

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

“They say Pushout, WE SAY PUSHBACK!!!”: A Case Study Examination of Chicanx-Latinx
After-School Youth Development and Transformational Resistance

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Johnny Carlos Ramirez

2018

© Copyright by

Johnny Carlos Ramirez

2018

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“They say Pushout, WE SAY PUSHBACK!!!”: A Case Study Examination of Chicanx-Latinx
After-School Youth Development and Transformational Resistance

by

Johnny Carlos Ramirez

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Daniel G. Solórzano, Chair

This qualitative dissertation study aims to examine the role that social justice-based After-School (AS) programs play in the development of asset-based oppositional behaviors that express critical agency and social action among urban Chicanx-Latinx youth. Research has proven that youth developmental models that cultivate agency among youth of color directly contributes to Positive Youth Developmental (PYD) outcomes. However, few studies have explained how or outlined specifically what engaged Chicanx-Latinx AS youth participants to develop a resistance behavior that reflects a critique of social oppression and motivation of social justice—Transformational Resistance (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). Simultaneously, the study investigates the potential PYD impacts that transformational resistance behaviors has on their social, emotional, and mental well-being. Utilizing Latina/o Critical Theory (Delgado Bernal, 2002) and Chicana/o school resistance frameworks, the study sought to understand how

Chicanx-Latinx youth make meaning and theorize on their process of developing a critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice.

Employing qualitative case study methods, the study focused on 16 Chicanx-Latinx youth participants, ages 15 to 24, who participated in a social justice-based AS program in the inner city of Los Angeles. At two school-based research sites, 18 semi-structured interviews and two focus groups were conducted: 8 interviews with AS youth participants from a youth leadership and mentoring program, 8 interviews with AS youth participants from a youth leadership Hip Hop program, and 2 interviews with the program directors of the social justice-based community youth program, *Advancing Justice* (pseudonym). In terms of data collection and analysis, in-depth individual and focus group interviews, participant observations and youth-generated projects were collected and preliminarily coded. Preliminary themes were identified and presented to youth participants and staff as a reflexive and collaborative process. Following this collaborative process, final themes were identified. Study findings indicated that the intentional role that creating safe spaces that focused on healing circles contributed to the development of Transformational Resistance outcomes. Youth in the study reported that ethnic studies curriculum and pedagogical approaches contributed to transformational resistance and PYD outcomes such as increased self-efficacy. Finally, the study's findings and recommendations will be utilized in a Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR) strategy to directly support a youth-led, grassroots organizing campaign for the establishment of a Department of Youth Development and Services in Los Angeles County.

The dissertation of Johnny Carlos Ramirez is approved.

David G. Garcia

Tyrone Howard

Maria Malagon

Daniel G. Solórzano, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

DEDICATION

The dissertation project is dedicated in loving memory of my

Nana, Maria de la luz Perez.

This dissertation is also dedicated to the “Roses that Grew from Concrete,” BPMP and UV young people who blessed this project by sharing their story, knowledge, hopes and dreams!

In Lak Ech, Tu Eres Mi Otro Yo, You Are My Other Me!

“By Keeping Our Dreams, Erasing Doubts

We Concrete Roses, We Never Tap Out!!”

Aho! Amen! Palabra!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION	ii
DEDICATION.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
VITA.....	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Research Questions	7
Significance of the Study	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Chicanx-Latinx Youth Resistance via Student Walkouts	10
The 1968 East LA Blowouts.....	11
The 1994 Proposition 187 Walkouts.....	13
The 2006 H.R. 4437 Walkouts	14
Youth Development Literature	16
Positive Youth Development.....	16
Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD).....	17
Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy	18
Barrio Pedagogy.....	22
Transformational Resistance Theoretical Literature.....	24
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	29
Qualitative Research: Case Study	29
After School (AS) Program Description and Site.....	32
After School (AS) Sites.....	32
Research Positionality and Site Entry.....	33
My Cultural Intuition	34
Selection Criteria and Participants.....	34
Data Collection	36
Procedures	36
Individual Interviews.....	37
Focus Group Interviews	37
Data Analysis.....	38
Dissertation Study Timeline.....	39

CHAPTER FOUR: MOVING FROM “SAFE SPACE TO SACRED SPACE”	40
In Lak Ech: Tu Eres Mi Otro Yo – You Are My Other Me.....	41
Youth Engagement in “Safe Spaces”	45
Conclusion of “Safe Space” section	54
Safe Space to Sacred Space	56
Youth engagement of Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Theory (CRT) frameworks.....	59
CHAPTER FIVE: ROSE THAT GREW FROM THE CONCRETE FRAMEWORK	67
The Rose that Grew from Concrete as Guiding Framework.....	67
Provide Inspiration to Do Similar Work in Future Educational/Professional/Justice Work Pursuits	69
Youth Participants’ Perceptions of Kinship Bond/Familial Connection with Femtors/Mentors.....	76
Authentic Care During Moments of Challenge/Struggle.....	84
Conclusion.....	89
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....	93
Implications for Theory.....	93
Implications for Educational Research	94
Implications for Policy.....	95
Implications for Youth Development	96
Areas of Future Research and Practice	97
REFERENCES	100

LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1.</i> Critically compassionate intellectualism model of transformative education.	23
<i>Figure 2.</i> “Defining the Concept of Resistance” (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).....	25

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge my faculty advisor and mentor, Dr. Danny Solórzano, aka Brother Danny, aka Profe Danny. Gracias for your conditional support and belief in me and my work! You and Laura will forever hold a place in my heart! I was able to honor my ancestors, mi familia, and our community, especially our youth, because of your gift from Creator to be a transformational mentor!

I want to acknowledge my Committee Members: Dra. Maria Malagon, Doc Tyrone Howard, and Dr. David Garcia aka Dr. G. I am truly honored to be walked into my scholarly work with your community of support, both academically and personally, in journey in accomplishing the PhD.

To my familia! Thank you Mom and Marty for all your love, prayers and unconditional support in my journey of accomplishing my dream of getting a PhD. Thank you Marie, Geno & the kiddos for providing a home space as I made the final push to get the PhD done! Thank you Grams for your prayers and unconditional love and support! Special shout-outs to Danny, Ricardo, Saul & Laura, Art & Gloria, Greg & Ana, Arnold & Mari, Angel, Mario, Freddy & Cristal, Danky and Pete for always reminding me of how we have moved from homies to familia! Shouts to Brother Ozzie & East LA Mens Circulo!

I want to acknowledge our BPMP & UV youth leaders! Special shout-outs to Ivette, Tim, Keyri, Claudia, Bryant, Brenda Cee, Ozzie, Angie, Wilson, Zuri, Rocio, Melinda and all the youth participants that I have been blessed to build with. Special shouts to Li'i & German for always having my back and providing me the opportunity to build youth empowerment in our communities! Shout-outs to Gallindo, Ms. Martinez

To my scholarly chosen familia! There are no words that can express how much your love, support and belief in my work has forever impacted my life. To the Scholarly "Big Homies": Dimpal, Pedro, Alejandro, Vero, Lindsay, Tracy B, Stovall, Cam, Jeff, Nancy A, Tara Yosso, Dolores, Octavio, Pepe, and all y'all I am inspired and motivated by you! To my Scholarly Homies: Ryan, Mika, Iris, Nora, Xtine, Alfredo, Lluiana, Liz y Jose Luis, Cindy, Bryant, Magali, Yadira, Mary, Alma & Luis, Tanya, Socorro, Abel, Alex, and all my RAC comunidad!! Special shouts to Ryan, Mika, Kenjus, Anthony, Alejandro, Pedro, Dimpal, Jordan B, Tracy, Seanito, and Nancy Flores for all the encouragement, love and care when I was working this past summer to finish. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the Fontana Lewis Library & Technology Center.

VITA

Education

University of California, Los Angeles Ph.D. Candidate Social Science & Comparative Education Concentration in Race & Ethnicity	September 2018
California State University, Northridge Master of Arts in Chicana/o Studies Emphasis on Education	August 2010
University of California, Los Angeles Bachelor of Arts in History Minor in Chicana/o Studies	March 2004
Chaffey College Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts	May 1996

Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships

Postdoctoral Fellow University of Denver IRISE, Interdisciplinary Research Incubator for the Study of (In)Equality	September 2018
Dissertation Year Fellowship University of California, Los Angeles	2017-2018
Institute of American Cultures Research Fellowship University of California, Los Angeles	2017-2018
Chicano Studies Research Center Library Research Fellow University of California, Los Angeles	2017-2018
Graduate Summer Research Mentoring Program Fellows University of California, Los Angeles	Summer 2012
Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Program California State University, Northridge	2007-2008
Graduate Equity Fellowship California State University, Northridge	2008-2009
Summer Program for Undergraduate/Graduate Research California State University, Northridge	Summer 2008
College of Humanities Dean's List	2006-2009

California State University, Northridge

National Association of Chicana and Chicano Presenters Scholarship
Chicana/o Studies Department
California State University, Northridge

Spring 2008

Publications & Policy Briefs

UCLA Center for Critical Race Studies, policy brief on the positive youth development impacts of youth resistance, activism and community based youth development programs for urban youth of color, Chicax-Latinx populations in particular. (In Progress).

Presentations

Ramirez, J.C. (May, 2018). *“They Say Pushout, WE SAY PUSHBACK!!!”*: A Case Study Examination of Chicax-Latinx After-School Youth Development and Transformational Resistance. Panel presentation at 12th Annual Critical Race Studies in Education Conference: Land and Knowledge: Indigeneity, Survivance and Healing. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM.

Ramirez, J.C. (June, 2014). *From Coping to Thriving: An exploratory study of healing and transformational Resistance development*. Panel presentation at 8th Annual Critical Race Studies in Education Conference: Race, Education and Public Policy for Social Justice and Transdisciplinary Activism in Critical Race Studies. Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

Ramirez, J.C. (May, 2012). *Exploring the pedagogical practices and identity development of Transformational Resistance: A Case Study of Chicana@ Youth Testimonios as Knowledge Production*. Paper/panel Proposal at 6th Annual Critical Race Studies in Education Conference—Race, Citizenship, Activism, and the Meaning of Social Justice for the 21st Century: The Legacy of Professor Derrick Bell. Teacher College at Columbia University, New York, NY.

Ramirez, J.C. (March, 2012). *Beware of the Racial Hazards in Santa Monica!!: A Critical Race examination of the Garfield School 1925-1940*. Paper presentation at National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies Conference at Chicago, IL.

Ramirez, J.C. (May 2011). *Agencies of Transformational Resistance: Youth Testimonios on Alternative spaces of Community Education*. Roundtable at 5th Annual Critical Race Studies in Education Conference—With Liberty and Justice For All? University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, TX.

Ramirez, J.C. (April 2011). *Agencies of Transformational Resistance: Youth Testimonios on Alternative spaces of Community Education*. Paper presentation at National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies Conference at Pasadena, CA

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

When one set of schools are given the resources needed to succeed and another group of schools is not, we have predetermined winners and losers. In this scenario, failure is actually the result of failing. This is the paradox facing urban school reformers. On the one hand, urban schools are producing academic failures at alarming rates; at the same time, they are doing this inside a systematic structural design that essentially predetermines their failure. This is where the urban reform rhetoric has missed the mark. It has presumed that urban schools are broken. Urban schools are not broken; they are doing exactly what they are designed to do. (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008, p. 1)

Schools have been doing us dirty homie u feels me that's 1-hundred . . . (Justice Center Youth Participant, personal communication, April 23, 2013)

It was Tuesday, April 23, 2013. The sound of the chanting in the Los Angeles City Council chambers was deafening. As I walked up to the entrance of the chamber's double doors, I saw an organized circle of more than 100 hundred young People of Color; I quickly realized that everyone centered their attention on a tattoo-faced, Black young man, sporting a blue L.A. fitted baseball cap as he held a megaphone and led a passionate chant:

They say pushout! We say pushback!

Pushout—PUSHBACK!

Pushout—PUSHBACK!

Internally, as a youth organizer, I was “fired up” on the power of resistance that the young people expressed in the institutionalized space of the City Hall chambers. I thought “It's going down right here! The Youth will be heard!” As the megaphone passed among several youth protesters, a face-pierced, young Latina, with a hot pink streak down her long, unbraided hair, grabbed the megaphone and began sharing her testimony of why she was at the City Council meeting:

I'm here today because I've been pushed out of school; my teachers, principals, and school police all “hated on” me. They would look for any little reason to suspend me. They would discriminate against me all the time by following me around and searching me in front of all the students and teachers to make me look bad, when I had nothing on

me and had did nothing wrong. I feel that they were just trying to push me out of school so that I would have to go [to] a probationary school that was all fucked up. I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for the *Justice Center*. They welcomed me into their program and their school and did not treat me like a criminal.

[Pointed at the police officers]

City Council, instead of having all these police officers standing around us, looking at us as if we are going to break the law, put more money into a program that helps teens change their lives.

[Raised a sign that read: The "1 percent" Campaign for L.A.'s Youth Development]

I want "1 percent" of the police budget [law enforcement and incarceration] to be used to open up like 50 youth centers and give youth jobs. If we can open up more youth centers then [there] would be less youth being pushed out of school and into the prison system.

At the very same moment, more than 30 officers of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) stood in a defense position nearby. The police served as a buffer between the youth protesters and the City Council members who were seated on stage on the other side of the room. The power dynamic of the room had undeniably changed. This was not going to be a "normal" City Council meeting. Instead of the next agenda item or board motion, the youth "speakout" was now the focus of the City Council members. The youth who staged this direct action were youth participants of a social justice-based youth organization called the Justice Center, which is a pseudonym.

Traditionally, youth collective action and resistance have been absent in educational research. In fact, urban youth of color who are labeled "at-risk," "dropouts," or "troubled" by the educational system are not the typical young people that mainstream America believe to have the agency for personal and social transformation. These deficit perspectives are rooted in stereotypes that Youth of Color do not have the mental, emotional, and intellectual capacity to (a) understand the power relations and their social location within society and their community; and (b) the ability to channel their critique of their social condition into personal or collective

form(s) of grassroots resistance such as civil disobedience, marches, hunger strikes, sit-ins, and boycotts. Historically, these grassroots strategies of youth resistance have successfully changed unjust policies and procedures within state institutions (e.g., schools, courts, government, etc.). Thus, youth-led resistance movements have given birth to a generation of youth—who were stigmatized as unreachable by the educational system—who were able to transcend the structural and institutional barriers in their lives to achieve an improved quality of life for themselves, their families, and communities as a whole.

In order to fundamentally change the “problem driven” paradigm that seeks to disenfranchise urban Chicax-Latinx¹ youth in particular, we as scholars need to examine types of social justice-based After School (AS) programs that engage in asset-driven youth development models and programs that cultivate youth agency and transformative resistance behaviors. Ultimately, this focus on social justice and Ethnic Studies frameworks (e.g., knowledge of self, self-determination) can potentially lead to both personal and social transformative change.

In this Chapter, I contextualize this study by presenting educational research that highlights the marginalization that Chican@-Latin@ youth encounter in U.S. schooling using pushout/dropout rate data as a proxy. Next, I frame the implications of the alarming high rates of Chicana/o pushout/dropout within a school to prison pipeline narrative. Lastly, I briefly engage After School (AS) youth development literature to draw attention to the paucity of research specifically focusing on urban Chican@-Latin@ youth populations, as well as, the potential

¹ Chicax-Latinx, Razx will be used interchangeably to (a) reflect Mexican, Mexican American, Central and Latin American ancestry, and (b) reflect a counter hegemonic identity construct that is intersectional, and acknowledges the historical and contemporary struggles of political resistance of Chicax-Latinx peoples have engaged in and for self-determination and liberation from U.S. colonialism and White supremacy.

outcomes and impacts that social justice-based AS programs have in the lives of Chicana@-Latin@ youth.

Statement of the Problem

The disparity in Chicana-Latina/o educational attainment is cause for national concern. While Chicana@-Latin@ are the largest minority population in the United States, they have the lowest levels of educational attainment (Covarrubias & Lara, 2013). The educational experience of Chicana/os-Latina/os is one of accumulated structural and institutional marginalization and inequity. Chicana@-Latin@ students struggle to access the economic and social resources that their White, middle-class counterparts receive and benefit from (Orfield & Ee, 2014). In Communities of Color, public schools are often segregated, underserved, and underfunded; poor urban schools are often ill-equipped to compensate for these structural social inequalities (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Orfield & Ee, 2014). Under these conditions of educational disparities facing Chicana@-Latin@ youth, nearly 3 out of 10—approximately 30 percent—of Latin@s (including recent immigrants) are pushed out of school at a national level (Covarrubias, 2011). It is important to note that even with demographic increase of Chicana@-Latin@ populations being the largest minority population in the United States (U.S. Census, 2014), there is still not a significant increase in educational attainment in comparison to their White counterparts in the United States (Yosso & Solorzano, 2006). Critical race educational scholars frame the discourse around the educational attainment of students from elementary to a PhD as the “educational pipeline.” Hence, the data indicates that there is a “crack” in the Chicana@-Latin@ educational pipeline and it must be addressed. One area of “the cracks” in the educational pipeline is the alarmingly high school pushout/dropout rates of Chicana@-Latin@ youth.

