County Department of Human Services to provide adult drug screening and counseling to juveniles in the child welfare system. These latter services have grown

extensively with the recognition of the dual involvement of so many adolescents and young adults in both child welfare and juvenile justice. Beginning in 2007 it became heavily involved in screening youth for a broad range of diversion and prevention, and it now provides access to several prevention community-based services such as Correct Course, Youth Assistance, and Choices Counseling. The JAC is a nonprofit organization so it has flexibility in its operation that might be lacking in a county governmental unit.

- Care Management Organizations. This involves the selection of five local nonprofit service providers with substantial experience in delivering community services to youth. Each serves as the lead agency for a specific "catchment" area and is responsible for development of a locally organized system of juvenile justice services and resources. The CMO must develop, implement, and manage a Plan of Care for each youth. Staff must actively report all activity on a daily or weekly basis in the Internet-based Juvenile Agency Information System [JAIS] which provides needed information for evaluation of both program processes and outcomes. Initially, a large group of agencies were invited to bid to be selected as one of the five contractors. Selection was based on the proposed quality and types of services to be provided, with special emphases on diversion and alternatives to incarceration. The selected agencies were not expected to provide all of the needed services, but to arrange for the provision and management of a locally organized system of juvenile justice services and resources. The central administrative agency, Wayne County Child and Family Services [WCCFS] was a public agency that oversaw local services delivery.
- The CMO has full responsibility for each youth following referral by the court and the JAC. They cannot eject a youth from care nor transfer problematic cases to another agency. They are however free to design relevant and creative intervention to meet the unique needs and risks of each youth.
- The JAC monitors each juvenile's level of care that is selected by the CMO and reviews each case at six-month intervals and at court-ordered security level changes. The JAC authorizes all formal changes in level of care on the JAIS system. Data on the JAIS information system are used by the county to reimburse the CMOs. Thus, there is an accountability linkage between assessment, treatment decisions, case management supervision, and expenditures for services under the umbrella of a single agency. Funding is vested with the nonprofit private agencies instead of large bureaucratic structures, which facilitates a more rapid response to emerging needs and trends. During the past decade an array of treatment options was constantly developed ranging from home-based and community services to secure care.

- Calumet Residential Facility. The department also has contracted for an 80-bed secure residential services center located in Highland Park in mid-Detroit for the exclusive service of juveniles enrolled with a CMO who require residential care. It serves only males and is easily accessible for visitation and family participation in the treatment program. With this facility the county can serve all serious felony offenders except for the very few who are adjudicated for capital crimes and the court requires that they be committed to a state-operated facility. A local nonprofit agency, Vista, operates a residential facility for a small number of females whose disposition requires residential care.
- Juvenile Detention Facility. In collaboration with the Circuit Court Family Division the Wayne County Child and Family Agency [WCCFS] operates a central detention facility for youth who require secure residential control pre-trial. However, many youth are now placed in home detention with a tether pre-trial rather than in an out-of-home placement. The facility consistently operates well below its bed capacity.

Since 2007 WCCFS and the prosecutor have provided a range of diversion, prevention programs, mental health services, and home-based services. These programs gradually now serve the majority of youth for the Wayne County Child and Family Agency, the majority of whom are not in the formal juvenile justice system. These services have been facilitated by the outreach activities of the Pcutor, the Court, the Juvenile Assessment Center, as well as the care management organizations.

Results

What have been the results of this program that was implemented during a period in which the county (especially the city of Detroit) experienced a dramatic decline in resources? Because the program structure provided for a very good management information system that was available to all of the participating agencies on the Internet on a 24/7 basis, substantial information exists for evaluation. The JAC was responsible for periodic utilization assessment so some quasi-independent information is available.

Compared with 1998 when 731 juveniles were placed in state residential facilities, in 2012 there were 6 juveniles in state facilities, all of whom had been assigned by the Family Court Juvenile Division due to the seriousness of their offenses. There were no county youth in out-of-state facilities. Many of the programs responsible for the decline in residential placements were not fully implemented until 2007; therefore the following outcomes reported by WCCFS compare 2007 with 2012. Such outcomes include the following:

- Decline from 5,689 new delinquency cases filed in 2004 to 3,899 in 2011, and in adjudicated cases by 38.4%

- Decline by 67% in secure detention, with 547 youth in home detention
- Decline in residential placements by 46% and in residential care expenditure by 44.3%
- In 2012, 2,901 youth served by CMOs in their communities
- Total of 9,319 youth served in diversion and prevention programs in 2012
- Recidivism rate of 17.5% in 2012 for felony convictions after termination (for a 2010 cohort)

In addition to the quantitative outcome measures, many programs have been initiated which have made possible these achievements. These include systematic professional assessment of all youth who come into contact with the justice system, several prevention and diversion programs, a drug treatment court and a teen court, mental health services, a sex offender program, a restorative justice program for young offenders, domestic violence services, and an "erase truancy" program. All of these initiatives represent a substantial investment in rehabilitation rather than mere custody or punishment.

CONCLUSION

The juvenile justice program that has been developed in Wayne County shows that the county could shift from an emphasis on placement of most delinquents in custodial out-of-county residential institutions to an emphasis on local community-based programs that include prevention and treatment and not just adjudication and punishment. The positive outcomes achieved in youth behavior reflect their participation in programs that were evidence-based and in accord with contemporary knowledge about adolescent development. Interagency collaboration between public and nonprofit private agencies grew as did financing from sources that previously did not support juvenile justice programs. Effective interagency planning and collaboration may be the outstanding characteristic of this model which involved substantial "reinvestment" as well as "realignment." These changes occurred during the decade of severe economic recession in Michigan and in Wayne County, but that was less of a constraint than might be expected.

However, much remains to be done. Most at-risk children and youth in Wayne County are growing up in extreme poverty and in neighborhoods that are crime-ridden, often abandoned, and dysfunctional. The quality of the education many of these youth receive is problematic at best and almost nothing is being done to prepare them for successful participation as adults in the rapidly changing economy. Many experience periods of homelessness and involvement in the child welfare system so family resources are often extremely limited. The disproportionate representation of African American youth remains a very serious problem with far too many males entering

the adult criminal justice system in their young adulthood because of the lack of legitimate opportunities for employment. Properly trained counsel is needed to ensure the civil rights of these juveniles are protected. All of these characteristics enhance the need for reforms in juvenile justice that emphasize positive youth development for high-risk as well as all youth.

The juvenile justice system in the US remains a harsh and punitive system for many of the children with whom it comes in contact, and these are the very children who desperately need a caring and supportive society. We are far more punitive in our juvenile justice system policies in almost all states than other developing countries. We would be well advised to consider the advice of the noted German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoffer: "The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children" (1940).

Reviews of changes in juvenile justice in the past century indicate there have been many forward and backward movements, but we do have the opportunity today with the models for change developed in many states to emphasize positive youth development approaches within the communities in which youth and their families reside. In addition, the several decisions made by the US Supreme Court in recent years have emphasized that children are less mature and culpable for their behavior than are adults. They provide a basis for the development of programs and services which will advance successful growth and development for youth. The principles for juvenile justice reform developed by the National Research Council (2013) also provide excellent guidelines for the future. Implementation of the change models largely involves the shifting of responsibility for juvenile justice programs and services to the local level. But unless there is substantial funding from federal and state resources, the mere change in responsibility may well fail because of the great inequalities in resources within and between states.

It has also become clear that organizational and community structures that facilitate collaboration among agencies are essential because all children, and especially those at risk, have various needs as they grow up. These needs can best be met through collaboration among providers along with adequate resources for those services.

NOTES

1. Decisions of the US Supreme Court included *Kent v U.S. 383 U.S. 541* (1966), *In re Gault 387 U.S. 1* (1967), and *In re Winship 397 U.S. 352* (1970). However, these decisions did not challenge the assumption that children were less mature or competent than adults and therefore should be treated differently from adults. Instead, the argument was that juveniles had the right to due process just as adults did.
2. Public Law 93–415, 1974.
3. As of 2000, 46 of the 50 states had made changes in their criminal laws to allow the transfer of juveniles to adult criminal courts for processing (Redding, 2008).
4. US Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012.

5. The author has been engaged in research in Wayne County since the mid-1990s when the changes there were initiated. Sources of information include newspaper reports about conditions in facilities; reports from the Michigan Family Independence Agency, Bureau of Juvenile Justice; and participation on a court-appointed task force to eliminate the detention of child welfare juveniles who run away from placement. Subsequently, extensive administrative reports from Wayne County Community Corrections and Wayne County Child and Family Services were made available to the author. These data were utilized in the preparation of this chapter.
6. Initially the Wayne County Department of Community Justice was the operating agency for the provision and management of juvenile services along with the Circuit Court. Subsequently, a separate unit, Wayne County Child and Family Services, was identified.
7. These strategies are similar to those that were utilized in Massachusetts in the 1970s when policies were implemented to close their large juvenile correctional institutions. Juveniles there were placed in a variety of community-based programs. See Miller (1991).

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Part II

The Assault on Dignity in Schools

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5 Market Ideologies and the Undermining of Democracy, Education, and Equality

David Hursh

At a recent hearing of the New York State Senate Committee on Education, several speakers[1] stated that when it comes to the failure of urban schools, "poverty is not the issue." The problem, they proclaimed, results from ineffective teachers protected by teachers' unions and the lack of teacher and student accountability. Their solution, like others who promote corporate-style reform, aims to privatize schools and turn them into competitive markets and to use high-stakes testing to hold teachers and students accountable.

These corporate reformers, who are the self-proclaimed "real reformers," include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Walton Foundation, private companies such as Pearson that profit from standardized testing and curriculum, and the United States Department of Education. For almost two decades, the corporate reformers have dominated educational policy making in part because they position teachers and teacher educators, many of whom work tirelessly to improve education for modest salaries, as defenders of the status quo.[2]

Moreover, as Ravitch (2013a) points out, the "real reformers" do not aim to merely reform schools but to model them based on business principles, to make them "into an entrepreneurial sector of the economy" (p. 19) and to transform the nature of society. The question arises, then: What are the ideology and goals of the "real reformers"? and What effect are they having on society as a whole and the middle and working class in particular? Why do they claim that poverty is not an issue?

Therefore, in this chapter, I begin by describing the neoliberal ideology that elevates the market, competition, choice, individualism, and privatization above all else. Neoliberalism provides the rationale for the current education reform efforts focusing on choice, markets, standardized testing, and accountability. Just as importantly, neoliberalism provides the rationale for political efforts to reduce governmental spending on social services and everything else other than the military as well as reducing taxes on corporations and the wealthy.

Neoliberal education and economic policies promote three ideals that undermine overall social welfare. First, neoliberals like former United Kingdom prime minister Margaret Thatcher (1993), in response to the

question of whether society had any obligation for people's welfare, proclaimed that "[t]here was no such thing as society, only individuals" (pp. 626–627). Therefore, individuals are responsible for making choices within free markets and those who are entrepreneurial deserve to succeed and those who are insufficiently entrepreneurial will fail. Ultimately, everyone is responsible for his or her own fate.

For neoliberals, success is based on individual effort and because some students succeed even though their family is economically impoverished, neoliberals conclude that poverty can be overcome and, therefore, "poverty is not an issue." Consequently, neoliberals shift the blame for student failure in low-performing public schools away from the social context and onto the students, their families, and their teachers. Furthermore, neoliberals reason that because the problem lies with teachers, students, and their families, remedies should focus on using standardized tests to hold students and teachers accountable. Improving efficiency by creating educational markets and privatizing schools and educational services is part of this rhetoric.

Second, neoliberal ideologies are used to justify efforts to reduce the role of government and social spending. Recent battles over approving the federal budget and increasing the debt limit embody these two neoliberal aims. Along with budget sequestration, closing the federal government significantly affected programs for the poor, such as, for instance, according to editors at *The Nation*, "Head Start, WIC, Meals on Wheels, drug treatment and mental health services, loans to low-income homebuyers, job training programs, workplace and environmental inspections," and further cuts have and continue to cause major damage to the National Institute of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Also, continuing battles over the budget are already raising the possibility of cutting other programs vital to the poor and working class: Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid ("Even When," 2013).

Third, by reducing all social interactions into individual market transactions, deliberations over educational, economic, and social goals are eliminated. Market choices will determine what schools should look like, what our communities and nation produce, and what our relationship with the environment should be. Yet contradictory to the neoliberal faith, markets do not automatically yield results that are the best for society. Contrary to the continued advice of Alan Greenspan (see Johnson & Kwak, 2010), unregulated derivatives did not correct themselves and, by precipitating the recent economic recession, placed the US and global economic system in peril. Similarly, almost every issue we face—climate change, energy, food, medical care, and education—cannot be solved by the "invisible hand" of markets, but require that we consciously deliberate together over what kind of world we want and how to achieve it.

Therefore, in the following section, I begin by briefly describing neoliberalism and some of its effects on economic and education policy. Then,

I turn to some of the consequences of neoliberal policies, some of which seem contrary to the stated goals of neoliberalism. In particular, although neoliberals often claim to desire to reduce the role of government in society, over the last 20 years, the power to make educational policy decisions has shifted from the local to the state and federal levels and resulted in more governmental intervention, not less.

NEOLIBERALISM AND EDUCATION

Neoliberalism is not, as some might assume, a new version of the liberal democratic vision promoted by Franklin Roosevelt's policies in response to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Roosevelt developed numerous programs to stimulate the economy and protect consumers, including creating the Social Security System and funding civic projects (such as the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps) to return people to work and put money in their pockets so that they could purchase necessities. He also sponsored legislation to regulate businesses, such as banks, to protect not only the consumer but also the banks from themselves. Roosevelt's social democratic ideals continued to gain some support after World War II as the federal government passed healthcare programs (Medicare) and built the interstate highway system, and states created relatively inexpensive university systems.

Instead, neoliberalism comes out of early classic liberal thinkers such as Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations* (1976), who envisioned a new industrial age with markets free of regulations. Smith argued that in free markets individual decisions—through the invisible hand—would not only serve the individual but also benefit society as a whole. Liberalism was a new ideal that reduced or eliminated the power of the king and the church, with the Declaration of Independence as a prime example of elite members of society using liberal notions to overthrow restrictions imposed by the crown and church.

However, industrialization and wealth came at a cost: increased wealth for a few and increased poverty for many. In response, workers began to organize and demand better working conditions and the public called for laws to protect women and children from excessive labor and their families from poverty. Cities and states passed legislation in relation to education, employment, health, and other issues with increasing acknowledgment that local and state governments must be involved in social and economic affairs by providing the conditions for everyone to realize their capabilities. Lastly, the unregulated economy underwent frequent booms and busts, with the most significant event being the Great Depression of the late 1920s and 1930s.

Previous to the Roosevelt administration, most economists endorsed the idea that economic recessions and depressions were economically beneficial because they weeded out inefficient businesses. But other economists, including

John Maynard Keynes (1936), argued that economic recessions were harmful both to citizens and long-term economic growth and, therefore, government, rather than cutting spending during financial downturns, should spend more to employ people, which would increase purchasing power and, therefore, spending and grow the economy out of recessions and depressions.

But the social democratic ideals espoused by Roosevelt through Lyndon Johnson were eventually eclipsed by neoliberalism. Neoliberal thought first gained notice in the 1930s and became an influential economic theory in the 1960s through the writing of Milton Friedman (1952, 1962) at the University of Chicago and Friedrich Hayek (1944, 1960) at the Mount Pelerin Society in Austria. Although neoliberalism is a term familiar to many citizens outside of the US, in the US neoliberalism is usually referred to as "free market policies." For example, Thomas Friedman (2005) is a vocal and visible proponent of neoliberalism in both his *New York Times* opinion editorials and his best-selling books, such as *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, but he always refers to it as "free market capitalism." In the 1970s, neoliberalism gained support from financial and corporate leaders who wanted to cut their labor costs and increase profits. Therefore, they aimed to weaken if not destroy unions, reduce social services and, therefore, taxes, and increase unemployment to lessen wage demands.

The first instantiations of neoliberal policies in the global North were in the UK under the Thatcher administration and in the US with the Reagan administration. For both Thatcher and Reagan, the state existed to implement policies that would benefit corporate growth, so they cut corporate taxes, reduced public expenditures, and intimidated and destroyed labor unions (the test case for Thatcher was the coal miners; for Reagan the air traffic control workers [PATCO]). Although both used the neoliberal state to promote corporate profits, both claimed to desire less governmental intervention in people's lives.

Neoliberalism, then, extends classical liberal thought into late capitalism and aims to undo social democratic liberalism. Rather than democracy and equality, neoliberalism promotes profits as the central goal. The quest for profits, neoliberals argue, requires all countries to develop free markets, decrease corporate taxes and governmental expenditures, and privatize the remaining public services, all serving to increase funds available for corporations to pursue profits (Tabb, 2002). As Harvey (2007) comments:

> [T]he fundamental mission of the neoliberal state is to a create a 'good business climate' and therefore to optimize conditions for capital accumulation no matter what the consequences for employment or social well-being. This contrasts with the social democratic state that is committed to full employment and the optimization of the well-being of all its citizens subject to the condition of maintaining adequate and stable rates of accumulation. (p. 25)

Furthermore, neoliberalism transforms not only the role of the state and the purpose of the economy, but also how decisions are made and the nature of democracy. No longer is democracy defined as citizens deliberating the nature of the common good and how to achieve it, but rather democracy is defined as choosing between existing products, with education no different from any other product. Neoliberal economists Milton and Rose Friedman (1980) promoted governmental funding of vouchers so that children could more easily afford to attend private or parochial schools. Friedman is quoted by Hirschmann (1970) as stating that "parents could express their views about schools directly, by withdrawing their students from one school and sending them to another, to a much greater extent than is now possible" (p. 16). No importance is given to citizens sharing, reflecting on, and refining their ideas of what kind of world they want to live in or schools they want to learn in.

Neoliberalism expands on classic liberalism's faith in individual pursuit of self-interest within markets by reconceptualizing the individual as not merely making choices, but as an autonomous entrepreneur responsible for his or her own self, progress, and position, responsible for his or her own success and failure. Mark Olssen, John Codd, and Ann-Marie O'Neil (2004) write that under neoliberalism:

> Every social transaction is conceptualized as entrepreneurial, to be carried out purely for personal gain. The market introduces competition as the structuring mechanism through which resources and status are allocated efficiently and fairly. The 'invisible hand' of the market is thought to be the most efficient way of sorting out which competing individuals get what. (pp. 137–138)

Students and their families are positioned as entrepreneurial individuals who are responsible for seeking, based on test scores, the best schools for themselves. As Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto, and Maringanti (2007) explain:

> A neoliberal subjectivity has emerged that normalizes the logic of individualism and entrepreneurialism, equating individual freedom with self-interested choices, making individuals responsible for their own well-being, and redefining citizens as consumers and clients. Margaret Thatcher's notorious 'there is no alternative' seems to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. (pp. 1–2)

Neoliberalism has undermined community and deliberative decision making, along with nonmonetary values. Teachers, restricted by standards, standardized testing, and curriculum determined at the state and national levels, have few opportunities to engage students in open-ended and often political questions regarding contemporary and controversial issues like environmental sustainability, for example. Rather, teachers are to teach the curriculum embodied in the state-produced tests.

AUSTERITY POLITICS: CONTROLLING TEACHERS AND CUTTING THE POOR

In this section, I suggest the teaching profession is under attack partly because neoliberals want to negatively portray unionized professionals so that they can, as Thatcher and Reagan did, reduce the power of unions and the amount of funding social services (education, health, transportation workers) receive. As I show, the current reform movement aims to portray public schools and teachers as failing, thus justifying privatizing schools and eroding teacher protections gained through unionizing. In particular, I show how seemingly beneficial programs such as Race to the Top (or First to the Top [FTTT]) undermine teacher autonomy, portray students and teachers as failing, and divert funding away from underfunded schools to private corporations (Hursh, 2013). Furthermore, neoliberal organizations, such as the National Council on Teacher Quality [NCTQ] and Teach for America, aim to transform educational policy so as to lessen the control of teacher education research and programs. Both have been granted significantly more legitimacy than they deserve.

Just after it was announced that New York State had won funding under Race to the Top [RTTT], I declared on public radio that New York will wish it had lost the competition. But I was only partly aware of the implications. The consequences have been greater than I anticipated. I knew that RTTT would require students to be tested in every subject and grade and that the test results would be used in evaluating teachers. I also knew that RTTT effectively removed the limit to the number of charter schools in each state. I was not aware of all the curricular implications and the disproportionate impact on urban school districts, their teachers, and students.

RTTT constrains teacher autonomy beyond my initial understanding by requiring states to implement curriculum and tests based on the Common Core State Standards [CCSS] and making the evaluations public. Moreover, in New York State, the tests given in spring 2012 included material the teachers did not typically teach in that grade and subject. Furthermore, the commissioner and regents may have set the cut score unusually high, therefore yielding a high failure rate. In New York State, only 31% of the students passed or were rated proficient on their Common Core exams. The low score statewide and even lower score in urban areas have been used, as I show below, to describe teachers and students as failures, and urban school as needing to be taken over by the State Department of Education and at least partially privatized.

For example, in an urban district like Rochester [RCSD], only 5% of the students passed. Such a low passing rate resulted in 922 of the 2,474 RCSD teachers (or 37%) receiving ratings of "developing" or "ineffective." In comparison to the RCSD, only 4 of the other 14 districts in the county had even one teacher designated as developing or ineffective and only 25 teachers throughout all 14 districts. All of the "failing" teachers

now require a professional development plan and, according to the unions' agreement with the State Department of Education, if the teachers are rated as failing for two consecutive years, proceedings to terminate their employment can begin. Adam Urbanski, president of the Rochester Teachers Association, stated that the "APPR (Annual Professional Performance Review) was intentionally positioned to dismantle urban public schools—possibly to diminish union power—and allow for the growth of charter schools" (Macaluso, 2013).

Urbanski's observation is backed up by two recent events regarding the school district's future. Soon after the test scores were made public, Governor Cuomo declared low scoring school districts might suffer the "death penalty" in which the Department of Education would assume management of the school. The current commissioner of state education, John King, is already "pushing for a bill that would allow the Board of Regents to take over schools districts with histories of low academic performance or financial problems" (Macaluso, 2013). Of course, it is only when we discuss urban districts that we can disenfranchise the community members by eliminating the school board and turning over governing the school to a state organization that is likely to outsource managing the school to a private corporation.

Although some districts may escape the harm caused by low test scores, for most districts, the cost of implementing RTTC and particularly the APPR far exceeds the funding received under RTTT. As I describe below, for one district, the cost exceeds the amount received by a factor of more than 23.

Lastly, but most importantly for teachers and students, all of the expense and attention devoted to implementing standardized curriculum and tests diverts our attention from issues such as inequalities in family income and school resources and how to create schools that build on the knowledge and interests of students, parents, and teachers.

Portraying teachers and schools as failing fits into the neoliberal goal of reducing governmental spending for social services, particularly for the poor, so that the government can reduce their overall expenditures and, theoretically, increase the funds for corporate investment (see Blyth, 2013, for a critique of these assumptions). One tactic used to convince the public that social services should be cut is to attack teachers and other public workers. For example, Wisconsin's Governor Scott Walker has significantly diminished the rights of unions to bargain for their memberships. In Wisconsin, unions can collectively bargain only for raises limited to the rate of inflation and union members are required to vote each year on whether they want their union to continue representing them in those limited negotiations. The current attack on unionized public workers echoes but exceeds in scope and duration the attack on coal miners and air traffic controllers 40 years ago.

Although acknowledging that teaching and teacher preparation programs can always be improved, teachers and teacher educators are increasingly

denigrated through supposedly objective reports and in the media. For example, the recent *Teacher Prep Review* conducted by the National Council on Teacher Quality [NCTQ] (2013) concludes that teacher education has "become an industry of mediocrity, churning out first year teachers with classroom management skills and content knowledge inadequate to thrive in classrooms with ever increasing ethnic and socioeconomic student diversity" (p. 1). According to their ratings, only 22% of teacher education programs are better than "mediocre" (p. 3).

NCTQ assigned a failing grade to the majority of university teacher education programs based on information provided on the programs' websites, including whether they prepared their education majors to teach the Common Core State Standards. Aaron Pallas (2013) from Teachers College at Columbia University believes that NCTQ has long had a political agenda. According to Pallas, NCTQ's mission over the past decades has been to "promote a particular vision of teacher education emphasizing criteria such as the academic performance of teacher candidates, instruction in the teaching of school subjects via scientifically proven methods, and rich clinical experiences" (p. 1).

Pallas points out that there is no research to support NCTQ's criteria for good teacher preparation programs. Furthermore, because their findings are based on information available on teacher preparation programs' websites, the information on which the ratings are based is limited. In fact, notes Pallas (2013), two programs at Teachers College were given the highest rating possible in part because of their selectivity, even though neither program exists.

Although NCTQ finds university-based teacher preparation to be failing, Teach for America [TFA] has convinced the federal government that five weeks of teacher preparation over the summer is sufficient to produce "highly-qualified teachers" (Ravitch, 2013b). TFA has committed millions of dollars to lobbying governments to influence policy in their favor and has placed alumni in politically important positions. One consequence of TFA's increasing political power has been that educational officials are beginning to think that all teachers should be prepared using the same model and should plan to teach for two years and then move on. This would benefit the increasingly financially strapped schools by reducing their personnel expenses. Teachers would never need to be paid more than a beginning salary. Furthermore, using TFA as a model, teacher education could be completed less expensively in a few weeks by institutions other than universities.

The denigration of teaching as a profession also provides a rationale for holding teachers accountable through standardized testing. RTTT was initiated by the Obama administration as a means of using federal stimulus dollars to bribe financially strapped states to increase the number of charter schools in the state; to institute more standardized tests to evaluate students, teachers, and administrators; and to adopt and implement the Common Core State Standards [CCSS].

As it turns out, most of the RTTT funding awarded to states goes not to school districts but to companies developing curriculum resources and standardized tests. Far less funding is delivered to schools. One local rural Rochester district has itemized the expenses for implementing Annual Professional Performance Review as required under RTTT. The assistant superintendent's figures show that in the first year the district spent $157,346 on activities and technology that they would not have otherwise spent. She also calculates that they spent $310,045 on activities for which they might have spent the funds otherwise (Williams, 2013). However, this district received *only $6,667 a* year in RTTT funding. Rather than aiding already underfunded schools, RTTT reduces the funding available for teachers and curricular resources.