In California, Latin@ students are now the largest major racial/ethnic group in public K–12 schools, comprising 54 percent of all K–12 students in the state in 2014–2015. The proportion of Latina/o students at county and local levels is significantly higher. Latina/o students account for 65 percent of K–12 students in Los Angeles County and 74 percent of the students enrolled in LAUSD (California Department of Education, 2014; Huber Perez et al., 2015). However, California Department of Education cohort data indicates that Chican@-Latin@ students are the largest group being pushed out of school, making up 22 percent of the pushout/dropout rates statewide (California Department of Education, 2014; Huber Perez et al., 2015).

In order to fully understand the severity of high school pushout (Tuck, 2012) for Chican@-Latin@ youth, we must frame it with the context of the “school-to-prison pipeline” narrative. Critical Scholars assert that there is a direct pipeline of Students of Color who get pushed out of school and get pushed into the criminal justice system. The overrepresentation of police in schools, zero-tolerance policies and suspensions, and high-stakes testing are cited as factors that contribute to school pushout into the criminal justice system (Rios, 2009, 2014). Consequently, research indicates that Latino (and African American) males are more likely than their White counterparts to be suspended from school and to be given a disability classification, and they are half less likely to be identified for talented and gifted programs (Torres & Fergus, 2012). As a result of the hostile schooling environment with schools, research also shows that young Latinos consistently report that they are less likely to seek help at school, including assistance offered by teachers, staff, and peers (Ponjuan, Clark, and Sáenz 2012).

For these reasons, it is imperative that school and community-based interventions be allocated to address the educational plight of Chican@-Latin@ youth in the United States. After

School (AS) programs are one intervention to support low-income youth of color gain academic success and positive youth development outcomes.

Since the 1990s, After School programs utilized a more asset-based approach and model—Positive Youth Development (PYD)—to effectively engage low-income youth of color. Positive Youth Development approaches aim to understand, educate, and engage children in productive activities so that they can acquire important skills that promote their well-being, and thus can actualize their capacity to become successful and contributing members of their communities (Damon, 2004; Larson, 2006). In recent years, the After School hours have gained substantial public and fiscal support as a context for Positive Youth Development programs (Mott Foundation, 1998). Much of this research has focused on the role of After School programs in the Positive Youth Development of low-income youth (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). However, little research has specifically focused on low-income Chicana@-Latin@ adolescents and Positive Youth Development outcomes.

Furthermore, few studies have examined the role of After School programs in Chicana/o-Latina/o Positive Youth Development (Diversi & Mecham 2005; Riggs, 2006). The numerous developmental challenges facing urban Chicana@-Latin@ youth can result in higher rates of risky behaviors, and academic failure over and above those for White, middle-class youth populations (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). These potential outcomes suggest the importance of including Chicana/o-Latina/o youth in Positive Youth Development programs. To date, only a few pilot studies have focused on the role of After School programs in Positive Youth Development of solely low-income Chicana/o-Latina/o youth (Riggs, Bohnert, & Guzman, 2010).

Critical scholars argue that the limits of current Positive Youth Development models are bound by an inability to examine the complex social, economic, and political forces that bear on the lives of urban youth, Chican@-Latin@ youth in particular (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Hence, social justice-based AS youth development programs and models have emerged that focus on Positive Youth Development outcomes that empower youth to identify, critique, and transform the structural and institutional forces in their social conditions. Through these programs, moreover, our youth personally and collectively engage in social justice actions in their communities.

Further, there is a gap in educational and youth development literature that examines the nuances of After School programs that are social justice-based. Also, a paucity of empirical research in these fields actually examines the role(s) that school site versus community-based settings have on how Chican@-Latin@ youth engage in After School youth development programming. Therefore, this dissertation study seeks to examine the role of social justice-based After School programs in engaging Chican@-Latin@ youth in the development of oppositional behaviors that reflect a critique of social oppression and a motivation for social justice. In addition, the study explores the potential similarities and differences between school-site versus community-based programming in the engagement of Chican@-Latin@ youth resistance.

Research Questions

Transformational Resistance is a conceptual framework that is emerging in critical race theory in education. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) contend that oppositional behaviors could be classified in four different ways: (a) Reactionary Behavior, (b) Self-defeating, (c) Conformist, and (d) Transformational Resistance. For the purpose of the dissertation study, I specifically examine Transformational Resistance behaviors, that is, resistance behaviors that

have a critique of social oppression and a motivation for social justice. My guiding research questions for this dissertation are:

1. How do AS Chicax-Latinx youth participants develop their critique of social oppression?
2. How do AS Chicax-Latinx youth participants develop their motivation for social justice action?
3. What are the curricular and pedagogical practices that engage AS Chicax-Latinx youth to develop a critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice?

Significance of the Study

This study is important because the traditional canon of research within the field of After School programs and youth development utilize deficit-based frameworks that fail to acknowledge Chicax-Latinx youth as “holders and creators of knowledge.”

In addition, scarce empirical evidence focuses extensively on Chicana/o-Latina/o youth populations in After School programs and the role that social justice-based after school programs play in Positive Youth Development outcomes (e.g., wellness, self-worth, improved ethnic identity, leadership, etc.). Lastly, the research study seeks to illuminate the pedagogical and curricula practices that engage Chicax-Latinx youth in transformative ways. A significant body of literature focuses on identifying the factors in why Chicax-Latinx youth disengage from school, yet an absence of research identifies youth development-based pedagogical and curricula approaches, strategies, and practices that can move youth resistance from being self-defeating to transformational.

The implications of this dissertation study can be utilized to further the need for youth development programming and reframe youth oppositional behavior from a deficit-based

perspective to an asset-based positive youth development outcome. In addition, the study's findings can be used as a resource for grassroots organizing campaign called the "1 Percent Campaign." The campaign's goal is to allocate one percent of the Los Angeles County law enforcement budget toward the youth development centers and services.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study draws on four main bodies of literature. I begin with a selected review of scholarship related to Chicana/o youth resistance as expressed in the student walkouts of 1968, 1994, and 2006. Next, I provide a critical examination of youth development literature. The third body of literature I examine is culturally relevant and response pedagogical approaches that engage youth of color, and in particular Chican@ youth. Finally, I include a critical examination of transformational resistance literature, paying close attention to how this study will further develop Transformational Resistance models and frameworks.

Chicanx-Latinx Youth Resistance via Student Walkouts

Throughout history, Chicana/o youth have endured multiple forms of oppression and injustice which have led to social, economic, and political marginalization. By using deficit-based schooling practices, the U.S. educational system has been one social institution that by design has resulted in dehumanization (Duncan-Andrade, 2005). School segregation; showering students who were perceived to be “dirty”; corporal punishment for speaking Spanish; inequitable school conditions; and vocational tracking are but a few educational policies and practices that effectively pushed Chicana/o youth out of academic spaces (Garcia, Yosso, & Barajas, 2012; González, 1990). However, there is also a narrative of Chicana/o-Latina/o youth empowerment, resistance and agency that exists as well (Delgado Bernal, 1999; Valencia & Black, 2002). This section highlights the 1968 East LA Blowouts, the 1994 Proposition 187 walkouts, and the 2006 HR4437 walkouts to illustrate the role that school walkouts have played in expressing Chicana/o youth resistance. I focus on “Walkouts” because they are expressions of youth resistance that reflect a critical awareness of social (and institutional) oppression, which then leads to mass protest and direct action.

The 1968 East LA Blowouts

During the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, Chicana/o youth began to formally build a social movement that addressed the educational inequity in their schools and communities (Munoz, 1989). Historically, U.S. schooling has marginalized Chicana/os by implementing policies and practices that attempted to eradicate their language and culture, track them into vocational-low waged jobs, and force them to attend schools with poor facilities and resources (Moreno, 1999). Chicana/o youth attended schools throughout the twentieth century in which racist teachers, counselors, and district officials did not believe that college preparation and matriculation were viable options for Mexican American youth. Chicana/o youth entered a school system that was driven by ideologies of biological and cultural inferiority (Valencia, 1997, 2002), and were designed to place them in a subordinate position to the Anglo status quo. As a result, the Chicana/o community maintained their socioeconomic position of cheap labor within U.S. society (Gonzalez, 1990). Within this context, Chicana/o youth throughout the Southwest began to organize themselves against the dehumanizing education they were receiving. An especially pivotal year in this mobilization was 1968, and the landmark event was the East LA blowouts.

In March 1968, more than 1,000 high students walked out of five East L.A. high school campuses to address the legacy of educational inequity in their communities such as high dropout/pushout rates, overcrowded, broken-down schools, and racist teachers and counselors who often steered Chicana/o students into auto shop instead of college-track courses. Students organized themselves and demanded that schools provide them with bilingual education programs, Mexican-American teachers and principals, culturally relevant courses, and Mexican cafeteria food prepared by mothers from the barrios (Garcia & Castro, 2011). Thirteen of the

student organizers of the Blowouts, along with Sal Castro, a social studies teacher at Lincoln High School, were charged with conspiracy to disrupt public schools and disturbing the peace for their alleged role in guiding the Blowouts—they were called the LA 13. Scholars have documented that the 1968 East LA Blowouts was the largest student protest in the Southwest of the United States and was foundational in the empowerment and mobilization of the Chicana community in the 1960's Civil Rights era. However, the traditional historical narrative of the East LA Blowouts did not have an intersectional approach and/or feminist perspective. In fact, not until Dolores Delgado Bernal's (1998) work did any scholarship engage the East LA Blowouts in a frame that acknowledges the direct role that Chicanas played in the organizing and consciousness-raising of the movement.

Chicana feminist and critical race scholar Dolores Delgado Bernal (1998) reconceptualizes the historical memory and conversation of the East LA Blowouts by examining those 1968 walkouts at the intersection of gender, power, privilege, and traditional grassroots leadership. Utilizing methodological tools such as oral history, historical narratives, focus group interviews, and archival research, she documents the experiences of eight Chicana high school student activists that participated in the Blowouts. In a powerful step forward, she pushes the traditional narrative of the "Chicano" student walkouts by arguing that traditional forms of leadership in activist movements need to be reevaluated from a feminist perspective to include multiple forms of student leadership. She challenges traditional interpretations of women in student movements by acknowledging that women have been at the forefront of student movements all along, even when not recognized as such. Moreover, her work reveals a side of history/herstory that has been silenced and ignored in the contemporary literature and historical writings that document the history of Chicana involvement in the 1968 East LA Blowouts.

The 1994 Proposition 187 Walkouts

The next massive demonstration of high school students in California came about three decades later in response to a particularly racist state proposition. In 1994, Chicana/o youth resistance was expressed in opposition to Proposition 187, or the “Save Our State” initiative. This proposition prohibited undocumented immigrants from accessing and utilizing health care, public education, and social services. In fact, Prop. 187, as it has come to be known, required school districts to verify the legal status of students’ parents and report any persons suspected of being in the U.S. unlawfully so that they would be detained and deported. According to Chicano historian Rodolfo Acuña (1996), Chicana/o student walkouts were organized and occurred in more than 30 Los Angeles Unified schools from areas as varied as the San Fernando Valley, East Los Angeles, Downtown, South Los Angeles, and Compton. It is estimated that more than 10,000 students participated in the walkouts, with Latino youth being the majority population represented. In comparing, the 1994 Prop. 187 walkouts to the 1968 East LA Blowouts, Acuña (1996) asserts that during the East Los Angeles walkouts there was a noticeable difference in context with regards to student activism. Acuna states:

[Prop. 187 Walkouts] reacted with a militancy reminiscent of the 1960s. However, in the 1960’s a general climate of support for student activism existed. Civil rights struggles, the Vietnam War protests and the War on Poverty programs conditioned students for the big 1968 walkouts. Also, the process then was accelerated by the work of leaders like Lincoln High teacher Sal Castro. The Prop. 187 walkouts were more spontaneous, and their leaders were not only Chicanos but also Central Americans.” (p. 159)

Additionally, the massive Prop. 187 walkouts caught extreme backlash from local politicians, media outlets and by the formally organized anti-187 campaign organizers that contended that “walking out” reinforced the idea by some that California was being invaded (Acuna, 1996). Also, there was controversy and a generally hostile response to protestors who waved the Mexican flag during anti-187 marches and rallies. Even so, the Prop. 187 walkouts expanded the

Chican@ youth resistance narrative by illustrating that educational injustice is not the only circumstance that could evoke mass youth direct political action. Chicana/o youth resistance was now framed around addressing forms of state-sanctioned oppression and violence at the intersection of immigration status. As a result, the Prop. 187 walkouts demonstrated how Chicana/o and Central American youth along with their allies can engage in youth resistance behaviors that reflected a critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice. These same resistance strategies and practices were evidenced in the early-twenty-first century in response to proposed national legislation of House Resolution 4437 in 2006.

The 2006 H.R. 4437 Walkouts

In the spring of 2006, Chicana/o youth organized mass walkouts in response to anti-immigrant policies which emerged at the federal level in the form of House Resolution 4437 (H.R. 4437). H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act, essentially made it a crime to be undocumented or even “assist” undocumented immigrants; defendants would be assigned felony charges, incarceration, and deportation. Gonzales (2014) argued that this particular bill ignited the modern-day immigration reform movement in the United States. In response to H.R. 4437, student walkouts occurred all over the United States. The largest of these took place in the Southwest. In fact, there are estimates that over 40,000 students organized walkouts in Los Angeles, which is believed to have been larger demonstrations than those around Prop. 187 in 1994 and the East Los Angeles Blowouts in 1968 (Gonzales, 2014). The Los Angeles Unified School District, with the support of Mayor Antonio Villaragosa, ordered a “lockdown” of middle and high schools within the district to prevent students from marching and protesting (Acuna, 2011). However, the overwhelming number of students at some schools—many of whom were jumping fences and mobilizing in critical mass

to demand that doors and gates be opened—prompted many school officials to do so in order that students would not injure themselves as they demonstrated (Acuna, 2011).

The mass student walkouts took many people by surprise based on observations that the student protest occurred spontaneously, with not much formal “pre-planned” organizing efforts. Scholars have cited that the 2006 walkouts marked the emergence of digital technologies like cell phones and social media (e.g., Myspace, text, instant message, etc.) as organizing tools to mobilize for direct action in a very fast manner (Yang, 2007).

By examining Chicana@ youth resistance expressed in the student walkouts of 1968, 1994, and 2006, it becomes evident that Chicana@-Latin@ youth have exercised their agency and collective power to challenge and transform educational and social injustice. This is important to note as foundational in framing a Chicana@-Latin@ youth resistance narrative, which this proposed study seeks to increase, magnify and further develop. At the same time, this selected review identifies a gap in the literature that specifically examines how Chicana@-Latin@ youth develop their critique of social oppression and their motivation to engage in social justice actions. With exceptions to scholars who have looked at the role that Sal Castro played in supporting Chicana@ youth resistance efforts, I did not find research that highlighted any specific pedagogical and curricula practices that contributed to the development of Chicana@ youth resistance behaviors. With that being said, this study sought to identify community-based pedagogical and curricular practices within an afterschool program that can cultivate outcomes of transformational resistance. Furthermore, this study pushes the literature of Chicana@-Latin@ youth resistance by generating research that centralizes their voices, lived experiences, and experiential knowledge in defining and describing how they came to develop their critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice. By establishing a historical narrative of

Chican@-Latin@ youth resistance and empowerment, it lays the foundation for the study to explore how youth resistance and agency can be contextualized within youth development literature and programming.

Youth Development Literature

Moving away from traditional deficit-based views of youth development, in the 1990s emerged a Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004) that focused on an asset-based approach to developmental and health outcomes for Youth of Color in particular.

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a holistic approach that focuses on the developmental characteristics—physical, personal, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual—that lead to positive outcomes and behaviors among young people (Durlak et al., 2007; Heck & Subramaniam, 2009). From a PYD perspective, young people are framed as possessing assets and resources that can be developed, which is fundamentally different than traditional “problem driven” approaches that only focus on them being developmentally challenged (Lerner et al., 2005). In short, PYD is a strengths-based, positive model of adolescence that recognizes one’s potential for change in adolescence and throughout life.

In pushing the PYD model forward, Critical scholars Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) expanded the positive youth development discourse by focusing on the developmental outcomes that occur when youth are critically aware of forms of oppression and engage in social justice actions to transform their conditions. They theorized this process as Social Justice Youth Development (SYJD).

Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD)

Building from asset-based youth development approaches, Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) expand the traditional discourse of youth development to include practices that encourage youth to address the larger oppressive forces affecting them and their communities. They contend that a complete model of positive youth development examines the processes by which urban youth contest, challenge, and negotiate the use and misuse of power in their lives. This understanding of youth development acknowledges social contexts and highlights the capacity for youth to respond to community problems and heal from the psycho/social trauma of hostile urban environments. Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) called this process Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD). In particular, SJYD focuses on the positive youth development outcomes based on the interrelationship between critical consciousness, social action, and identity.

Congruently, Ginwright and James (2002) frame the SJYD framework such that youth political consciousness and community activism are contextualized in which young people are framed as “agents of change” within youth development literature. They contend that SJYD is based on principles that (a) analyze power in social relationships; (b) make identity central; (c) promote systemic social change; (d) encourage collective action; and (e) embrace youth culture. These SJYD principles exemplify the agency, resistance, and transformative power that youth possess when they are engaged in a learning process that empowers them.

In addition, Akom, Cammarota, and Ginwright’s (2008) conceptualization of “Youthtopias” identifies settings and environments where such empowerment might take place. They define formal and informal educational spaces where young people depend on one another’s skills, perspectives, and experiential knowledge to generate original multi-textual, youth-driven cultural products that embody a critique of oppression and desire for social justice.

Ultimately these youth-driven cultural products lay the foundation for community empowerment and social change. Thus, “Youthtopias” are expressions of transformational resistance in that they are acts of resistance behaviors that are based on the interconnection between critical consciousness and motivation for social justice.

While Social Justice Youth Development conceptual frameworks and models are foundational to this study, there is lack of empirical research that focuses on the distinctions and nuances that unpack the positive youth development outcomes that Chican@-Latin@ youth experience when they develop a critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice. This study seeks to contribute to the discussion of SJYD by centralizing the voices, experiential knowledge, and lived experiences of Chican@-Latin@ youth as valid forms of knowledge production which can provide scholars and youth workers a deeper understanding of how Chican@-Latin@ youth engage in transformative resistance behaviors.

In order to fully understand how Chican@-Latin@ youth develop their critical awareness and agency, we must examine the pedagogical and curricula practices that foster that development. One body of educational literature that speaks to how Youth of Color are engaged in a process that leads to empowerment, agency, and positive academic identity development is in the field of Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy

In educational research, there is a growing body of critical research that examines the role that culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy plays in addressing the growing disparity between the racial, ethnic and cultural characteristics of teachers and the academic failure of African American, Native American and Chican@-Latin@ students. Critical scholars posit that the changing demographics and increased immigration had resulted in an ethnically, culturally, and

linguistically diverse K–12 student population in the United States (Mbugua, 2010). One major challenge of our educational system is that the teaching profession is still a predominantly White, middle- to upper-class, female, monolingual teaching force interacting with an increasingly diverse student population (Darling Hammond, 2000; Mbugua, 2004; Spring, 2004). There have been numerous reform efforts in teacher education programs throughout the U.S. to engage prospective teachers in ways that promote educational equity, social justice, and multicultural learning environments. Research in the area of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000) has been fundamental in re-conceptualizing the curricula and pedagogical practices of teachers to engage Students of Color to attain both academic achievement and self-empowerment.

In Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) foundational work, “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” she conceptualizes culturally relevant teaching as a pedagogy that empowers Students of Color intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural forms of knowledge to transmit information, skills, and attitudes. Ladson-Billings (1995) asserts that “culturally relevant teaching must meet three criteria: an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness” (p. 483). Further, she theorizes that the best practices is for educators to facilitate students’ ability to transition between and across their multiple identities, while developing an awareness of the world and their position in it (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Further, Gay (2000) described culturally responsive teaching practice as reflecting the following qualities: “acknowledges cultural legacies in relation to the past and present, transitions between community and academic contexts and concepts, facilitate multiple learning

styles, foster intra and intercultural dignities, and incorporates multicultural content in all subject matters” (p. 29).

In terms of examining culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies and utilizing Critical Race Theory (CRT), Tyrone Howard’s scholarship makes those distinct connections. In numerous studies, Howard has examined the theoretical and pedagogical challenges that teachers face in positively supporting the development of academic identities among African American students, males in particular (Howard, 2010, 2013). Of critical importance, Howard’s research has centered on employing Critical Race Theory’s theoretical methods, such as *counterstorytelling*, in order to gather first hand educational experiences from the perspective of African American students themselves. Utilizing the voices, lived experiences, and experiential knowledge of young Black males to interpret their schooling experiences within an environment that they many felt was inherently unjust shifts the educational narrative of African American students. In doing so, it generates research that situates Black youth to be critical stakeholders in developing educational, strategies, and solutions to address marginalization due to schooling policies, environments and hostile campus racial climate.

For example, Howard’s “Who Really Cares? The Disenfranchisement of African American Males in PreK-12 Schools: A Critical Race Theory Perspective” (2008) presents an ongoing study of 200 African American middle and high school males were surveyed about their schooling experiences, and the potential roles that race may play in them. Ten African American males were interviewed; five attended schools in urban primarily low-income areas that were made up of largely Black and Brown students, whereas the other five participants were from racially mixed schools in suburban communities, which were predominantly White and middle-class. One central theme that emerged across the documented *counterstories* was the young

men's heightened sense of awareness of negative racial stereotypes of about African American men. The study participants attributed their academic success to their desire to challenge the negative stereotypes of young Black males such as becoming incarcerated or dropping out of school. Hence, Howard's work reveals how African Americans students' heightened sense of racist stereotypes in their school environments could lead to their resistance in the form of "proving them wrong." Hence, this study aimed to examine (a) the social justice-based AS program's pedagogical and curricular practices that support Chican@-Latin@ youth agency and resistance, (b) transformative resistance rooted in their critical awareness of oppression in their lives, school, and community; and (c) how that critical awareness potentially led to social justice actions.

More specifically, Howard's (2002) study of African American students' perceptions of effective teachers that contributed to their increased student effort, engagement in class content, and overall achievement. He begins by acknowledging "the critical importance of teachers grounding their pedagogy within a framework that congruent with their students' cultural orientations" (p. 440). Also, he utilizes the data from student interviews to develop three key strategies teachers used to successfully engage Black youth: (a) establish family, community, home-like characteristics; (b) establish culturally connected caring relationships with students; and (c) use certain types of verbal communication and affirmation (Howard, 2002). Hence, Howard's research and theorization on the critical role that culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy plays in engaging Black students and positive academic outcomes is key to this study. It provides a foundational perspective in the study's exploration of how Chican@-Latin@ make meaning and articulate how they came to develop their critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice. In addition, Howard's research findings recommend specific

teaching strategies that emphasize identifying and connecting with students' cultural identities and sensibilities directly informs this study as well. The study's examination of the AS programs pedagogical and curricular practices has sought to identify possible best practices, theoretical orientations, and lived experiences that inform the development of a transformative resistance behavior.

To sum up, there was a body of literature that defined and contextualized culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy relative to experiences African American students but there was a paucity that focused on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogical approaches in engaging Chicana@-Latin@ youth. There was one quinessential article that extensively discussed a pedagogical model the centered on the development of positive academic identities, critical social awareness and agency of Chicana@-Latin@ students, that is, Barrio Pedagogy (Romero, Arce, & Cammarota, 2009).

Barrio Pedagogy

Romero et al. (2009) theorized a framework and model of engaging Chicana/o students that (a) countered the reality of racism and subordination within the American education system, (b) assisted in the development of an academic identity and proficiency, (c) framed Chicana/o students, parents and community as holders and creators of knowledge, and (d) offered a pedagogical approach based on indigenous epistemology and authentic caring relationships with students, which led to Freirean elements of personal and social transformation. These tenets were conceptualized within a three-pronged approach of curriculum, pedagogy, and student-teacher-parent interactions called the Critically Compassionate Intellectualism Model of Transformative Education.

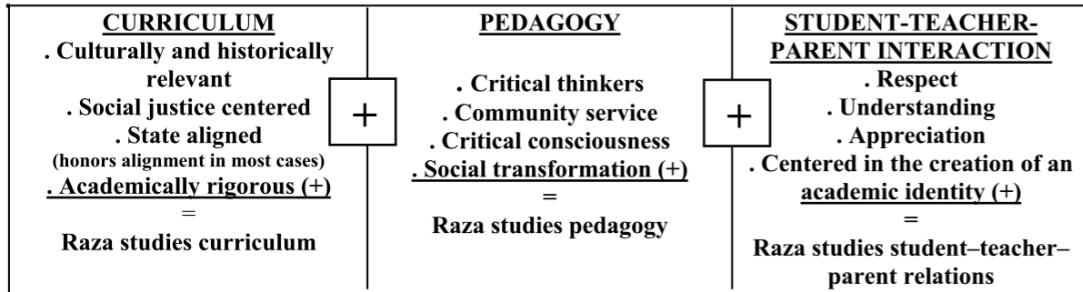


Figure 1. Critically Compassionate Intellectualism Model of Transformative Education.

Figure 1. Critically compassionate intellectualism model of transformative education.

More specifically, they theorized a barrio pedagogy that rested on the notion that teaching Chican@-Latin@ students was not done solely within the context of a traditional school classroom, but sought to transcend the deficit ideological schooling perspectives by incorporating the knowledges of the communities that the students are coming from. They contended that a barrio pedagogy treated the classroom as a “the third space” (Bhabha 1994; Moje et. al. 2004) that critical intellectual engagements took place in both in the barrio and in the school. The classroom then became a convergence of the barrio and the institution. Romero et al. (2009) state:

This third space challenges the status quo and the stereotypes that exist within our educational institutions. This is a newly created pedagogical space that is driven by the need to challenge the epistemological and ontological understandings of our students and in many case their parents. Furthermore, our pedagogy is grounded in the understanding that race and racism are dominant variables within the tri-dimensionalized reality of our students, their parents, our communities, and within us as emancipatory educators. (Romero, 2008a, p. 227)

Congruently, there was literature that centered on humanizing pedagogical practices that centered around utilizing Chican@-Latin@ cultural identities and forms of knowledges to create a space of empowerment in the classroom. Franquiz and Salazar (2004) found that teachers who practiced a humanizing pedagogy engage Chican@-Latin@ adolescents in a fashion that nurtures academic achievement and resiliency. They contend that teachers who utilized pedagogical

approaches that centered *respeto* (respect), *confianza* (trust), *consejos* (guidance), and *Buen Ejemplo* (positive example) transformed schooling environments for Chicana/o students from an oppressive condition to a space of empowerment. Hence, the practice of humanizing pedagogy, coupled with the culturally relevant and responsive approaches, clearly reflects the underpinnings that facilitate Chicana@-Latin@ students to develop a critical awareness and desire to transform oppressive conditions.

Therefore, the above mentioned articles illustrate a need to expand the discourse and literature of Culturally Relevant and Responsive pedagogy and its correlation to Chicana@-Latin@ youth empowerment. This study seeks to do so within the context of a social justice-based AS program facilitated at a school site. Also, the Culturally Relevant and Responsive literature is heavily represented in educational research, specifically in the areas of critical pedagogy and Critical Race Theory in education. Consequently, this study puts educational research and youth development (AS program) literature into conversation with one another, which can lead to interdisciplinary perspectives and groundbreaking theorizations.

Transformational Resistance Theoretical Literature

In this section, I highlight the transformational resistance literature to conceptualize the foundational research that undergirds this dissertation and identify ways that this study can expand the current educational literature.

Transformational resistance is a conceptual framework that is emerging in critical race theory in education. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) theorized that hegemonic definitions of Chicana and Chicano oppositional behavior as solely being deviant failed to acknowledge the systemic institutionalized forms of oppression and domination that contribute to their oppositional behavior, as well as the agency that Students of Color have in displaying

oppositional behaviors as expressions of resistance behavior. They contended that these resistance behaviors could be classified in four different ways: (a) Reactionary Behavior; (b) Self-defeating; (c) Conformist; and (d) Transformational Resistance. In Figure 2, “Defining the Concept of Resistance,” youth oppositional behavior is measured in quadrants of resistance:

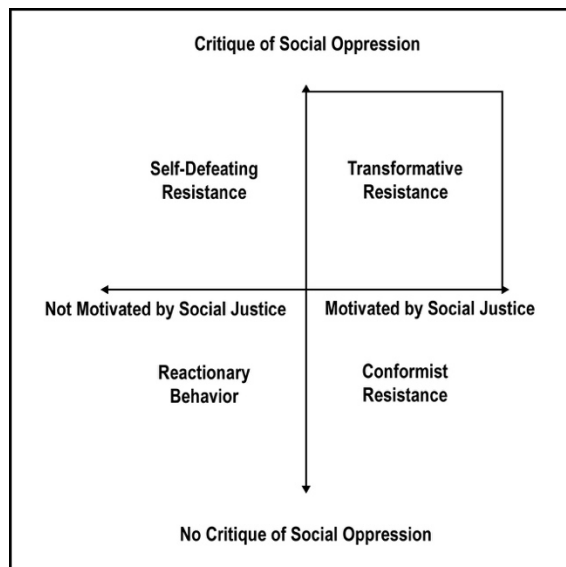


Figure 2. “Defining the Concept of Resistance” (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Further, they theorized that student resistance behaviors could be expressed internally or externally, depending on the context and level of agency of students. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) thus framed student resistance in a model that fully contextualized resistance behaviors in thematic categories that provided a clear analysis and measurement tool for scholars, practitioners, and community members.

This article was instrumental in influencing subsequent literature on student resistance. It provided a framework in resistance discourse that highlighted the role that human agency and consciousness of social oppression and motivation for social change has in shaping expressions of resistance behavior. It provided a categorization of student resistance by creating a measurement tool (model) that clearly identified and articulated the different forms of student

resistance. In doing so, Chicana and Chicano student resistance was shifted into a paradigm that took into account how human agency can be expressed in multiple ways, illustrating the fluidity of resistance behaviors from the spectrum of being reactionary to the opposite end of the pendulum as being transformational. Furthermore, the piece situated resistance behaviors by exemplifying the intersections of students' awareness and consciousness of social oppression and interest (or lack of) in taking actions (internally or externally) that are motivated by social justice. This shifted resistance discourse by framing student resistance in a sociopolitical context that illuminated direct correlations to the agency of oppositional behaviors, paying close attention to the possibilities for personal and social transformation.

Brayboy (2005) builds on and extends the notion of transformational resistance by defining it as the acquisition of credentials and skills for the empowerment and liberation of American Indian communities. Moreover, his study of Native American students' struggle in university spaces and in predominantly White institutions reflected the intersection of transformational resistance with social justice outcomes. He theorizes that there must be support from "powerbrokers" within an individual's home community and the institutional setting to ensure equitable and sustainable change. Thus, Brayboy's expansion of transformational resistance provides another dimension to how such a framework can be used as a tool to critically engage acts of resistance, resiliency, and empowerment. It also further discusses the potential positive or negative implications of aligning one's self with social justice outcomes in an institutional setting (e.g., the university).

Covarrubias and Revilla (2003) utilized the transformational resistance frame to describe the sociopolitical spaces within which marginalized peoples engage in building community with each other. Their study analyzed the *Public Allies* program and *Raza Womyn* student

organization. They contend that community spaces are contested spaces in which an “intersection” occurs. “Intersections” are identified as sociopolitical, ideological, cultural, and intellectual spaces influenced by the intersection of race, class, sexual orientation, and gender structures of domination challenged by resistance. More specifically, Covarrubias and Revilla examine the acts of transformational resistance demonstrated by marginalized people participating in organizations that they conceptualized as organized spaces of collective resistance, or “Agencies of Transformational Resistance” (ATR). ATRs are committed toward the social and personal transformation of various forms of social injustice. Covarrubias and Revilla (2003) defined ATR’s as advocacy organizations that: (a) promote a multi-dimensional consciousness; (b) nurture a commitment to social justice; (c) provide and develop skills and services that make it possible for participants to engage in at least one of several forms of empowering changes (e.g., self-transformation, school change, community empowerment, or societal transformation); and (d) create and sustain a community of inclusiveness. Hence, the ATR model builds on the transformational resistance framework by applying the expression of resistance behavior that had a critique of the system and a motivation for social justice within a context of space and pedagogy. It expanded the transformational resistance conceptualization to shift it from being framed within personal acts of resistance to advocacy organizations that foster the development of transformational resistance identity and behaviors.

Revilla (2004) continued building on the ATR discourse by citing how *Raza Womyn*, a *mujer*-centered Chicana-Latina undergraduate student-based organization, challenged the oppressive conditions of queer and straight Women of Color through a gender-specific pedagogy and student activism. Revilla theorized that Raza Womyn’s development of a “Muxerista pedagogy” and the teaching of social justice through student activist activities reflected the ATR

tenets and ideological construct. Revilla (2004) defines “Muxerista pedagogy” as a critical pedagogical process of creating safe spaces for queer and straight women, while simultaneously centering their lived experiences as valid forms of knowledge. Hence, Agencies of Transformational Resistance such as *Raza Womyn* reflect pedagogical approaches that seek directly to challenge hegemonic systems of oppression and domination by generating Chicana-Latina specific resistance identities.