Whereas districts struggle to fulfill these new grossly underfunded mandates, corporations reap financial benefits from RTTT and the CCSS. Some of the real winners under RTTT include the following, as researched by DeGoey, Quick, and Santiago (2013):

- The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers [PARCC], a 21- state consortium and an offshoot of Achieve, Inc. The education policy organization board led by business leaders was awarded $170 million of stimulus money to create Common Core Assessments.
- $160 million was awarded to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium for assessment creation and, according to their website, "the remaining support provided through generous contributions of charitable foundations" (SmarterBalanced, 2014a, p. 1). They identify their mission as "a state-led consortium working collaboratively to develop next-generation assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness." SmarterBalanced , 2014b, p. 1. The consortium "involves educators, researchers, policymakers, and community groups in a transparent and consensus-driven process to help all students thrive in a knowledge-driven global economy" (SmarterBalanced, 2014b, p.2).
- Recent news reports identify Pearson, a London-based educational and assessment company, as the winner of a five-year contract with New York State to create Common Core ELA and math exams. The cost to the state is upwards of $32.1 million (Bakeman, 2013, pp. 12–13).

That most of the funding under RTTT goes to entities other than the schools may not be surprising given how educational policy making has shifted from the local to the state and national levels, including corporations such as Pearson, foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Walton Foundation, and unelected governmental officials. One prime

example of how these organizations collaborate to push for corporate-style education reforms is Teach for America, which receives money from Gates, Walton, and other neoliberal organizations, and uses their increasing clout to lobby for policies that serve TFA rather than the communities where their teachers teach. For example, as part of the current 2013 federal budget resolution, TFA's five-week-long teacher preparation program was again deemed as preparing "high quality teachers" as required under No Child Left Behind (Ravitch, 2013b).

A second example of the intertwining of corporate and neoliberal governmental interests is the recent announcement that the person nominated by President Obama as second in command to the US secretary of education will be Tim Mitchell, CEO of the NewSchools Venture Fund, which Ravitch (2013c) describes as strongly supporting privatizing public schools and "disrupting public education." Mitchell is not the first member of the NewSchools Venture Fund to work for the department. The fund's Joanne Weiss was hired to launch and run RTTT and became his chief of staff, and another NewSchools employee was hired for DOE's communication team (McNeil, 2013).

It is here that we see how neoliberal policies benefit venture capital foundations, corporations, and governmental officials to the detriment of the rest of the population (Saltman, 2012). In the not-so-distant past, before the rise of mass standardized testing, teachers created almost all assessments for the students in their classrooms. A few states, like New York, created final exams for some secondary subjects. Now, corporations benefit enormously from the testing and accountability movement, whereas schools are underfunded and institute, with little fiscal support, the assessments created by others.

Furthermore, by blaming the schools for the country's economic problems and proclaiming that students will learn more if we just hold them accountable, we can ignore increasing inequality and poverty. Under the social democratic policies implemented after World War II, poverty decreased and inequality declined. In 1970, the wealthiest 1% amassed only 8 to 9% of the US's total annual income. "But after that (when neoliberalism became ascendant), inequality began to widen again, and income re-concentrated at the top. By 2007, the richest 1% were back to where they were in 1928—with 23.5% of the total" (Reich, 2010, p. 13).

The recession of 2007 had negative consequences for all groups of income earners, but the recovery has benefited only the top 1%. A recent report (Saez, 2013) shows that since the depths of the recession, overall income grew "by just 1.7 percent. . . . But there was a wide gap between the top 1 percent, whose earnings rose by 11.2 percent, and the other 99 percent, whose earnings declined by 0.4 percent" (Lowrey, 2013, p. B1). In addition, the top 10% of earners took more than half of the country's total income in 2012. Moreover, the top 1% took more than one-fifth of the income earned by those in the US, one of the highest levels on record since 1913 when the government first instituted an income tax (Lowrey, 2013; Saez, 2013).

The shift in income from the bottom 99% to the top 1% has severely impacted African Americans in general and the black middle class. "A 2007 Pew Foundation/Brookings Institution study found that a majority of African American middle class children earned less than their parents and, even more alarming, that almost half of downwardly mobile offspring had fallen to the bottom of the income distribution" (Patterson, 2010, p. 20).

And whereas neoliberals claim that in terms of educational success, poverty does not matter, the research says otherwise. "The research consensus has been clear and unchanging for more than a decade: at most teaching accounts for fifteen percent of student achievement outcomes, while socioeconomic factors account for sixty percent" (Goldstein, 2011, p. 17).

Neoliberal policies have had both real material and ideological consequences. Educational policy is increasingly controlled by wealthy families who have large foundations—what Ravitch (2013a) calls the Billionaire Boys Club—and unelected officials, such as the US secretary of education, state commissioners and chancellors, and the National Governors Association. Funding increasingly goes to non- and for-profit corporations. One such recipient is Pearson Education, who develops the assessments, the curriculum, and textbooks for many states, and, in the process, has become the largest publisher in the world.

That private corporations benefit enormously from the decisions of governmental agencies contradicts the professed neoliberal ideology of free markets and democracy. As I have shown, the crucial decisions are made by the corporate and political elite, many of whom have intertwining relationships on various committees and are funded by the same neoliberal foundations.

Neoliberals define democracy as the freedom to choose between competing products–whether material goods or schools—to serve one's own interest. But such an approach ignores that what is provided is often determined by others who have the political and monetary power to control the agenda, and also that what is good for one may undermine the common good.

In response to four decades of neoliberal dominance, historian Tony Judt (2010) writes: We know what things cost but have no idea what they are worth. We no longer ask of a judicial ruling or a legislative act: Is it good? Is it fair? Is it just? Is it right? Will it help bring about a better society or a better world?" (pp. 1–2).

Neoliberalism assumes that we do not need to deliberate over what kind of society we want (Harvey, 2007). Yet the process of deliberation is both democratic and educational. We need to rethink the nature of society, the role of the state, our relationship to the environment, and our educational system. We need to begin to describe what kind of society and world we want and how will we get there. We need to rethink how best to provide healthcare and financial security for the elderly, how to rebuild our nation's infrastructure and our schools. These will require that we learn to think in an interdisciplinary way, open to the views from all members of society. Given the current divisive debate in the US and the complexity of the answers, engaging in this discussion will not be easy.

NOTES

1. Carrie Remis, The Parent Power Project (http://parentpowerproject.org/main.html); Sam Radford, District Parent Coordinating Council of Buffalo.
2. My efforts to radically transform K-12 education are described in my partly autobiographical book *High stakes testing and the decline of teaching and learning: The real crisis in education* (2008).

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6 E Pluribus Unum

Elementary School Narratives and the Making of National Identity

Mary Christianakis and Richard Mora

INTRODUCTION

In March of 2010, the Texas Board of Education approved a social studies curriculum that emphasized the primacy of capitalism and conservatism, minimizing the contributions of African Americans, Latinos, and other ethnic minorities in American history textbooks. Conservatives on the Board claimed that the curriculum had gone too far left and wanted to include language about the violent intentions of the Black Panther Organization to balance out Martin Luther King, Jr.'s pacifist approach (McKinley, 2010). We introduce this chapter with the Texas controversy to illustrate the often-unacknowledged relationships between political ideologies and the construction of perceived historical facts and events in textbooks and public school curricula. The underlying premise of the present chapter is that, as Apple (1992) asserts, textbooks "are part of a complex story of cultural politics" (p. 10). As such, textbooks emphasize certain perspectives, at the expense of others, resulting in a "selective tradition," or a "selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification" (Williams, 1989, p. 58). The selective tradition frequently serves "to promote patriotism and national cohesion" (Al-Haj, 2005, p. 49).

Using critical approaches and the concept of "selective traditions," we embarked on this study of how historical women and/or persons of color are represented in textbooks assigned in California's public elementary schools. More to the point, we explored the following questions:

- What is the moral or message of the story?
- How did this historical figure's accomplishments distinguish him or her in history?
- What were these figures' central challenges or struggles?
- What was omitted from the historical narrative?
- What do those omissions reveal about American historical narratives?
- How do the narratives interpret these figures' contributions vis-à-vis a national identity?

We used the tools of both literary and document analysis to examine the historical content of the previously California-adopted Open Court Elementary School Language Arts series for grades one through six. Analysis focuses on the underlying social, political, and economic underpinnings used to construct sociopolitical and sociohistorical myths that serve to promote the dominant narrative of nation-state and the notion of *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one). We argue that when discussing historical figures who are people of color, textbooks present narratives of exceptionalism and heroism to promote a unified national identity and character (the one), ignoring that the one was created at the expense of the many who have suffered under the United States' enterprise of economic and cultural dominance. To be clear, what students learned from the biographical narratives discussed herein is beyond the scope of our analysis.

For our analysis, we reviewed the extant literature on children's historical texts and post-colonial theoretical perspectives on history and the nation-state. The literature reviewed cuts across fields such as education, history, and critical theory. Following the review of the literature and the methods, the findings are presented in terms of how texts represent the following: (1) African Americans and (2) Native Americans and Alaskans. Within each group, we address particular themes that explore the research questions. We note here that Latinos, typically underrepresented in the curriculum, were shockingly unrepresented as historical figures in the textbook series. After summarizing and analyzing our findings, the final section of the chapter addresses future implications for educational practice and research related to diverse representations of people in children's textbooks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the concepts framing this textbook analysis is selective tradition. Writing about the social impact of selective traditions, Harris (1990) explains, "when a tradition is selective or, worse, when it sets up inaccurate and damaging stereotypes, the meanings and knowledge shaped by it become significant because they shape individuals' perceptions of the world and their roles in it" (p. 541). With our understanding of selective tradition as a foundation, we explore how the authors selected in the Open Court Reading textbook construct stories of minorities and women that represent a positive and cohesive national narrative.

In 1927, Du Bois argued for the inclusion of African Americans and African American writers within white-dominated literary and historical canons:

> White Americans are willing to read about Negroes, but they prefer to read about Negroes who are fools, clowns, prostitutes, or at any rate, in despair, and contemplating suicide. Other sorts of Negroes do not interest them because, as they say, they are "just like White folks." But

> their interest in White folks, we notice, continues. This is a real and tremendous handicap. It is analogous to the handicap of all writers on unpopular themes but it bears hardest on young Negroes because its bar is broader and more inclusive. It puts a premium on one kind of sadistic subject. (p. 276)

Since then (albeit with much struggle), the publishing world has come a long way, with many African American authors earning prestigious literary awards and the stories of many African American historical figures being taught in classrooms from elementary school through college.

However the problem of representation and white male curricular dominance persists. As Apple (1992) argues,

> Dominance is partly maintained here through compromise and the process of 'mentioning.' . . . Thus, for example, a small and often separate section is included on 'the contributions of women' and 'minority groups,' but without any substantive elaboration of the view of the world as seen from their perspective. (p. 8)

This chapter explores how those narratives function for women and historical figures of color in American textbooks and how selections contribute toward multiculturalism and the concept of *e pluribus unum*, but often lack perspective of the very peoples they seek to include.

MULTICULTURALISM

Given that the textbooks analyzed for this chapter were published following the introduction of multiculturalism into school curricula and textbooks, a brief discussion of multiculturalism is in order. Beginning in the 1960s, there has been a strong push by particular stakeholders to have multicultural, -ethnic, and -racial material incorporated into school curricula and books. Banks (1988) documents four approaches to reforming curricula to include ethnic minorities. The first is the contributions approach, in which the criteria used to select ethnic heroes or historical figures parallels the criteria used to select white heroes (p. 1). The second is the ethnic additive approach in which ethnic content is added to the dominant Eurocentric narratives (p. 1). With both the contributions and ethnic additive approaches, Banks argues, the mainstream curriculum remains the same in terms of its goal and structure. The third, transformation approach, challenges Eurocentric narratives by approaching the curriculum as coming from several different perspectives (p. 2). Finally, the fourth approach, the decision-making and social action approach, requires social action and problem solving for persistent social problems in the curriculum (p. 2). As Banks (2009) explains: "A major goal of multicultural education is to help

students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function within their own microcultures, the U.S. macrocultures, and the global community" (p. 25).

The diversification of school texts that ensued following the Civil Rights movement has resulted in various criticisms, from both conservative and progressive scholars (Al-Haj, 2005, p. 48). Conservative critics argue that the cultural diversity promulgated by multiculturalism undermines societal unity and is, thus, "the enemy from within" (Cummins & Sayers, 1996, p. 4). Fearing that multiculturalism is leading the United States to go from a nation rooted in *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one) to one rooted in *e pluribus plures* (out of many, many), Ravitch (2000) puts forth the following recommendation:

> As cultural controversies arise, educators must adhere to the principle of 'E Pluribus Unum.' That is, they must maintain a balance between the demands of the one—the nation of which we are common citizens—and the many—the varied histories of the American people. It is not necessary to denigrate either the one or the many. Pluralism is a positive value, but it is also important that we preserve a sense of an American community—a society and a culture to which we all belong. (p. 275)

Ravitch's position that we must "preserve" American community begs the question of what exactly merits preservation and what is "American community"? It also raises the question of what nondominant aspects of the American community and spirit need resuscitation.

Scholars with progressive politics question the role of multicultural curriculum on the grounds that as "a body of thought which originates in the liberal pluralist approaches to education and society" (McCarthy, 1988, p. 267), it fails to question inequity and dominance sufficiently. Some argue that by focusing on difference, multiculturalism skirts racism and the sociohistorical experience of people of color (McCarthy, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 1996), thus failing to oppose dominant ideologies (Olneck, 1990). What is more, according to McLaren (1995), multiculturalism maintains the status quo and perpetuates the dominant groups' sociopolitical advantage.

NATIONAL NARRATIVES AND IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

The works of Benedict Anderson (1983) and Eric Magnuson (1997) also inform the chapter. Anderson's work provides insights into how nations, as "imagined communities" (p. 6), come to be. Magnuson's analysis of ideological conflicts in the United States details how rightist and leftist national narratives in textbooks influence the discourse of civil society.

Anderson (1983) defines a nation as "an imagined political community—imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). He argues that,

with the exception of very small villages or small tribes, all nations are imagined and conceived of as "a deep, horizontal comradeship" (p. 7). Nations achieve comradeship and a "national consciousness" using print and literacy. Accordingly, he argues, all printed texts serve to mediate information across time, distance, and culture. In this chapter, we seek to understand how historical narratives in children's texts seek to inform an American national consciousness.

Magnuson (1997), who asserts that "there is no possibility of a neutral text" (p. 87), presents the ideal national narrative of the United States that, although not universally embraced, is present in history textbooks in some fashion or form. Here is how he describes the narrative:

> The fundamental, general American national narrative is one of the creation of the first true democracy, of Americans as trailblazers, pursuing a mission of democratic utopia. The vision is of a new enlightened (Enlightenment) nation, united in sacred beliefs, the 'self-evident truths' of liberty and equality. Power, repression, poverty and inequality are seen as being radically lessened and possibly eradicated through the pursuit of the sacred virtues of the Western Judeo-Christian tradition. . . . This narrative pursuit of an American utopia is a story of transformative voyage upward, an epic sacred quest. (p. 91)

In order to examine the ideological framing of the biographical narratives thoroughly, we utilize the ideal national narrative as the sociopolitical point of departure of historical texts, regardless of their "selective tradition."

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to examine how children's language arts textbooks adopted in California employ minorities in historical readings to construct a national narrative in the elementary school curriculum. We focus on language arts texts because, in our current accountability era, the subjects that are taught consistently are language arts and mathematics. We limit our examination of texts to those used in Los Angeles, California, not only because it is our home city and state, but also because Los Angeles Unified School District is one of the largest school districts and California is an influential state when it comes to textbook markets (Apple & Oliver, 1996; Brown & Brown, 2010). We analyzed textbooks for grades one through six. Most of the selections draw from the upper grades, as they tend to emphasize historical content, rather than reading skills and phonics.

To examine the biographical narratives and themes that emerged in the Open Court Language Arts textbooks, we employed two related, but distinct methods: literary analysis (Aldridge, 2006; Brown & Brown, 2010; Hess, 2005) and document analysis (McCulloch, 2004; Prior, 2003).

Literary analysis of textbooks involves four steps: (1) perusing the literature, (2) developing thematic codes, (3) analyzing the themes, and (4) illustrating conclusions with examples (Aldridge, 2006; Brown & Brown, 2010). Document analysis focuses on the situated nature of documents and texts. As Lindsay Prior (2003) maintains, documents are situated in "networks of action" (p. 2) that mediate their textual production, consumption, and interpretation. Similarly, McCulloch (2004) argues that texts are historical in nature and draw upon operative race theories and dominant historical narratives.

Data analysis involved a two-phased approach. First, we began by counting how many selections in each grade-level textbook focused on multiculturalism, minorities, and women. This phase documented themes, purposes, and messages of the stories. In documenting the selections, the biography genre was the most common one that included multiculturalism, minorities, and women, and therefore became the focus of this chapter. The second was to axial code the biographies across race and messages communicated by the stories.

FINDINGS

The initial analysis of American historical figures and periods involved identifying texts that referenced people of color. In the texts for grades one through six, we counted 18 texts that focused on people of color in the United States. Of those texts, 14 were selections from biographies; the others explored cultures and time periods. The 18 texts included African Americans and Native Americans and Alaskans. There was only one Asian American selection, and it focused on Japanese-born violinist Midori (Mi Dori Goto). We do not provide analysis for this selection, as it was the only one and we could not establish a thematic pattern. The most striking aspect of the counting and categorizing of the selections was the lack of inclusion of Latino historical figures who worked to combat the negative residuals of colonialism. It is especially surprising because the Open Court Reading series was adopted in many of the largest states, like California and Texas, that serve the majority of Latino students in the country. Common to all of the selections was the multicultural message that America is a land of immigrants. In second grade, in the unit entitled "Our Country and Its People," the selection opens with the title "Immigrants." The first page is bordered with stars and stripes. Featured on the first page is a picture of what appear to be an Asian girl and African American young man, with an older white man. The pictures, along with the red, white, and blue border, signal that the United States is a land of many different people, the land of *e pluribus unum*. The first lines read: "North America is made up of many peoples. All of them came from other places—willingly or unwillingly. People

coming from other places are called immigrants" (Thompson, 2000, p. 208). The selection also claims that the very first immigrants were the American Indians, who "may have come across a land bridge from Asia to Alaska" (Thompson, 2000, p. 209). Most problematic about this opening is the conflation of immigration, which is tied to nation-states, with migration, which describes movement patterns of people. The possible emigration of American Indians from Asia and Alaska predates North American nation-states. Furthermore, by defining Native Americans as the first immigrants, the selection emphasizes the common experiences of colonists and Native people, thus minimizing and naturalizing colonialism through the common American multicultural experience.

Additionally, African slaves are cast as immigrants who came "against their will," which is also problematic (Thompson, 2000, p. 216). As Olneck (2001) explains, "The rhetorical amalgamation of African Americans into the immigrant saga homogenises very different experiences and obscures the distinctive role of racism in United States culture and history" (Olneck, 2001, p. 344). By corralling all Americans together under the common identity of immigrant, the story constructs a narrative of common experience (with cultural variation) between the Native Indians, Africans, and the voluntary immigrants identified in the selection—Irish, Jewish, Swedish, Dutch, German, French, Asian, Mexican, Central and South American, Caribbean, and Polish people. Thus, the text can argue that all peoples in the US share a joint purpose as well as emphasizing the "gains" from the important work that immigrants do, and how "everyone is made richer by celebrating so many different ways of life" (Thompson, p. 230).

In the analysis below, we further explore the national narratives constructed in the Open Court Reading series. We have organized the findings below by race and ethnic groups, as our analysis found that the stories of particular groups are used to tell a distinct story that contributes to the American national narrative of those groups. We begin with African American historical pieces, as over half of the pieces we counted represented that group. Next, we analyze the few selections focusing on Native Americans and Alaskan Natives.

BIOGRAPHIES AND NARRATIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL FIGURES

Throughout the Open Court Reading series, there were ten historical stories documenting the experiences of African Americans. Of those selections, eight were biographies and two focused on historical events or periods. Three authors of those selections were African American and the rest appeared to be white. The following selections in Table 6.1 are included in the analysis:

Table 6.1 African Americans

Grade Level	*Title and Author*
Grade 1	None
Grade 2	1. "A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr." by David A. Adler
Grade 3	2. "Teammates" by Peter Golenbock, illustrated by Paul Bacon
Grade 4	3. "Mae Jemison: Space Scientist" by Gail Sakurai 4. "Two Tickets to Freedom" from *Two Tickets to Freedom: The True Story of Ellen and William Craft, Fugitive Slaves* by Florence B. Freedman, illustrated by Doris Ettlinger 5. "Arctic Explorer: The Story of Matthew Henson" by Jeri Ferris 6. "Phillis Wheatley: Poet" by Susan Altman, illustrated by George Crespo
Grade 5	7. "Bill Pickett: Rodeo-Ridin' Cowboy" by Andrea D. Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney 8. "Emancipation" from *To Be a Slave* by Julius Lester, illustrated by Charles Shaw
Grade 6	9. "A Picture Book of Jesse Owens" by David A. Adler, illustrated by Robert Casilla 10. "Ray and Mr. Pit" from *Brother Ray: Ray Charles' Own Story* by Ray Charles and David Ritz

Literary and document analysis produced two persistent themes that framed African American people and history in the United States: (1) the importance of hard work and following one's dreams and (2) the role, influence, and importance of white allies. In the analysis that ensues, we provide examples of these themes across selections at different grade levels.

WORKING HARD AND FOLLOWING YOUR DREAMS

Martin Luther King, Jr.

A persistent theme in many of the stories presented in the Open Court Reading series is to work hard and follow your dreams. One can hardly mention African Americans and dreams without invoking Dr. Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech. Second graders reading from the Open Court Reading series could read about Martin Luther King's leadership in a biography picture book selection. Dr. King's story emphasizes that he was a hardworking student, finishing "high school two years early . . . and enter[ing] Morehouse College" (Adler, 2000b, p. 143) in Atlanta at the age of 16. According to the story, Dr. King became a minister in Montgomery, leading his followers to peaceful protest. The story highlights Dr. King's 1964 Nobel Peace Prize and credits him for leading the country toward desegregation: "New laws were passed.

Blacks could go to the same schools as Whites. They could go to the same stores, restaurants and hotels" (Adler, 2000b, p. 149). However, the next page of the story tells of his assassination. His assassin's racial identity (white) is never revealed in the story, only that a man who was "hiding" shot him. There is no explanation in the story as to why James Earl Ray killed Dr. King. The story simply ends with the words that mark his gravestone: "I'm free at last." The ending implies that Martin Luther King, Jr. sacrificed himself so that his dream of racial equality could come true. Consequently, as in many other textbooks, "the Martin Luther King who emerges . . . is not the acerbic, anti-poverty, anti-war activist of 1965 to 1968, but the visionary Christian integrationist leader of 1956–64" (Foster, 2006, p. 168). The text casts King as a leader working within the American national narrative of freedom and justice for all.

The American hard work and dream maxims are also illustrated in the biographies of Jesse Owens, Dr. Mae Jemison, Matthew Henson, and Bill Pickett. Their selections all tell the story of "the first" or exceptional African American in their respective fields and take a contributions approach to multicultural education (Banks, 1988). Their hard work and accomplishments stand as evidence that any persons with will and determination can fulfill their dreams if they are willing to overcome the hurdles in their minds. Hence, the narratives fail to illustrate how social and economic institutions have generated many hurdles that most marginalized people cannot overcome.

Jesse Owens

"A Picture Book of Jesse Owens" (Adler, 2000a) tells the rags to riches story of a black little boy from Alabama who became a record-setting, gold-medaling Olympic athlete: "The races Jesse Owens ran were over in seconds, but the story of his rise from poor sharecropper's son to a world hero has inspired young people to dream and to work hard to make their dreams come true" (Adler, 2000a, p. 87). Jesse Owens set three Olympic records in the 1936 Olympic games held in Berlin, Germany, and earned four gold medals for the United States. In spite of Hitler's attacks on black and Jewish people, Jesse Owens was able to be successful through his athleticism. Jesse Owens believed that success and opportunity is available only through hard work. The story points out that he wrote two books on issues facing the black community. In the first one, *Blackthink: My Life as Black Man and White Man*, he wrote, "If the Negro doesn't succeed in today's America, it is because he has chosen to fail." Two years later, in *I Have Changed*, he seemed more aware of the prejudice blacks face every day and showed more understanding for those who fought for equality (Adler, 2000a, p. 86). However, by highlighting Owens' critique of the Negro, the story reiterates the meritocracy myths promulgated by the Horatio Alger stories.

Mae Jemison

Dr. Mae Jemison is the first African American woman to travel to space, doing so on the Endeavor Space Shuttle on September 12, 1992. She began her career at Stanford University, where she was elected as president of the Black Student Union and studied African and Afro-American studies and chemical engineering. Upon finishing her bachelor's degree, she decided to become a doctor and entered the Cornell Medical School. Dr. Jemison completed her medical internship training at the University of Southern California's County Hospital and worked as a physician for some time before she joined the Peace Corps to provide healthcare for all Peace Corps volunteers and US embassy employees in the developing nations of Sierra Leone and Liberia. Dr. Mae Jemison was accepted into NASA's astronaut program in June of 1987, at which point she began training.

In spite of her medical degree, throughout the 15-page story (Sakurai, 2000, pp. 76–90), Dr. Mae Jemison is referred to as simply "Mae" 74 times. She is referred to with her full name, Mae Jemison, five times. And only twice is she referred to as Dr. Mae Jemison. Nonetheless, the biography of Dr. Mae Jemison documents how "Mae Jemison had made her childhood dream come true" (Sakurai, 2000, p. 88). In 1987, she was one of 15 astronauts chosen out of a qualified applicant pool of 2,000. Dr. Mae Jemison marked the significance of her space flight by saying, "My participation in the space shuttle mission helps to say that all peoples of the world have astronomers, physicists, and explorers" (Sakurai, 2000, p. 85). Missing from the story is an analysis of how society and institutions have limited the full participation of women and people of color.

What the story only obliquely references is why Dr. Mae Jemison's accomplishment is particularly noteworthy. The primary reason is that she is African American and a woman, both identity categories that have had a difficult time getting into the field of space and aeronautics. "Mae Jemison knew that she wanted to be an astronaut. Although all the astronauts at the time were White and male, Mae wasn't discouraged" (Sakurai, 2000, p. 79). Although Dr. Jemison's determination overpowered both gender and race-dominant practices operative at NASA, there is no explanation of why all of the astronauts were white and male.

Furthermore, there is no contextualization of the role that teachers and schools played in gender and race discrimination. Although her parents were supportive and nurturing, the author writes:

> Other adults were not as encouraging as Mae's parents. When Mae told her kindergarten teacher that she wanted to be a scientist, the teacher said, "Don't you mean a nurse?" In those days, very few African Americans or women were scientists. Many people like Mae's teacher couldn't imagine a little black girl growing up to be a scientist. But Mae refused to let other people's limited imaginations stop her from following her dreams. (p. 78)

The biography emphasizes Dr. Jemison's tenacity to persist beyond the limited imaginations that her teachers had of a little black girl. In that narrative, Dr. Jemison has the agency to refuse others by believing in herself. Perhaps missing from the narrative is that others' imaginations may not have been limited but, instead, that they did not want Dr. Mae Jemison, or any African American woman, to accomplish such a goal. By making Dr. Jemison's accomplishment a story of imagination and persistence, the author downplays how social and racial injustices undermine the aspirations and perseverance of those who suffer discrimination.

The story of Dr. Mae Jemison draws upon a contributions approach to multicultural education that serves to reiterate existing narratives of the American path breaker, a variation of rugged individualism. Dr. Jemison, we learn, now travels the country inspiring young people to follow their dreams. Her motto is "Don't be limited by others' limited imaginations" (Sakurai, 2000, p. 89). By emphasizing her tenacity, without enumerating her multiple struggles, the story underplays the institutional roadblocks to pursuing individual dreams.

Bill Pickett

Bill Pickett also followed his dreams, in his case to become a cowboy. After a full career, Bill Pickett became the first African American inducted into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma. A bronze statue was commissioned to commemorate him.

A child of freed slaves at the turn of the century, Bill watched cowboys drive steers to the stockyards of Kansas. Like Dr. Jemison imagined herself as an astronaut, Bill Pickett imagined himself as a cowboy: "He would lie in bed and dream of the day when he'd be old enough to rope mossback cattle and help stray dogies keep up with the herd" (Pinkney, 2000, p. 532). However, the story makes no mention that ranch and rodeo owners rarely hired black cowboys.

Nonetheless, Bill Pickett found a way to make his dream come true. One day, Bill saw a bulldog bite the lip of a cow. The cow would not move. He figured that he could hold the lip of a cow with his own teeth long enough for it to get branded. This method of holding a cow became known as "bulldogging." He bulldogged all over the country and eventually left the ranch for the rodeo. The author writes, "[T]he newspapers didn't seem to care if Bill was Black or White—Bill's bulldogging was news! The Wyoming Tribune and the Denver Post printed stories about the wild-riding South Texas brushpopper who could tackle a steer with his bare hands, and his bite" (Pinkney, 2000, p. 538). This story of Bill's success demonstrates how African American historical figures and their stories serve particular social, historical, and discursive functions in public school curricula aimed at a unifying and inclusive narrative. As Moreau (2008) states about textbook authors of a few decades ago, "The least controversial and thus most

popular means to include more African-Americans was through the 'contributions' narrative. Authors spliced Black men and women into a preexisting storyline without significantly disrupting it, much like publishers had done in the early twentieth century when they began giving more attention to White ethnics" (p. 311). In the case of Bill Pickett, his extraordinary feats as a rodeo cowboy mitigate the pervasive racism in America during the early 1900s, which limited his employment as a cowboy. Mr. Pickett fits in alongside the other hard-living and hard-working cowboys, thus minimizing the institutional constraints on his racialized identity and emphasizing his participation in the rugged cowboy narratives of the United States.

The narratives of African American firsts contribute to the overall narrative of the US as a land of opportunities where those who have a strong work ethic and are not discouraged by challenges can make their dreams come true and succeed. Absent from these narratives is the fact that African Americans have suffered discriminated for generations and, thus, have had their life chances curtailed.

The Influence of White Allies

William and Ellen Craft

As pervasive as the "work hard and follow your dreams" theme is, so too is the narrative of the influence of white allies. Of the ten selections on African Americans, five of the stories describe the pivotal roles that whites took in providing opportunities and shaping the success of these African American historical figures. In "Two Tickets to Freedom," for example, two runaway slaves named William and Ellen Craft are offered advice from a white train guard: "let me give you a little friendly advice. When you get to Philadelphia, run away . . . and have your liberty" (Freedman, 2000, p. 102). By having white allies personalized through empathetic and sympathetic characters, the stories minimize the role of white dominance and racism operant in the slave system. Below, we provide some representative examples from the stories in the Open Court Reading series to illustrate the function of white allies across the narratives.

Jackie Robinson and Jesse Owens

Jackie Robinson's story is offered in the third-grade reader under the title "Teammates" (Golenbock, 2000). This ten-page story focuses on two key white allies more than on Robinson himself. The first is a white man by the name of Branch Rickey, the president and GM of the Brooklyn Dodgers. The story describes Mr. Rickey as a man "who wanted to get Dodger fans the best players he could find, regardless of the color of their skin. He thought segregation was unfair and wanted to give everyone, regardless of race or creed, an opportunity to compete equally on ball fields across

America" (Golenbock, 2000, p. 111). The story tells of Branch Rickey's search for a star player in the Negro leagues "who would be able to compete successfully despites threats on his life or attempts to injure him" (p. 112). Jackie Robinson joined the Dodgers only to face continued hostility from fans and even his own teammates, except for Robinson's second white ally, Pee Wee Reese. When players circulated a petition to remove Jackie Robinson from the team, Reese declined to sign it and declared, "I don't care if this man is black, blue or striped" (p. 115). The story then proceeds to explain how at one Cincinnati Reds game, Reese put his arm around Jackie's shoulder and shouted to the hostile fans: "I am standing by him. . . . This man is my teammate" (p. 117). This is how the story of Jackie Robinson ends. The underlying message of the story is how one team executive and one teammate paved the way for black baseball players by standing in alliance with Jackie Robinson so that the major league fans would accept him. The narrative function of "Teammates" then is to show that white people helped black people overcome racism.

According to "A Picture Book of Jesse Owens" (Adler, 2000a), Jesse Owens also had two white allies support his career as an athlete. The first one was Charles Riley, a gym teacher and coach of the track team who saw promise in Jesse as a runner. Jesse met the coach, whom he called "Pop," every morning before school to train. The author writes: "Coach Riley taught Jesse to run as if the ground were on fire. He said Jesse should train not just for the next race, but to be the best runner he could be. He told Jesse to always train for the future—'for four years from next Friday'" (Adler, 2000a, p. 79). Once at the Olympics, Lutz Long, the popular German jumper who came in second, ran over to shake Jesse's hand. The picture of the two athletes—a black American and a white German in the midst of all the hate and prejudice around them—is one of the lasting images of the 1936 Olympics (Adler, 2000a, p. 84).

The progressive generosity and sportsmanship of his white German ally provided a model for all of the spectators watching the Olympics. By pointing out the few white allies who supported Owens, the story constructs the racists as marginalized villains, without the admission that most of the country as well as the world was complicit in the promulgation of racism. In this way, the narrative is in line with the ideal national narrative as it serves to highlight the lessening of inequities as a young nation moves toward "American utopia" (Magnuson, 1997, p. 91).

Phillis Wheatley

Through white recognition in the publishing world and an "owner" who was willing to care for her and provide her with an education, Phillis Wheatley was able to become the first African American female poet in the United States:

> Phillis Wheatley is remembered today because of her role in the development of black American literature. Her sensitive poetry proved at

> a time that blacks, when given the opportunity, were equal to White, both intellectually and emotionally. At a time when the fight against slavery often seemed endless, Phillis Wheatley's poems provided both hope and ammunition. (Altman, 2000, p. 545)

Although Wheatley's narrative does not present her as a docile slave without agency, it nonetheless follows in the tradition of the antebellum history textbooks, which presented blacks "as objects of action directed by White slave traders, plantation owners, and abolitionists" (Moreau, 2008, p. 142).

Matthew Henson

Matthew Henson was the first African American explorer to reach the North Pole. Henson was able to garner many skills and make connections, mainly because the Inuit people trusted him more than the other explorers, as he more closely resembled them. Peary, the white explorer who invited Henson to assist him without offering him any compensation, relied on Henson greatly. However, when it came time to reach the North Pole, Robert Peary's alliance with Henson proved thin:

> He sent [Henson] back to the base camp. There were three reasons: one was the frozen heel; another was that someone had to protect Mrs. Peary at the camp; and the third was that Peary believed an explorer should have a college education in order to know what to do in an emergency. (Ferris, 2000, p. 346)

In the telling of Henson's story, the author Jeri Ferris (2000) also acts as an ally:

> My goal is to make these determined men and women inescapably alive, to make their deeds inescapably real, and to plant the seeds of similar determination and self confidence in the children who read about them. My goal is that children, no matter their ethnic and social backgrounds and despite the obstacles, will say to themselves, 'I, too, can make a difference.' (p. 349)

Henson's goal is to motivate individuals to reach self-realization. An important goal missing from the "make a difference" (p. 349) message is that institutional practices can also make a difference for a range of children across racial, socioeconomic, and gender lines.

NATIVE AMERICANS AND NATIVE ALASKANS

Throughout the Open Court Language Arts Reading series, there are four historical stories documenting the experiences of Native Americans and

Table 6.2 Native Americans and Native Alaskans

Grade Level	*Title and Author*
Grade 1	None
Grade 2	1. "Sequoyah: Inventor of the Cherokee Written Language" by Diane Shaughnessy and Jack Carpenter, illustrated by Sandy Rabinowitz
Grade 3	None
Grade 4	2. "Pocahontas" from *The Virginia Colony* by Dennis B. Fradin, illustrated by Robert Roth 3. "The Story of Susan La Flesche Picotte" from *Homeward the Arrow's Flight* by Marion Marsh Brown, illustrated by Diane Magnuson
Grade 5	4. "In Two Worlds: A Yup'ik Eskimo Family" by Aylette Jenness and Alice Rivers, illustrated by Aylette Jenness 5. "Sacagawea's Journey" from *Sacagawea* by Betty Westrom Skold, illustrated by Craig Spearing

one documenting Native Alaskans. Of those selections, three are biographies of women, one of a man, and one of the Yup'ik people. None of the authors of the selections appear to be Native Americans themselves. The selections in the analysis include the texts in Table 6.2.

Literary and document analysis produced two persistent themes that framed Native American people and history in the United States: (1) colonists' tools and knowledge for self-preservation and progress and (2) collaboration and cooperation between colonists and Native peoples.

Adopting Colonists' Tools and Knowledge for Self-Preservation and Progress

Western colonialism is charged with the murderous disappearance and displacement of Native American tribes. That is why it is ironic that two of the textbook selections should emphasize the importance of appropriating white men's tools for self-preservation and Native American advancement. In the biography of Sequoyah (Shaughnessy & Carpenter, 2000), the importance of written literacy is made salient. Separately, the biography of Susan La Flesche Picotte underscores the necessity for Western medicine and Western hygiene practices.

Sequoyah

Sequoyah is credited with the invention of the written Cherokee language. Once in contact with white men who were able to communicate with writing over long distances, Sequoyah realized the importance of the written alphabet, not only for the communication of messages, but also for the

preservation of the Cherokee language: "Sequoyah saw young Cherokees learning English to communicate with White people. He was afraid that these Cherokees would forget their own language and culture. People use language to preserve their cultural traditions and history" (Shaughnessy & Carpenter, 2000, p. 96). Over a period of 12 years, Sequoyah constructed a syllabary with 85 symbols, which he was able to disseminate widely. He helped tribal leaders write their own constitution and soon after shepherded the publication of the very first Cherokee newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*. Ignored by the narrative is that, although the Cherokees "had met most of the criteria of a 'civilized' society by the 1820s," the US government still expelled them from their lands in Georgia and moved them in "a forced march known as the Trail of Tears," a march that led to the deaths of one-quarter of the Cherokees (Moreau, 2008, p. 160).

The Yup'ik

As it turns out, Sequoyah's desire to capture the Cherokee language in writing was indeed a wise act of cultural and linguistic preservation. In comparison, the Yup'ik villages of Scammon Bay, Alaska, began to lose their language when the government started opening public schools where the students learned English and were forbidden to speak Yup'ik. Native elders began to protest and in contemporary times, as the story, "In Two Worlds," illustrates, children "want to be fluent in both of their languages—English and Yup-ik" (Jenness & Rivers, 2000, p. 255). The selection, by virtue of its title and content, presents a narrative of the best of both worlds. There is little discussion of how English became one of "their" languages. The case of the Yup'ik serves to illustrate the promise of multiculturalism—the people get to be both Yup'ik and American. They remain diverse, but the English language gives them a national language and identity that connects them to their fellow US citizens.

Susan La Flesche Picotte

The superiority of Western medicine and hygiene practices is another theme the narratives on Native Americans promote in the Open Court textbooks. This message is communicated in the fictionalized biography of Susan La Flesche Picotte, "the first female Native-American doctor in the United States. After completing medical school she returned to her home and began work as the doctor at the reservation school" (Brown, 2000, p. 282). In her story, she both practiced medicine and taught school children on a reservation in Nebraska. The story describes the poor condition of the Native houses, commenting on how they had not been "kept in repair." On one occasion, when Susan rode up to one house "in which a windowpane was out, the hole stuffed carelessly with old rags, anger flared in her. Inside, she knew, was a child on the verge of pneumonia" (Brown, 2000,

pp. 284–285). She scolded the father as she tended to the child with the pneumonia. He replied, "You always try to tell us how to live" (p. 285).

Hygiene was another way to contrast Native Americans from white Americans and Western practices. After delivering a baby for the Whitefeather Family, Susan observed:

> There were two other Whitefeather children, and Susan noticed that they came to have their hands washed before a meal. She noticed other things: the family's clothes were clean, and the blankets on the beds were clean. 'You're doing well with your little family,' she praised Minnie.
>
> Minnie smiled. 'Remember the summer you were home from school when you rode around trying to teach people to wash their hands before meals? We believed you—about germs and all.'
>
> 'And now you're teaching your children,' Susan said approvingly. 'That's fine, Minnie. It means the upcoming generation will have a better time of it.' (Brown, 2000, p. 295)

The construction of Native people as primitive and uneducated positions white practices and institutions as more evolved and therefore necessary for the Native people. In the story, Susan La Flesche Picotte reflects, "'I'm not accomplishing miracles,' she told Rosalie one evening, 'but I am beginning to see some of the results of better hygiene and health habits. And we're losing fewer babies and fewer cases to infection'" (Brown, 2000, p. 295). Because of her Western training, Picotte is able to save lives on the reservation, perhaps a Western contribution to help balance out the Native American displacement and the genocide that eradicated many Native peoples. In this way, children in California can learn about how Western practices contributed to the preservation and health of Native peoples.

Collaboration and Cooperation Between Colonists and Native Peoples

Pocahontas

The story of Pocahontas has become part of the American collective imagination and popular culture. Disney movies have been made about her and Americans have embraced her as an American icon:

> The story of Pocahontas, for instance, appeared in virtually every schoolbook history [since the antebellum], her rescue of John Smith; marriage to John Rolfe; and an early, tragic death that left a single son 'from whom many of the illustrious families of Virginia are descended.' Textbook writers found this colorful myth of national origins irresistible, even when they expressed some doubts about the veracity of Smith's role in the tale. (Moreau, 2008, p. 155)

Pocahontas has been credited for cooperating with and assisting colonial men in their settlements and providing diplomatic cover and protection.

Born in the Virginia area, Pocahontas was approximately 12 years old when the colonists arrived in Jamestown. The fact that Pocahontas saved John Smith's life sets the theme of collaboration and cooperation throughout the story. According to the reading selection, Pocahontas had a playful and flirtatious relationship with the colonists:

> She often came to Jamestown, where she would challenge young men to compete with her at performing handsprings and running races. The English youths taught her a phrase: 'Love you not me?' which Pocahontas would repeat to them. In return, Pocahontas taught Captain Smith and the other colonists some Native American words. (Fradin, 2000, p. 526)

According to the story, Pocahontas' friendship and diplomacy with the English settlers brought a short period of peace between the natives and the colonists. Hence, the fact that Pocahontas married John Rolfe voluntarily, had a son, and moved to England in 1616 comes as no surprise. However, accounts from Native perspectives argue that these were misleading assertions and that in fact Pocahontas was kidnapped and forced to collaborate (Axtell, 1987, p. 625). This kidnapping narrative is not offered as a possibility in the Open Court Reading series. As such, Pocahontas remains agentic as one of the first Native Americans to marry a white European. The story simply summarizes her life: "In 1617 . . . Pocahontas died of smallpox. The woman who had saved John Smith's life and who had once performed handsprings in Jamestown was only twenty-two years old when she died" (Fradin, 2000, p. 527). Her contributions to American settlement were continued by her son, Thomas Rolfe, who was raised in England. "At age twenty he returned to Virginia, where he became a popular citizen and even helped defend the colony against Native Americans" (p. 527). Thomas Rolfe's life in Virginia, along with the portrait of Pocahontas as an English lady on the opening page of the narrative "Pocahontas from the Virginia Colony," suggests that early settlers were not necessarily against Native Americans, but rather for their own "civilized" Western lifestyle. This romanticized "origin myth" supports the ideal national narrative, which depicts the US as an enlightened nation.

CONCLUSIONS

Historical narratives in the Open Court series, like those in other textbooks, "perpetuate the vision of America as the land of opportunity to be shared by all ethnic groups" (Foster, 2006, p. 170). In keeping with some strands of multiculturalism, the narratives construct an American history in which

people of color and women, particularly African Americans and Native Americans, are both the creators and beneficiaries of the great American Dream. African American historical figures reach their dreams by believing in themselves, being persistent, and working hard. What is more, according to the narratives, some of them reached their goals and became "the first," not in spite of discrimination and opposition, but rather thanks to the kindness and righteousness of white people. Similarly, the narratives indicate that white people helped Native Americans maintain their culture and health by exposing them to Western medicine and literacy.

As is the case with any selective tradition (Williams, 1989), the Open Court narratives discussed in this chapter exclude certain material, particularly the history of racism. The exclusion of the inequities faced by the historical figures discussed allows for the construction of narratives that can serve to promulgate the ideal national narrative, which describes a nation rooted in the desire for equality and liberty. What is more, in no way do the narratives challenge the notion of *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one). Depicted as immigrants, African Americans and Native Americans share a common, although distinct, experience with other peoples in the US. Thus, Ravitch's (2000) concern that multicultural texts, like those discussed in this chapter, will present narratives of *e pluribus plures* (out of many, many) rather than historical narratives promoting a cohesive, unified nation is unfounded.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- In what ways do the biographical narratives in the textbooks promote the notion of *e pluribus unum*?
- Many biographies in children's books promote the American Dream through hard work. What is missing from these narratives?
- What is the narrative function of biographies in children's textbooks and how does that vary across different ethnic groups?
- How do multicultural representations in biographical texts aim to promote the benefits of diversity?
- What is the narrative function of whites in the biographies of people of color?
- Why do the biographical narratives of African Americans and Native Americans differ in message?

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7 Neoliberalism and Urban School Reform

A Cincinnati Case Study

Dennis Carlson

In this chapter I tell the story of neoliberal educational reform in one urban school district—Cincinnati, Ohio—in the 1990s, spearheaded by leaders in the business community. More specifically, I focus on one inner-city high school in the district serving primarily poor black youth and, even more specifically, on one project in the high school to create a school-within-a-school "interdisciplinary team." The hope of those involved in the project was that new reform initiatives in the district aimed at decentralizing authority to local school sites, experimenting with new approaches to instruction, and encouraging the break-up of large high schools into smaller "teams" could be used to open up "free space" for progressive, culturally relevant approaches to curriculum and pedagogy. I was involved as a liaison to the interdisciplinary team as part of a school-university partnership in "democratic educational renewal." I argue that although the interdisciplinary team was able to open up some critical space in the school, this space was severely restricted by what Felix Guattari has called the "semiotic machines" of transnational capitalism, which in the age of neoliberal hegemony have been "de-territorialized" from the economic sphere and "re-territorialized" in various public spheres, including public education.[1] These "machines" include quantification machines that tie continued support for the project to the "bottom line" of individualized quantitative data linked to high-stakes testing; basic skills machines that reduce the curriculum to a series of sequentially arrayed "functional literacy" skills; and disciplinary and policing machines designed to manage the "problem" of urban youth as dangerous and out of control. The case study suggests there may be very limited space in most urban schools serving poor black and brown youth for genuinely democratic and empowering forms of education so long as the machines of neoliberal reorganization remain hegemonic and unquestioned. This is in spite of the fact that neoliberal educational reform seems to provide a basis for carving out more "free space" in local school sites.[2]

NEOLIBERAL HEGEMONY AND THE MACHINES OF TRANSNATIONAL CAPITALISM

Before I tell this multi-layered story of neoliberal urban school reform, I want to say something more about the theoretical and conceptual framework I

use to construct and frame it as a narrative. Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony plays a central role in this regard. Hegemony refers to both cultural leadership by one power bloc in society and to the "commonsense" that supports and sustains such leadership—that is, the conventional wisdom and commonsense beliefs that legitimate and support the dominant group's reform agenda and discourse.[3] Neoliberalism in education may thus be approached and studied as a hegemonic discourse and movement that serves the interests and represents the epistemology and worldview of economic and managerial elites, but that also appeals broadly to "average" Americans concerned about improving the quality of public education and returning discipline and order to urban schools and communities. A hegemonic discourse is organized loosely around what Michel Foucault called "rules of formation," which establish a common object of study, a common style and viewpoint, a set of operative concepts, and a set of common themes or narratives which individual speakers use to articulate a legitimate statement, or one that is taken as legitimate.[4] At the same time, rules of formation establish that which is unspeakable and who cannot speak. When we apply this to neoliberalism in education, we can say that the rules of formation are bound up in a lexicon of terms and themes whose meanings are interrelated and interdependent, such as "the free market," "preparing American youth for the new, global labor market," "holding teachers accountable," "competition," "site-based management," "the bottom line," "the consumer," "productivity," and so on. Both Gramsci and Foucault understood discourses as having some internal coherence or rules of formation, although they also emphasized the degree to which discourse is non-unified, is contradictory in some ways, has blind spots, and is open rather than closed in a structural sense. Thus, neoliberal discourse in education supports decentralization of authority at the same time it calls for accountability systems that have the effect of increasing the power of the state over what goes on in local school sites. It also has taken on somewhat different forms as interpreted by political conservatives and liberals in the US. Liberal democrats, for example, have supported the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation advanced by the Bush administration, which is a codification of neoliberal themes and strategies. But liberals more than conservatives have emphasized the need for "full funding" and for more attention to programs such as Head Start to promote equality of opportunity.

Another characteristic of hegemony, at least hegemony as organized by the rules of formation of the "free market," is that legitimate utterances are understood to be apolitical and serve to depoliticize social policy. Neoliberalism represents itself as purely rational and scientific, grounded in managerial "science" and economics, which means that the "priesthood" of neoliberal educational policy consists of those who speak in one of these two disciplines. James Richardson writes of this priesthood that it presumes that "in a democracy others are free to comment, but their command of the language is [considered] imperfect." The priesthood may correct them, or gently dismiss them, "but it does not debate with those

who lack the necessary competence."[5] This stifling of debate, linked to the presumption that neoliberalism is a scientific rather than political way to arrange public and private institutions, means that it takes on the aura of inevitability and necessitarianism.

We are asked to accept that we inhabit a social and cultural world produced and guided by self-evident, law-like principles, in the face of which resistance is futile and alternatives are "unrealistic."[6] Those engaged in educational research are asked to subordinate themselves to a "disinterested" study of "what works" to increase school and instructional "effectiveness"—as defined by standardized test scores and the "needs" of the labor market. In this sense, neoliberalism can be understood as a contemporary variation on a theme that has been around for some time. We find it, for example, in the "end of ideology" thesis advanced by sociologists in the 1950s and 1960s, and in recent times by those associated with the "end of history" thesis.[7] In both cases, the assumption is that policy decisions are now managerial rather than political in nature, that no further "transformations" of society—such as socialism—will be forthcoming, and that people have to face harsh realities, including the reality of social and economic inequality.

Finally, neoliberal discourse "works," to the extent that it does, because it makes some good sense. Gramsci recognized that there is always some "good sense" as well as "bad sense" in a hegemonic commonsense, because it must have a broad populist appeal. People are not puppets or dupes, and neoliberalism has been successful partially because it has been able to creatively rework deeply rooted populist themes, and even democratic dreams, so that they resonate with an elite social, economic, and educational policy.[8] It makes good sense, after all, to argue that public schools need to be held accountable for insuring that "no child is left behind," that bureaucratic control of the schools has been undemocratic and stifling to creativity, that schools should be more directly accountable to their "customers"—students and their parents, and that racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps need to be overcome. Pierre Bourdieu notes that neoliberalism may even "gives itself the air of a message of liberation" through a whole series of symbolic codings and "lexical tricks" designed to present a restoration as a revolution.[9] In order to mount a serious challenge to neoliberalism and establish new "rules of formation" for the articulation of public policy in education, progressives will need to rearticulate the good sense in the hegemonic discourse and rearticulate it with alternative traditions of meaning and struggle.

To this point I have limited myself to a discussion of neoliberalism as a hegemonic discourse—one that has become the dominant "commonsense" in framing public dialogue on education, and one spoken by both Republican and Democratic administrations in Washington with slight variations since the early 1980s. But hegemonic discourses are not just talk, and not just commonsense beliefs. They are also a form of practice, so that we can

speak of the discursive practice of neoliberalism in urban schools. Furthermore, all practice takes the form of power exercised over human bodies, mediated by what Foucault called "micro-technologies of power" and what Guattari called "machines."[10] By using the word "machine," Guattari meant to suggest that schools and other public sites be understood less in terms of structures and more in terms of work processes in which something is being produced, using certain semiotic machines or tools. The dominant tools of transnational capitalism, he argued, are continuously being lifted out of their context-of-usage in the economy, re-tooled and "re-territorialized" into non-economic sites. In this way, transnational capitalism does not need to exercise despotic power over the "wheels of society" to make sure that public schools and other state institutions serve to reproduce the conditions for its continued hegemony. It even becomes crucial to capitalism's survival that it arranges "marginal freedoms," freedoms that give people the illusion of an "absence of authority," when in fact that authority only takes a different form, in machines that establish "semiotic pilotage" of state agencies.[11]

What are the semiotic machines of urban school reform in the age of neoliberalism? Here I want to focus my comments on three primary types: basic skills curriculum machines, quantification of quality machines, and disciplinary and policing machines. A basic skills machine is anything used to transform or translate the curriculum into a sequential series of behavioral skills to be "mastered," which are related discursively to the "functional literacy needs" of high school graduates in the new entry-level workforce. This includes policy documents, curriculum texts that "target" predetermined skills, performance-based lesson and unit plan formats, remedial instructional packages and programs, sophisticated management-information systems to oversee student progress through the curriculum, and professional discourses and technologies in teacher education (such as "Praxis" and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education standards).