Based on the existing Transformational Resistance literature, this study pays close attention to identifying the pedagogical practices, curriculum, and ideological frameworks in community-based youth development program spaces in and outside of schools. Fundamentally, this study seeks to understand “the how” of transformational resistance outcomes. How is it potentially being created, facilitated, and expressed by Chican@-Latin@ youth? Aligning it with critical race educational scholars, the study’s findings can contribute to a body of literature that informs a paradigm shift toward transformative youth development and schooling practices for Chican@-Latin@ youth populations.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss the study's methodologies and data collection methods. First, I present a brief overview of my previous Masters of Arts (M.A.) thesis to illustrate my research background and scholarly commitments of generating a case study research that addresses Chican@-Latin@ youth development. Secondly, I review my overall research design, as well as, provide a closer look at the social justice After School program and explain why it is a relevant research site when examining youth resistance and agency in an urban context. Third, I proceed to discuss my role and history as a researcher/participant observer/co-facilitator of the program and how the multiple roles afford me vantage points to closely examine the youth participants' growth and activism. Fourth, I provide an overall description of the study participants and their importance in this study, along with the study's potential contribution to the "L.A. 4 Youth campaign." Finally, I conclude this chapter with an overview of the methods I used to collect data and my process of analysis.

Qualitative Research: Case Study

The research questions in this study are best addressed by utilizing qualitative research methodology, specifically the case study. According to Merriam (1998, 2009), case study research in education is conducted so that specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained. A case study design also allows a researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 2011, 2013). Since an in-depth understanding of a situation or phenomenon is desired, case study research provides a richly descriptive end product focused on meaning, process, and understanding (Merriam, 1998). Further, case study research provides the

methodological approaches that center on better “understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Hence, this study explores how Chican@-Latin@ youth participants of a social justice-based AS program make meaning of their development of critical inquiry of social oppression and their agency in addressing social injustice. My guiding research questions for this dissertation are:

4. How do Chican@-Latin@ AS youth participants develop their critique of social oppression?
5. How do Chican@-Latin@ AS youth participants develop their motivation for social justice action?
6. What are the curricular and pedagogical practices that facilitate Chican@-Latin@ AS participants’ critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice?

There is a paucity of educational research that examines the interrelationship of Chican@-Latin@ youth, alternative learning environments and community spaces that utilize transformative pedagogical practices to cultivate youth empowerment, agency, and resistance. Utilizing Covarrubias’ Agencies of Transformational Resistance (ATR) framework (Covarrubias 2003 & 2005), I conducted a M.A. thesis (Ramirez, 2010) that examined Chican@ pushouts involved in a progressive grassroots youth organization in West Los Angeles with a focus on Chicana/o school disengagement and re-engagement. Through participatory action research and the method of *counterstorytelling (counterstories)*, the study documented participants’ narratives of school disengagement as a form of resistance to the dehumanization of U.S. schools. Youth in the study indicated that (a) caring teachers and adults, and (b) experiencing the creation of art

supported their re-engagement in schools. Study participants recommended a community-based mentoring program for prevention/intervention with disengaged youth.

Implications from this study included a paradigm shift from a deficit view of Chican@ pushouts to reframing disengaged youth as resilient, knowledge-producers with the power to transform their lives. In terms of action research outcomes, the study's findings were used as empirical evidence (and curriculum) for youth organizing workshops for a youth led organizing campaign. The campaign focused on demanding that City officials increase funding for the hiring of two Case Managers (femtors/mentors) staff positions. The hiring of two Case Managers was a strategy recommended by the study participants to address student disengagement and school pushout in their community. The youth were successful in their campaign and City officials increased the youth organization funding to hire the two additional Case Manager positions.

My previous M.A. study centered around the Chican@-Latin@ youth participants defining their disengagement and re-engagement in their schooling experiences; however, it did not investigate further into the specific pedagogical practices, curriculum/programming materials (and workshops) that contributed to their engagement in school or learning development at the youth organization. In addition, the previous Study did not pay close attention to possible Positive Youth Development outcomes that can be related to transformational resistance behaviors such as positive self-esteem, healing and reconciliation, resiliency, and self-advocacy. Hence, this study aims to explore and examine the pedagogical and curricular practices that inform the development of youth critical inquiry and agency; while simultaneously, paying close attention to positive youth development outcomes that may result from their critical consciousness.

After School (AS) Program Description and Site

The social justice based AS program is sponsored by a community-based organization committed to legal services, immigrant justice and youth/parent empowerment in Los Angeles, California—*Advancing Justice* (pseudonym). The mission of *Advancing Justice*'s school-based afterschool Leadership Development in Interethnic Relations program (LIDR) is to empower school communities to improve inter-ethnic group relations, student academic achievement, democratic participation and community involvement (Advancing Justice website, 2016). The program seeks to provide social justice-based youth leadership development programs and curriculum training to support inner-city Los Angeles schools with a special emphasis on secondary schools in the Central Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley area. In doing so, *Advancing Justice* provides community resources and support to school campuses, students and parents, as a means to create civic engagement through youth participatory research, teacher training and community service projects.

There are two different programming formats at the two AS program sites. The *West* site programming is a student-initiated femtoring/mentoring program that is focused on self-awareness, academic support, leadership development, and activism/civic-engagement. The *East* site is a youth collective comprised of four student clubs that are focused on promoting positive cultural identity, youth empowerment, leadership, environmental justice, Hip Hop and activism.

After School (AS) Sites

The research sites will be at two Los Angeles Unified School District high schools located in the Los Angeles area. The research site in Downtown Los Angeles, the Pico Union-West Adams area specifically, was called *West*. The research site that is located in the north eastside of Los Angeles, the El Sereno-North East Los Angeles area, was called *East*.

Research Positionality and Site Entry

For the past five years, I have been co-facilitator in developing and implementing youth empowerment and mentoring programming at both research sites. I have established relationships with the youth participants, parents, teachers, and school staff. This dissertation research project was in no way “drive-by” research. The reason that I have the opportunity to be able to conduct this study is because I have an established relationship with *Advancing Justice* community with years of service. With a spirit of reciprocity, I have supported the program development, implementation and overall goals of the Advancing Justice youth leadership program. Now, *Advancing Justice* is being supportive of my dissertation study to ensure I complete my PhD and generate research that can be used a tool for youth empowerment. Thus, I have earned a trust and respect in my role as activist scholar that engages in research “with community” and not “on community.” Hence, my research positionality is about conducting research that is grassroots, youth-community engaged, and can be used—and operationalized—as a resource for social justice outcomes. As a Xicano Critical Race scholar, my positionality to engaging in the research process is not politically neutral and is unapologetic about dismantling the majoritarian deficit-based narratives of Youth and Communities of Color. In turn, my research positionality is rooted in embracing my ethnic, cultural, and activist identity which then informs how to develop discourse that frame Chican@-Latin@ youth as holders and creators of knowledge.

Furthermore, this dissertation study is not about me using research to “give a voice” to youth experiences. On the contrary, the mission of this study is to centralize their voices, lived experiences, and experiential knowledge as valid forms of knowledge production. My role as researcher is to highlight and amplify Chican@-Latin@ youth as knowledge producers and

critically vital to the development of strategies, interventions and solutions to address the social inequalities that disenfranchise Chicana@-Latin@ youth.

My Cultural Intuition

In order to utilize my lived experiences, experiential knowledge and 15 years of youth development work experience to inform this study, I utilize Chicana educational researcher, Dolores Delgado Bernal's (1998) Chicana feminist epistemological concept called "cultural institution." Based on the assertion that Chicanas, feminist and Scholars of Color have a particular standpoint on how they make meaning of their lives, and within that process, they have a unique viewpoint based on being members of marginalized groups in U.S. society. Delgado Bernal (1998) theorizes that there are four main sources that contribute to "cultural intuition." The four main sources are: "one's personal experience (including collective experience and community memory), existing literature, one's professional experience, and the analytical research process itself" (p. 563). With that said, my cultural intuition informed how I engaged in data collection and analysis, specifically in the way that I utilized multiple forms of youth culture discourses to encourage study participants to feel comfortable to freely express themselves. In the data collection section, I share examples of how my cultural intuition shaped the interview process.

Selection Criteria and Participants

This dissertation study utilized purposeful sampling techniques to identify and select study participants. Purposeful sampling strategy is a widely used in qualitative case study research for identifying and selecting of "information-rich" cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of

interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Therefore, the study's utilization of purposeful sampling strategy assisted in identifying a sample population that (a) focused on study participants who have an established participation in the program, and (b) increased the representation of Study participants with diverse backgrounds and intersectional social identities; and lastly, (c) provided the best opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the potential holistic impacts that resulted from their involvement in the social justice-based AS program. In the next section, I specifically explain the "who will be selected for the study" and "the why" of this study's sample population highlighting the purposeful sampling strategy.

The sample population for this dissertation study was 16 youth participants and 3 staff from both West and East sites. The sample population represented an equal amount number of study participants from each of the two research sites: 8 participants from *West* and 8 participants from *East*. This strategy assisted in creating a balanced approach to conducting research at both sites. In doing so, the study had a greater chance to identify similarities or differences based on study participants' lived experiences, experiential knowledge, and engagement to pedagogical practices specific to the two research sites. Also, the balanced representation of study participants enhanced the study's documentation of distinct school and community conditions experienced by the study participants. Importantly, the study employed a gender-balanced approach to collecting data which takes into account the distinct gendered forms of oppression and knowledge production expressed by Chican@-Latin@ youth (Delgado Bernal, 2002).

Under these conditions, the study participants were selected based on four criteria: (a) Study youth participants participated in the program for at least one full year or were an alumni of the program; (2) Study youth participants were reflective of gender balance; (3) Study youth

participants were between 15 and 24 years old; and (4) Study youth participants were of Chicano-Latino descent.

Study participants were identified based on high levels of current program engagement. Utilizing the *Advancing Justice's* youth participant database, I contacted study participants to set up interview appointments at the research site and/or *Advancing Justice* main office. I recruited the Study participants via phone, email, Facebook, and Snapchat direct message and at scheduled weekly programming meetings and events. Based on my youth organizing "best practices" experiences, contacting them via cell phone and social media apps which are on their cell phone were the best strategies to ensure a high level of response.

Data Collection

During the time of data collection, study participants were actively engaged in the site's youth programming and projects. Study participants had at least one year of active engagement with youth programming, organizing, and accessing support resources within the AS program. This purposeful sampling strategy provided a way to gather a deep understanding of potential youth development outcomes, program engagement, and critical reflections of their involvement in the AS program.

Procedures

I incorporated several methods of data collection for this qualitative case study that included in-depth interviews, two focus group interviews, field notes, and participant observations. More specifically, I interviewed youth participants that were currently in high school, as well as participants that were "alumni" who still actively participated in the program. These alumni study participants were possibly working/part-time, going to college/trade school/military, or were possibly unemployed and not enrolled in school. Study participants

were asked questions that illuminated their lives leading up to their involvement into the program and how their engagement with the site's programming, staff, and curriculum materials has generated a critique of social inequality and motivation for social change.

Individual Interviews

The individual interview data were collected using a digital audio recorder. These interviews were completed in an average of an hour to an hour and a half. Questions were developed to attain a greater understanding of how AS Chican@-Latin@ youth participants developed their critique of social oppression, as well as their motivation for social justice. Prior to starting the interview, participants were given an informed consent form stating their rights and informing them that the interview would be audio-recorded. I conducted the individual (and focus group) interviews at the research site, main office, and/or home spaces. I primarily utilized the research site's meeting rooms, which offered a space that was private.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus groups interviews were between one to two hours respectively. Interview questions were open-ended, and when appropriate, I asked follow-up questions. All interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, if needed.

Once again, aligning the study with Delgado Bernal's (1998) cultural intuition framework, I will employ youth orientated discourse expressing culturally relevant phrases and points of reference that have roots in Chican@-Latin@ youth cultures. For example, youth participants from my previous M.A. case study (Ramriez, 2010) commented on their lived experiences involving "street life," "drug use," or "gang affiliations." I utilized questions and responses using culturally relevant terms such as "go get lit" (smoking marijuana), "kicking it" (hang out with friends or idly doing nothing), "low key" (confidential/personal information) and

“Haters” (people who try to belittle others, degrade, spiteful), to name a few. By engaging in these culturally relevant youth discourses, I was able to frame interview questions or engage in dialogue that enabled study participants to openly share aspects of their lives that might not normally be shared with a “researcher.” Lastly, all recorded field notes, observations, and interviews were transcribed verbatim onto a Microsoft word database.

Data Analysis

In terms of data analysis, the units of analysis will be the audio recorded interviews and the student generated projects. Once the interviews were transcribed, I read, analyzed, and coded the interviews according to my research questions, particularly searching for dominant and emerging themes. After I identified emerging themes from the interviews, I presented the themes with study participants at a “member-a-check” group meeting. In doing so, this study seeks to ensure accuracy and engage youth participants in the formulation and interpretation of the study findings.

Lastly, I collected youth-generated projects that study participants cited as informing their critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice, such as YPAR documentaries, poetry, photos, speeches, and journals. I coded and analyzed these projects according to research questions and also included them in member-check.

The risks for those involved in this study were limited. My 15 years of serving as a youth advocate worker, case manager, and mentor has provided me a background on how to respectfully engage youth that have been exposed to high levels of mental, physical and emotional trauma. I am well versed in facilitating dialogues of a sensitive nature in a conversational manner, paying close attention to body language, eye contact, and emotional responses. Likewise, my cultural background and social justice youth development work at both research sites has enabled me to

build a sense of trust and sensitivity with study participants. As a result, study participants will free to share openly and vividly their lived experiences and critical self-reflections. As a researcher, I want to create a space in which Chican@-Latin@ youth participants can speak their truth and critically reflect on how they came to a transformative form of resistance behavior.

Dissertation Study Timeline

The following table is my academic timeline to conduct the study for this academic school year.

Academic Quarter	Task	Goals
Summer 2016	IRB, Identify Study Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB approval • Identify Study participants • Contact/Schedule Interviews
Fall 2016	Begin Interview Process Participant Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Interviews • Transcribe
Winter 2017	Focus Group Interview #1 Focus Group Interview #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Interviews • Transcribe • Start Analysis Process
Spring 2017	Analysis Process Member-Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Analysis Process • Code/Emerging Themes • Member-Check • Findings/Recommendations
AY 2017-2018	Dissertation Writing	Dissertation Year Fellowship

CHAPTER FOUR: MOVING FROM “SAFE SPACE TO SACRED SPACE”

This chapter answers research question number one: *How do Advancing Justice (AS) Chicax-Latinx youth participants develop their critique of social oppression?* Study participants reported that AS youth programming provided a “safe space” which was foundational in their cultivation of a critique social of oppression. Traditionally, the term “safe space” has been understood as “an environment that allows students [youth] to engage with one another over controversial issues with honesty, sensitivity and respect” (Arao & Clemens, 2013, p. 135). However, I will expand and build upon this premise by highlighting “safe space” as directly related to students’ cultivation of agency and the foundational condition for fostering critical socio-consciousness. Ultimately, this process empowers participants to become agents of social change.

In addition, youth collaborators identified the role that ethnic studies and Critical Race Theory (CRT) frameworks played in developing their critical awareness of social oppression. In order to better understand the complexity of the themes in this chapter, I begin by illuminating the indigenous Mayan concept of *In Lak Ech* which provides a critical lens to identify the foundational ideological perspective that shaped the *Advance Justice* youth programming space. The implementation of indigenous epistemologies is an extension of ethnic studies frameworks by centralizing ancestral knowledge creation and customs that are culturally relevant and responsive to Chicax-Latinx youth.

Next, I highlight how youth participants describe the role that “safe spaces” and ethnic studies frameworks contribute to the development of their critique of social oppression. I assert that when “safe space” and Ethnic Studies merge, it creates the condition for self-empowerment, personal transformation and the development of “sacred space.” To do so, I discuss the crucial

importance of creating “sacred space” that transform inherently oppressive (violent) spaces into humanizing communities that build a sense of belonging, acceptance and human interconnectedness; in order to engage in youth empowerment work that can potentially lead to transformative outcomes. Lastly, I highlight the importance of Ethnic Studies curriculum and pedagogy that utilize a CRT framework to the fostering of Transformational Resistance agency/consciousness.