The basic skills machines of urban schooling are instrumental machines in that they are designed to work and rework the "raw material" of labor power (students) in order to bring out and develop its economic potential, in this case a potential linked to the low-wage service industry job market for high school graduates. By the 1980s, the service industry had become the fastest growing sector of the economy as "blue collar" manual labor jobs began to rapidly disappear and the job market for college-educated workers had begun to stagnate. Since then, these trends have continued. According to a recent US Department of Labor report, employment growth continues to be concentrated in the service-providing sector of the economy, which is projected to grow more than twice as fast as the overall economy in the next decade. At the same time, manufacturing employment is expected to decline by a further 5%, much less than the 16% decline that occurred over the previous decade.[12] In some ways, the "skill needs" of the new service industry workers are higher, or at least different, than

those of the old industrial workers, so that political and economic leaders have been concerned that high school graduates are not sufficiently skilled in the new basics. This was a theme of the influential 1983 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk*. That report argued that "business and military leaders . . . are required to spend millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs in such basic skills as reading, writing, spelling, and computation."[13] The situation had apparently not improved much if any by the end of the century, when the National Adult Literacy Survey reported that about 40% of those in the labor force had literacy levels that were inadequate for their jobs and concluded that "these findings paint a bleak outlook for the future of the U.S. labor market."[14] This also suggests that basic skills discourses and machines have not ameliorated the situation, so that one wonders just how much basic skills reform is about raising skill levels and how much it is about other things—such as stripping everything from the curriculum aside from a set of economically functional "basic skills."

This is the path charted out by the influential National Education Commission on Time and Learning in its 1994 report, *Prisoners of Time*.[15] That commission, established under the first Bush administration in 1991, was composed of a select group of school board members, superintendents, and principals, along with representatives of the Business Roundtable and the Hudson Institute—both major neoliberal think tanks in education. The report argued that educators are prisoners of time in the sense that there is only so much time in the school day, and it concluded that much of this time is currently being "wasted" on topics and courses not directly related to a "core" set of math, language literacy, and social studies skills and competencies. The report recommended that schools eliminate the use of "academic time" (regular school hours time) for "non-academic" purposes during the regular school day. According to the report, non-academic purposes are all activities and classes not directly related to the "common core all students should master," which includes English and language arts, mathematics, science, civics, history, geography, the arts, and foreign language. Everything else is to be relegated to the realm of the extracurricular, something that can be offered through school clubs and activities after the regular school day. This includes physical education, family life education, band and orchestra, yearbook and school newspaper, classes and programs for unwed teenage mothers, and driver education. It also means the possible elimination of music, art, and physical education teachers (the so-called "specials") at the elementary level. There certainly is some good sense to the idea that the school day should not be cluttered with a lot of classes and programs in which students are not learning much and in which the curriculum is not challenging. On the other hand, many of these "non-academic" classes play an important role in motivating young people, in helping them contribute to community, and in engaging in dialogue and common activity with other young people. Many of these "non-academic" classes are "safe

spaces" where youth marginalized by class, race, and other markers of difference can engage in the kind of work that leads to self-affirming identities. So the piece-by-piece elimination of such spaces in urban schools in particular over the past decade is a serious cause for alarm.

A second and related type of neoliberal machine I identify with what Roland Barthes called the "quantification of quality."[16] Barthes noted that in contemporary theatre, much as in good education I would say, participants are engaged in producing a certain "aesthetic reality," the quality of which reveals itself through interpretive and even intuitive responses. On the other hand, the "business" of theatre, again like the "business" of education, seeks to establish a whole circuit of computable indicators of quality. In the case of the theatre, these include ticket sales, a tabulation of the number of times the audience applauds or laughs, exit interviews in which members of the audience rate the performance, and other mechanisms for quantifying quality. In the case of education, the quantification of quality occurs—most notably—through the examination. To even make a "legitimate" statement about whether or not the nation's schools are making progress in raising standards, one must accept standardized test scores as stand-ins for student achievement and knowledge. Recently, at a conference, I attended a session in which an educational psychologist reported on efforts to narrow the racial and socioeconomic achievement gap in education. According to this psychologist, conclusive proof now existed that the more often poor minority youth were tested in school, the more they achieved. In the question-and-answer session that followed I dared to ask what was used to assess whether they had achieved more or not. Achievement, I was told, was measured by state proficiency test scores, of course. What the presenter could not or would not see was just how circuitous this logic was. What all the studies had demonstrated was that the more you test students, the better they get at passing tests.

One much cited example of a neoliberal narrative of progress through high-stakes testing is that of the so-called "Houston miracle." As governor of Texas, George W. Bush worked closely with corporate leadership in the state to overhaul the state's system of public instruction to bring schools into alignment with the latest approaches to cost-effective management in industry and the changing "needs" of the labor force. Houston was much touted as the exemplary model of this school reform based on a partnership between political and economic leadership in the state. It reported steadily rising passing rates on the new Texas Assessment of Academic Skills [TAAS] test, and seemed to be making remarkable strides in eliminating the achievement gap between white and minority children. When Bush became president, he brought with him to Washington as his new education secretary Houston's superintendent, Rod Paige. The "No Child Left Behind" law signed by President Bush in January 2002 gives public schools 12 years to match the progress made in Houston's schools in raising achievement levels and narrowing achievement gaps. Now we are

beginning to learn more about how the Houston miracle was produced or, more accurately, fabricated, through quantification of quality machines. A recent investigation of Houston schools by the *New York Times* revealed a "rampant undercounting of school dropouts," along with an overreporting of how many high school graduates were college bound.[17] Although 88% of Houston's student body is black and Latino/a, only a few hundred minority students leave high school "college ready," that is, having the college preparatory courses colleges are looking for in applicants. The investigation also revealed that gains on the state's high school proficiency exam were not transferable to other standardized exams of academic achievement. Finally, the *Times* investigation pointed to the fact that whereas the state has billed its high school proficiency exam as setting high standards for students, it was widely acknowledged in the state that it was a "minimum skills" test that was a ticket for minimum skills job. What this indicates is that the "Houston miracle" was only the illusion of progress. What real progress there was in raising test scores was produced through teaching to the test and the reduction of the curriculum to basic skills. So we must interrogate and demystify neoliberal discourses of progress and of "miracles" and ask what real purposes, and whose interests, they serve. We must also ask whether the quantification of quality in education through high-stakes testing machines has actually had the effect of making a quality education impossible in many urban schools.

Yet a third type of urban school reform machine is about disciplining and policing the bodies of poor black and Latino youth. Disciplinary machines take on many forms, and primary among these in urban schools are high-stakes testing machines. That is, high-stakes testing is not only a basic skills curriculum machine and a quantification of quality machine. It is also and at the same time a disciplinary machine. According to Foucault, the examination is the primary educational ritual of disciplinary power, "a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish," all at the same time. Through the examination, a "visibility" is established over individuals "through which one differentiates and judges them" (p. 184). But disciplinary machines also come in the form of policing technologies and apparatuses—like detention, zero-tolerance policies, and unannounced locker searches. The erosion of the public, the decline in job opportunities for urban youth, and the decline of the infrastructure in poor, urban neighborhoods have all been accompanied by what Mike Davis has called the "militarization of city life" in the new American megalopolis.[18] As a result, public schools have been pushed to develop ever-tighter working relationships with the juvenile court system and the police. This vastly expanded policing apparatus, with the latest surveillance and riot-control technologies, still finds itself unable to deal effectively with the socially constructed problem of urban youth "gone wild."[19] So disciplinary power shifts back and forth from overtly repressive policing machines to newer approaches associated with humanistic and behavioral psychology, where

the emphasis is on surveillance more than punishment, and on rewarding students when they are "good," i.e. conform to normalizing regimes of self-management and self-presentation.

THE CASE STUDY: SCHOOL REFORM IN CINCINNATI IN THE 1990S

How do neoliberal educational policy and the machines of neoliberal school reform shape and "discipline" what goes on in local schools serving poor urban youth? To address this question in more concreteness and specificity, I now turn to the case study of urban school reform in Cincinnati during the 1990s. The 1980s had been a time of considerable conflict surrounding the city's schools, and school board meetings were often contentious. Community groups felt the entrenched bureaucracy was unsympathetic to their concerns, and the teachers union, the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers [CFT], and the school board were often locked in bitter and protracted disputes. This was accompanied by declining public support for the schools, a declining tax base, and a declining student population as white middle-class flight to the suburbs continued unabated. In 1990, Cincinnati voters expressed their dissatisfaction with the schools by voting down a $7.2 million tax levy.[20] In the face of bankruptcy, the school superintendent agreed to a request by the Cincinnati Business Committee [CBC], a civic-minded group composed of the top corporate CEOs in the city, to put forward a plan for school reform and reorganization. This reform, issued by the CBC and adopted by the school board in 1991, came to be called the Buenger Commission Report, after its chair, the chairman of the board of FifthThird Bank, Clement Buenger. The CBC not only secured the school board's agreement to a virtual "take over" of the schools by corporate elites in the city, the board also agreed to hire as superintendent a candidate hand-picked by the CBC. Thus began an era when Cincinnati schools were run by business leaders, according to one newspaper account, "with district and union leaders holding their briefcases."[21] School district leaders traveled to the CBC headquarters for meetings on a regular basis, and candidates for principal positions often were interviewed in corporate offices, by members of the CBC. In an article marking the tenth anniversary of the Buenger Commission Report, a member of the CBC was quoted as saying: "If you take Fortune 500 folks and send them into the schools, they will give you their best ideas. . . . Businesses are very action-oriented." Furthermore, business leaders are able to "keep everyone focused on how the schools can concentrate on educating a future workforce, [maintaining] accountability, and setting goals."[22] Not everyone found the business takeover of the public schools to their liking. There were criticisms by teachers union and community leaders that the CBC had bankrolled the campaigns of school board candidates with whom it wanted to work, and the executive director of the

CBC was often referred to as the "shadow superintendent," because he was involved in overseeing so many decisions in the superintendent's office. For many of the working class and poor black residents of the city, according to a newspaper report, the CBC was perceived as "paternalistic," as made up of older, rich white men who had not and would not place their own children in the city's public schools.[23]

The Buenger Commission was a hegemonic machine that set wheels in motion in the city, and it was also an assemblage of various interlocking machines, each set to the task of working and reworking a particular part of the school system. One of these machines took the form of a plan for reorganizing and "streamlining" administration of the school system. In the language of the report, the school district had suffered from the "politicization" of decision making and from an entrenched "bureaucracy." The solution was a depoliticized, "action-oriented" business management system that could cut through bureaucratic red tape and get things done. The report called for a transformation of the system from "a top-down pyramid into an organization focused on individual schools and administered by professional managers . . . to produce superior educational performance." As for the position of superintendent, it was to be remodeled along the lines of a corporate CEO, "since the job carries responsibilities comparable to managing large businesses." The superintendent, in turn, was to be supported by a group of "talented, qualified people with business experience," people who could help keep the focus on the "product" of the system. Principals were to report directly to the superintendent, placed on a year-to-year contract so that they would be held accountable for increasing test scores and attendance rates, and lowering dropout rates. This all was tied to the elimination of a whole stratum of middle-level administrators and supervisors. For example, the central office administrative staff was cut from 127 to 62. The Curriculum and Instruction Department was particularly hard hit by staff firings, and the entire department was renamed the "Quality Improvement Office." Its responsibility would be to disseminate findings from research on "best practices" and "school effectiveness," and to train teachers in new student assessment techniques associated with standardized testing. According to one of the commission's key supporters, the Buenger Commission reforms provided a way of taking "the subjectivity out of educational judgments. . . . It was 'Let's find out what it costs, how many people are served, and the results.'"[24] As for the teachers union, its support was procured by a teacher pay raise, the cost of which was partially offset by deep cuts in administrative and clerical staff.[25]

The Buenger Commission Report, at least on the surface, committed the school district to a rather dramatic decentralization of power to local school sites. Principals and teachers in individual schools would no longer be tied down, no longer bound by a standardized curriculum or mode of instruction. According to the report, they were to be "empowered to make decisions affecting their schools' operations," and to empower

them, they needed to be given responsibility "to produce superior educational performance." The report began with a paraphrase from John Milton: "Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good people is but knowledge in the making."

The school district needed, in other words, to encourage a proliferation of difference and diversity in teaching students, and they would be given incentives, along with responsibility, for breaking the mold and thinking outside the box. According to a later planning machine, each of the city's big "comprehensive" high schools was to be broken up into smaller units, so that power within the school was to be decentralized even further to teams of teachers working in schools-within-a-school organized around particular themes and reorganization models.[26] The irony and the contradiction of such neoliberal decentralization machines is that although difference and experimentation were supported, it was only in pursuit of a common goal—the production of standardized test scores and other quantitative indicators of success. There was to be a free marketplace of ideas in the district, but a marketplace in which every school had to produce and sell the same thing, and transform it into established categories of quantifiable data. This strikes to the heart of the contradiction of neoliberal reform agendas in urban schools. It may be true that there are different ways to prepare young people to take standardized tests and that experimentalism will lead to ever more effective ways of doing so. Those schools that are good at raising test scores will survive, and those that are not will face closing—so that the marketplace will insure that only the fittest schools survive. But neoliberal machines of decentralization and experimentalism do not establish the conditions for the democratization of decision making in public education, nor for real teacher and principal "empowerment." Indeed, they effectively prevent local schools from serving such aims. Furthermore, as I have already indicated, the neoliberal machines of urban schooling have not "worked" even by their own standards of what it means to have "schools that work." Student achievement data for 1996–97 indicated that the district was still quite far from its 2001 target for student achievement—to have every student in the district meet or exceed defined standards. Only 15% of fourth graders passed all required sections of the fourth-grade proficiency test, and only 14% of sixth graders passed the required sections of the sixth-grade proficiency test.[27] Before graduation from high school, students were expected to pass the Ohio Graduation Test [OGT], but only about half of those who entered as freshmen were able to pass the test by the time they were seniors, and most of the rest dropped out. Again, the irony is that these are very low expectations, associated with mastery of "functional literacy skills" for entry-level jobs. The Buenger Commission seemed unconcerned with what happened to young people after they graduated from high school. There was no talk in the report of the need to encourage more students to prepare for college. An official with the Cincinnati Youth

Collaborative, a group of business leaders in charge of overseeing one of the mini-districts created as part of the decentralization initiative, once confided in me that "these kids just aren't college material. You only set them up for disappointment if you encourage them to think that." As a result, the remaining vestiges of a college-preparatory advanced placement track were eliminated in the name of "de-tracking." Only a few magnet schools would serve those young people considered to be "college material."

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL AND THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM

Central High School was, in the mid-1990s, the time of this study, a typically large "comprehensive" high school. It had over 100 teachers and enrolled over 1,200 students in grades 9–12. Most of the students (84%) were African American, and most of the rest were poor Appalachian youth—who also were marginalized socially and economically in the city and region. A high proportion (55%) of the students at Central High came from families with incomes below the poverty line. Approximately half of the entire student body consisted of ninth graders, and approximately half of all ninth graders failed to return the next fall, either because they transferred out of the school or they dropped out. Approximately two-thirds of the sophomores ended up graduating, or approximately half of all entering freshmen. Central High had a reputation in the district as being a "tough" school, one that middle school students sought to avoid if possible. It had housed large vocational education programs from the 1960s, when it was built, through the early 1990s, but when the district decided to eliminate vocational-technical programs from the city's high schools as part of the Buenger Commission initiative, the school lost automotive, metal working, and beautician programs, and as a result several wings were largely abandoned. The advanced placement program in the school, which once served students who planned to go on to college, had been steadily cut back in the mid-1990s and was being phased out as the school was "de-tracked" around a basic skills curriculum.

As liaison from Miami University in a school-university "partnership in democratic educational renewal," I typically visited with the principal to explore ways we might work together in renewal initiatives. In the fall of 1994, during one of these visits, the principal told me that he had great news. He had received a memo from the superintendent's office that he thought I might be interested in. The memo indicated that the central administration wanted to support several pilot projects in school reorganization and was inviting each high school to submit one or more proposals for projects, on a competitive basis. Several of the most promising projects would subsequently receive some start-up funds from the superintendent's office. This was more than a request, the principal said. The superintendent expected at least one proposal from Central High School, and he had only a few months

to put together a plan. Fortunately, he continued, he had already chatted with several of his more "innovative" teachers who had been "bugging" him for more freedom to teach the way they wanted to teach. When he identified these teachers, they were, as I suspected, the core group of committed, progressive-minded teachers whom I had already identified as most receptive to democratic, progressive approaches to change. The brunt of it was that he had already talked to the teachers about putting together a plan for a pilot project for a school-within-a-school "team." By asking the teachers to come up with a reorganization pilot project he was, as he admitted, finding a way of keeping them from "bugging" him all the time. If they wanted freedom to do their own thing, here was a perfect opportunity. What emerged out of this confluence of interests was a plan for an interdisciplinary team, as it was called, that would be located in one abandoned wing of the building. The group of involved teachers would take a randomly selected, heterogeneous group of ninth graders and work with them over the course of two years, assuming the roles of teachers and advisors.

I subsequently participated with this group of teachers in drafting the project proposal over the course of the next school year. We met after school each Friday that year to hammer out a proposal for reorganization that included both the specifics of the project and a project "vision." The final project proposal was subsequently supported by the central administration. It also received some support through the National Network for Educational Renewal [NNER], which supported the school-university partnership. Miami University agreed to assign pre-service education students and several student teachers to the team to help bring down the teacher-student ratio; and a doctoral student whom I advised agreed to conduct a participant observation study of the project for her dissertation research and in this capacity served as an informal teacher assistant and secretary for team meetings.

One of the teachers on the team, and a leader among the other teachers, was also a doctoral student in education at Miami University and would subsequently write her dissertation on local media coverage of a videotaped beating by police of a young black male who attended Central High—about which I will have more to say later. Both of these participants connected to Miami University were committed to forms of "critical pedagogy" influenced by Paulo Freire.[28]

The interdisciplinary team began operating in the fall of 1995, with a group of 160 ninth graders, or about one-quarter of the school's ninth-grade student population. This included a number of special education students who were not identified or treated in any way differently, in keeping with a guiding principle of the team that there should be no internal tracking or labeling of students. The teaching team consisted of seven women and one man, all but one of whom were from white middle-class backgrounds. There were teachers for each of the core subject areas (math, science, English, and social studies), one special education teacher who floated between

classes and served as a team leader, and three home economics teachers who provided the elective credits in the program. Because the interdisciplinary team was housed in a wing that had once housed vocational education programs, it was cut off from the rest of the school by several doors and a stairwell. From the outset, then, the interdisciplinary team was located at the margins as outside that which was normal and "regular" in the school. At the same time, the fact that the interdisciplinary team occupied a space apart, on the outside of the normal, seemed to suit the team teachers fine. Indeed, this space on the outside is precisely what they wanted, a space as much untainted by the dominant discourse and practice in the school as possible. Teachers also hoped that this space apart would be good for their students, because it would encourage them to forge bonds of community apart from the perceived "bad" influences in the rest of the school.

The commitments to democratic forms of curricula and pedagogy in the interdisciplinary team were perhaps best represented in a series of conference papers and a journal article that were subsequently co-authored by myself and several of the teachers. In these contexts, the project was presented as committed to an "inclusive dialogue" among the teachers, in which all voices were heard, differences respected, and decisions negotiated rather than imposed, but in which there was also a commitment to a "common vision" of democratic education. That common vision was associated with several elements, aside from dialogue. It implied a commitment to "heterogeneous grouping," rather than ability grouping of students, and a "full inclusion" approach to dealing with special education students. It also implied a commitment to "equity" and "social justice," which meant helping poor black youth get the kind of education they deserved so that they would have an equal chance to succeed—although it was unclear how this was to be facilitated when the focus was still on getting students to pass the state proficiency test, not go on to college. Finally, the common vision of the interdisciplinary team was associated with the idea that teachers should be "reflective practitioners," continuously engaged in modifying and revising the curriculum and their instructional approaches in a "fluid and ever-changing context." Ironically, this language of teacher reflection and experimentalism was also a core element of the Buenger Commission discourse, and its inclusion in interdisciplinary team documents received strong support from the superintendent's office. It was just that the interdisciplinary team and the Buenger Commission disagreed on what the reflective process and experimentalism should be about.

Throughout the fall of 1995, the teachers exhibited a good deal of enthusiasm and excitement about the project, and under the influence of several of the most progressive-minded and critical teachers on the team, a genuine effort was made to move toward cooperative learning, assessment through exhibitions, and a culturally relevant curriculum. For example, students were engaged in a critical study of rap music and Hip-Hop culture, in terms of how it represented black males and females, and they participated in writing

and performing their own rap music that included more "positive" themes and representations. The teachers also organized an interdisciplinary unit in which students investigated the history of the neighborhoods and communities in which they lived and assessed current housing and social service needs in the communities. One of the most elaborate interdisciplinary units involved a group project where students had to create a constitution for a "hypothetical" country. Some teachers felt it was a little too risky to ask students to create a new constitution for the US, because that might be taken as a criticism of the existing document, but students were told that this "hypothetical" country was to be the country in which they would like to live. Students responded by drafting elaborate constitutions that eliminated poverty, set high minimum wages, and insured that the Congress and the Supreme Court were balanced by race and gender. Another project involved investigating the nutritional content of food in the school cafeteria, assessing it according to a nutritionally balanced diet, and discussing how nutritional problems plague their own families and communities.

The interdisciplinary team teachers maintained a sense that they were controlling their own destinies, and they genuinely believed that the progressive ideals they espoused mattered. So over the first year of the project, they were relatively happy with what they were doing and felt empowered as teachers. They also began to appreciate just how much teachers need the community of other teachers; and the interdisciplinary team gave them community for the first time in their professional lives. In interviews, students also identified community as the major feature of the interdisciplinary team they liked, along with caring teachers. But for teachers, all this caring and community came at a cost. Their working weeks had been intensified rather dramatically. Not only were teachers in the team now responsible for many of the routine activities that administrators used to take care of, they were always meeting before school, after school, and over lunch during their common prep period to talk about what was happening that day and week, and to plan and assess various project-based activities assigned to students. Planning, monitoring, and assessing student projects took a good deal of teacher time, although they felt that the extra work was worth it. Added to all this, teachers assumed responsibility for calling parents or guardians on a regular basis to tell them something "positive" about how their child was doing and to enlist their support when there were problems. To make time for all this, teachers began to arrive earlier at school—some as early as 5:30 a.m.—and they rarely left before 5 p.m. The teachers in the interdisciplinary team had always assumed that they could "give them [the superintendent's staff] what they want" and "tell them what they want to hear," and then quietly go about their own business. But already by the end of the first year of the project, in the rush to quantify everything for the superintendent, they were beginning to wonder whether it would be possible to "do their own thing." At team meetings, teachers often spent time discussing, as one teacher remarked, how "we can avoid compromising our vision for the interdisciplinary team, and at the same time give

them what they want." If there was a consensus among teachers about how to respond to this challenge, it came in the form of a strategy to be "upfront" with students. Teachers told students that they personally opposed the test and did not think it reflected what students really knew, but that if everyone cooperated, it might be possible to devote a minimum amount of time to actually preparing for the test through some very direct teach-to-the-test instruction. Subsequently, Friday morning was established as this time for this "skill-'em-and-drill-'em" instruction. Then another morning each week was added to focus on test preparation strategies, stress reduction and focusing techniques, and the power of thinking positively. This policy of being "upfront" with students about how they needed to pass the test in their own self-interests, not because it meant anything, tied to a strategy of setting aside time for test-taking, had its contradictions, of course. It meant compromising the team vision and further delegitimizing the test in the eyes of students, and as time went on more and more time had to be ceded to the very kind of "teach-to-the-test" instruction the teachers claimed they opposed.

At the end of the first year of the project, the interdisciplinary team was able to produce enough quantitative data to "keep them happy" at the central office, although only minimally. A little over half of the interdisciplinary team students had passed all of their core subjects (math, English, social studies, and science) compared to 34% of other ninth graders in the school. Daily attendance was estimated at 85% in the interdisciplinary team, compared to 78% in the rest of the school. Approximately 36% of interdisciplinary team students received one or more discipline referrals during the year, compared to a school average of 52%. Test scores, however, had not risen. But at least they were no worse than the scores of "regular" students. This meant that the interdisciplinary team was a limited success from the district's standpoint, and it decided to continue support for the project, with the proviso that the team focus more of its energies on raising proficiency test scores.

In the second year of the project, one of the most progressive teachers in the team quit in order to devote full time to her doctoral studies. Another critical voice, the doctoral student who was doing her dissertation on community building in the team, also began to phase out her involvement. On top of this, one of the teachers on the team had decided to transfer out because the demands on her were too great.

So there were new teachers transferred into the team by the principal, teachers who were not as committed to a "common vision." As pressures intensified to raise test scores, many of the project-based curriculum machines began to be replaced by other machines, including proficiency test study guides produced by the state Department of Education [DOE], along with sample worksheets and lesson plans downloaded from the DOE website. Many of the commitments to community building, and a closer, more personal relationship between teachers and students, continued into the second year. However, these were not supported by the individualizing

micro-technologies of testing. Furthermore, the semiotic machines of standardized testing encouraged the use of a narrowly pragmatic syntax, so that teachers more often reflected on how to teach particular skills in the most efficient and quickest manner possible. Even the remaining elements of a project-based curriculum began to loss touch with the "common vision." Under the influence of home economics and special education teachers, projects were justified less in terms of cultural relevance and critical pedagogy than in terms of "hands-on" learning, which was related to the generally low developmental level of students in the interdisciplinary team. Group projects and cooperative learning activities also were cut back, because teachers felt that students in small groups spent too much time socializing and not enough time working. Furthermore, when students were left unsupervised, conflicts and fights more often broke out.

So concerns for discipline began to take priority over commitments to cooperative learning and the project method, and this was linked to a broader concern with discipline in the school. In Cincinnati, as in most other urban school districts serving the urban poor, disciplinary discourses have played a powerful role in shaping educational policy and practice over the past century. What was new by the mid-1990s was the development of much closer working relationships between the police, the juvenile court system, and the public schools as elements of disciplinary power. The roots of disciplinary power could be traced back to the corporate boardrooms of the city, but also to white middle-class and working-class fears of the dark urban core of the city as a "danger zone"—a fear that looped back and forth between the news media and the white community.[29] This fear represented a real threat to downtown businesses and played a significant role in the general decline of the downtown business community throughout the nineties. The problem was compounded, from the standpoint of business leaders, by youth loitering downtown and supposedly scaring away customers. When vandalism and fights did occur, the press was quick to talk about "wildings." In this charged atmosphere, tensions between police and inner-city black youth increased, and this was reinforced by a number of high-profile shootings of unarmed black youth by police. The result was a heightened police visibility on inner-city streets, a nighttime curfew for youth under 18, and the selective enforcement of a loitering law designed to prevent urban youth from "hanging out" downtown. In one inner-city middle school, a pilot project was even established in which the juvenile court came to the school every Friday, so that students did not have to miss a day of school in order to still appear in juvenile court.

If there is one catalytic event associated with the growing power of disciplinary discourses and machines in the city, it was the 1995 videotaped arrest and beating by police of an 18-year-old African American young man for loitering and resisting arrest downtown—a young man who just happened to be a student at Central High School, although not a student in the interdisciplinary team. Later, the media "framing" of the incident

would be the subject of dissertation research by one of the original members of the interdisciplinary team. The details are as follows. The young man, along with about 50 other students, was waiting for a school bus transfer downtown, and while they waited, they hung out on nearby street corners. An office worker complained to the police that the youth were blocking entrance to the building in which she was working. But just what "blocking" meant was never clear. At any rate, when the police arrived and asked the students to return to the bus stop and wait there, one young man refused to leave, and he was arrested. This is when the scuffle broke out that was captured on videotape by a local television reporter who happened to be in the area. In the weeks following the beating and arrest, the videotape would be shown again and again on local television news shows and analyzed frame by frame. Two distinct "viewings" of the beating and arrest were produced in the community. In the black press, the videotape was compared to the Rodney King videotaped beating in Los Angeles, and it was represented as part of a long legacy of policy brutality against blacks in the city. But in the white community, and in the city's news media, the dominant scripting or viewing of the tape was quite different. In a series of "in depth" reports on the videotaped beating, the major news outlets in the city told a predictable story, one that emphasized the importance of closer supervision of youth at all times by responsible adults, including a closer working relationship between the schools and the police to make sure that youth are not left unsupervised. To leave urban youth unsupervised, according to this script, was to invite trouble.

Yet by arresting the Central High student and not reprimanding the police involved, the police department and the public schools also invited trouble. At Central High, students reacted to the arrest of one of their classmates by staging a protest rally. The ad-hoc student group that organized the rally called on the administration to cancel afternoon classes so that students could gather in the school courtyard in support of their classmate. When the administration denied this request, the group called on students to stage a walk-out of classes, and most did. Suddenly the rally was a protest against both school administrators and police—who together represented the "enemy." The image of a school/police axis of power was reinforced when police showed up to keep everything under surveillance and make sure there were no disturbances, although the effect might actually have been to precipitate a disturbance. When several students were arrested for vandalism and disorderly conduct, it only seemed to confirm the belief among many students that the school and the police were working together. It also confirmed to the administration in the school and the central office that tougher tactics were needed to maintain order. When I visited the school during this period, I almost always saw one or more police cars parked outside. The intensification of a disciplinary discourse also was visible in the increased number of "code red" hall sweeps each week. A blaring alarm would go off throughout the school, disrupting all

conversations and instruction. This was a signal for teachers to close their classroom doors while security guards swept through the halls—all of this to round up students who were skipping classes and hanging out in stairwells and halls. The number of suspensions and other disciplinary procedures in the school also increased in the wake of rising tensions in the school and a zero-tolerance policy.

Although administrators and teachers at Central High School generally supported the crackdown on discipline and efforts at reestablishing order and control in the classrooms and corridors, most also viewed this as a short-term rather than long-term solution to problems in the school. Some even recognized that law and order tactics could backfire and create a vicious cycle of control—which is precisely what seemed to be happening. The principal once confided to me: "I don't like playing the policeman. That's not why I came into this profession. There has to be another way." In this atmosphere, the interdisciplinary team seemed to offer hope for another way, and the principal and the central administration began thinking in earnest of reorganizing the entire school into several semi-autonomous interdisciplinary teams. By the spring of the second year of the interdisciplinary team project, the principal had decided: "I think we've got to move in that direction [reorganizing the school into interdisciplinary teams] as fast as possible." He saw in the school-within-a-school reorganization model a way of personalizing relations between teachers and students, and creating more community among students, which he believed "is the only way to turn around the numbers on disciplinary referrals."

This can be taken as an indication that progressive forms of reorganization can impact on the system, even one organized by the machines of high-stakes testing and the disciplining of student bodies. But if this is to be taken as a hopeful sign, it must be a qualified hope. For even within the disciplinary team, student conflict and resistance often was viewed as a problem to be managed. Teachers just believed that this conflict could be resolved more effectively through conflict resolution strategies, community building, and a therapeutic approach to treating behavioral problems. Team meetings were now often about planning behavioral intervention strategies for individual students, strategies that linked underachievement to problems in social adjustment and to problems in the family. Although the therapeutic discourse was most in line with the beliefs and orientations of the special education teachers on the team, its influence was clearly broader. It was related to the idea expressed at one time or another by most all teachers on the team that professional educators, social workers, psychologists, and so on must fill the void left by the presumed lack of a stable family and community life for urban youth. One teacher remarked: "We're trying to teach what they don't get at home."

Another teacher complained: "The reality is that these kids have issues that need to be addressed before they can be learning what it is they have to learn." The therapeutic discourse did not promise academic excellence

and high academic standards so much as a less hostile, more relaxed learning environment, one in which discipline and punishment were replaced by situating the student in a network of "caring" relationships. I put "caring" in quotes not because I doubt the commitment of caring professionals, but because caring too often turns out to be about normalization more than liberation or empowerment. As a therapeutic discourse gained power and influence in the interdisciplinary team, teachers talked less and less about setting high academic expectations for students. They talked instead about the need to "work on" students' presumed low self-esteem. A higher self-esteem was to be achieved by setting clear, realistic goals for students so that, according to one teacher, "they come to class knowing that they are expected to do something each day." All of this took for granted a hegemonic deficit model of poor urban youth that deflected attention away from the production of underachievement in the district, and also depoliticized student resistance to the schooling process.

Was the interdisciplinary team a success? Certainly, to the district it was enough of a success that this experiment in reorganization was used as a blueprint for further reorganization in Central High School and several high schools in the city. As of the time this essay is written, Central High School is divided into three interdisciplinary teams, although each is now in "academic emergency" and faces closing in the near future; and if that happens parents will be given the option of vouchers to support educating their children in private charter schools which are springing up in Cincinnati as in other urban districts across the country. The interdisciplinary team was also represented in National Network of Educational Renewal discourse as an exemplary model of school-university collaboration in "democratic educational renewal." But the democratic language in which the project was originally couched did not circulate very well within Central High School, where neoliberal language had more currency. The partnership between Central High School and Miami University, through the support of the NNER, has since been terminated. Meanwhile, Cincinnati Public Schools continue down the same path charted out for them by the Buenger Commission in 1991 and extended since 2001 by the semiotic machines of No Child Left Behind.

TOWARD A PROGRESSIVE RESPONSE

How might progressives respond to the neoliberal discourses and machines of urban school reform? I want to close by briefly suggesting several strategic responses. The first of these is the work of demystification and deconstruction, that is, revealing the commonsense, taken-for-granted beliefs embedded in neoliberal discourse and machines of school reorganization, and revealing their cultural origins and the interests they serve. Before it is possible to imagine an alternative to what Philip Jackson once called the

"unnatural state of affairs" in public schools, its naturalness must be called into question. Let me provide one example of such demystifying work from one of my own classes for teachers pursuing master's degrees. In the class I ask teachers to write a reflection essay in which they demystify and deconstruct part of the commonsense "life-world" in their school or classroom. One urban school teacher wrote about the "Success for All" school reorganization model employed in her school serving poor black and white children. The emphasis in "Success for All" is upon identifying students' skill levels through frequent rounds of testing, then "targeting" remediation to individual skill deficiencies. A former consultant to industry was the featured speaker at one of the inservice training sessions in the school, and his topic was "Total Quality Management." According to the teacher, the speaker told the teachers the following story about children as blueberries:

> Let's say you are in the business of processing natural resources for market, which is really what public schools are doing if you think of children as natural resources. If you have, for example, a business that processes blueberries, you have a conveyor belt with workers on each side picking out all the bad berries. But this is where public schools and business are different. Public schools can't discard any children. So you're stuck with some bad berries, and the question is: How do you get these berries to look good enough so that they can meet the product, the quality standards established for berries that go on the market.

The teacher had once been a vocal supporter of "Success for All," but class readings and discussions began to make her realize "that I've been brainwashed by this kind of propaganda." She also began to realize that she might have commonsensically been thinking about her students as mainly "bad berries," and this disturbed her greatly. Finally, she recognized that her school was "still setting low expectations for children, because all that seems to matter is getting kids ready for the market"—in this case, the entry-level labor market. This blueberry analogy suggests how naturalized this hegemonic commonsense has become in American education and public life, and how important it is for teachers, as well as broad segments of the public, to break its spell.

A second element of a democratic progressive response, and one suggested by the case study presented in this chapter, has to do with revealing the ways in which neoliberal urban school reorganization has continued, in new forms, a history of the disciplining and policing of black bodies in public institutions. Certainly, the close working relationship between the public schools, penal institutions, and social welfare agencies in urban districts goes back over a century. It obviously places a significant role in understanding the schooling of poor black and Latino males in many urban school districts in America. But the disciplining and surveillance of black female bodies as dangerous bodies also has a long history in American

cities, particularly in the North. As Hazel Carby has shown in her genealogy of black women who migrated to Northern urban areas after the Civil War, the policing of black women's bodies became an active priority of civic and business leaders. Bourgeois ideology situated these emerging policing practices in a language of "moral crisis" and "moral panic" that appeared to explain the behavior of black women and provide a framework for responding. "The moral panic about the urban presence of apparently uncontrolled black women," she writes, "was symptomatic of and referenced aspects of the more general crisis of social displacement and dislocation that were caused by migration."[30] Moral panic took the form of a fear that black females were sexually degenerate and therefore socially dangerous, a judgment shared by leadership elements of the black bourgeoisie in the urban North. The particular set of interlocking social service and welfare agencies, tied to a legal-juridical power, that were called into existence through the discourse of moral panic all represented "the behavior of these migrating women as a social and political problem, a problem that had to be rectified in order to restore a moral social order."[31]

Demystification and deconstruction along these lines are both necessary and insufficient. As primary responses to neoliberal discourses and machines, they can easily position those who have not previously reflected upon the impact of neoliberalism on social life to become demoralized. For example, when teachers begin to understand how neoliberal reforms actually play a part in reproducing inequalities of class and race, how they treat students as merely products coming off a conveyor belt headed to the labor market, and how they serve to discipline student bodies more than liberate student minds, they may become cynical about being able to make a difference in their own teaching. Cornel West and Roberto Unger have written that in the political climate of disillusionment and despair that currently grips American political life, most Americans "alternate between resenting the incapable politics of their country and blaming themselves for failure to succeed at a game that so often seems rigged against them."[32] In such a context, the work of progressive public intellectuals and educators must be to do more than critique what is; they must also work to keep hope alive. Hope, in turn, must be anchored in the recovery and reappropriation of collective narratives of democratic public life and of collective struggles for social justice and equity. The devaluing and forgetting of the language of democracy is one of the most damaging effects of neoliberal hegemony, although it is not just the recovery of a language of democracy that is called for. The meaning of democracy itself is at stake as neoliberals relate it to the rights of consumer-citizens in a free market society. A progressive discourse would need to reassert a different commonsense understanding of democratic education and public life and affirm a different promise. That promise, projected on to a new cultural landscape, continues to be about bringing people together across their differences to

engage in critical reflection on their lives within the context of culture and history. It is also about linking education to social reconstruction, and thus to a praxis engaged in changing the world to advance a fuzzy democratic vision of what could be. And it continues to be about helping empower and give voice to those who have been marginalized by class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and other markers of difference and "otherness" so that they can develop their full potentials and become active participants in the making of a vibrant democratic public life.

NOTES

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4. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, p. 74.
5. James Richardson, *Contending Liberalisms in World Politics: Ideology and Power.* Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001, p. 167.
6. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*, trans. Richard Nice. New York: The New Press, 1998, pp. 29–44.
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11. Guattari, *Molecular Revolution*, p. 235.
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19. See Christopher Lasch, The age of limits, in Melzer, Weinberger, & Zinman, eds., *History and the Idea of Progress*, pp. 227–240.
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27. Kellor & Odden, Cincinnati, p. 3.
28. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th anniv. ed., trans. Myra Ramos. New York: Continuum, 2005.
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Part III

Resistance from Inside Communities and Schools

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8 Raising Critique About Unhealthy Food Access Among Marginalized Youth in Communities and Schools

Catherine Lalonde

INTRODUCTION

We are currently in the midst of a global food crisis. The impact of global warming and rising fuel costs along with the consolidation of agribusiness and distribution channels results in people across the globe rebelling against the lack of access to quality, culturally relevant food and rising food prices (Menzel & D'Aluisio, 2007; Sengupta, 2008; Streitfeld & Bradsher, 2008). In North America, many are affected by rising food prices and those who have historically been most marginalized are acutely impacted by lack of access. In countless low income communities in the US, families have access to limited, unhealthy, or older food in local markets and corner stores. Whereas the National School Lunch Program [NSLP] in all public schools features food of questionable nutritional value, given the lack of healthy choices in low income communities and the expense of nutritional alternatives, this reality has profound implications on the healthy growth and development of children and their learning in schools. Given these circumstances, there is serious need for discussion over these issues in the education literature and more broadly.

In this chapter I present informal data from a study conducted with a group of 15 low income culturally marginalized female and male students ages 13–18. My intent was to try to determine a baseline of what views these students may have on the quality, freshness, and variety of food available in their urban neighborhood and school. We engaged in informal cooking classes that intentionally created an open atmosphere in which students were encouraged to discuss issues relating to the politics of food that were important to them. In order to help frame these conversations, I drew from work by nutritionists, "slow food" activists (whose goal is to take pleasure in the act of cooking "good food" as a community in sustainable ways), and food theorists (Albon & Mukherji, 2008; Bisset & Potvin, 2007; Kolbe, Kann, & Brener, 2001; Morgan & Sonnino, 2008; Murray, 2007; Nestle, 2007; Petrini, 2007; Pollan, 2008; Roberts, 2008). Due to the informal nature of the data collection process, in this analysis, I provide characterization of the findings. Then throughout the ensuing discussion, I

shift between the individual experiences associated with the cooking course and how they might be pulled throughout the broader structural processes of policy development. In this chapter I also discuss the issue of the global production and targeted distribution of food/nutrition. The control of food quality and access in communities and schools in the US in relation to race/social class is then considered. Also investigated is how this impacts children in terms of growth, development, and learning.

SITE, METHODS, AND CHARACTERIZATION OF THE DATA

Data were collected at what I call "Prospect Clubhouse," which is a community center located in the large postindustrial city in the Northeast in which the youth reside. The participants were in regular attendance at this community center and it is located near their homes and school. Data were collected informally, through conversation while conducting a series of five one-to-two-hour cooking classes with participants. As a middle-class member of the dominant culture, I realized I would be in the minority at this site. Having no previous relationship with this venue for research or the cooking class participants, I successfully entered after meeting with the administration and telling them of my goals to try to gauge what youth may have to say about food access and critique. I also offered to teach cooking skills over the course of several weeks. In spite of my outsider status, the gatekeepers at this location were more than welcoming. The physical layout of the space was also readily manageable. The clubhouse is located on a side street near one of the city's highways and next door to a church, and is far enough into the block (due to the church's presence on the corner) to be removed from the highway's noise. In between the edge of the church and the actual clubhouse is a fenced-in playground and picnic area where students frequently eat their meals when it is not raining.

Each day, a thick, windowless metal door with a secure-looking lock greeted me at the front of the building. It opened when I tried it, and I was greeted with the laughing and screaming of children (the ages "8–13 group" I am later informed) and by staff members. A combination of pictures and decorations made by the children (including a long paper dragon hung from the ceiling), educational posters featuring African American leadership quotes and portraits, and posters of past Boys and Girls Club recipients of "club member of the year" awards covered the walls of the main clubhouse room. "Mr. N.," the community center director, was seated behind a computer (that looked to be from the late 1980s) and beside a telephone at the main desk to my right. Each day he shook my hand and welcomed me after I walked in. My food access discussion and cooking class began after lunch during all five weeks.

On the first day of the class, I received quizzical looks from the youth when I initially asked them to list places where they could buy food in their

neighborhoods and the types of food they could purchase or have at school. In order to get this conversation going and to get us to know each other and eventually feel comfortable working together, we also talked about possible recipes for us to prepare. This is the open, flexible atmosphere I hoped to nurture that would allow the youth to ask questions and share stories during the food preparation process.

Throughout the first class meeting, the staff members were more than accommodating—with a female and male staff member, respectively, intermittently entering the kitchen to inquire if I needed anything. By the time I began the raised voice/shouting round necessary to guide the youth through the democratic process of selecting the "top five recipes" lists and thereafter construct the four meals to be prepared, staff members got back to their routines, signaling they knew I would have no problem asking for assistance. Due to health and safety regulations in the community center kitchen, as expected there were age-related health codes preventing children under 18 years of age from using the stove, which I was not told until a 15-year-old male youth was helping stir the ground beef mixture to be used to make pastelitos during our second class meeting (and first day of cooking).

When asked informally about the quality of food they could buy in their neighborhood and the places where it was available, they said little. No matter how I attempted to draw the youth into a conversation about food access in their communities, our conversations continuously returned to issues of gender critique and connections between food and allergies or religious-based practices. This was the case throughout the duration of the course. In their defense, this was a nontypical after-school experience the students seemed to find fun after a long day of learning. They perhaps were trying to "keep it fun." For instance, when we began preparing an apple pie, I introduced the notion that more apples could be purchased at a local farmer's market than at a local supermarket for the same price, asking if any of the youth knew of or had been to any similar non-supermarket venues. They expressed surprise, with a few of the youth remarking they believed places like farmer's markets would be *more* expensive than supermarkets, and none of them knowing of or having been to any non-supermarket venues to purchase produce. Their response points to the issue of food access, as there are no non-supermarket venues like farmer's markets in their neighborhoods, thereby foreclosing any kind of conversation about the youth frequenting them. At this point, the youth rerouted the conversation to the general like or dislike of apples and then pies, maintaining the "fun" aspect of the lesson, leaving any consideration of food access behind. Thus, at each point when I raised issues of food access or food quality, out of necessity, the youth would focus away from these issues perhaps due to the dearth of non-supermarket food venues in their neighborhoods.

The female youth at the community center would say that the boys only cared about eating the food and not making it. However, when speaking with the male youth, largely on an individual basis, I learned they were

very interested in cooking, with some even recounting stories about doing so at home. Whereas these reflections were related to me on an individual basis, there was initial resistance to participating in the cooking classes from some of the male youth. For instance, on the first day of the course, as some students began walking through the main door, arriving either from morning school activities or jobs and upon discovering they would begin a cooking class that week, they began asking Mr. N. (the community center director) why they needed to participate. "Because sometimes I get hungry," was Mr. N.'s frequent response. As suggested above, throughout the five weeks of our time cooking and talking together, and my ongoing efforts to encourage them to discuss what kinds of food they access in their communities, these students would instead engage in gender critique and general discussions about their lives. Whereas the after-school students were undoubtedly trying to have a non-school experience, this potential lack of knowledge suggests there is a real need for critical conversation on these issues somewhere in their lives. Importantly, many weeks after the program ended, several of the students contacted me and they brought up the topic on their own and said they were interested in learning more.

GLOBAL PRODUCTION AND TARGETED DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD

The US Department of Agriculture [USDA] shapes the policies that guide US food production and distribution, both domestically and globally, including US nutrition education guidelines designed for the general US population and used widely with school children. The main guidelines center around the Food Guide Pyramid, which was originally created in 1992, later modified to become MyPyramid in 2005, and recently transformed into MyPlate in 2011. Whereas any of these educational graphics should be designed to encourage greater consumption of plant-based foods (fruits, vegetables, legumes) than animal-based foods (meat, dairy, eggs), Nestle (2007) exposes the involvement of food producers in revisions of the graphic, especially in relation to eating less animal-based foods.

During the 2005 revision of the graphic, this resistance from the food companies was highly public. Much attention was brought to how the USDA negotiates the ongoing tension between providing healthy nutrition information and appeasing food companies. The meat and dairy food companies were especially focused on the negative economic consequences should the general US population begin to consume less of their products. This shift in the educational graphic reflects a broader shift in perceptions of healthy diets in the US, as the original data collected by the USDA changed across time—from general food supply to food consumed within households and to food consumed by individual people. And whereas the food industry resists changes to the educational graphic that work against their profits, it has embraced these same guidelines for use in selling products.

The national transition from preparing and consuming food in the home to consuming prepared foods largely outside of the home has expanded the food industry's reach and profit margins. This has created a food culture in the US that has nearly become dependent on the combined efforts of the USDA's diet guidelines and the food industry's ever-changing product lines (Nestle, 2007).

Limited access to fresh, nutritious food is found not only in many parts of the world but also across the US. This lack of a consistently adequate food supply, depending on the extent of the condition (whether chronic or temporary), results in negative repercussions for physical, psychosocial, emotional, and cognitive health (Bne Saad, 2013). The "US food regime" directly impacts nations experiencing limited healthy food access, as the US (like other powerful nations) engages in systems of production and distribution of food to preserve its agribusiness sovereignty. The 1996 FAIR Act was designed to curtail some of this power by discontinuing price supports and production controls, but these were replaced by income-based supports and subsidies for exports. Further, the global economy at that time reflected many nations shifting toward supply management, such that producers across the world and within the US competed for consumers in increasingly liberal economic circumstances (Winders, 2009). Therefore, especially the largest US agricultural entities benefited from this international policy shift whereas others did not—and international food and food aid distribution remained largely unchanged.

In relation to US participation in food aid for developing nations and nations in crisis, the US, along with other trade-aligned collectives, such as the European Union [EU], has used "tied" food aid since the beginning of its involvement in this process. Whereas "tied" food aid allows the donor nation (in this case, the US) to provide food and distribution methods of its choosing, "untied" food aid would allow recipient countries to choose the food, even enabling them to source products from local venues (a distribution method that would be vital in the event of an emergency situation). Currently, there is a call among critics for creating a category called "food sovereignty" to be used to describe developing nations that have created self-sustaining food systems, as those that depend on imported food contend with limited control over food-related policies (Bne Saad, 2013). As one of the major donor countries, the US controls much of what foods are distributed and how in food aid situations. Yet US resistance to working with recipient nations to improve this process for those recipients indeed reflects the strength of US agribusiness working to maintain its unquestionable and powerful position.

Pollan (2006, 2008), who is considered a contemporary, mainstream voice for organic and locavore movements, ties food practices to politics in the context of daily food shopping, processing, and consumption activities. The term "locavore" refers to people who source most if not all of their food from local farms or small business merchants, with "eat local" movements

now expanding to include purchasing non-food items as a form of extended participation. Pollan critiques the practice of individualizing action instead of calling for the disruption of unequal food systems in place. For instance, Pollan (2006) lauds small farms, implying that they are free of the various forms of abuse experienced on larger corporate farms. However, many of these small farms also employ low-wage, non-union immigrant laborers (Lavin, 2013). Further, Pollan's contention that such small, typically family-run farms thrive due in large part to a lack of government assistance, opting for an "off the grid" economic existence, sets a series of connections in motion that encourage movement away from the larger notion of a state-supported public good. Instead, by "eating local" and otherwise engaging in consumer practices associated with organic and locavore movements, individuals perceive the "equality and freedom" associated with this "social action," as they have been co-opted into supporting, rather than disrupting, neoliberal ideology (Lavin, 2013).

The spending-as-action ("buying-local") approach to food systems is highly detrimental to underprivileged populations, in particular. Such populations find themselves in dire circumstances, with neoliberal perceptions of "action" requiring financial resources, whereas effecting change through policy makers to alter this economic inequity requires power and cultural capital (Winne, 2008). In addition to issues of access, the quality of food in urban areas and schools, and households with limited access to fresh, healthy food impacts school children's physical, psychosocial, and emotional health, all of which affect academic performance in the short and long term.

FOOD QUALITY AND ACCESS IN US COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS

Pollan (2006, 2008) maintains a focus on "shopping local" as a form of activism, as consumers then would purchase food from small businesses instead of large supermarkets buttressed by the food industry. Because of this movement's focus on purchasing and processing nutritious local food, both of which impact on finances and time, it is frequently perceived as a privileged movement engaged in by high income populations, rather than working to effect policy changes that would provide low income, culturally marginalized populations access to this food experience (Anderson, 2012; Goldberg, 2013). Further, and as outlined in greater detail in the next section, whereas there is a rise in households (and consequently, school children) with limited access to healthy food, the food-based social services made available to families and children are shrinking and diminishing in quality (Moran, 2011; Rigby et al., 2012; Rosenfeld, 2010).

In low income, culturally marginalized communities located in urban centers, there tends to be a limited amount of food access venues for securing fresh, nutritious food due to well-entrenched institutional racism.

Similar to residential segregation experienced by culturally marginalized groups, supermarket redlining occurs when corporations use demographic data about prospective market sites to determine whether or not a location should become a supermarket venue (Bell & Burlin, 1993; Eisenhauer, 2001). Whereas some strangely argue this issue persists due to geographic constraints, as urban landscapes do not typically allow for sprawling food facilities or the space necessary to allow for large-scale food distribution, another potential cause of limited food access revolves around demographic perceptions and their impact on profit margins (Winne, 2008). In this way, not only is the quality of food available in these areas compromised but so also is access to it (Moore & Diez Roux, 2006; Morland et al., 2001; Morland, Wing, & Diez Roux, 2002). Thus, until we address the problem of institutional racism inherent in low income, culturally marginalized urban areas, nutrition education necessarily will fall short of altering affected individuals' diets in the long term.

An extensive body of literature exists in relation to how price impacts consumption of fruit and vegetables in low income areas (Cassady et al., 2007; Fontenot Molaison et al., 2005), and even in relation to adolescents (Granner et al., 2004). However, Winne (2008) suggests the importance of considering healthy food access. Raja, Ma, and Yadav (2008) explore the dearth of healthy food access in various neighborhoods, finding that culturally diverse neighborhoods had a lack of supermarkets and more small grocery stores as compared with white neighborhoods. The authors found that the smaller, family-run grocery stores tended to have less selection, older items, and higher prices.

In order to support smaller grocery stores as opposed to lobbying for grocery chain initiatives that will undercut and close down small shops, some argue that programs to expand access to healthy food would best need to occur in the context of these smaller grocery stores (Winne, 2008). Small food stores are often used for supplying food in-between bigger shopping trips, providing opportunity for purchasing fresh, healthy food from these smaller venues (Bodor et al., 2007). Further, it is worth noting many smaller stores carry more food that is culturally relevant to a community. However, due to skyrocketing real estate costs and difficulty in keeping fresh produce and other healthy food in stock, small grocery stores in the local food environments in low income, culturally marginalized areas have difficulty finding the financial support necessary to keep the shelves stocked (Park et al., 2011). In fact, especially in light of the recent economic recession in the US, small grocery store owners are having difficulty staying in business, further reducing possible access to healthy, nutritious food in many low income, culturally marginalized areas (Plasencia & Glass, 2011).