In Lak Ech: Tu Eres Mi Otro Yo – You Are My Other Me

When I began to analyze and identify the complexities of how AS Chicanx-Latinx youth develop a critique of social oppression, one central theme emerged: Youth engagement (and naming) of “safe space.” Initially, as a scholar and youth worker practitioner, I hypothesized that the youth participants were going to overwhelmingly cite youth empowerment workshops (i.e., Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Theory in Education frameworks) or participation in grassroots forms of political protests as factors that contributed to their critique of social oppression. However, the study participants reminded me (and critical scholars) of the critical role that creating and facilitating a learning environment that generates a humanizing community has in the cultivation of critical social awareness.

During my six years of youth empowerment work with *Advancing Justice*, one underlining philosophical foundation which guided the development of youth programming spaces was the indigenous concept of *In Lak Ech* or *In Lak Ech Tu Eres Mi Otro Yo, You Are My Other Me*. Rooted in ancient Mayan epistemology, ontology and axiology, *In Lak Ech* provides a world view that promotes the interconnectedness of humanity. In his book, *Amoxitli the X codex: In Lak Ech, Panache Be, Hunab Ku and the Forgotten 1524 Debates*, Dr. Cintli

Rodriguez (2010) explains indigenous concept of *In Lak Ech* as a symbiotic framework for human beings to treat one another and become interconnected in their humanity. He states:

In Lak Ech is not simply an ancient Indigenous Maya concept; in fact, it is a prescription for how we should treat each other as human beings. It is the anti-thesis of dehumanization. It is the first step toward rehumanization. It is the first step in viewing our fellow human beings not simply as neighbors, but as brothers and sisters. As co-equals. (Rodriguez, 2010, p. 20)

Rodriguez's definition of *In Lak Ech* speaks directly to the connection and transformative outcomes that occur when one engages in a "safe space" that is humanizing. Utilizing a liberatory educational paradigm, Freire explains that the process of humanization is when a human being shifts from being an "object" to a "subject," that is, the process of becoming more fully human as social, historical, thinking, communicating, transformative, *creative persons who participate in and with the world*² (Freire, 1970, 1994). Thus, the humanization process is fundamentally rooted in human beings' (i.e., Chicax-Latinx youth) capacity to express their critical agency in their lives and the world around them.

Throughout this chapter it becomes evident that in a "safe space" environment, Chicax-Latinx youth were able to develop their critique of social oppression by developing their critical thinking and agency. Examples of critical social awareness and critical agency can be such as expressing their poetic voice through Hip Hop song (e.g., Everyday Lyfe), creating online, positive, youth-centered communities to respond against racial microaggressions (e.g., Black Rose Press) and participate in an indigenous-centered community healing run throughout the streets of West Los Angeles, the Four Corner Spirit Run. Thus, Chicax-Latinx youth participants engaged in a humanizing community that enabled them to become their authentic selves because they engaged in youth programming spaces that put into practice values of *In Lak*

² Italicization is my allocated emphasis not emphasized in the original text.

Ech. Indigenous epistemological values such as being inclusive, accepting and interconnectedness to humanity (and all life on Mother earth) can cumulatively contribute to transformative outcomes. These transformative outcomes, I argue, transform spaces that youth previously identified as oppressive as opposed to being “safe.”

The inspiration to utilize the *In Lak Ech* framework within youth programming spaces comes directly from the pedagogical approaches utilized by the critical educators of the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) Mexican American/Raza Studies (MAS) program. From 1998 to 2010, TUSD MAS program was the only K–12 Ethnic Studies program in the United States (Acosta, 2014). Incorporated into their curriculum was the *In Lak Ech*-inspired poem entitled “Pensamiento Serpentino,” written by Luis Valdez, the founder of *El Teatro Campesino*, a grassroots political Chicana theater troupe that emerged out the 1960’s farmworkers movement in California. The *In Lak Ech* poem states:

Tu eres mi otro yo/You are my other me
Si te hago dano a ti/If I do harm to you
Me hago dano a mi mismo/I do harm to myself
Si te amo y respeto/If I love and respect you
Me amo y respeto yo/I love and respect myself

At its core, the *In Lak Ech* poem reflects an indigenous epistemological and ontological framework of understanding human interaction and existence in the world. Whether it be the colonial and/or U.S. capitalist structure in United States, human beings are indoctrinated into social divisions within society rooted in racial hierarchies, individualism, and competition for social and economic resources. However, an *In Lak Ech* perspective shifts human existence from the “I” of the individual to the “We” of Community.

For example, the *In Lak Ech* framework on human existence can be found in the philosophical underpinnings of Zapatismo (Ramirez, Carlsen, & Arias, 2008). One of the central

tenets of Zapatismo is the belief that as indigenous peoples on this earth, their role is to emphasize the dignity of others, belonging, and common struggles on their ancestral lands. And by doing so, they are creating “Un Mundo Donde Quepan Muchos Mundos”/A World Where Many Worlds Fit.” Thus, the implementation of *In Lak Ech* values and world view into *Advancing Justice* youth programming spaces is an expression of de-colonization and re-humanization within schooling environments that are designed to colonize and de-humanize Chicana-Latinx youth in particular.

Furthermore, in *Precious Knowledge* (2011), a documentary focused on the struggle and resistance of TUSD MAS students, teachers and community to the passing of HB2281,³ illustrates a powerful glimpse into how the *In Lak Ech* concept was put into practice in the classroom space. In a classroom ritual or ceremony, students and teachers recited the *In Lak Ech inspired* poem using a call and response format at the beginning and end of class. By using the poem as a classroom mantra, the Mexican American/Raza Studies educators have successfully transformed their classroom spaces into an inclusive community that promoted a sense of belonging and empowerment, and is grounded in the reintroduction of the students’ indigenous heritage. Epistemologically and pedagogically, the MAS students being encouraged to acknowledge and embrace their indigenous cultural identity (and heritage) were given the conceptual lens and values to unlearn the colonized forms of oppression such as self-hate, colorism, and internalized racism experienced by Communities of Color within U.S. society (Acosta, 2014b; Romero et al., 2009).

³ In 2010, Arizona state legislation passed HB 2281 that eliminated the MAS program, even though empirical research cited that the MAS students outperformed their non-MAS student counterparts with increased GPA, standardized test scores (e.g., AIMS tests) and high school graduation rates (Cabrera, Milem, & Marx, 2012).

In this way, I assert that *Advancing Justice*'s implementation of the *In Lak Ech* framework in their youth programming sites was an intentional pedagogical tool to create spaces designed to be inclusive, accepting, and empowering spaces for youth of color, Chicanx-Latinx in particular. Under these conditions, it becomes evident in youth participants' reflections that the programming space provided them an opportunity not only to feel an interconnectedness to one another, but also to develop a deepened sense of humanity. Grounding this chapter in *Advancing Justice*'s employment of an *In Lak Ech* framework within youth programming spaces provides the necessary conceptual lens to better understand the Study participants' theorizations about the critical role that engaging in a "safe space" with Ethnic Studies curriculum and pedagogy can have in the development of critical social awareness. Ultimately, the study's findings speak to a fundamental need for critical knowledge sharing and youth empowerment work that can foster a critique of social oppression: it must be rooted in a "safe space" or humanizing environment that creates a deepened sense of belonging, acceptance, and community support. Similarly, Covarrubias (2011) finds that intentional, inclusive community-building is a necessary precursor to the development of a strong commitment to social justice and a multi-dimensional critical consciousness. Without that space to connect with everyone's humanity, there is no space for the development of critical consciousness with a potential for transformative outcomes. They must go "hand-in-hand!"

Youth Engagement in "Safe Spaces"

In the dissertation study, youth participants cited that engaging in a "safe space" played a vital role in their development of a critique of social oppression. *Curly Sunshine*, a 19-year-old, gender-non-conforming Chicanx, who was born and raised in the Mid-City area of Downtown Los Angeles. Curly Sunshine grew up in a mixed-citizenship status home, with her mother and

two older sisters living undocumented. During her childhood, she worked with her mother as a street vendor, assisting in translating with English speaking customers. Developed through those life experiences, *Curly Sunshine* has strong communication skills and carries herself as a natural leader. *They*⁴ joined the BPMP during their tenth-grade year and instantly became an active participant taking on several leadership roles. In high school, *They* founded the first ever LGBTQIA⁵ student club on campus to address the hostile environment and lack of visibility of Queer students on campus. In this next passage, *she* explains how engaging in community-building “ice-breaker” activities contributed to their feelings of being part of an inclusive “safe space.” *Curly Sunshine* states:

I think BPMP was a really safe space because of me being queer and being "fresh out of the closet." And I also founded G-BLITS⁶, which is a GSA⁷ club on campus, so at that time I think that I really needed that support and community.

It was doing the BPMP ice-breakers that didn't matter whether you were from different races or different sexual orientations [that help create safe space] . . . BPMP basically provided activities that worked regardless of your identities or intersections. And I think that really made it safe cuz all these activities were inclusive of all people. And personally, I was able to transfer those BPMP activities into my G-BLITS club. I was made to feel a part of a “safe space” then I created safe space for others, you know.

Curly Sunshine passage reveals how the BPMP space was an environment that was accepting and inclusive of her queer Chicanx identity. Historically, we must acknowledge that schooling structures and environments have marginalized LGBTQIA students of color (Mayo, 2013).

Similarly, in terms of public health, LGBTQIA youth of color, queer-Latina in particular, have

⁴ Curly Sunshine’s intersectional identity pronouns are: They, Them, she and her.

⁵ LGBTQIA stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual or Allied.

⁶ G-BLITS stands for Gay Bisexual Lesbian Intersexual Transgender Straight allies.

⁷ GSA stands for Gay Straight Alliance.

one the highest rates of suicide among teens in the United States (Bauman et al., 2014; Blackburn & McCready, 2009). Under these conditions, it is evident that *Curly Sunshine*'s feelings of community of support, acceptance and inclusiveness of diverse identities and intersections in BPMP space is positively impacting her overall mental health and wellness.

More specifically, *Curly Sunshine* illuminates how pedagogically the “ice-breaker” activities helped create an inclusive community among youth participants, regardless of peoples’ diverse social and intersectional identities. It becomes clear that the BPMP space provided a humanizing space for *Curly Sunshine*, who as a queer Chicanx, had experienced a hostile campus climate toward LGBTQIA students at *West*. They were able to share the BPMP “ice-breaker” activities and the *In Lak Ech*-inspired space of inclusion and interconnectedness, and put them into practice in *her* G-BLITS club. For example, youth participants really enjoyed participating in an ice-breaker activity called “Ultimate Ninja.” In this activity, all youth participants make a giant circle and yell together “Ultimate Ninja.” Then all players freeze in an action-orientated “ninja pose.” The goal of the game is to be the last ninja standing. To stay in the game, players must not let anyone hit their hand. If one player hits another players hand, they are out. Each player gets a turn to make one smooth motion to hit an opponent’s hand. The rotation goes clockwise until there is one winner.

The fun, excitement, and challenge of playing “Ultimate Ninja” highly engaged BPMP youth participants like *Curly Sunshine* to experience the positive social-emotional outcomes of collective play and community-building. These positive social-emotional outcomes directly contribute to the feeling of being a member of a “safe-inclusive community” within a classroom environment at school. Further, I contend that *Curly Sunshine* embraced the BPMP ice-breaker activities to build a “safe space” for her G-BLITS members and put the *In Lak Ech* values of

humanity and deepened sense of community into practice. In other words, it was an expression and embodiment of *In Lak Ech* praxis.

Moreover, *Curly Sunshine* theorized on the interrelationship between creating a “safe space” and developing a social justice lens. She explained:

I feel that the process of creating a “safe space” and developing a social justice lens goes “hand in hand.” It's essential for [youth programming space] to be a safe space first because think about it . . . why learn about social justice? Why care about other people? Why go out of your way to try to make this world better for other people, if you don't have a group of people that actually care for you and are there for you. So I think that by creating a “safe space,” you open doors for people to actually connect to their humanity, connect into their compassion, connect to their love for one another, you know, it's *In Lak Ech*.

Curly Sunshine provided a powerful theorization of first establishing a “safe space” environment as foundationally necessary to the process of developing a social justice lens. *Curly Sunshine's* analysis of the interrelationship of “safe spaces” with the development of a critique of social oppression speaks to the necessity of being able to engage in a community of support that generates a compassion for humanity. Utilizing a Freirean lens, I posit that *Curly Sunshine's* contention that a humanizing community of support is critical to the development of a critique of social oppression reflects the process of re-humanization that needs to occur for an individual to truly embrace a compassion for humanity and justice (Freire, 1970). Urban Chicax-Latinx youth exist within systems of oppression that perpetuate both structural and institutional forms of violence.

As a result, these oppressive conditions create a process of dehumanization which then becomes internalized by oppressed individuals/groups (Balhn, 1985; Carter, 2007; Watt-Jones, 2002). This process of internalized de-humanization prevents the development of agency, resistance, and empathy for humanity. Hence, the creation of a “safe space” that promotes,

embodies, and puts into practice the interconnectedness and community of support outlined in the philosophy of *In Lak Ech* actually nurtures/activates the process of re-humanization.

More specifically, *Curly Sunshine* asserts that youth who engage in the creation of a “safe space” are given the opportunity to feel and experience community expressions of acceptance, compassion, and empathy that directly provides them opportunities to “connect to their humanity” (i.e., the process of re-humanization). Under these conditions, “safe spaces” play a foundational role in the process of re-humanization, necessary to develop a critique of social oppression that can potentially lead to a motivation for social justice—Transformational Resistance (Brayboy 2005; Covarrubias & Revillas, 2003; Hidalgo & Duncan Andrade, 2009; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

In addition, *Brother B*, a 19-year-old Chicana BPMP youth leader, highlighted the significant role that engaging a “safe space” contributed to his development of a critique of social oppression. *Brother B* grew up in the Pico Union/University Park area of Downtown Los Angeles. His parents emigrated from Mexico during the late 1980s and separated when he was five years old. He has lived with his mom in the same one-bedroom apartment his whole life. His mother works from home as a garment worker and has always been very supportive of his educational aspirations. *Brother B* joined the BPMP during his tenth-grade year, when his school therapist recommended that he take a step out of his “comfort zone” to build his social skills by joining an on-campus femtorship/mentorship program (i.e., BPMP). Growing up, he struggled with a speech impediment and as a result, he became extremely introverted. Even though he may have initially struggled with his social and communicative skills, though, *Brother B* is a talented writer. In fact, after participating in a YPAR project focused on racial microaggressions and positive coping strategies, he created an online community and blog called

the *Black Rose Press*. In the next passage, *Brother B* illuminates how the values of *In Lak Ech* contributed to a community of respect and inclusion. He asserted:

I definitely feel that BPMP is “safe space” because of the values of In Lak Ech, Tu Eres Mi Otro Yo, You Are My Other Me. I did feel that in my years of being in BPMP, we maintained our values of being connected with one another. BPMP really did uphold the value of “if I hurt you than I’m hurting myself” and I did see that especially within the members treated one another. They were really respectful of one another and tried to maintain that respect, inclusiveness and diversity. Those values for me makes BPMP not only a great program but a wonderful “home” to be in at school.

Brother B’s reference to BPMP as a “home” speaks to the shift from “space” being transformed to “place.” Scholars have theorized on how transformation of “space to place” are grounded in the relationships that individuals (and groups) have to one another within a space can lead to it being transformed into “place.” In this case, BPMP youth members creating humanizing interconnected relationships guided by *In Lak Ech*-praxis transformed the classroom programming space into “a place like home.” The BPMP members (and facilitators) community actively sought to practice the values of the place in relation to each other. The process of rehumanizing included the possibility of re-indigenizing to the types of relationships and values that maintain community. In fact, both indigenous ontological notions of reciprocal relation to the land as well as the axiological commitments to inclusiveness and diversity made the program into a home for students within classroom (Patel, 2015, 2016).

Further, I contend that *Brother B*’s assertions also revealed a shift toward re-indigenizing of how he views his sense of belonging and community relationships with his BPMP peers and facilitators. The *In Lak Ech* values of human interconnectedness that were put into practice by BPMP members (and facilitators) in youth programming spaces (i.e., classrooms) directly reflected an indigenous world view that promotes youth resistance and survivance within

schooling spaces that are inherently de-humanizing for students of color, Chicax-Latinx in particular.

Also, *Brother B* mentioned the role that “ice-breaker” activities employed in BPMP programming space facilitated the building of an inclusive community of support among youth participants. *Brother B* explained:

Definitely the “ice-breakers” was a main force in creating the inclusiveness in BPMP. And I think that hearing other people's stories and having the time to be more engaged in fun activities with them help connect us all together [as a community]. For example, activities like ‘Ultimate Ninja’ all helped us connect with one another. At first, I had to learn how to trust and not let being introverted stop me. Then, I learned to build trust with someone else who may not have shared the same background as me. But it really helped knowing that we may all hold different identities, but at the end of the day, we're all just humans. We're all here together to share our stories, our enjoyment, our laughs and our stress and all that stuff. We're here [at BPMP] for a positive experience and we're here to make the best out of it. I believe this was how BPMP was able to maintain an inclusive environment.