In economically and racially marginalized communities, primary food venues typically include fast food outlets, dollar/discount stores, 24-hour stores, and convenience stores. All of these sources influence what foods are available to children in low income homes with limited access to healthy

food (Hilmers et al., 2012; Sharkey et al., 2013). Importantly, the proliferation of service-oriented jobs, with shifts ranging across all hours of the day, increases dependency on 24-hour stores (perhaps doubling as workplace and shopping venue, thereby increasing convenience) (Walker et al., 2012). Recently, some argue against widespread speculation or assumption about small grocery venues providing the predominant food access points in low income, culturally marginalized areas, instead finding that even the elderly will travel well beyond their neighborhoods to independent supermarkets to stretch their food dollars (LeDoux & Vojnovic, 2013). Depending on the type of store or stability of a food environment in terms of store turnover, individuals are willing to take the risk of finding lower or higher quality produce for lower cost (Block & Kouba, 2006; Filomena, Scanlin, & Morland, 2013; Gustafson et al., 2013). Therefore, it is not solely food access or poverty or nutrition education dictating whether and what type of food is consumed; a constellation of factors contribute to the building and maintenance of limited access to healthy food, and all in the context of broader unequal systems of food production and distribution.

In an interesting marketing move, Walmart recently began building smaller supermarkets in low income, culturally marginalized areas with limited access to healthy food. This corporate entity is shifting away from building in already saturated suburbs in favor of becoming the only option in these areas (Huber, 2011). However, not only does this effort increase the low wage job opportunities in these areas (and thus canceling out any savings on affordable and healthy food), but competition with Walmart's lower prices all but sounds the death knell for small markets and non-traditional food venues (i.e. food cooperatives, mobile produce markets). Whereas the latter small business and grassroots efforts would support expanding food access through multiple venues, including larger supermarkets, Walmart's profit margins dictate their actions which have consistently relied on monopolization (Hilmers et al., 2012; Huber, 2011). Further, the entry of Walmart-type distributors into rural and urban areas threatens to repeat the past cycle whereby a decrease in sales led to creating these areas with limited access to healthy food in the first place (Walker et al., 2010). New Haven, Connecticut, residents can attest to the repercussions of losing a major supermarket in their area, after having lost another in the past, raising serious concerns about whether or not they should pursue opening a new supermarket and repeating the same cycle in the future (Russell & Heidkamp, 2011). At the very least, the low wage labor introduced by Walmart into areas already experiencing financial instability would work to reinforce impoverished circumstances.

Schools are another space for addressing limited access to healthy food, and the School Breakfast Program [SBP] and NSLP are the two main programs designed to provide reduced price or free meals to school children. In the late 1970s, "a la carte" options began appearing at schools during lunch time, which are not a part of NSLP but compete with those food options.

The pizza and French fries offered among the a la carte options began to compete with the healthier foods available through NSLP. Because many schools found themselves desperate for the share in profits from the a la carte options yet wanting to entice more children to consume the NSLP-based foods, more pizza and French fries began appearing in the NSLP lunch line. In light of this expansion of unhealthy foods into NSLP there is a need to educate children in terms of both nutrition and the politics of food access (Poppendieck, 2010). The neoliberal push for providing "choices" for children in schools has potentially devastating effects on children's health and learning. A larger push must also include adequate funding for all public schools so the nutrition in school food is not compromised in the first place.

Although school food programs continuously struggle with such pressure to compete with unhealthy food alternatives, the SBP and NSLP literally provide school children from low income families with nutrients vital to their health and well-being. In order to recover the USDA's original anti-hunger focus of these programs (Morgan & Sonnino, 2008), a shift would need to take place, from the profit-driven mentality of the food industry to the provision of food to benefit the health and well-being of school children in the name of equity and social justice. In this sense, children must be provided with consistent, nutritious meals.

IMPACTS ON CHILDREN'S GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND LEARNING

Children in low income areas are particularly in danger of being exposed to limited access to healthy food and the negative impacts it has on their growth, development, and learning. In spite of its often compromised nutrition quality, SBP participation among low income youth indicates positive effects on academic achievement in cognitive, behavioral, and social areas. Increasingly, research shows how neglecting breakfast adversely impacts cognitive functioning (Basch, 2011). If the SBP could provide nutrition-dense food only, it is easy to imagine the effects would be much more beneficial. The NSLP and SBP are accessed more often to address limited access to nutritious food than is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP], a new moniker for the Food Stamp Program [FSP] voluntarily used by states since October 1, 2008, as issues like stigma, travel expenses, and language barriers tend to result in lower participation in SNAP. A major policy recommendation is to raise awareness about the food assistance programs available to potential lower income participants, along with eradicating misconceptions about how they function and increasing accessibility to them (Fiese et al., 2011).

Historically, FSP began in 1939 to distribute agricultural surpluses to needy populations. But after the lapse between this initial program ending in

1943 and efforts to restart FSP in the 1960s, the focus was divided between continuing to find consumers for surplus agricultural goods and feeding working poor and poor populations nutritious diets (Moran, 2011). After many battles between liberal urban and suburban Democrats in support of FSP and rural Southern Democrats and Republicans who supported agricultural interests, a compromise was reached in which the food stamp bill was passed just before passing of a bill to increase subsidies for cotton and wheat farmers (Rosenfeld, 2010). In this way, throughout the late 1960s and early to mid-1970s, a combination of balancing FSP and farm interests, along with an influx of urban and suburban representatives from both parties, led to expansive growth of FSP during that time. Although the conservative Ford administration pushed for more restrictions on FSP in the face of the weakened economy, the urban and suburban representatives were able to lay the foundation for passing the Food Stamp Act of 1977 during the Carter administration (Rosenfeld, 2010). After this growth of the FSP, now SNAP, conservative efforts, especially during the Reagan administration in the 1980s, have drastically reduced access to food through SNAP, especially in low income, culturally marginalized neighborhoods (Rigby et al., 2012). A recent passage of an agriculture bill without support for SNAP highlights this focus on weakening the program, rather than increasing access for potential participants (Weisman & Nixon, 2013).

Lack of access to fresh, nutritious food exposes children to compromised physical health. For instance, children growing up in households consistently experiencing limited access to healthy food are more likely to have many birth defects (such as cleft palate and spina bifida), develop weakened immune systems, become more prone to infections, be anemic, or have developmental delays, all of which impact neurocognitive development that can negatively affect social and academic outcomes (Carmichael et al., 2007; Fiese et al., 2011; Heinig & Dewey, 1996). Recent research using a longitudinal data set tracking a kindergarten cohort through to the eighth grade shows the long-term health impacts of consistent versus transient access to healthy food. For example, children who had limited access to healthy food for three years, followed by a return to an environment with access to healthy food, were temporarily in poor health (measured through complaints of stomachaches and headaches), as compared with children from households with access to healthy food since birth, whose long-term health is positively impacted (Ryu & Bartfeld, 2012). Further, there are connections between limited access to nutritious food and poor health among children of recent immigrants versus children with US-born mothers, with US-born children of recent immigrants at greater health risk because of their limited access to information about food-related public assistance programs and/or knowledge of social codes and diets. All of this calls into question how these ongoing physical, psychosocial, emotional, and academic impacts will affect future generations (Chilton et al., 2009).

When limited access to fresh, nutritious food is combined with poverty and racially marginalized status (and, in many cases, new immigrant parental status), this produces situations for children that undermine their overall health and well-being. Taken together, these factors can have devastating effects on their academic performance. When children lack consistent access to healthy food, as they move through school, they are more likely to experience behavioral problems, be suspended from school, see a psychologist, score lower on achievement tests, and have lower academic progress in math and reading (Alaimo et al., 2001; Jyoti, Frongillo, & Jones, 2005). This limited access to nutritious food likely contributes to a generational cycle that works to cement them in a circumscribed world of poor health, academic underachievement, and persistent poverty.

CONCLUSION

It is vital to raise critiques about access to unhealthy food among low income, culturally marginalized youth, as this works to expose healthy food access inequities and promote consumption of nutritious food among these youth populations, in particular. Marketing low-nutrition food at youth moves beyond television and "counting games" (taught in schools) devised and distributed by snack companies to increase sales of their products. Food corporations have integrated their products into school vending machines and lunch programs, garnering the greatest amount of interest from underfunded schools that are attended predominantly by culturally marginalized students and/or from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Nestle, 2007). Similarly, the intense marketing of ever more processed, packaged, and mobile food has resulted in decreased interest in food preparation among all youth in favor of the "fast, easy, and cheap." These food "products" featuring greater fat and sugar contents and low nutritional value have led to rising health problems and escalating costs to treat diseases resulting from this "Western diet" (Murray, 2007; Pollan, 2008; Roberts, 2008).

Some activists are resisting the dumping of processed food on all children, and especially culturally and economically marginalized youth, through organizations such as the Slow Food Movement. This movement, as mentioned, combines the pleasure of cooking and eating fresh food with community-oriented and environmentally sustainable methods. In practice, people are encouraged to engage in the more time-consuming, or "slower," act of cooking food from scratch and consuming it in a more community-oriented environment than is encouraged by "fast," processed food (Petrini, 2007). In addition to taking more time to prepare, "slow food" tends to cost more, as fresh food, often organic and local, is sought out to create elaborate meals. In essence, food is getting more expensive and more processed. Fresh, nutrition-dense food in a wide variety of options is by far the most expensive of all. Clearly change is necessary when these issues are

compounded by our current energy and financial (mortgage, credit, and student loan) crises, which have the potential to send low socioeconomic populations (as well as many struggling middle-class populations) into a self-sustaining downward spiral with little hope of escape.

Through the experience related at the beginning of this essay it was apparent the youth did have some critiques regarding gender and cooking, and the fact that females did most of the food preparation and cleanup (Lalonde, 2011b). The marginalized students however did not have much of a critique regarding the issue of food access and nutrition or the politics of why they have access to the food they do in their neighborhood or school. Whereas many programs like these are helpful and important, they do not seem to be focused on involving youth in directly calling into question the political nature of unequal food access and quality. For instance, one education program in Ontario, Canada, grown from a community-based nutrition program, is designed to expand the culinary skills and food knowledge of low income, culturally marginalized elementary students and their families through a school-based nutrition program. Students engage in separate workshops with their families (save for two annual student-family workshops) that encourage development of food preparation skills and a social conscience about their local food environment (Bisset & Potvin, 2007). Another school-based program in Victoria, Australia, engages third- through sixth-grade students in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden [SAKG] Program. By learning about, growing, and consuming the fresh produce from the garden, students' attitudes and tastes are challenged (Gibbs et al., 2013).

There are also many informal after-school programs to encourage healthy eating among youth. Healthy Opportunities for PA [Physical Activity] and Nutrition [HOP'N], promoted by the Young Men's Christian Association [YMCA], helps fourth-grade children learn about and struggle against obesity through a combination of physical activity and increased intake of fruit and vegetables. Ultimately, however, issues like perceived versus actual positive results, limited space for the physical activity component of the program, high staff turnover, and limited support by administrators and other staff members have compromised implementation of the program (Hastmann et al., 2013). Another after-school program involves the evaluation of snack and beverage quality changes before and after engaging in a YMCA Learning Collaborative [YLC]. This program was studied across seven YMCA sites for 14 months, resulting in an increased offering of water as a beverage, rather than sweetened beverages (Mozaffarian et al., 2010). There are many other programs that increase access to food among underserved populations (Raja, Born, & Kozlowski Russell, 2008; Raja, Ma, & Yadav, 2008), and local community-based efforts, like the Chicago Food System Collaborative (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2006). Considering the time-consuming focus of standards reform in schools, the informal nature of community centers presents an ideal space for initiating conversations and building critiques in relation to food issues.

In relation to increasing school children's access to food, there are programs like the BackPack Program (Fiese et al., 2011) and Fresh Moves (Huber, 2011) that work to expand anti-hunger efforts and access to fresh, healthy food. Because of the limited participation in food assistance programs like SNAP by low income families with limited access to fresh, nutritious food, programs like these should be expanded, as they become a crucial part of affected children's access to food. However, like the broader use of private food assistance venues like food banks, these efforts work to address the *symptoms* of the inequities created by the *root* of these issues: food systems that result in unequal food access.

Programs like those assessed in this chapter have implications for the nutrition and food preparation education of low income students in North America, in that positive impacts on nutrition might not only support their academic achievement, but also their ability to fiscally survive amidst a global food crisis by breaking a growing dependence on fast food and prepackaged food industries. However, due to issues associated with limited access to healthy foods, the broader US and global contexts of food production and distribution become an important part of this conversation. Future studies should consider how to bridge the school and after-school program gap in order to facilitate critical discussion on these issues. Further, whereas ongoing programs similar to the one analyzed in this chapter should be evaluated and modified to help sustain food education and access efforts, ongoing research should involve the global food context, especially by drawing what is learned from these smaller programs to effect policy changes to expand access to nutritious, fresh food to low income, racially marginalized youth. With some access to information on this issue students will likely want to learn more and community-based sites such as the one in this research are ideal locations for such conversations to take place.

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9 Speak It, Live It!

Spoken Word Pedagogy as Critical and Culturally Responsive Practice

Bronwen E. Low and Reenah L. Golden

> My notebook is my horse and saddle
> With this
> I ride
> I ride into the creativity of my emotions and embrace them as one would their child.
>
> My backpack is my sheath.
> When combined with a pen
> I am unstoppable
> (Darrin, 18)[1]

> Here's my dilemma. I'm the minority here by virtue of my age and because of my culture, and to have this conversation, yeah, it's a difficult thing. Some of the stuff is hard to hear and worse than that, some of it's hard to understand. I'm trying to get it, and I think that's what you're pointing at. How often out there are the roles reversed. ("Tim," high school English teacher)

Tim is a high school English teacher in a mid-size city in the Northeast who surprised his class of seniors with the news they would be starting a spoken word and Hip-Hop unit. These topics were mostly new to him, and a student asked to borrow a tape recorder to help him learn because "there's a lot happening in the hallways that teachers don't know about." The next day, two of the school's best freestylers were battling back and forth in class, improvising lines and rhymes and in so doing, carving out a new place for their skills and artistry in the school. Tim initiated the unit in order to better engage the interests of his students, many of whom were Hip-Hop identified, and to educate himself. He had been teaching English and creative writing in the city school district for more than 20 years and felt his ignorance about rap music and Hip-Hop culture was a missed opportunity to reach his students. This teacher's sense of responsibility for fighting his cultural disconnect from the predominantly African American and Latino/a students in his classes is unusual. That he is white whereas his students are not is less so. As the student population in US classrooms grows increasingly more diverse, the teaching population remains resiliently white (data from 2007–2008 place it at 83%. [2])

This disconnect is not only based on "racial" difference. For example, Ayanna, a culturally immersed female African American high school English teacher who works with Tim says she also experiences a disjuncture from her students. She attributes this to the reality that few of her students share her Muslim faith, and to changing cultural and generational perspectives. In her teaching, she addresses this divide early and head-on, as she and her students together create an intentional community in her classroom. This work starts on "day one every school year where I close my door and it begins." Ayanna cultivates a culture of open dialogue to explore social issues, outside influences, and personal frustrations and feels it is healthier and more productive when these are out and on the table, "as uncomfortable as some of it may be." As with Tim, she believes being closed to generational differences and youth culture can create barriers and missed occasions for teaching and learning in the classroom.

As a researcher and an arts-in-education administrator working in the same urban school district and high schools as Ayanna and Tim, we too have been fighting cultural disconnect between teachers and students, and school curriculum and students' out-of-school skills and interests. When we first met in 2003, Bronwen was an assistant professor at a local college with expertise in curriculum and youth culture, including Hip-Hop and spoken word. Tim invited her into the arts-magnet school where he taught creative writing to co-create a spoken word course for two classes of his senior English language arts students. Reenah joined the project as a spoken word artist-in-residence to offer performance workshops and immediately became a co-teacher. She had been working as an arts administrator and teaching-artist in this district for eight years and later created and included this school in an expanded citywide slam and spoken word poetry program, Slam High. This program now regularly sends a team to the annual Brave New Voices international youth poetry slam invitational.[3]

Although working in collaboration with a shared project goal, we experienced many situations differently based on our own cultural perspectives and backgrounds. Reenah is a middle-class African American and a native African American Vernacular English [AAVE] speaker. She was raised in this city school district, where according to 2005/2006 data, half of the schools have a poverty rate of 90% or higher, and 88% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Bronwen is a white middle-class Canadian who grew up in Montreal and who had only just moved to the US at the time of her collaboration with Reenah. Our daily planning meetings and debriefs provided much insight into the types of disjunctures we were feeling and which Tim and Ayanna describe. We found open dialogue to be a powerful tool for discovery and knowing.

In this chapter we explore the possibilities and challenges of spoken word as a form of culturally responsive curriculum that has the potential to resist traditional relations of authority and transform classroom experiences for teachers and students across grade levels and subject areas. In our

examination of the curricular dynamics of student voice and expression, we enter the heart of several high school classrooms in this district that challenged the business as usual of schooling. These include Tim's high school English language arts classrooms, where Bronwen and Reenah worked together and classrooms in different schools in the same district in which Reenah has worked. We draw upon data from Bronwen's classroom ethnographies, Reenah's personal reflections, and examples of student poetry.

Reenah's work in schools as a teaching artist is funded by a variety of small municipal, state, and private grants, which fortunately still value the arts in education. Most of these she applies for herself in partnership with teachers to support her work in their classrooms. The teachers who invite Reenah into their classrooms are exceptions rather than the rule. They often have years of experience that have given them the confidence to put themselves in positions in which they are no longer the experts (Low & Callahan, 2004) and to open their classrooms to critical discussions and (relatively) uncensored youth expression. And yet even these teachers often enter the collaboration with some trepidation. Tim told us the very popular school slams created in this program have been met by a "resounding silence" from the administration, and both Tim and Ayanna make sure to close the doors to their classrooms during instruction.

THE POETICS AND POLITICS OF SPOKEN WORD

Slam is a powerful youth-driven social movement, a close cousin to Hip-Hop culture with which it shares the values of community, performativity, and social critique. Hip-Hop is a culture whose four central elements are rapping, deejaying, break dancing, and graffiti art, expanded to include new elements such as "street language" and "street knowledge" (KRS-One, 2001) as well as forms such as Hip-Hop theatre and journalism (Chang, 2007). Although informed by Hip-Hop culture, slam poetry is a much more specific practice in which poets perform original works, scored on a scale from 1 to 10 by a randomly selected panel of judges, without the use of any props, costumes, or accompaniment. Both the competitive mock-Olympic slam poetry scene as well as rap music might be considered subsets of "spoken word culture," a category used to describe forms of poetry and performance in which an artist recites poetry, often to musical accompaniment. Spoken word remains a grassroots phenomenon, with thriving poetry and performance scenes in coffee houses, community centers, and bars across North America. At the same time, it is increasingly mass mediated, given the number of feature films and documentaries dedicated to the resurgence of spoken word. (See, for instance, *Slam* (Levin, 1998), *Slam Nation* (Poole & Shaw, 1998), and *Slam Planet* (Brooks et al., 2006)). The breadth of the category of spoken word opens up some powerful currents for curricular inquiry in poetic oral traditions past and present in North America and

across the globe, such as African American popular poetics as found in spirituals, jazz, and blues poetry, and the Black Arts movement.

Reenah's spoken word poetry is often inspired by the youth she works with:

fists stuffed into hoodie
walk with a proud limp.

let your hem drag through sidewalk grime
nostrils flaring at the entrance
a familiar stench
be at home.

no roses here
you have looked thoroughly
every morning and every late night
in all types of light
no flowers or fragrance
the wrappers on the ground
colorful reminders of dissidence
rainbows of resistance

step lively, son.
remember backdoors
and neck laces,
no grinning,
no skinning,
you've seen ghost breath
every exhale in winter
you know it well
it whistles blood chill
cuts through January

know your place.
between curb smut and gutter talk,
find your left vein.

feel its pulse as a reminder that you
live here

visit the liquid tombstones.
leave your dandelion root and henny bottle.

this land is your land,
carry your weapon concealed. (Golden, excerpt from "What to Do with Pockets of Hope," 2013)

With this poem Reenah places the reader in the shoes of an urban youth as he navigates the path laid out before him by circumstance, working to find and maintain hope on his way through a neighborhood blighted by garbage, cold, drugs, and violence. The poem intends to convey the urgent need for solutions to the obstacles facing poor youth.

Whereas the literature on Hip-Hop education is burgeoning (Akom, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Emdin, 2010; Hall & Diaz, 2007; Hill, 2009; Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Low, 2011), less has been written on spoken word and slam in education, despite their cultural fluorescence. As Hodari Davis, executive producer of *Brave New Voices*, describes, many of the young people he works with who might previously have identified with Hip-Hop now think of themselves in terms of spoken word. Reacting in part to the sense in some progressive circles that "Hip-Hop is dead" due to its excessive commercialization, these youth find spoken word to be a less restrictive category. We like how spoken word can tap into students' investments and talents in rap—-either as lyric writers, performers, or as listeners—-and then extend them in new directions.

Whereas community-based organizations that offer spoken word programs for youth have been going strong since at least the mid-1990s, performance poetry and its implications for education are just beginning to garner sustained academic attention (Low, 2011). Bruce and Davis (2000) offer an early account of a high school language arts unit that brings together Hip-Hop and slam poetry, designed in part to offer an expressive outlet for violence intervention. Fisher (2003, 2005, 2007) lays important conceptual groundwork in her study of the intergenerational and "adult participatory literacy communities" developed at mostly African American open-mic events, as well as in her ethnography of the "Power Writers," an after-school spoken word poetry club at a high school in the Bronx. By paying careful attention to the teacher's creative writing pedagogies and to the words of students, Fisher (2005) builds a vision for literacy education grounded in respect for the experiences of young people, multilingualism (including "Bronxonics"), poetic traditions, and the potential that youth exceed the limits of "ascribed lives" (p. 119). Not confined to spoken word in her exploration of the power of finding one's poetic voice, Jocson (2005, 2006, 2008) details the transformative potential of the June Jordan Poetry for the People program in urban classrooms.

Despite the pedagogic value of such programs, curricula and pedagogies that foster and promote student voice often rock the boat, and so can exist in tension with school cultures and practices designed to manage, and thus control, student experience and outcomes.

A "CANCER IN THE SCHOOL"

The silencing of student voice is a systematic process. All one has to do is visit an elementary school in the first week of school and observe the

differences between a kindergarten and second-grade classroom. In the early childhood space, notice the bubbly energy and eager eyes as new learners tell each other and their teachers stories, make eye contact with their peers, and offer up their five-year-old life experiences to scaffold their learning and connect intimately with curriculum. Initially, this behavior might be encouraged, depending on the teacher's personality and energy level. A key determinant shaping this scenario is also how much of a language or cultural barrier exists between teacher and students (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Teachers who share cultural reference points with their students are able to more easily segue from student talk to lesson plan.

However, in the absence of patience and understanding, many teachers spend much of the time quieting the anxious hand-raisers and refocusing students on the topic at hand, in the interest of "classroom management." The teacher wants engagement but only on what (and how it) is deemed appropriate. "Wait until you are asked a question or have the answer" becomes the rule and as time passes and grade levels advance the classroom can become a tug of war between teacher and student body. Many students resent the structure and subject matter and thus resist by withholding their participation when it is requested. Across the US in urban secondary schools "I'm good" is a common mantra for disengagement, as students deflect the teacher's pleas to get involved in the lesson. Teachers swing between interrupting private conversations amongst students and looking desperately around the classroom for a raised hand, glimmer of interest, or any sign of life. Where went the eager five year old who could barely contain herself long enough to allow a classmate to finish a story before rushing enthusiastically to connect to her own experience?

We have repeatedly witnessed this process of silencing, which is not only disruptive to students' academic development but to their growth as politically empowered citizens. Take the following example. One year, a twelfth-grade African American female student who was well known in the school district as both athletically and academically talented was suspended from school for raising her fist at her table in the school cafeteria and calling out "Black Power!" This student and a friend had been sitting together and talking about Black History Month, saying that they did not think the school had done enough to acknowledge and celebrate it. They were also criticizing the topic's confinement to a month. The student raised her fist and made the statement in emphasis. A white administrator passing by overheard the phrase and reported the student to the principal. In swift response, the principal summoned the student to the office and subsequently sent her to the computer lab, under the supervision of the school security officer. She was ordered to write an apology for her actions and told this might lessen the terms of her forthcoming punishment. After discussing her position with Reenah, a teaching artist in her English class, the student chose instead to write a letter of rebuttal offering a rationale and historical context for her comments, including what

she had recently learned about the 1968 Olympics. This letter did not seem to help her case because the principal suspended her from school. Other students in the cafeteria who witnessed the event were upset. In response to this unrest, the administration delayed the first class that day after lunch in order to call a special school assembly with the seniors. At this time the administration made clear they would not tolerate any disruptions to school life.

This student had always had good grades (never lower than a B). She confided to Reenah that she could not understand why kids who leave school to go smoke weed could be back the next day, whereas her actions resulted in suspension. The administration justified the suspension by saying it was necessary in order to avoid a "race riot" similar to one that had happened, reportedly, at the school ten years prior. This student was also known to be outspoken and pro-black, neither of which should have justified her treatment by school officials who reportedly referred to her as a "cancer in the school." Her poem written for the Black History showcase entitled "Black" had been heavily scrutinized by the administration just days before the cafeteria incident. As well, an administrator came to observe Reenah's poetry workshop after the suspension and special assembly in order to monitor the classroom climate and potentially its teacher.

This high school has one of the tougher reputations in the city, and the administration had clearly been struggling with solutions to maintain control and safety, which, as in so many schools in the US, include metal detectors and armed sentries at the entrances. It is also important to note that the principal administering the punishment was an African American woman, underscoring the reality that tensions between racially marginalized students and schools are not the sole product of white administrations. Perhaps this spoke to a deeper issue of internalized racism and misogyny. Whereas we only know what the principal said in her warning to the student body and follow-up conversation with Reenah, the suspension seems a symptom of a culture of schooling in which students' rights to freedom of expression get trumped by worries of students being "out of control." This is a large and fluid category within which are lumped everything from violence and truancy, failure and underperformance on standardized tests, and symbols that get read as counter-culturally resistant such as Hip-Hop clothing, language, and attitude. Hip-Hop in this sense is imagined as inherently troublesome and potentially militant.

It is therefore not surprising the slam was a site of anxiety for the administration at this student's school, and the principal personally screened all of the potential performance poems. The day before the slam in that school, this female student was suspended again in what the principal called a preemptive move, a response to her worry that the student would stray from the pre-approved poetry text. Perhaps there was also concern that this student would win the slam and then represent the school at the city finals, and possibly the entire city at Brave New Voices.

Whereas we feel this student's suspension is an example of schools being afraid of what students might say if given a platform, some fears about student voice seem due to teachers and administrators "not knowing" the language of youth and youth culture. In a number of the classrooms we have witnessed, this linguistic ignorance is the result of monolingual white teachers working with African American students.