Employing a CRT lens, *Brother B* speaks to the role that counterstorytelling (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002) played in creating a humanizing space in which Chicax-Latinx youth were able to build an inclusive community through sharing their life’s struggles, joys, lived experience, and experiential knowledge. Hence, I assert that counterstorytelling was a methodological and pedagogical tool to facilitate an environment that promoted the asset-based notion that “your story is your strength” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). And by embracing one’s story and learning from other peoples’ stories, struggles, and insights can in fact generate a sustainable inclusive-humanizing community.

Lastly, *Brother B* shared that the BPMP provided a safe space for him to affirm his LGBTQIA identity. He explained:

In BPMP I was able to find a “safe space” thanks to mentors *Johnny Rockit*, *Ivette ohh* and *Tim Tezzy*. I was able to solidify my LGBTQIA identity. I had already come out as LGBTQIA before participating in BPMP but at that time I was still trying to figure out how to full embrace my identity. But with the support of BPMP, I was able to stand

firmly in my LGBTQIA identity when it came time to write my personal statement for the UC's. As a first-generation college student, who was applying to big universities, I was able to include my LGBTQIA identity in my essay. I did feel that it was very necessary to include that part of my identity because it was part of my story and I needed to express it. I felt that these admission people needed to know that this is who I am and that this is what I could bring to their universities. And so BPMP really helped me out and especially in building up my confidence too! That's what the "safe space" of BPMP has given me.

It becomes evident that the youth engagement of a "safe space" was reflective a holistic pedagogical approach that sought to further student academic, social, and personal development. *Brother B's* passage speaks to the youth empowerment, agency, and social and emotional growth he experienced during his high school years in BPMP. As a tenth grader, he initially entered BPMP struggling to express his voice and embrace his LGBTQIA identity as an asset. However, by twelfth grade, Brother B had been able to embrace his story and LGBTQIA identity as a strength, and they sought to attend a university that promoted diversity student population. It became evident that youth engagement of a "safe space" was part of a holistic pedagogical approach that sought to further student academic, social, and personal development.

Furthermore, *Cio* illuminated the role that engaging in a "safe space" had in providing her support as an undocumented Latinx student in LAUSD. When she was eight years old, she emigrated from Guatemala to the U.S. with her older sister as an unaccompanied minor. Her mother, who also emigrated from Guatemala, works as a street food vendor in the Pico Union/West Adams area of Downtown Los Angeles. Throughout her childhood, *Cio* has taken on adult roles to support her single mom's food vending cart as a necessary means to ensure her family can afford rent, food, and clothing. Thus, *Cio* and her two sisters help her mother with the preparing, cooking, and vending before school, after school, and all weekends. The demands of working long hours assisting her mother's food vending cart, coupled with the pressures of a heavy academic workload, *Cio* found herself not having any time to really enjoy life as a

teenager. In this next passage, *Cio* explained how accessing a “safe space” at BPMP gave her a community of support, as well as an opportunity to take a personal break away from the pressures of her daily routine. *Cio* elaborated:

A “safe space” means that you've been accepted and that you feel comfortable. Because sometimes you might not feel that support at home and you might feel depressed. In my case, at home, I felt like time would just run by so fast, you know. I would just go home, go to work and then go to sleep, and then get up and start it all over again. But being at BPMP actually helped me see that my time was important there. I was able to use that time to experience the love of other people and feel all their positive expressions. It could be someone giving me words of encouragement like “*Cio* you're good at this” or “*Cio*, you did this—Great job!” At BPMP I felt all that positivity was feeding into me. I believe that all falls into a ‘safe space’ because it helps you gain confidence in yourself. And then you add all the love of your own family and then all the love from members in BPMP. It all makes a big difference in your life. It gives you hope! And you know, some youth really need that cuz they may not have that at home.

Cio's reflections on her engagement in BPMP's “safe space” can be directly contributed to positive youth development outcomes such as building her confidence and developing a sense of connection to a community of her peers (and femtors/mentors). Adolescent Development scholars (King et al., 2005) have identified the critical role that confidence building and connection to a community of positive peers has in youth moving from “surviving to thriving.” Similarly, *Cio* cited that the community love and support that she received from her involvement in BPMP space gave her feelings of hope. This phenomenon speaks to Ginwright's (2011, 2016) healing justice model which centralizes the critical role that hope plays in increasing resiliency and overall mental wellness among urban Youth of Color. It becomes clear that *Cio*'s engagement in BPMP was increasing her hope levels as she struggled to take on the adult roles and responsibilities to ensure her family's livelihood. Thus, BPMP's “safe space” contributed directly to increasing her resiliency and wellness respectively.

Moreover, *Cio* credited the “safe space” and community support of BPMP in her ability to overcome her fears and negative stigma of being undocumented within U.S. society. *Cio* explained:

BPMP helped me not to fear being undocumented. Before as an Undocumented student, I used to think that I'm not valuable to the U.S. But the support I got from BPMP made me feel that everything I do in this life counts and is important [to the world] This [affirmation] gave me a lot of self-respect. It's hard being undocumented in the U.S. where everyone points out that undocumented immigrants are here intrusively. But you know what, undocumented immigrants are here because we are the ones who are doing a lot of hard work for the U.S. [economy]. Basically, the U.S. provides work and we [Undocumented immigrants] provide them a service, which is our work! . . . What I gained at BPMP was to actually value our lives first, and then, see how we can give back to the community.

Cio highlights how BPMP contributed to her development of a positive self-perceptions of her Undocumented identity. It is extremely difficult to develop and maintain a healthy self-esteem as an Undocumented youth, when racist-nativist messages which are being transmitted via mainstream media outlets, as well as, in public and political discourse. Thus, *Cio* ability to reframe her undocumented identity from a deficit perspective to a source of resiliency. Her self-affirmation illustrates her agency to resist the de-humanization associated with non-U.S. citizenship status. Furthermore, it becomes clear that BPMP programming sought to empower young people to exercise their power to challenge structural and institutional violence, but are also simultaneously, a space for positive coping mechanisms and place to heal from external trauma.

Conclusion of “Safe Space” section

In summation, study participants highlighted that engaging in “safe spaces” was a foundational environment in their development of a critique of social oppression. Youth collaborators highlighted the inclusiveness and human interconnectedness that shaped the BPMP programming space. Utilizing the indigenous epistemological frameworks of *In Lak Ech* in

creating the programming space for Chicanx-Latinx youth participants was central to their self-reporting of BPMP as a “safe space.” The referencing of being able to feel and experience a deepened sense of belonging and membership within a humanizing community is critically important in understanding the role that human interconnectedness positively affects urban Chicanx-Latinx youth.

Foremost, it is imperative to acknowledge that the Chicanx-Latinx youth in the study experienced some of the highest levels of structural and institutional violence. And they have employed some of the highest levels of agency and resiliency! The exposure to high levels of social toxins can often times lead to Chicanx-Latinx youth to experience loss of hope and lead to de-humanization. Feelings of low self-worth, lack of confidence, low motivation, extreme alienation, and internalized self-hate can all lead to self-harmful behaviors. These are the outcomes of being in environments and institutions that have historically and currently marginalized the healthy development of youth and their families. Hence, it is critical to situate the Chicanx-Latinx youth participants reporting of engagement and naming of “safe space” as a result of finding a sanctuary (i.e., a place of safety) from structural and institutional acts of violence within their daily lives. For this study and in practice, we must honor the voices and lived experiences of our youth in their self-reporting of “safe space” in order to better NAME and CHALLENGE the structural forms of oppression such as White supremacy, colonization, patriarchy, and heteronormativity which places them in situation looking for sanctuary (a safe interconnected-humanizing community) in the first place.

Scholars have critiqued the notion of creating or holding “safe space” within structures or institutions that are inherently designed to be violent and dehumanizing for People of Color (Leonardo & Porter 2010). The contention is that when youth or community engage in

challenging and transforming the hostile/violent climate of an institutional space, they are holding “brave space” (Arao & Clemens, 2013; Cook-Sather, 2016). However, I contend that the framing of BPMP as a “safe space” is an accurate descriptor for marginalized social and intersectional identities such as LGBTQIA and Undocumented youth who experience the highest levels of trauma due to structural oppression. In fact, Chicax-Latinx LGBTQIA and Undocumented youth populations have higher rates of suicide, addiction, and school pushout. In addition, I would argue that space that focuses on creating a humanizing community environment in which youth do not feel that they are going to be verbally attacked or bullied can also lead to the naming of more “safe spaces.” Moreover, the sheer absence of spaces of inclusiveness and human interconnectedness in the community or within schools can also play a role in Chicax-Latinx youth identifying spaces like BPMP as a “safe space.”

Safe Space to Sacred Space

I argue that when Advancing Justice AS Chicax-Latinx youth participants engagement of a “safe space” that put the epistemological framework such as In Lak Ech into practice, there was a transformative shift in the space. When youth participants felt interconnected to one another’s humanity and struggles, we shifted from a safe space to a sacred space. This shift toward creating a sacred space is guided by the notion that once youth participants began to humanize each other and feel deeply interconnected to the programs such as BPMP, they transcended their relationship to the AS youth programming space, as well as to their schooling environment. Changing their relationship and connection to one another and to the actual classroom space as a manifestation of indigenous epistemology is an act of decolonization. The process of decolonization within schooling spaces that are inherently colonizing and dehumanizing occurs when youth participants and the facilitators/coordinators reclaim their

humanity and interconnectedness within oppressive schooling structures. Although it was not solely an act of resistance, it was an act of refusal. In many ways the transformation into sacred space is re-indigenization for urban Chicax-Latinx youth, building upon ancestral knowledge and ways of being that originate from their ancestral epistemologies.

There is a paucity within the literature that addresses sacred spaces and urban Chicax-Latinx youth. In an article entitled “Xicana Sacred Space: A Communal Circle of Compromise for Educational Researchers” (Soto et al., 2009), Xicana scholars theorize on a framework that centered on the complexities of a Chicana ontology and epistemology within academic and community spaces. The authors concluded that creating a Xicana sacred space could be used “as tool for raising consciousness, gaining strength, cultivating cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998) examining positionalities and standpoints and develop intellectual growth for Xicana scholars who are interested in conducting decolonial, emancipatory, and feminist research and action projects” (Soto et al., 2009, p. 755). The Xicana Sacred Space (XSS) conceptualization provides a powerful framework to better understand the creating of a Xicana-centered sacred space within the academic and community. However, XSS does not fully illuminate the process of shifting from a “safe space” to a “sacred space” for urban, low-income Chicax-Latinx youth.

Based on my cultural intuition and experiential knowledge, as both a practitioner and CRT scholar, I witnessed firsthand the shifting of Advancing Justice youth programming space shift from a “safe space” to a “sacred space.” First, I believe that application and practice of an indigenous epistemological framework, such as, In Lak Ech was foundational in shifting the youth programming space from “safe” to “sacred.” The In Lak Ech-praxis approach was critical in activating the ancestral knowledge and relationships that re-indigenize Chicax-Latinx youth. Thus, there is a decolonial component inherent in shifting institutionalized spaces from “safe to

sacred.” The Chicax-Latinx youth participants and adult facilitators collectively changed the relationship to the space, and the members within space, by operating from relationship which are humanizing and indigenous. The change in relationships within youth programming space was an act of resistance and refusal to White supremacist-colonizing structures that normally direct the power relationships within the After-School space.

Second, the transformation into “sacred space” was co-constructed by youth participants and adult facilitators. The central part to that construction of the sacred space is rooted in the axiological commitment of the facilitators to facilitate the space with intentionality. The use of In Lak Ech was axiological way to share values of humanity, community and indigenous ways of being.

Third, the shifting from “safe space” to “sacred space” was a temporal phenomenon within an institutional space like a traditional classroom. I draw from Alzaduas theorizations on *nepantlanta* and being a *nepantlantero* which situates people and places in flux with one another. It can be site of a oppression but then can shift to be a site of resistance. One can be oppressive and then can shift to be liberatory. And within this temporal environments, spiritual activism (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Huber, 2009) can occur that promote a resistance that enables one to transcend the structural and institutional forms of oppression. For the youth participants in BPMP, they were able for two times a week create and participate in a space that provide them hope, authentic caring relationships and human interconnectedness. BPMP programming space was transformed into a “sacred space” by the fact that the youth participants (and adult facilitators) were building a community of love, support, and inclusiveness that provided them social, emotional, and mental replenishment to exercise their empowerment, resiliency, and agency.

Youth engagement of Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Theory (CRT) frameworks

CRT Racial Microaggressions in the creation of Black Rose Press (BRP)

Brother B, a 19 year old BPMP youth leader highlighted the role that ethnic studies and Critical Race theory frameworks contributed to his critique of social oppression. Brother B intersectional identities are being queer, U.S.-born, Chicanx and a first-generation college student who grew up in the Pico Union-University Park area of downtown Los Angeles. His parents immigrated to the United States during the early 80's from Mexico to gain job opportunities that could provide a living wage. His mother is a garment worker and performs outsourced labor in the living room of from their 1 bedroom apartment. Since his childhood, Brother B struggled with a minor speech impediment and as a result became a very introverted person. During his 10th grade at West, his counselor encouraged him to take a “step out of his comfort zone” to learn how to build up his communication and social interaction skills. The counselor passed him a flyer BPMP and encouraged him to attend a meeting. At his first meeting, Brother B found it extremely difficult to engage in the ice-breaker activity, which called on him to speak to a group of 15 students and 3 adults.

During his 11th grade year in BPMP, Brother B participated in a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) documentary project that merged together Ethnic studies pedagogy and Critical Race Theory frameworks. He was introduced to the concept of racial microaggressions and the negative culminative impacts that it has on Chicanx-Latinx youth within his campus and community. As part of the YPAR methodology and ethnic studies pedagogy, Brother B was mandated to develop strategies and solutions that would benefit his campus and community to address the harmful psychological and physiological of racial microaggressions. The solution that Brother B developed was an online youth forum called the *Black Rose Press* (BRP). The

Black Rose Press name was a merging of the Concrete Rose framework utilized in BPMP programming space and the youth engagement of online blogging in social media platforms. In this next passage Brother B defines the conceptual meaning of the Black Rose Press. He states:

To define the name Black Rose Press, I will break down each word to define its meaning. The word 'Black' means resilience because I imagine people thriving in world filled with darkness: racism, xenophobia, and poverty. When Tupac wrote in his poem, "Proving nature's laws wrong it [the rose] learn to walk/without having feet," these lines resonate with the word Black because nobody cannot thrive without having the proper socioeconomic resources, yet, they manage to push themselves and their families forward without it. The 'Rose' resembles the red flower that grows in scrubs. Finally, the 'Press' signifies that the blog, Black Rose Press, is a community-run digital newspaper where students and community members can be their own journalist by sharing their stories that are overlooked by television and newspaper mediums.

Next, Brother B explains how the *Black Rose Press* was operationalized to engage the youth at West. He explains:

The project I developed was called the *Black Rose Press*. The *Black Rose Press* was an online community forum where high schoolers at West can come together and post content ranging from poems, images, videos, and audio from soundcloud...so they could come together and have a collaborative experience in raising people's voices at West Adams who may not get a chance to be heard. Also, it could help students who may not be able to go to BPMP to feel supported and a part of a positive community...

For example, The *Black Rose Press* would give students an opportunity to voice their thoughts and feelings on issues of oppression like violence. From writing a poem about the loss of a friend or a picture that symbolizes nonviolence, I feel that we as students have the power to uplift each other and bring attention to end violence within our community.

Black Rose Press was created to build a bridge between different social circles and just give students a resource to empower themselves. And if we can become empowered and support one another, we won't let oppression like racism or racial microaggressions or anti-immigrant beliefs divide us, then, we can finally unite together as a community!

The *BRP* served as a public student forum for critical consciousness and resiliency building amongst youth participants. Utilizing a digital forum, Brother B was creating a humanizing-interconnected community of support similar to BPMP youth programming space. More specifically, the *BRP* illustrated how the safe space created within BPMP empowered youth

participants to think about sharing their ideas with others outside the space. By doing so, youth participants are finding creative ways to build a larger sense of community by building small and then moving outward. Utilizing the technological (i.e. social media) platforms provides a high level of youth engagement, and in turn, can provide a high level of youth empowerment and resiliency.