NOT KNOWING THE LANGUAGE

As Alim (2007) argues, the monolinguistic approach to language teaching makes school a site of ideological warfare with both overt and covert mandates to assimilate all children into middle-class white linguistic and cultural norms. Alim has found even teachers who think they have some sociolinguistic understanding of AAVE can be misinformed. This reminds us of one of Reenah's stories about language and learning:

> One of my favorite education "war" stories is from my "bonus" mom, Dr. Cecilia Griffin Golden, about her own childhood that I have heard her tell throughout her 35-year career as an educator and administrator. She talks about being an eager primary school student learning grammar and syntax and discovering an omitted verb form in her teacher's lesson—the African American use of the verb "to be" as an indication of something done systematically or constantly. She raised her hand and asked the teacher, "What about when you 'be' doing something?" Her baffled teacher did not have an answer and thus dismissed the invariant "be" as incorrect. Little Cecilia was deflated and discouraged. This might have been the end of her enthusiasm for learning and her confidence in mastering English, but in Dr. Golden's case, she was motivated to continue her education and join the ranks of African American educators committed to better understanding and supporting the cultural nuances of language and learning. And fortunately I had the benefit of her guidance, as well as that of my other parents and mentors, in navigating the challenges presented by my first language and primary dialect in the classroom. But how many urban youth are stunted by this disconnect and monolinguistic approach to teaching in their formative years?

Spoken word pedagogies offer up the possibilities for communication across social difference for those teachers willing to take the risks involved in learning a language they have not already mastered. This means teachers must approach their students with a degree of humility about what they do not know. Take into account notes Bronwen wrote after a protracted time observing in Tim's classes:

> One day Tim described to his class his first day as a new teacher in the city school district, when he walked into his first class and realized

everybody except him was Black. He said he felt "scared I didn't know what to say. How to speak. That I didn't know the language. And here I am an English teacher. And the kids could talk circles around me. They could." This idea teachers can be ignorant of the language of the students clearly resonated with at least one student in the class. A month after this account, a student brought in to class Jay-Z's *The Blueprint*. He had printed out some lyrics to distribute and wanted to play two of the album's tracks. He asked his teacher, "Are you ready? This is for you. I don't care what the class thinks. This is for you. I want to accomplish something this year." When Tim asked why, the student reminded him of the story he had told the class, in which his new students were "talkin so that you couldn't understand what they were saying. And like sometimes when I talk to you, you can't understand what I'm sayin. And I mean, it's sort of a code, but it's not really a code, this is the way I talk." To this, Tim responded, "I'm honored. I really am. I mean, I'm going to get philosophical. That's probably the greatest gift we can give one another is the opportunity to access, get in, and make some sense out of worlds that are different. And we do that through language. That's cool." It struck me as one of the most powerful exchanges all term, especially because this student often seemed to be testing Tim for the first part of the term, interrupting and ignoring many of his attempts to communicate.

This student seems to have heard in Tim's story a genuine commitment to understand better the language and culture of his students. He decided that helping his teacher in this quest would be to accomplish something this year. He chose Hip-Hop as the vehicle for doing this. Tim's response to his student's generosity gets to the heart of the possibilities of education across differences: making sense of worlds that are different.

The role reversal of student as teacher inherent in a shared learning community can profoundly upset a system where teachers are preconceived as the repository of all knowledge in the classroom. Despite this discomfort, teachers must foster an inclusive language environment, including different varieties of English, as critical practice in the classroom. Because the exploration of language is a key element of spoken word and slam, whether in workshop or actual performance, an attention to and transitions between language varieties can organically become part of the process.

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGIES

It has been helpful for us to think of the potential of teaching and learning through spoken word in terms of "culturally relevant" and "culturally responsive" pedagogies. The seminal work in this area is the research of Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 2000) and Gay (1994, 2000) on teaching African American children. The components of these pedagogic models are in

many ways the cornerstones of good teaching in any context and help us to understand the potential of spoken word pedagogies. The effective teacher must be able to promote academic achievement by creating dynamic and well-ordered classrooms with high standards and expectations for all students (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Teacher-student relationships are central to culturally relevant pedagogies and need to be fluid and equitable, extending beyond the classroom.

Teachers must work to build a classroom community of learners in which students learn collaboratively and from each other (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Teachers should effectively scaffold student learning by assessing and drawing on previous knowledge. This requires cultural competence, including, for instance, detailed and accurate knowledge of African American history, language, and literature, in order to design curriculum that draws upon the richness of students' cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Culturally relevant curriculum also builds bridges between home cultures and more traditionally academic ones (for instance, by legitimizing AAVE in teaching Standard American English), so that students are not forced to choose between "academic excellence" and African American culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17). The curriculum must also contain a sociopolitical critique of the systemic nature of inequality so that social structures can be imagined otherwise (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Both Ladson-Billings (1994) and Gay (2000) make clear that culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies for African American students are not the sole domain of African American teachers. Cultural outsiders often need to do a good deal of self-educating given the limits of their own schooling. This outsider group can include African American and other groups of teachers who also feel removed from a younger generation's cultural referents, as with Ayanna. It can also be challenging for white teachers who have been limited by Eurocentric school structures and pedagogies to see how these systematically privilege white and middle-class students to the detriment of others. And deficit models of African American culture, families, children, and youth are so pervasive it can be difficult to see and think outside of them. In light of complex and oppressive histories of cultural interaction in the US, it is crucial for teachers to engage in critical self-reflection on their own prejudice and its effects. It is important for teachers to understand their subject positions can have positive and negative influences on their students (Howard, 2003). In interactions with students, this can mean being honest about one's own history and limitations. Defensiveness is the main antagonist in adopting pedagogies of openness in a classroom, where student voices can sound off on controversial subject matter involving race, class, gender, and sexuality. Such pedagogies require constant testing of the teacher's comfort zone and accepting the existence of cognitive dissonance between dominant and nondominant cultural perspectives.

Given the embeddedness of spoken word in storytelling and oral traditions, especially African diasporic ones including the development of

Hip-Hop in the US, spoken word can effectively be used to build bridges to the home cultures and literacy practices of students. As well, supporting students in sharing their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives as they develop their poetic voices is a foundation for sustained and equitable relationships between teachers and students. But as Ladson-Billings (1994) argues, this requires teachers to leave the safety net of what they already know and teach, self-reflect on the situated nature of their own experiences, and accept, in the process, the dismantling of the hierarchy of knowledge transmission.

Rather than see language as a barrier, the slam community adopts it as the main vehicle for connection and growth. The constant process of language play, experimentation, and revitalization (Low, 2006) in slam supports the mission of the youth spoken word movement to create safe spaces for the development of youth voice and shared learning experiences. This also allows for the creation of a common ground on which young poets and their mentors can interact, critique, and grow during serious and deep discussions of poem content, meaning, and social context. For instance, Reenah describes the facilitation process of a typical (out-of-school) workshop:

> We might be sitting around in a cypher, a creative circle of youth and adult poets together listening to each other freestyle, or workshopping a nearly performance-ready piece. The shared goal is to offer as much input as possible for the author and the audience member equally. For example, one of the deepest moments to me in the birth of a poem is when the poet hears her or his own words spoken back by another person from that person's own perspective. Poets are always pushing in these moments. Pushing each other, pushing the poem, pushing the meaning. Sometimes this inspires a group piece as poets start to build on a line or concept. The process is very organic. It is very inclusive, often generating a shared vocabulary. For instance, there are these powerful moments when someone reveals that a poem really freed them up and a phrase like "get free" emerges as a battle cry (from Philadelphia Youth Poetry Movement). Or a coach implores a poet in rehearsal to "get into the story" and the acronym "GITS" (coined by Queen GodIs of Urban Word, NYC youth slam team, 2008) becomes the only term needed to get into performance mode and to go deep into the physical and spiritual space where the poem's truth resides. We adopt each other's mantras and speak so easily, sometimes forgetting where a term even originated. What is clear is words have power and there is mutual respect for all in the authorship of this shared-language to be used for the good of the community.

Fostering the mutual respect essential to the poet/mentor relationship and process described above, so crucial to learning, can be a struggle to maintain between teacher and student in the traditional classroom. Dismantling rigid roles is critical to reimagining classroom practice.

STUDENT STORYTELLING THROUGH SLAM

When classrooms are refocused to foster openness and critical discussion, surprising things can happen, as Reenah describes:

> There's an interesting moment that seems to occur in almost every spoken word [school] residency I engage in. I refer to it affectionately as "The Closet Notebook Phenomenon" and it usually occurs right after Day 1. A student will be hanging back after we finish the session to pull out of a backpack a well-worn notebook full of unedited prose that he or she is eager to show me. Our conversation happens after the classroom teacher has rushed out to her "hall post" or break, but not before flashing me a surprised look about this hidden notebook that has never made an appearance in class. I have heard countless times in advance how difficult it will be for me to get most of the male students to write ANYTHING. The urban myth about non-writing Black and Latino males has got to be the most pervasive and contrary to all my experiences. Although I am well aware of the grade books filled with missing assignments and poor ELA test scores, I know these students write. Sometimes they write in the fashion of the greatest thinkers and orators—in their heads. All you have to do is poke your head into the rap cypher to witness their verbal athleticism in the form of freestyle. Or they write informally, in private notebooks.. On Day 2 I am reintroduced to the eager storyteller.

What has made this closeted writer suddenly comfortable enough to out himself, even although in an English class one would expect all writers to feel at home? When asked, students reveal discomfort with the technicalities of the writing they are expected to produce. They also report disinterest in the subject matter to which they are expected to respond. Some do not even consider their personal pages to qualify as writing. "It's not really a poem or anything; it's just something I wrote," said one high school sophomore about the words scribbled in his brandished notebook. Whereas there are definite rules for classifying poetic forms, we feel students should hold the right to name their writing as poetry if they want to, regardless of age or experience. However, this right seems relinquished to the teacher in the absence of a student's confident voice.

The structure of traditional schooling promotes this hierarchy of judgment, especially for assessment purposes. In creating safe spaces in which to push against this framework we find an opportunity to admit and develop more young writers into the literary world. Once the door is opened and the poet is out of the bag, we can draw upon the work of well-established poets and literature from different genres to support the young writer's mentorship and developmental process. Some writers who do not always find their way into the traditional English classroom, such

as Saul Williams, Patricia Smith, Lemon, Suheir Hammad, and other Def Poets (Medina & Rivera, 2001; Simmons, 2005), are excellent starting points for bridging the gap between student voices and those of classic literature. Students can read published poems aloud, write poems in responses to other poems, and create group performances. This provides a cypher of sharing and contributing writing while creating opportunities for rich dialogue about content.

Despite the potential richness of the learning, concerns about what students might say if given the stage and mic are regularly voiced by teachers and school administrators who allow spoken word and slam programs into their buildings. In fact, the issue of censorship is almost always a chief concern on the part of both the students and adults involved right from the start of the program. Although they disagree about whether there should or should not be censorship, concerns stem from the same source—fear. Students are afraid if they do not know the rules of engagement they will be penalized for free speech. Administrators are afraid students will use their voices to express their dissatisfaction with rules and policies. What we have seen prominently as a side effect of this work is that once empowered with the tools, teens will speak up and speak out on the issues they find to be the most pertinent in their lives.

SPEAK IT, LIVE IT!

The title for this section, as well as the chapter, invokes the moment in Reenah's poetry teaching when students first step to the mic. They might be visibly shaken and hesitant to proceed. Someone calls, "Speak it!" and a veteran responds, "LIVE it!," emboldening the new poets to test their voices and simultaneously reminding all poets present of their responsibility as agents of change. Once the notebooks are out of the closet, students address a range of themes and issues in spoken word poetry. A powerful current in the poetry of students we have worked with is social critique, as the youth grapple with important issues at the individual, local, and international levels. For instance, in the 46 poems performed in the final school slams in one high school over a few years, 11 were critiques of the state of the world, with most implicating current politicians and the older generation. 6 explored topics of violence and crime, 10 spoke about drug addiction, 8 addressed issues of poverty, and 7 critiqued the "War on Terror." In one thematic current, we have seen many students confront ideals of self as a jumping-off point for social critique. For example, take this excerpt from the poem "Missing Person's Report," written by Slam High alumna Sharese King, age 17 (which she performed at Brave New Voices, 2008):

> I can't recall the day she ran away
> But this is the longest she's ever strayed

I finally filed that missing person's report I'd been putting off
When they asked me who was lost
I told them it was me
They laughed
Finding my spiritual withdrawal funny
I guess I'm the only one who can do the searching

So blindfolded, I'm walking the path to finding myself alone
Using my feet as my eyes
And I've searched my scalp
But tripped in the trap of tracks
Strapped to my naps
So I scaled back and tried to stalk
The arch of my back
But it was jam packed
With too many burdens setting up camp

I swam laps through muddy, black melanin
Too dusky to see if she is hiding in my own skin
And I find it's maturing too thin
I'm trying to outgrow it
But can't break the seal
Off this new wrapping
Check the crescent cuts
The epidermis stuck
Behind my nails
Perhaps she took off
Because I can't take this skin off
And although Dr. Time always comes to bandage the wounds
I insist on peeling it back
Picking the scab
And the hurt never goes away

So I continue my search

In this poem Sharese, an honor student in her final semester of high school at the time, shows frustration in her search for self at a critical transition point in her own life as a young African American woman pushing against societal constraints. We often start in the spoken word residency to position the student as a subject matter expert. In youth slam and spoken word education pedagogy, we engage life as primary text. Sharese's peers reinforced her sentiments during classroom discussions and the workshop process as the poem evolved. The finished piece was later performed for a national audience in Washington, DC, in the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam in which her team was a finalist.

In contrast with the number of poems that engaged current social issues, only 4 of the 46 slam poems spoke primarily about love whereas 2 spoke about friendship. This challenges the common portrait of youth as mostly preoccupied with peer relationships. Why do so many of the students choose to tackle social problems? Regardless of what these youth read or watch together, we find students naturally gravitate toward addressing important social issues in their poems. Some choose "identity" poems as their main tool of discourse, sharing deep insights into who they are and how they choose to wrestle with discontent. Others choose what Reenah terms "so-poems"—poems that confront social political issues they find relevant that could include the world, community, or school. And finally, there are "sit-poems," or situation-poems, that tell a story that may be autobiographical or set in a familiar environment like the school. These poems take the listener into the speaker's world and vividly express its intimate details.

That the students frequently choose to tackle challenging topics in the poetry slam suggests they crave a venue and permission to express themselves, in their own language. Or in the words of one student, "I think everyone was saying things that needed to be said, but didn't know how to put them. But once everyone said them, they were said so eloquently it was amazing." Another pointed out, "racism, terrorism, image, society, love—you can tell exactly what runs through our minds every day." In one class, toward the beginning of the project one student asked for the group to be as thoughtful as possible,

> cause we think about a lot of things they don't know we think about, you know what I'm saying. We write a lot of things they don't know we write about. So we care about issues they don't know we care about. If we show them we care about these issues and we learn about these things and we can do it in this creative way of language . . . they got to know that . . . the things we have to say, even although we might say it in a different way; that shit is important.

It might be that youth are particularly interested in tackling serious issues when "they," adults in general, and teachers and administrators in particular, are listening (Hoechsmann & Low, 2008). This speaks to the importance of youth writing in schools, for despite many students' frustrations with high school, the committed nature and seriousness of the performances at school slams suggest youth still see schools as places where one works to be as smart as possible in the presence of their peers but also of adults. The awareness of an adult audience was made particularly clear in one piece a student performed at the school slam, which began, "All administrators, you might want to have a seat with this one." The student then proceeded to assess negatively many aspects of the schools' bureaucracy and regulations, and what these meant for "learning in city schools." Another powerful local critique made by "Bob," age 17, was of the city's budget crisis and

the decisions being made to cut arts and sports programs, all within the context of testing and standardization of No Child Left Behind:

> We, and by we I mean we who are coming of age,
> Need to tell the world what's what.
> That we don't give a fuck about color, gay, straight or bi,
> All you need to do is give us the material for wings and we can make ourselves fly.
> So don't cut the arts, cause we need to learn to express,
> Don't cut sport because without sport we're a mess
> The answer here is to spend more money on learning, and less money on tests.

This student uses poetry as a tool to contest the decisions being made on behalf of his generation. He makes clear that its priorities and concerns are not those of the ones in power, and although recognizing youth still need adults, the providers of material, the focus needs to be on helping young people make *themselves* fly.

"BROKEN FLOWERS"

Elliott Powless, a member of the Iroquois Nation and alumnus of Slam High, at age 17 submitted the following poem entitled "Broken Flowers" to the Sundance Institute's Speak Green competition. In response to a call for "green poems" about the environment and environmental justice, Elliott, like many of his urban peers, chose to use his three minutes to get personal and address issues specific to urban indigenous people, describing himself as a badly misused natural resource in his own community.

> I am so wilted and beaten to the point bumble bees won't even look at me anymore
>
> I am the rose that grew from a crack in concrete
> but was stepped on by feet rocking the newest Jordans
> I stand on the corner selling my organs
> hopin my pain will make music these people will enjoy
> see my pollen produces potent poisons to please this world
> but please . . . this world is too much
> you see I am that wilted dandelion that stands defined to the hands of time
> but damn these lines are so hard to spit . . .
> when momma had a baby but its head's been ripped . . .

In this piece, Elliott pays homage to rapper Tupac Shakur's poem "The Rose That Grew from Concrete" (Shakur, 1999) and creates similar images

contrasting his natural potential for growth with the forces stepping on and wilting him. As did Bob, Elliott holds the environment in which he lives accountable for inadequately nurturing him. In the same vein as Darrin in the opening of this chapter, Elliott turns to artistic expression, spitting lines, however difficult, in response to his sense of being stunted and limited.

We feel that when Tim and Ayanna close their classroom doors, they create and protect a space for a pedagogy of openness and curiosity that is conducive to sociopolitical critique and personal investigation, for going "off script." This improvisation can be profoundly instructive for both students and teachers, for instance, when it leads to literacy lessons such as the importance of audience and purpose in writing and the situatedness of the poet and listener's perspectives. The process can also illustrate the challenge and importance of working to better understand and sometimes move beyond the differences which can lead to mistrust and misunderstanding (Low, 2011). It is also very important in building the relations of mutual trust and respect that are the cornerstones of teaching and learning. Whereas this risky work is enabled by closing the classroom door, the result is that the teachers willing to do this are largely alone and so are not sharing their successes and challenges. We write this chapter to help open the door on these powerful literacy practices.

Teachers regularly tell us how the spoken word workshops transformed certain aspects of their classrooms. For instance, Tim and other teachers have remarked upon the dramatic drop in lateness and absences in spoken word classes. As well, students who are not usually among the top academic students in the school often win the school slams, as different literacy skills such as oratorical and performance ability are valued in the slam competitions. We have also seen the work have an important legacy for students. For instance, when we meet students we have taught in the past, they often take the opportunity to reconnect, updating us on their lives, but also, tellingly, on their continuing experiences, including blocks and inspirations, as writers and poets. Many of the students who participated in the spoken word movement have found the space to use their voices in profound and meaningful ways. Sharese is currently studying to receive her PhD in linguistics at Stanford University. Elliott, who was a Princeton Prize recipient for one of his poems, became involved with youth development in his city after graduating. He was instrumental in the start-up of his family construction business and attributes his work ethic and confidence as an entrepreneur to slam and community activism. Whatever their life pathways, they often share a thread of outspokenness and confidence that lends itself to agency for social change.

NOTES

1. Whereas Tim and the students in Bronwen's research study have been given pseudonyms in the interest of guaranteeing their anonymity, Ayanna and the youth quoted here from Reenah's Slam High poetry program are not minors and would like their words to be authored publicly.
2. Retrieved May 20, 2013, from http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28.

3. Brave New Voices is hosted annually by Youth Speaks, the largest youth spoken word organization today, founded in 1996 in San Francisco. Youth Speaks works with about 200,000 youth across the country in partnership with organizations in more than 30 cities, offering a wide range of programs including after-school and in-class writing and performance workshops (www.youthspeaks.org).

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10 The War on Dignity
Hip-Hop Youth Read Schools the Riot Act

Brad Porfilio, Debangshu Roychoudhury, and Lauren M. Gardner

The virulent, all-out "war on youth" instigated by political and economic leaders in the US nearly 15 years ago has become further intensified since the global economic meltdown (Chomsky, 2013; Giroux, 2013). Unlike past economic recessions impacting citizens in the US, where the state provided social entitlements and subsidies that improved the lives of working-class citizens, the corporate *largesse* has wielded its power to further debilitate the general populace, particularly low income children and their family members. For instance, the state supports corporate interests by allocating resources and generating initiatives that keep in place the US's military-prison-industrial complex while simultaneously curtailing resources for public goods that improve the well-being of the working class, including public healthcare, public transportation, public employment, and public housing. Collectively, the state's unjust actions are responsible for breeding a youth-hating culture that is witnessed in a "41.6 percent jobless rate for Black teens" (Bloice, 2013); the number of homeless school-aged children surpassing "1 million during the 2011–12 school year—a 57 percent increase since 2006–07" (Kaufmann, 2013); an "increase of 700,000 children in poverty in the US between 2010 and 2011" (Watson, 2013).

Sadly, the assault against youths' dignity is becoming more pronounced in K-12 schools across the US. In fact, schools are becoming virtually a "school hell" for youth who are marginalized by their racial class status to the extent that they are pushing themselves entirely out of the schooling process and into the penal system (Alexander, 2010; Casella, 2008; Kincheloe, 2007; Tuck, 2011). For instance, more and more children attend educational structures that are debilitated, unsafe, unsanitary, and overcrowded, where they are criminalized and demonized through an array of surveillance equipment, armed security guards, military recruitment stations, and draconian "get tough on youth" zero-tolerance policies (Casella, 2008; Kozol, 2006; Porfilio & Carr, 2010; Ross & Gibson, 2007; Saltman & Gabbard, 2010; Tuck, 2011). Numerous low income youth who reside in urban contexts across the US have recently grappled with having their school districts temporarily shut down, losing all of their teachers as well as "permanently shuttering" their neighborhood schools (Resnikoff, 2013). Political and corporate leaders have used the very crisis they have created

in public education to put in place additional corporate formations in K-12 schools, including high-stakes examinations, merit pay, vouchers, corporate teacher training initiatives, and value-added methods of teacher evaluation, all of which stunt children's intellectual and social well-being. According to Chomsky (2013), the power elite continue to corporatize schools so they are able to block youth from critically thinking and "questioning authority" as well as to replace educators who are capable of empowering youth through democratic classroom practices and culturally relevant instruction with compliant technicians who are trained in fast-track, corporately sponsored programs such as Teach for America [TFA].

Even though numerous low income children are experiencing "unending and multiple assaults to their sense of dignity," as noted by Hall in this volume, due to the neoliberal takeover of schools and other segments of social life, there is a burgeoning movement of critically aware youth activists and artists who are finding fissures amid the status quo and implementing pedagogical projects that are dedicated to making youth fully human (Freire, 2005). Specifically, Hip-Hop intellectuals are creating multimedia presentations, narrative writing assignments, collaborative choreography workshops, dance performance, and student-developed artistic projects for the purpose of sparking youths' intellectual desire to critically understand the nature of their social world and to become active in transforming it.

The purpose of this chapter is to document the impact of Hip-Hop Based Education [HHBE] on youth situated in schools across North America. Our insight is gleaned from the pedagogical projects two of the authors (Lauren and Debangshu) implemented as Hip-Hop artists and critical researchers in schools in Houston and New York. It also emanates from the empirical research conducted by one of the authors (Brad) with Hip-Hop artists and program directors of the Canadian youth-led organization, the 411 Initiative for Change. Based on the Hip-Hop artists' narratives and connecting with youth personally and pedagogically in K-12 schools through Hip-Hop culture, we argue that the virulent assault on youths' dignity has the potential to be ameliorated if critical and concerned educators and school leaders connect with Hip-Hop-centered, youth-led organizations. Rather than perpetuating the larger pattern of K-12 schools implementing curricula and teaching methods designed to position students to be dutiful, compliant citizens, youth-led initiatives informed by Hip-Hop culture have the potency to afford students the "knowledge and skills they need to learn how to deliberate, make judgments, and choices about participating in and shaping decisions that affect everyday life, institutional reform and government policy" (Giroux, 2009, p. 3).

YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

Over the past decade, anti-democratic social conditions have continued to worsen for youth in North America, particularly for low income youth and youth of color, as the dominant elite further eliminate or privatize social

goods as well as move corporate ideologies, practices, and relationships to the so-called Third World, where they concentrate their wealth and power by compelling numerous social actors in Latin America, Africa, and Asia to toil in globalized sweatshops and by controlling the natural resources of the inhabitants (McLaren, 2007). The assault on urban youth of color in North America has been severely proliferated by the social "toxins" of racism, mass unemployment, mass incarceration, pervasive violence, and police brutality, as well as racist school practices and lack of productive after-school care (Alexander, 2010; Porfilio & Carr, 2010; Saltman & Gabbard, 2010). In response to their increasingly stark social reality, numerous youth across North America have generated dissent movements with their peers. They have collectively raised their concerns for and opposition to the social, economic, and political forces responsible for suffering and misery permeating life inside and outside of schools. Not only are today's youth engaging in activist pursuits at a younger age as compared with youth of previous generations, but they are using social media to connect with other "border" youth who are dealing with similar oppressive social and economic conditions (Fine, as cited in Verderame, 2009).

In some cases, youth in North America have also harnessed social media and mass media to build globalized intergenerational networks, where they lobby for fundamental changes in schools and in society (Kippenbrock & Thornburgh, 2009; Verderame, 2009). According to Fine (in Verderame, 2009), mass media and social networking have also broadened the scope and sophistication of youth activism:

> People are working both locally and in some cases globally. So it's operating at multiple levels, and that's really exciting. It's powerful for young people to feel like they're part of a national and sometime international movement of youth trying to create change. (Fine, as cited in Verderame, 2009).

On the other hand, Taft and Gordon (2013) have been highly critical of youth-centered spaces as the catalyst for the most profound activist work. In their study of youth activists from 2002–2006, they found that youth activism is negotiated and understood in a manner incongruent to the institutional understandings of activism and political engagement commonly regarded through youth advisory organizations.

Common to the youth-led organizational project is the notion of youth participatory action research also known as YPAR (Kirshner, 2007). YPAR or its variant, the community-based participatory action research model, or CBPAR, has shown a rapid growth in the fields of social science and health. YPAR is a form of CBPAR where youth engage and identify problems they want to improve and conduct research on the various ways to improve these problems in order to advocate for social change (Cammarota & Fine, 2007). A variety of challenges exist in creating an equitable learning and

research environment where youth can interact at an equal power level with researchers, including limited time afforded by the project, power imbalances created due to hierarchical rules and authorities, competing demands as well as turnover of staff and students (Ozer et al., 2010). Ozer et al. (2013) find that despite these shortcomings, youth are able, with the aid of organizations, to reiterate the prime goals and objectives as well as create avenues for exerting their own power and influence over the process.

The after-school context often provides a rich space for youth-led organizational work, particularly in the realm of civic engagement organizations focusing on building democratic practices amongst youth. Community-based organizations [CBOs] have often been the site for what has been referred to as the "civic engagement gap." Civic engagement programs outlined by Shiller (2013) have created avenues for youth to develop a civic identity, to feel empowered as well as build self-efficacy particularly in the area of advocacy.