Everyday Lyfe Hip Hop Project

In addition, BPMP youth participants exhibited their critique of social oppression through their lyrics in a Hip Hop project entitled “Everyday Lyfe.” In response to the election Trump to the presidency, BPMP youth leaders organized a healing-talking circle on campus as student-led response to the feelings of fear and despair among the West student community. Based on the feelings, reflections, and themes that emerged from the talking circles, BPMP youth leaders wanted to organize after-school campus event called the Unity Fest. The Unity Fest event would be a place for students, teachers, staff and administrators gather together to express their peace, love and unity at West and for the community as a whole. There would be live music, youth performers, community artists, and an open mic for West students to exercise their voice as resistance and healing. In addition, there would be community-based organizations that provide resources to students such as free legal services, health centers, youth job/internship opportunities and student support services from the local Community College. While simultaneously organizing this youth event, the BPMP youth leaders decided to create a collective Hip hop song that would embody their personal story, as well as, what BPMP stands for on campus and the community. The hip hop song would be performed at the Unity Fest event.

In order to create the hip hop song, BPMP youth participated in an 8-week workshop series on learning the her/his/ourstory of Hip hop culture and how hip hop expression has been a tool for empowerment, healing, and social change. They watched documentaries and analyzed different hip hop songs that reflected a powerful testimonio of resiliency and critiques of social oppression.

In Brenda Cee's verse she poetically shares her lived experiences as a middle school student and directly references the ethnic studies and CRT frameworks as an expression of empowerment and resiliency. Brenda writes:

Back in the day when I was in middle school
A lot of people we're wannabes, trying to act cool
But what I know now, I didn't know then
What it truly takes, to make a real friend
Because people now-a-days be acting real fake
Do what I gotta do to stay away from these snakes
I just need a friend to keep it 100
Someone who shows love and never be frontin'
That's why I have my peeps up in BPMP
Shout outs to my West Adams Community
"In Lak Ech, Tu Eres Mi Orto Yo
You Are My Other Me," just to let you know
We take a stand to fight each other's oppression
Self Determination, a Black Panther's lesson
So, *we're keeping our dreams, erasing our doubts*
Cause we *Concrete Roses, we never tap out*

This passage truly symbolizes the role that Ethnic Studies pedagogy, CRT and Hip hop expression has shaped her self-perception and the view of the world. Aligning itself with Ethnic Studies pedagogical approach, Brenda Cee begins her verse with centering and sharing her lived experiences as a middle school student who struggled to establish friendships that were authentically caring. Next, she makes several direct references to ethnic studies and hip hop themes and concepts that reflect self-determination, solidarity and resiliency. She cites the Mayan philosophy of In Lak Ech as belief that promotes standing in solidarity to collectively

fight oppression. Then, Brenda Cee acknowledges the concept of self-determination which was a part of the political education modeled by the Black Panther Party for Self Defense and lastly, concludes with a reference to the theme of youth resiliency exhibited in Tupac Shukar's poem "Rose that Grew from the Concrete." By framing herself symbolically as a "Concrete Rose," Brenda Cee utilizes her dreams, aspirations and self – confidence to develop a mind-set that drives resiliency to structural or institutional oppression.

Similarly, *Ivette Ohh* verse she highlights the need for an intersectional approach to unity and community building that reflects the CRT tenet of intersectionality. Ivette Ohh states:

It's time to make a change in this nation
No time for separation, it's time for congregation
This is the time and this is the hour
We need to come to together, that's called *Youth Power*
No one gets left behind that's our mentality
We gotta settle our differences; intersectionality
Why are we putting a hold on this conversation

Ivette Ohh's poetic analysis is rooted in the Ethnic Studies pedagogical approach of facilitating the development of a student's critical consciousness. As a Documented youth organizer, she has been heavily engaged in the grassroots organizing discourse regarding the need for movement building to apply an intersectional approach in leadership representation and messaging in the immigrant justice movement. For example, there has been a call for more intersectional organizing with undocumented Black, Queer and Trans communities in order to expand the mainstream discourse that homogenizes the immigrant rights movement as solely a Latino issue.

In addition, Z.U.R., a 17-year-old Undocumented-Unafraid BPMP youth participant employed a humanizing and critical hope perspective to challenge the Trump election in her hip hop verse. Z.U.R. writes:

Don't y'all know this is critical to our education
This land use to be an indigenous nation

*No human is illegal, we are pro-immigration
Where is the mind of this demagogue at
Let's impeach him out of office, how 'bout that
Trump don't believe in climate change, he's trying to build a wall
He's trying to destroy the earth, trying to make us feel small
But at the end of the day, love Trumps hate
We're gonna win this fight there's no debate*

In the poetic passage, Z.U.R highlighted several themes that are reflective of a critique of social oppression. She begins her verse by challenging the racist-nativist political discourse around the U.S. immigration issue. She does so by honoring the historical truth that prior to the establishment of the U.S., North America was comprised of indigenous peoples and nations. She follows that assertion by pushing the immigrant justice movement messaging of “No human is illegal.” In addition, Z.U.R references the power of love to debunk the hate of Trump’s racist-nativist rhetoric. By doing so, she set up her concluding verse which highlights the “We” as expression of Community power and resiliency to prevail against Trump and his supporters’ White supremacist agenda within U.S. society.

Conclusion of Ethnic Studies and CRT Section

In summation, Study participants highlighted the role that Ethnic Studies and CRT frameworks have in cultivating a critique of social oppression. Scholars have high highlighted the role that merging ethnic studies and CRT frameworks have in highly engaging Youth of Color. Tintiangco-Cubales et. al, 2015) explicitly asserted that CRT frameworks provided concrete tools for ethnic studies pedagogical approaches that center the lived experiences and experiential knowledge of Youth of Color. Tintiangco-Cubales states:

“CRT provides concrete tools in engaging framing pedagogies of race, such as counterstorytelling and testimonio (Yosso 2005) which, rather than adding the perspective of communities of color to a Eurocentric story, instead centralizes the experiences and narratives of people of color, thus legitimizing them as evidence to challenge and reframe dominant narratives about race, culture, language and citizenship” (p. 113).

Hence, Brother B creation of the Black Rose Press was a project that centralized and validated his lived experiences and experiential knowledge. His deepened sense of community of support and femtoring/mentorship relationships motivated him to transcend that humanizing interconnectedness into an online community space in which his peers are engaging each other. It was evident that the BPMP YPAR project focused on CRT racial microaggression study directly contributed to his increased social awareness and critical agency.

In addition, the *Everyday Lyfe* hip hop project revealed the transformative pedagogical connection found in the merging of ethnic studies and CRT frameworks (Cammarota & Fine, 2010). The BPMP youth participants lyrics illustrated how CRT was a pedagogical tool in their storytelling and emerging transformational resistance consciousness. When *Brenda Cee* referenced her alienation in middle school, but then highlights how BPMP is her community of support alongside youth who are struggling for their goals and dreams within oppressive conditions (i.e. Concrete Roses). This poetic referencing of how BPMP supports her is a prime example of *testimonio*. She wanted the listener to know unapologetically that BPMP had played a tremendous role in providing her a community of support. Also, Ivette Ohh shared that “youth power” (i.e. youth-led social change) needs to be expressed with the mentality that no one should be silenced or excluded. She specifically makes a call for “intersectionality” with a commentary for increased dialogue for intersectional movement building. Thus, the merging of ethnic studies and CRT frameworks establishes a foundation pedagogically to engage Chicanx-Latinx youth in a process of centralizing and validating their lived experiences and experiential knowledge. In doing so, Chicanx-Latinx youth express their voice, ideas, and empowerment all leading to transformative outcomes.

Lastly, I contend that linking of ethnic studies and CRT frameworks provides opportunities for high Chicax-Latinx youth engagement and transformational resistance outcomes. CRT, both, theoretically and pedagogically, provides the tools that can empower Chicax-Latinx youth to see themselves as “holders and creators of knowledge.” In terms of addressing educational disparities of Chicax-Latinx youth, there needs to be increased implementation of ethnic studies and CRT curriculum and pedagogy within urban schools. Furthermore, educational researchers and teacher educators need to pay closer attention to the use of ethnic studies and CRT frameworks in AS youth development programming spaces in order to transform the traditional classroom environment.

CHAPTER FIVE: ROSE THAT GREW FROM THE CONCRETE FRAMEWORK

We wouldn't ask why a rose that grew from the concrete for having damaged petals, in turn, we would all celebrate its tenacity, we would all love its will to reach the sun, well, we are the roses, this is the concrete and these are my damaged petals, don't ask me why, thank god, and ask me how. (Shakur, 1999)

This chapter was developed to answer research question number two: *How do AS Chicax-Latinx youth participants develop their motivation for social justice action?* In order to answer this question, I discuss the vital role that femtors/mentors play in the development of Chicax-Latinx youth participants' motivation for social justice action. Throughout the chapter, I note that study participants cite femtoring/mentoring relationships as significant contributors to their current or future motivation to engage in roles and activities that cultivate youth and community empowerment.

I begin this chapter by presenting the guiding framework, "The Rose that Grew from Concrete;" this framework is significant because it allows me to critically analyze the struggles and resiliency Chicax-Latinx youth endure as they work to overcome structural violence and oppression. Second, I assess the role that femtoring/mentoring relationships have in contributing to study participants' motivation for social justice action. Lastly, I conclude by further theorizing how the characteristics of femtoring/mentoring relationships empower Chicax-Latinx youth and how these relationships have a transformative potential. This new theorization of femtorship/mentorship is in conversation with and furthers discourse on Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) *transformational mentors framework*.

The Rose that Grew from Concrete as Guiding Framework

To fully understand the lived experiences and experiential knowledge of urban Chicax-Latinx youth participants in the study, it is imperative that I ground this work in a critical lens that illuminates how structural oppression negatively impacts the lives of our youth. As a

practitioner and scholar, I utilize Tupac Shakur's (1999) "The Rose that Grew from Concrete" poem as a guiding framework to explain my approach and engagement with youth. As a youth participant in a writing circle, Tupac Shakur wrote an autobiographical poem called "The Rose That Grew from Concrete":

Did you hear about the rose that grew from a crack in the concrete?
Proving Nature's laws wrong it learned 2 walk without having feet
Funny it seems but by keeping its dreams
It learned 2 breathe fresh air
Long live the rose that grew from concrete
When no one else cared! (p. 3)

When I share this framework with youth and community members, I pay particular attention to the imagery and symbolism in the poem and use these figurative components to explain the conceptual lens and my approach to social justice youth development work. At its core, the poem speaks to the struggles and resiliency of youth of color who are trying to grow and survive within environments that are not designed to support their growth.

Metaphorically speaking, young people are the "roses," and the "concrete" is the structural forms of oppression that are within their lives and communities. In order to grow through a "crack in the concrete," I encourage youth to develop "strong roots." Roots are symbolic of knowledge of self, culture, family, social justice, compassion for humanity and the earth. I also seek to inspire them to keep their hopes and dreams as motivation to be resilient and strive for happiness. By employing both these strategies, young people have access to a self-empowerment framework to overcome structural, social, or institutional forms of violence—what we may come to understand as "barriers"—they may encounter throughout their lives. Lastly, I constantly remind young people that as "roses," they need to recognize and embrace that they have the power to heal themselves. One way they can take part in that healing process is through their participating in spaces and programs that foster a deepened sense of love, peace,

unity, and justice. Hence, *Advancing Justice* programming spaces like Black Panther Mentorship Program (BPMP) and UV provide that support, empowerment, and mentorship/femtorship that support Chicax-Latinx youth develop a critique of social oppression and a motivation for social justice action.

Indeed, throughout this Chapter, I document key manifestations of structural violence occurring within their home communities and experienced by my research collaborators. Mindful of damage-based research approaches (Tuck, 2009) undertaken when researching marginalized communities, I position Chicax-Latinx youth participants as “Roses Growing from the Concrete.” Rather than focusing on “damaged petals,” I celebrate their tenacity to reach for the sunlight!

Provide Inspiration to Do Similar Work in Future Educational/Professional/Justice Work Pursuits

Youth participants reported being inspired and motivated to engage in social justice actions by wanting to do work similar to that which their femtors/mentors do. Youth participants brought a diverse set of identities and lived experiences with them into the social justice-based AS program, Black Panther Mentorship Program (BPMP). In the following paragraphs, I introduce youth participants and describe the mentoring/femtoring relationships they experienced. Further, I detail how such relationships inspired and motivated them to engage in social justice actions similar to those in which their femtors/mentors participate.

Ivette Ohh, a 24-year-old undocuscholar,⁸ has served as a youth facilitator and coordinator at BPMP for nearly six years. She is one of the original student co-founders of the BPMP during her tenth-grade year at *West*. She was born in Nayarit, Mexico and migrated with

⁸ I use the term undocuscholar to signify students who embrace and frame their undocumented status and identity as an asset in their engagement of the U.S. educational system.

her mother to the United States when she was six months old. *Ivette Ohh* grew up in the Pico Union Neighborhood of downtown Los Angeles, a Mexican and Central American (im)migrant community that has suffered high levels of poverty, violence, and historically underfunded and underresourced public schools (Simon, 1997). In tenth grade, *Ivette Ohh* met her teacher and mentor *Gurrola*, when she enrolled in his elective course that incorporated *Advancing Justice's* Leadership Development and Interethnic Relations (LIDR) curriculum. The curriculum is rooted in utilizing an Ethnic Studies framework and employing Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) methods. *Ivette Ohh* and her classmates facilitated a YPAR project that focused on defining and describing why students at *West* were being pushed out of school at a high rate. Based on their YPAR findings, *Ivette Ohh* and eight other students organized themselves alongside *Gurrola* and developed a femtoring/mentoring after-school program as a prevention and intervention strategy to address the high school pushout rate at *West*. It is undeniable that her creation and active involvement in *BPMP* as a participant, femtor, and coordinator has impacted her educational and professional aspirations.

In this next passage, *Ivette Ohh* explains the process by/through which she came to the realization that she wanted to be a social justice educator like her mentor, *Gurrola*. First, she begins by highlighting how the mentoring relationship developed with *Gurrola* when introduced to social justice issues while taking his class in tenth grade. More specifically, *Ivette Ohh* comments on how *Gurrola's* belief in her development as a young person, coupled with teaching her about structural violence such as racism, inspired her to want to become a history major. She stated:

And I remember *Gurrola* would always tell me "I see a lot of potential in you, I see a lot of potential in you!" So I think that's when it was like ok I have a teacher who believes in me, who can talk to me about these things [social justice issues] and who genuinely cares about my development. So, I think that because I

had that foundation, that relationship with him, I think that everything that he told me I became open to it and interested in. So, when he talked about social justice issues I was like I wanna learn more, I wanna learn more. And even before that, I was a conspiracy person you know. I went through my phase of the illuminati and government conspiracy stuff. But then I realized that what I was learning now aren't [conspiracy] theories anymore! The knowledge and information that *Gurrola* was talking to me about is some real shit. It was real stuff. And then I thought, wait, if I invested so much of my time focused on these conspiracy theories, like damn, I wanna know more about these real issues like race, like racism and all that stuff, you know. So, I just kinda became a sponge when *Gurrola* was feeding me all these social justice issues and I just wanted to know more and more. So, when I took his U.S. History class, I was just like "alright, this is what I wanna do! I wanna be a history major . . ." I was already thinking about it at that time in tenth grade, I wanna be a history major.

In this passage, *Ivette Ohh* begins to establish that her mentoring relationship with *Gurrola* was a direct result of exposure to social justice issues. She explains how her consciousness and level of effort to develop social awareness shifted from learning about conspiracy theories, to developing a passion for learning about social constructs like race, and systems of oppressions, such as racism. As a result, *Ivette Ohh* began to develop future college aspirations of wanting to become a history major similar to her mentor, *Gurrola*. Hence, *Gurrola's* mentoring of *Ivette Ohh* shaped her academic identity development in terms of modeling a course of study that a person who seeks to develop and implement a social justice lens as an educator might pursue (in this case, History). Similarly, it underscores the manner by which educators inculcate values of justice through their own intellectual curiosities and academic interests.

In this next passage, *Ivette Ohh* explicitly highlights her aspirations to work as a teacher like *Gurrola*. *Ivette Ohh* begins to raise critical self-reflection questions about why young people or members of her community are not talking about social justice issues. This passion to empower students in a way that mirrors her own empowerment is foundational to her desire to become a social justice educator like her mentor, *Gurrola*. *Ivette Ohh* elaborated:

And then I began to question like “Why aren’t people talking about it?” “Why aren’t kids talking about it?” I felt that if kids knew this knowledge that they would feel like me. And that was always my thing, I just wanted to teach . . . I just wanted to reenact what happened with me and *Gurrola*, with other people. I wanted that to happen with them. This might sound funny, but I wanted a bunch of *Gurrolas*’ running around for students to be learning from and a bunch of *Gurrolas* teaching them! LOL! That’s what I really wanted and I feel like that’s why I want to be a teacher because I wanna be that teacher and mentor that *Gurrola* was to me. I want to be that person for students. And I wanna empower them and build them up and let them know they can do something about injustice.