HIP-HOP AND HIP-HOP-BASED EDUCATION: REVOLUTIONARY POTENTIAL

It has been 40 years since numerous subjugated youth gathered in New York City in response to the unjust social conditions impacting their schools, families, and communities (Chang, 2005; Dimitriadis, 2001; Prier, 2010). Through various and innovative forms of cultural production—such as break dancing, graffiti, spoken word, and song—racialized youth have offered powerful analyses and critiques of their social conditions (Hill, 2009; Prier, 2010). Over the past three decades, as Hip-Hop has moved from a local youth movement to an international phenomenon, the corporate music industry has wielded its power to redirect Hip-Hop's social energies away from critical expressions of struggle, protest, and resistance toward messages of materialism, greed, and individualism (Hill, 2009; Roychoudhury & Gardner, 2012). Hip-Hop icons of today often describe themselves as successful entrepreneurs ("hustlers in the game") with their standpoint aligning closely with white male corporate executives who promote a materialistic, misogynist, homophobic, and violent image of Hip-Hop culture (Magubane, 2006; Porfilio & Viola, 2012).

Despite corporate desire to remake Hip-Hop into purely a corporate configuration, there currently exists a socially transgressive Hip-Hop counterculture that spans the globe. The alternative movement is marked by the revolutionary fervor emanating from the dissent work of Hip-Hop intellectuals bent on establishing a social order on the ideals of democracy, freedom, and justice. This movement consists of racialized youth from the ghettos of Western Europe, the territories of the Middle East, shantytowns of Southeast Asia, and the favelas of Latin America who have utilized Hip-Hop as their unique counter-space to explore possibilities for critical

inquiry, historical reclamation, as well as an avenue to nurture emancipatory imagination (Porfilio & Viola, 2012).

Over the past several years, critical scholars, educators, educational leaders, and youth themselves have infused various elements of Hip-Hop culture across the various content areas and amid after-school programs in numerous North American schools (Akom, 2009; Gosa & Fields, 2012; Petchauer, 2009). However, the impact of HHBE varies contextually, depending upon the schooling process, from reinscribing the dominant norms and power relations to improving "student-teacher relationships, preventing alienation from schooling practices, enriching school climate, and promoting literacy" (Gosa & Fields, 2012). In the case studies we provide below, we illustrate how youth-led organizations informed by Hip-Hop culture have provided thousands of youth in North America a humanizing form of education. The Hip-Hop artists and educators created in a cultural milieu of Hip-Hop nudge youth to engage with a critical civic praxis. Critical civic praxis involves the engagement with ideas, practices, and experiences that build the capacity for the struggle for social injustice and views young people as subjects, rather than objects who are capable of changing debilitating social and structural conditions of inequity (Ginwright & Cammorata, 2007).

The youth presented through the case studies herein exemplify critical civic praxis in that they utilize Hip-Hop art as a tool for transforming what they view as the sites of inequity and injustice. In doing so, they are utilizing the art as a way to sharpen their analysis of what needs to be changed and how they can create change.

METHODOLOGY

Case study methodology has been chosen as the method of scientific analysis in this present study in order to illustrate contextually the multifaceted ways youth operating at the margins utilize Hip-Hop as an artistic form of activist engagement as well as a form of cultural production in order to resist assaults on their dignity committed by educators and administrators complicit in perpetuating systematic inequalities borne in institutional contexts. Case study methodology is generally utilized to use cases as representations of greater social phenomena. Although neither causal nor correlative relationships are being assumed, case studies qualitatively elaborate a process that would be otherwise difficult to illustrate. Herein, case studies illustrate the relational nature between adults and youth at the intersections of institutional development toward the end of creating means to address and redress educational, social, and cultural inequity and indignity through Hip-Hop.

Cases (N=3) have been chosen purposefully because each represents a youth-led organization in North America that utilizes various elements of Hip-Hop performance and culture to resist the preeminent social message

youth receive about themselves as problematic and dangerous. Cases have been chosen to differ on one particular independent axis—population vis-à-vis geographical region—in order to illustrate how the ways youth utilize Hip-Hop to redignify and resist instantiate across various contexts and across genders. The following case studies represent data collected in 2011–2013 in Toronto, Houston, and New York.

Data Sources

The Toronto, Ontario, case represents interview data ascertained from two program directors and two artists associated with the Canadian youth-led organization, the 411 Initiative for Change. For almost 13 years, the organization has utilized Hip-Hop in its multimedia performances and curricula initiatives in educative contexts across Canada for the purpose of providing youth "with the motivations, skills and support to become more engaged and active citizens in their communities ("About Us," 2012). A qualitative framework was employed because it allows researchers to capture the experiences and interpretations of social phenomena as well as establishes the participants rather than researchers as the experts in the study (Creswell, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2007). The participants were equipped to share their experiences by creating or taking part in youth-led organizations and being situated in oppressive contexts during their childhood. This method also allowed the participants to share their insights in terms of the impact the organization has had on youth, educators, and other community members (Porfilio & Watz, 2010).

The Houston case represents literacy data collected from an ongoing three-year longitudinal study on youth psychological well-being and Hip-Hop narrative from 2012–2015. The literacy measurements were taken from a letter written to Barack Obama as part of the school's in-school Hip-Hop curriculum and measures expression and rhetorical strategies, as well as values. These analyses provide an in-depth lens into the way youth narrate their psychological selves through writing.

The New York case represents an after-school youth-led organization focused on global and social issues affecting youth in a myriad of contexts. This particular case study is taken from a project the organization did with a psychological and dance researcher, entitled "Hip-Hop Dance to UnderSTAND." The project consisted of 17 youth participating in narrative writing, collaborative choreography workshops, dance performance, and critical Hip-Hop dance curriculum. Youth utilize Hip-Hop dance as an emancipatory historical site of critical consciousness through dance curriculum steeped in activist identity orientation and historical black liberatory artistic styles including jazz, salsa, breaking, and Hip-Hop social dance. The high school-aged students wrote "I dance because and for what purpose" narratives and choreographed a team dance in small groups with the prompt of performing their social justice dance piece for the United

Nations about a social issue of their choosing affecting the youth and their communities. The genres of the dance essays and dance performances of the social justice pieces were analyzed through a discursive values analysis.

Recruitment and Sampling

The Toronto case study represents interviews with youth and facilitators taken from active research-based recruitment. The Houston example represents a sampling which includes students who are already in and participating in the in-school and after-school rap narrative series offered through a large charter school. Recruitment was IRB approved and both parental consent and youth assent was retrieved in both Spanish and English in December 2012. The Hip-Hop Dance to UnderSTAND study conducted with a New York City nonprofit organization over two consecutive days received IRB approval with parental consent and student assent and utilized a convenience sampling of 17 diverse female and male high school students (Gardner, 2013).

TORONTO: ENGAGING AND INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH HIP-HOP

Tamara Dawit, Patrick McCormick, and Anita Wong founded the 411 Initiative for Change nearly 13 years ago because they were aware that numerous schools across Canada failed to provide youth the knowledge, skills, and ideas necessary to become agents of social transformation, social actors who hold the civic imagination to be "self-reflective about public issues and the world in which they live" (Giroux, 2010). Instead, schools, particularly those attended by low income youth of color, were complicit in sapping the dignity of youth by instituting unjust policies, such as the opening of more charter schools and "losing bounty transfer" in school boards. These mandates ensured already cash-strapped schools lost valuable resources and became further racially segregated (Anderssen, 2012).

Prior to launching the 411, the organizers had success involving youth in global educational projects dedicated to bringing awareness and amelioration of systemic injustices and social maladies. For instance, Tamara led initiatives that focused on youth and AIDS and collaborated with the National Youth Anti-Racism Network. Central in the organizers' previous success in captivating youth to become social agents of change was connecting with youth through the cultural mediums and knowledge systems through which they learn about the world. Not coincidently, the organizers felt confident that melding Hip-Hop culture, social commentary, and multimedia would make the 411 Initiative for Change a leading youth-led organization for engaging young people "on common global issues" ("About Us," 2012).

Several of the Hip-Hop artists associated with the 411 had experienced firsthand the failure of the Canadian educational system to provide them with the critical literacy skills to pinpoint what constitutive forces caused pain and alienation in their own lives, to understand what bred social ills in their communities, and to recognize what spurred social inequalities across the globe. However, the artists gained much of their strength, resiliency, and critical understanding of the world through various elements of Hip-Hop culture, including deejaying, break dancing, graffiti art, fashion, and emceeing. They were also aware that numerous youth across Canada learned about their world through various "teaching machines," such as YouTube, Facebook, e-zines, DVDs, and cellphones. Therefore, the artists were confident that schools could support "students' self-empowerment and self-transformation" (McLaren, 2012, p. 62), rather than position youth to be complicit in supporting the larger power structures, if they provided them intellectually stimulating experiences centered on examining the culture they bring to the classroom and mediated through the modalities in which they learn.

For instance, Eternia was raised in an impoverished household in which domestic violence was part of her lived reality. She decided to leave her debilitating situation and moved out of her household at the age of 15. The world of Hip-Hop became a source of critical knowledge and solace for Eternia. It helped her understand and confront the life difficulties she encountered as a young woman. It also propelled her to complete high school and excel in higher education.

Eternia was also cognizant that young people across Canada were dealing with similar unjust realities that she experienced during her childhood. She also believed many of them were not equipped to recognize how their pain and alienation are linked to systemic oppression along the lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality. She was also fully aware that numerous young people learned about their world through technological media and their pop culture idols.

Yet, unlike many politicians, educators, and corporate leaders who are complicit in supporting the idea that today's youth are a source of society's problems, including crime, violence, and poverty, Eternia's connection with youth and her own firsthand experiences with systemic injustice gave her the critical capacity to view that "young people are smart and empathetic and aware." Eternia has used her critical insights surrounding youth, connection with Hip-Hop culture, and understanding of systemic injustices to become a source of inspiration, knowledge, and hope for thousands of young people across Canada. She relates the following:

> Really, just watching how the youth get into our presentations is very positive. The interaction and engagement is truly inspiring. Young people are smart and empathetic and aware. Every day it inspires me to learn more, know more, and be a better example. Young people

> are looking to me for answers. I know many women and girls have approached me and reached out to me, expressing how my music mirrors many of their experiences, such as pain, sadness, joy, and others. They say, "It's like you wrote my life story in your songs." That happens a lot. I think people crave authenticity and genuineness. I provide that for a lot of people. I'm just me.

Eternia provides many "young people" the "answers" by connecting with them through YouTube, Facebook, and her own personal websites. She also helps students unpack why they are dealing with experiences of "pain, sadness, and joy" through her multimedia presentations fused with technology, including DVDs, computers, microphones, and speakers, with elements of Hip-Hop culture, through her personal narratives dealing with injustice and through social commentary. She has also been a trailblazer in the Hip-Hop world, providing inspiration for numerous female artists who must combat the gendered idea that the only legitimate MCs are male.

The organizers and the artists of the 411 Initiative for Change have also offered a liberatory education to youth across Canada because they provide pedagogical spaces for youth to share their insights as to how the organization can assist them in understanding and transforming their world. For instance, based upon the youths' input during and after their workshops and multimedia presentations, the organization decided to provide students with insight on domestic issues impacting young girls, such as "body image, self-esteem, racism, careers, healthy relationships and bullying (cyber bullying)" (The 411 Initiative for Change, 2011). Previously the organization only felt it necessary to infuse pedagogies that guided students to understand what is responsible for the systemic oppression girls are grappling with across the globe, such as early childhood marriage, violence, and poverty.

The organization also firmly recognizes that the influences of their pedagogies on youth are elusive and may only resonate with them, if at all, in the future. Yet, as critical pedagogues, they hold out hope their brand of critical education can inspire youth to engage others to become critically reflexive about their world and to become active in transforming it. The artists documented how their organization inspired youth to join other youth-led organizations dedicated to concerns surrounding social justice; to formulate their own organizations; to fundraise for causes that support activists' pursuits; and to educate their friends and family members about issues surrounding social justice, youth culture, and education.

HOUSTON: USING HIP-HOP TO ADVOCATE TO THE ABSTRACT

Of Hip-Hop's many aesthetic media, rap narrative may be one of its most ubiquitous. Youth in the Houston case example represent seven early high school students aged 13–16 years old from low income backgrounds. All

of the youth are either black or Hispanic; two of the youth are female, and five are male. All youth represent a convenience sample from an in-school rap narrative construction and performance class and workshop series. The class and series are facilitated by a Hip-Hop artist who is also a teacher at the institution; youth create their own raps and lead in the performances. To date, youth have performed at various venues in the community, including their 1,000-person annual show entitled "Feel the Force/Truth for the Youth."

As part of a civic engagement portion of the curriculum and as a way to negotiate the values for literacy explicitly upheld by the school and implicitly upheld by the youth, the facilitator requested that the youth write a letter to President Obama advocating for why they think Hip-Hop should be taught in schools. Youth were prompted to use experiences from their own lives and empty space on paper where they can write. As part of the research being conducted there by one of the authors, youth were asked to write the letters three times over a one-year period. The following analysis demonstrates the use of rhetorical strategies co-occurring with expressive components of the narrative in one representative narrative example.

Analytic Strategy

Two of the three authors created a content analysis of all 21 narrative letters over the three time periods. The content analysis yielded 64 words that held a meaning and valence related to the theoretical conception that Hip-Hop enacts a form of critical civic praxis in education. From the 64 concepts that emerged, two reliability coders reduced the number to a series of organizing principles based on critical analysis of the text. Three organizing principles included Rhetorical Strategies, Expressions, and Values. Rhetorical Strategies consist of the ways and tools the author uses to make a convincing argument. Expressions include the ways, the aesthetics, and the stylistics of how the author communicates his or her argument. Values represent the ideologies or idioms that emerge when narrating.

For the purposes of this chapter, we focus on two specific coded items: abstract words as a form of expression and support strategies utilized through the use of rhetoric. Abstract words are an important component of Hip-Hop narrative in that they allow the rapper to utilize metaphor and simile as a way to create imagery that is vivid and oftentimes explicit. Abstract words are also important in the development of literacy in that they usually represent multi-syllabic word usage and also indicate the use of cognitive states such as "expression," "fantasy," or "imagination." Furthermore, multi-syllabic words are useful in rap narrative because they allow for the creation of multi-syllabic rhyme patterns which phonically sound pleasing and emerge from the tradition of jazz literature as located in work by Ralph Ellison.

Findings and Theorizations

What is of interest here is that during the *advocacy* period of writing, the area in the narrative when the author uses specific reasoning to support his or her conclusion, the use of abstract words increases. Specifically, the co-occurrence between abstract words and the advocacy portion of the narrative was 1.00*, meaning that every time the author was advocating for Hip-Hop, he or she used abstract words as a way to convey meaning.

The purpose of the letter writing was to afford students the opportunity to take on a leadership role as a rhetorical strategy specifically around the culture of their choosing. The letter, a symbol and discursive tool utilized in mainstream education, provided a common context for the use of values negotiation between those put forth by the school and those taken up by youth through youth culture. By allowing for the stance of leader and allowing youth to focus on a potentially revolutionary cultural force as their topic, youth were able to advocate for themselves as inclusively members of both Hip-Hop and traditional schooling cultures. They communicated to the president of the US that the two worlds are not disparate foci, but exist together in the consciousness of youth and that Hip-Hop acts as a metric to solve problems both inside and outside of school.

NEW YORK: THE HIP-HOP DANCE TO UNDERSTAND STUDY

The Hip-Hop dance cypher is a "communal and competitive discourse . . . the height of community and competition . . . where all (or some combination) of the Hip-hop cultural modes of discourse and discursive practices—call and response . . . signifying . . . narrative sequencing" and much more "converge into a fluid matrix of linguistic-cultural activity," with Hip-Hop dance serving as an embodiment of Hip-Hop culture (Alim, 2006) and Hip-Hop dance as a unique multimodal discourse (Gardner, 2013). This study focuses on understanding how urban youth of color construct and expand upon tools of Hip-Hop dance as historical discourse of critical consciousness to develop and embody an activist stance (Gardner, 2012, 2013). The study also seeks to understand how Hip-Hop dance choreography is utilized as a tool for transformation and what the affordances of Hip-Hop dance are (Gardner, 2013; Gardner, Roychoudhury, Garner, & Tyson, 2012).

The New York case study presents findings from 17 urban high school students aged 14–18 years old from diverse backgrounds, including 14 females and 3 males. The students are active members of the New York nonprofit organization focused on global youth and community issues and participated in the two-day Hip-Hop dance study.

Analyses

For the purpose of this case study, the data presented focus on one of the five strands of data collected: the individual student narratives responding to the prompt "I dance because and for what purpose." Most of the students used an entire hour to write these essays and wrote on one sheet of paper. The researcher has conducted a discursive values analysis of the 17 narratives and has analyzed for predominant values and value co-occurrences.

The analytic strategy consisted of the researcher analyzing the 17 narratives with a single reliability coder. Analysis and reliability coding revealed 10 specific values around four organizing principles: critical consciousness, emotions, heath, and development. Initial findings indicate that the four dominant values emerging across the 17 narratives are *identity* (development principle), *catharsis* (emotions principle), *thought/reflection* (critical consciousness principle), and *dynamic interplay* (development principle) (Gardner, 2013). The narratives were also analyzed for value co-occurrence, which indicated that the values of *identity* and *dynamic interplay* are co-occurring in a number of instances across the 17 narratives.

The preliminary analyses for the Hip-Hop Dance to UnderSTAND study (Gardner, 2013) utilized a particular reliable coding scheme across two coders. Identity within this study is defined as instances with dance narratives where dance helps students express individuality, authenticity, and self-development as far as who they want to become. An example of a piece of narration that was coded for identity was "(we dance to express ourselves) and our feelings." The primary portion of this phrase was coded for identity and the second portion was coded for emotional expression. Dynamic interplay within this study is being defined as the dynamic relationship between self and community that exists with the understanding that people, actions, and development are something shared and existing between people. An example of a piece of narrative coded for dynamic interplay would be "we are all connected through music and dance." Preliminary Findings

Preliminary findings suggest that student dancers were building upon tools of critical consciousness through a critical Hop-Hop dance educational curricula in order to develop their sense of *identity* through *dynamic interplay* with relationships forming and developing through the instantiation of Hip-Hop dance culture and development of a Hip-Hop dance community (Gardner, 2013). Many of the students had some level of critical consciousness coming into the study with an understanding of global, social, and political ills, as well as oppressions that create disparities and social stratifications. The students were able to expand on their current conceptualizations of the world, further developing critical consciousness, by being able to build analytical and collaborative tools of community and mobilization. Students, therefore, developed an understanding of Hip-Hop and urban arts that stretches far past aesthetics to an understanding of art

as propaganda or a transformative tool with which to tell stories through dynamic systems of meaning in order to inspire others to mobilize with them to create positive social changes.

DISCUSSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

This chapter documented how youth-led organizations informed by Hip-Hop culture offered youth in Toronto, Houston, and New York a humanizing education amid educational structures predicated on molding youth into "human products" who "lack the capacity and vocabulary to challenge the assumptions and structures of the corporate state" (Hedges, 2011). The directors and artists from the 411 Initiative for Change in Toronto fused technology with elements of Hip-Hop culture, the artists' personal struggles with systemic injustices, and reflective spaces "to empower and inspire young people" ("About Us," 2012). The pedagogical initiatives launched by the organization left thousands of youth critically aware and personally empowered to challenge the systems fueling their alienation, injustice in their communities, and the suffering and misery of people across the planet. The youth-led organization in Houston centered its pedagogical work on the Hip-Hop narrative to foster students' critical literacy skills so as to become leaders in solving social problems inside and outside of their educational community. The rap narrative functioned as a revolutionary springboard as youth were able to develop a composite model of self inclusively as a member of both Hip-Hop and traditional schooling cultures. The youth-led organization in New York employed Hip-Hop dance as a central component in guiding youth to develop critical consciousness and to take an activist stance. The pedagogical initiative helped to facilitate youth building analytical and collaborative tools of community and mobilization as well as to garner an understanding of Hip-Hop and urban arts that stretches far past aesthetic to an understanding of art as propaganda.

Based on our empirical research, pedagogical initiatives, and personal connection with youth in schools across North America, we believe critical educators, schoolteachers, and school leaders ought to continue to humanize K-12 schools through a curricula that focuses on "youth culture and resistance" (Akom, 2009, p. 55). In addition to HHBE serving as a potentially liberating source for youth who often become marginalized, alienated, and disaffected in schools that focus on profit making, on deskilling and silencing educators, there is a burgeoning dissent educational movement launched by youth who are cognizant of the deleterious impact that corporate impulses are having on life in K-12 schools. For instance, collegiate students who formulated Students United for Public Education [SUPE] to make people cognizant of "for-profit corporations and their political representatives" who are using the guise of "closing the achievement gap" and "school choice" to "privatize and sell off public education" (Students

United for Public Education, 2012). They also realize concerned citizens must join them in confronting "problems of racial and economic inequality" and promoting a "robust and well supported education system" in order to provide a quality education for all.

To be sure, educators, youth, and concerned citizens must go beyond producing curricula bent on youth culture and resistance. The public school system may become dismantled and other social goods privatized before these curricula spark youth to become agents of social transformation. They must also focus their energy on unveiling how neoliberal capitalism is the chief source behind human suffering and misery and why youth-centered organizations must engage with broader coalitions to dismantle it.

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11 Conclusion

Julia Hall

It is a hard time to be young person today, above all one growing up in marginalized circumstances. It is clear among those who are economically disenfranchised, African American families and children and those from other culturally dominated groups experience the most assaults on dignity. This takes place in terms of percentages living in poverty, numbers of those living in polluted communities, particular methods of targeting by payday lenders and other arms of the consumer lending industry, and so forth. As detailed in this volume, the problems experienced by students in school can no longer be seen as separate from those that shape lives outside classroom walls. This new reality—as articulated in ever more harsher ways—is an outcome of the crisis-prone economic system as it continues to hurtle down its track toward maturation. On the timeline of the development of the economic system, at this juncture unfettered markets are increasingly presented as the only solution to the restoration of a strong US presence. Yet as long as any remedy for economic crises involves the same narrow range of options as tried in the past—either private, state, or a mix of private-state options—the result will be continued despair for children and their families. As Wolff (2010) maintains, these limited solutions leave the essential problem, the nature of the unbalanced employer-employee relationship, unexamined. The recent resurfacing of various libertarian solutions to the ongoing economic crisis bode especially disastrously to the basic rights and dignity of those who do not benefit from racial privilege.

How does this economic reality specifically translate into the struggle for survival among marginalized children in their homes and communities? As explored by Bullard, in particularly low income and African American neighborhoods, the surrounding air, water, and soil are toxic. Land and water is increasingly contaminated with the byproducts of industry and urbanization, including raw sewage, insecticides, PCPs, hormones, nitrogen fertilizers, antibiotics, and other industrial and chemical run-off. Such neighborhoods are often noisy, located near industry, highways, and airports, and are often full of physical hazards. These communities also typically lack green space and opportunities to play in safe and healthy areas. Housing is likely to be made of unsafe materials and, with absent owners,

may lack health and safely upgrades. Such housing is often crowded with high concentrations of people living in each dwelling (Bullard, 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2007). Lalonde argues relative to more prosperous areas, food that can be accessed in such communities, in terms of proximity, is typically processed, old, unhealthy, and overpriced. Unemployed and underemployed, families are increasingly targeted by various sectors of the debt trap industry as they scramble to pay for basics such as food, medicine, and rent. Adults in homes are tired, sick, and worried. Children in these same homes likely absorb this stress.

Underprivileged children confront further obstacles inside their racially and social class sorted schools. Top-down curriculum reflecting bland and uncritical knowledge measured through standardized tests that penalize are the norm for these students. Curricular materials promote a narrow set of ideologies that celebrate militarism and European capitalist values exclusively. Bare bones course offerings with a glaring absence of art, music, and language leave few opportunities for creative discovery. With limited academic courses these students will likely not be able to compete for anything with their more privileged peers across town. Instead, many of these schools are structured as school-to-prison pipelines, in which there is an abundance of metal detectors, searches in schools, and other forms of militarized surveillance and punishment (e.g. Kozol, 1991, 2005). "Learning" means memorization. Patriotism takes the form of accepting these ideologies unquestioningly, blaming oneself for "failure," and the continual purchasing of commodities and services as a measure of happiness and success (e.g. Carlson, 2012; Hursh, 2008; Pierce, 2007; Saltman, 2005, 2007, 2010). This curriculum takes on dimension within/across classrooms, schools, neighborhoods, and households and diminishes the life chances of these children.

In this high-pressure environment, it is exceedingly complicated for educators and students to question and critique. In this atmosphere, the ability to grow and learn in a respectful and healthy environment, including the opportunity to be exposed in schools to critical ways of thinking about structural arrangements, equality, civic engagement, and identity are increasingly replaced with the narrow and brackish. Meanwhile, there is a rising tide of (re)new(ed) social movements (e.g. libertarianisms, special-interest strands of the Tea Party, exclusionist parties) that feature disparate groups finding unified meaning in angry rhetoric that is racist, anti-female, anti-immigrant, anti-union, and anti-public investment. The sharpness of this anger is at the same time a contrast to the otherwise vague and disconnected understandings of how policies get constructed and the purposes they serve. At stake is the current generation of children who have been denied a clear notion of the public, and its voice, its social movements (e.g. feminism, anti-poverty, anti-racism), its sense of dignity, and a sense of hope. Many of these voids have been replaced by an overriding despair (Lipman, 2011; Noguera, 2008; Shapiro, 2009; Steinberg,

2010). As argued here, spaces in schools need to be pried open so that students and teachers can together engage in deep discussion and interrogation of structure and culture.

Educators and students in this volume work to (re)capture sites of positivity and hope. Schools are ideal places for such critical learning and these discussions could be taught across curriculum (e.g. Emdin, 2010; Forbes, 2010). However, educators and families cannot be expected to do this alone. For comprehensive social change to occur, in which children are provided with environments in which they can thrive, the concept of human dignity must be reclaimed both in and outside school. There is an immediate need for critical educators to access cross-disciplinary research and to network with other individuals and groups in the pursuit of cohesive change that is large enough for the moment. As this volume demonstrates, we must mobilize with those in other disciplinary and applied fields, such as government, policy making, environmental health, public health, mental health, social work, law, human rights, criminal justice, sociology, media studies, certain NGOs, social work, and child development. These groups would do well to leverage their combined social and political resources to challenge the assault on dignity among low income children in their communities. The imaginative and innovative voices and ideas generated by teachers, students, families, and other community members who have long been working to reject and reshape such forces must be the central part of this. New ways of thinking about economic crisis and the tired pattern of temporary fixes and blame might emerge. In all of this, the concept of a "public good" as a cultural set of beliefs and practices essential to the basis of democracy must be claimed.

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