The above passage illuminates how *Ivette Ohh*’s aspirations to become a critical educator, like her mentor *Gurrola*, are rooted in her motivation to raise consciousness through close mentoring relationships with similar social justice educators. Utilizing a social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) lens, it is evident that the United States educational system is fundamentally designed to maintain the social inequalities and capitalist hierarchical power relations within society. Thus, a teacher who empowers students through curriculum, pedagogy, and femtoring/mentoring relationships to exercise their agency to have a critique of social oppression and a motivation for social justice is, by their sheer existence, a political act of resistance to a hegemonic schooling structure.

Much like *Ivette Ohh*, *Keyri*, a 20-year-old Salvadoreña BPMP youth participant was inspired to follow a professional trajectory similar to that of her femtors/mentors at *West*. *Keyri* was born in inner-city Los Angeles and grew up the eldest child with a single mom and younger sister in the K-town/Midcity district. Historically, *Keyri*’s community has struggled with poverty, police brutality, gang violence, and more recently, gentrification (Garner, 2017). She was exposed early on to issues of violence both inside and outside her home. As a middle-school student, *Keyri* actually supported her mother both emotionally and physically to end a domestic violence situation with her step-dad. She persuaded her mother to finally remove her step-dad from the home through heart-felt conversations of support and by packing up her step-dad’s

belongings and placing them outside of their home. Thus, prior to participating in BPMP, and based on her exposure to gender violence, *Keyri* already possessed a strong social awareness of gender inequalities and systems of oppression such as patriarchy. This social awareness was also generated from *Keyri*'s family receiving services from a community-based organization named Peace Over Violence (POV), an agency that supports domestic violence survivors. She attended preventive workshops and counseling services to develop positive coping strategies to deal with the long-term impact of domestic violence. *Keyri* has been a BPMP youth leader for four years and has a passion to empower the youth of her community. Currently, she works for an afterschool program at a middle school in her community called Beyond The Bell (BTB). In this capacity, she is able to develop youth empowerment programming (e.g., Ethnic Studies workshops) and establish femtoring/mentoring relationships with middle school students from South Central Los Angeles.

In this next passage, *Keyri* explained that her motivation to engage in empowering youth within an AS youth development program is rooted in finding femtors and mentors at BPMP. She credited her BPMP femtorship/mentorship with providing her with the tools to increase self-awareness and embrace a knowledge of self. Also, she pointed out the positive impact that BPMP femtors/mentors had in providing “first-hand” experiences in social justice spaces. *Keyri* explained:

I took so many things away from BPMP, but one thing I can say is that I found really good mentors like *Johnny Rockit*, *Ivette Ohh* and *Tim Tezzy*. They literally taught me about myself. They taught me about my background, my culture, especially the history that we are not taught in the classrooms in regular school. They also gave us real life experiences like participating in the 4 Corner Spirit Run, the May Day Immigrant Rights protests, and presenting our research presentations (YPAR) at Cal State L.A. for Family Empowerment Fest. They'd teach us about who we are in society and why we see things the way we do. They taught us why some of us ended up in some routes in society and we learned about our advantages and disadvantages depending on the color of our skin . .

. BPMP gave me knowledge of who I am and inspired me to do something better for my community . . . for people from my background or similar to my background.

In this passage *Keyri* illuminated how her BPMP femtors/mentors facilitated and assisted in her development of knowledge of self. She specifically cited the support of BPMP femtors/mentors, particularly the teaching of history (e.g., ethnic studies) that was not being taught at her school. These teachings provided *Keyri* with the conceptual and linguistic tools needed to increase her self-awareness and to further develop of an empowered sense of self-identity. Furthermore, *Keyri* drew attention to how BPMP femtors/mentors afforded her an opportunity to have first-hand participation in social justice spaces and events in the community.

At its core, *Keyri* highlighted the process of self-empowerment through a process of praxis. For the purposes of this study, praxis is understood as a process of gaining knowledge of self, intentional reflection, and then applying that knowledge in social justice activities. As a result, *Keyri* developed an inspiration to actively engage in improving and potentially transforming the conditions of her community. For example, *Keyri*'s desire to get involved with the Beyond The Bell (BTB) after-school program was fueled by her commitment to want to empower youth from her community to have a transformative experience similar to her own in BPMP. This commitment to youth empowerment becomes clear in her aspirations to become a femtor/mentor to support Chicax-Latinx social justice youth development.

Likewise, in this next passage, *Keyri* indicated that she wants to pursue a similar path of doing youth mentoring work like that of her BPMP mentor, *Johnny Rockit*. *Keyri* stated:

There are many of us young people like myself, who now want to go out and go into other schools and do the youth empowerment work *Johnny Rockit* is doing by becoming somebody else's mentor because of participating in groups like the BPMP. Maybe before I just thought, oh BPMP, it's just a club. But you know, in these groups, you find mentors, you'd find people that you could actually go to and that's where you find family.

The passage reveals *Keyri*'s intentions of pursuing youth empowerment work modeled to her via her mentorship with *Johnny Rokit*, BPMP co-coordinator. In fact, she posits that young people who participate in groups like BPMP are motivated to engage in After-school youth empowerment programming and mentoring work.

In addition, this passage illuminates how *Keyri* names a familial bond that can emerge from femtoring/mentoring relationships which that foster a motivation for social justice action. Chicana educational scholar Tara Yosso (2005) theorizes how Chicanx-Latinx students innately possess forms of knowledge and asset-based approaches that they draw from to overcome structural oppression, such as institutionalized racism within schooling structures. One way students are able to transcend these systems of oppression is by developing familial bonds with traditional family, extended family, friends, and community members (i.e., one's chosen family). This process aligns itself with one of the tenets of Yosso's (2005) Community Cultural Wealth model, *Familial capital*. This form of capital refers to those cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition (p. 79). Further, Yosso expands on the attributes of *Familial capital* by stating that this form of cultural wealth expands the traditional concept of family to include a more robust understanding of family. Yosso (2005) states:

This form of cultural wealth engages in a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. Acknowledging the racialized, classed and heterosexualized inferences that comprise traditional understandings of "family," familial capital is nurtured by our "extended family," which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends who we might consider part of our *familia*. From these kinship ties, we learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to our community and its resources. (p. 79)

Using a familial capital framing, we can understand how *Keyri*'s connection to her BPMP Femtors/Mentors and to the programming space echoes the kinship bond outlined in Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth Model.

I assert that BPMP was that "chosen family" that provided a relationship and deepened sense of community that provided *Keyri* the guidance, support, and authentic care that mirrored familial relationships. With that connection, she was able to connect to resources within that BPMP program that assisted her in graduating high school and being accepted as a first-generation college student to a four-year public university. It also provided her with the leadership and youth work experience to become hired as an After-school site aid for the BTB program. Hence, the BPMP was a space that cultivated and activated *Keyri* agency and resiliency to access educational and occupational resources. In this next section, Study participants shared their perceptions of familial connection and kinship bond with their femtors/mentors at both *East* and *West* programming sites.

Youth Participants' Perceptions of Kinship Bond/Familial Connection with Femtors/Mentors

Angie, a 20-year-old Chicana *UV* youth co-coordinator at *East*, described the mentoring relationship she developed with *Duenas* as one based on a familial connection. *Angie* is the youngest of five children and grew up moving between South Central and East Los Angeles. Her mother works a *domestica* and she was primarily raised by her older sisters. Due to issues of domestic violence within the home, *Angie*'s mother and sisters moved a lot during *Angie*'s childhood. As a result, *Angie* has struggled with having a home environment that was emotionally supportive. In this next passage, *Angie* speaks on how she perceived her mentor *Duenas* as a father figure in her life:

Cuz you know how a lot of our students don't have a "good" father figure. So, they adapted it to whoever is like the best fit for them. So, *Duenas* was like that for me, you know, he was there, he got it, he listened. He was like a father figure for me and you know that really helped. And the way he went about it was like saying things like "you tell me what you're interested in, you tell me what you want to learn," you know! And if you are like oh well I don't know where to start. He would be like "all right, that's cool. We can start from scratch then it's all good!" And I'm like, all right, cool. Tell me what you got basically. And, so he would just like tell you everything and then if you're interested in that he'll go more in depth into that and if you want to learn more but this, he'll go out of his way to like teach you more about that. *Duenas* was always patient and always wants to teach me what I need to learn to help me out in my life, you know. He truly cares and since I never had a father figure like that, him being a mentor like that for me means so much more to me and to our students who are like me, you know.

It becomes clear that *Angie's* perceptions of her mentor *Duenas* as a father figure are rooted in challenges within her own immediate familial relationships. She revealed that *Duenas'* style of mentorship is grounded in the practice of first listening, and then asking her questions about what she is interested in learning or information needed that may help her out in life in general.

Hence, *Duenas* was modeling the traits of a positive male role model, namely through excellent listening and communication skills. These skills, when coupled with being able to be patient and attentive to *Angie's* social-emotional learning needs, contribute to a kinship bond that supports student participation.

Another example of a familial connection referenced through femtoring/mentoring relationships can be found in *Keyri's* explanation of how youth empowerment programs such as BPMP can positively impact the youth of her community. As a reminder, *Keyri* was a BPMP youth leader for three years during her high school years at *West* and during the time of this study, she was working for a traditional After-school program within LAUSD called Beyond The Bell (BTB). She immediately cited numerous reasons how BTB did not create the same environment she found in BPMP. In this next passage, she explained how she would frame her

endorsement of *Advancing Justice's* BPMP program to youth and more specifically the young people of her low-income community of *K-town*:

Wherever a student may live, but especially if you live in the hood, I would tell them to go to BPMP cuz at BPMP you'll find family! You're gonna learn about yourself and you'll grow as a person. You'll find pride in who you are, your background, your family's background, and you'll find a safe place to come to, afterschool. And you'll find a group of mentors (and femtors) that really understand you, who will open up to you about who they are and share with you what they have learned and they will help you open up and learn who you are too! Trust, you'll find the support that you might not have at home . . . You might not have with your friends . . . So yeah the first thing I would tell a like youth from my hood is that at BPMP, you will find a family. You will find a family that will give you good advice, that will always be there and will be your mentor as long as you keep that relationship with them, they will always "have your back."

In this passage, Keyri is explaining powerfully how BPMP can serve as a place for youth from her "hood" or "Concrete Roses," can find a safe environment that provided love, care and a strong sense of self-identity rooted in understanding one's background. Also, Keyri is illustrating how BPMP femtors/mentors are able to share their *testimonios* of lived experiences and gained knowledge as a strategy to model and encourage youth to engage and develop knowledge of self and critical self-reflection. Hence, I contend that this process of BPMP femtors/mentors sharing their testimonio of lived experiences and modeling a positive self-identity is a pedagogical approach that engages youth that have experienced high levels of structural violence and oppression. And by doing so, BPMP femtors/mentors engage in a learning process that contributes to their understandings of youth work practice that is culturally and intersectionally relevant to the youth population being empowered.

In addition, study participants commented that Femtors/Mentors provided critical support by sharing personal and common struggles as way to motivate and empower youth femtees/mentees to overcome barriers in their lives. In this way, youth participants and their femtors and mentors created a kinship bond. *Melly*, a 20-year-old Latinx BPMP youth

participant, highlighted the positive impact that femtoring/mentoring relationships based on a shared identification with common struggles and lived experiences can contribute to a kinship bond. It is important to note that during *Melly's* educational journey she was identified by school officials as a learner with special needs. She indicated that one of her main challenges with learning was understanding social cues and knowing how to process and respond to them in schooling environments. Her participation in BPMP provided critical support in her successful completion of high school and later contributed to her attending a local Community College. In this next passage, *Melly* explains how she was validated and supported in her academic challenges as a community college student by her femtor *Ivette Ohh*. *Melly* stated:

I think mentorship (femtanship) is having someone believe in me, you know, it was like having a personal guide. I knew that during high school my BPMP mentors (femtors) always believed in me. So, with that kind of unconditional support in my life, it kinda validated that I too could believe in myself, you know! It can be very hard in college. In fact, I had to retake English three times because the first three times I failed miserably. And you know my life and how much I have struggled being a special needs learner and trying to understand new social cues or understanding new information. I was at a very low point and I actually felt like I wasn't smart enough to even be in college. But then I talked with *Ivette Ohh* on the bus that day and she told me how she struggled with Math and how many times she failed her Math classes too. I don't remember the exact number but it was a few times too like 3 or 4. But I remember she told me that I was not alone and for me not to give up on myself you know. And *Ivette Ohh* would keep telling me "just keep pushing, keep doing it, you can do it Melly!!" So, I went to West LA Community College to re-take that English class and I passed it with an "A." I remember that having that conversation with *Ivette Ohh* really helped me because she knew exactly what I was going through. So "shout out" to *Ivette Ohh* for being a "real one."

In this passage, *Melly* specifically highlights *Ivette Ohh* femtoring approach that focused on connecting similar academic struggles and resiliency in Community College. It becomes clear that *Ivette Ohh's* decision to share her personal academic struggles of repeating math was used to console and validate *Melly's* academic hardships at the Community College. We see that *Ivette Ohh* was using her lived experiences as a pedagogical tool to neutralize *Melly's* insecurities and self-doubt of "not being smart enough to be a college student." This process of sharing one's

personal stories, vulnerabilities, and lived experiences of their educational trajectory in the femstorship/mentorship setting has been referred to as an *Educational Testimonio* (Burciaga & Navarro, 2015). Burciaga and Navarro contend that *Educational Testimonio* can be used a tool to create critical pedagogical opportunities to provide mentorship that can potentially lead to a transformative outcome. In this case, *Ivette Ohh's Educational Testimonio* was used as an empowerment and retention tool so that *Melly* would not lose academic motivation and be pushed out of higher education. Also, *Melly's* explicit acknowledgement of *Ivette Ohh's* support by calling her a “real one” reflects a kinship bond. A “real one” is a term utilized in youth popular culture to define a person that “can always be counted on and won't turn on you.” It also refers to someone “who may not be directly related to you, but you consider them to be family.” Under these conditions, it becomes evident that *Melly's* perception of her femtor *Ivette Ohh* has more than a traditional femtoring relationship but rather, displays a familial connection.

Much like *Melly*, *Mc Oz*, a 16-year-old Chicana BPMP youth participant also cites how the mentoring/femtoring relationship can create a kinship bond by sharing similar life circumstances with his BPMP mentors. In the tenth grade, *Mc Oz* started participating in BPMP because of his genuine interest to learn more about hip hop and activism. At a BPMP “Open Mic” lunchtime outreach event, *Mc Oz* took part in the “freestyle flow” activity in which he grabbed the mic and performed an impromptu hip hop rhyme in front of his whole school. And when he was done with his freestyle flow, he passed the mic to the BPMP mentors who also engaged in a “freestyle flow” to show support and solidarity with *Mc Oz's* hip hop expression. After that event, *Mc Oz* started attending BPMP regularly as a youth participant and stayed with the program until his graduation from high school with the class of 2018. In this next passage,

Mc Oz speaks to the connection he has with his BPMP mentors/femtors through their sharing of similar home and life circumstances (i.e., lived experiences) with him. *Mc Oz* explains:

Just seeing *Johnny Rockit* basically motivates me. Basically, seeing *Johnny Rockit* "spit FACTS." By knowing him and his background and where he comes from, kind of relates to what I'm going through right now in my life. I knew he was born to teenage parents like me and that was hard, and he grew up in poverty and didn't do so good in high school like me too. But look he made it out you know. He's gonna get his PhD! So, I kinda of see *Johnny Rockit* as my example. I definitely see him as very important person in my life. But not just *Johnny Rockit* also *Ivette Ohh*. I don't want to just be so centered on *Johnny Rockit*! LOL! But like *Ivette Ohh* you know, the amount of work she's put in to get this BPMP started. You know, the student walkout she helped organized when she was in high school. When I think the amount of work she's put in and she is undocumented! It just amazed me that day at BPMP when she shared her story about that *Johnny Rockit* and *Ivette Ohh* inspire me to believe that one day that I could do something to stop oppression in my community and not go down the wrong path, you know.

Mc Oz's commentary highlights that the sharing of similar lived experiences and life circumstances by BPMP mentors and femtors provided mentees the support and critical role model in their development as social justice-minded Chicax youth. First, *Mc Oz* established that he had been motivated by *Johnny Rockit*'s ability to "spit FACTS." The term "spit FACTS" is a popular youth Hip Hop cultural expression that conveys one's ability to speak both factual information, as well as one's personal truths and opinions with strong feeling (Urban Dictionary, 2014). Second, *Mc Oz* illuminated that he knows and can directly relate to his mentor *Johnny Rockit*'s familial challenges of being raised by teen parents in poverty conditions, as well as being labeled at-risk in high school. It is evident that *Mc Oz*'s mentoring perceptions were based on linking *Johnny Rockit*'s modeling of passionately sharing critical knowledge and information (i.e., "spit FACTS") and on his personal identification with shared familial struggles (having teen parents) and school challenges (labeled an at-risk student). By doing so, he asserts that his mentor *Johnny Rockit* is an "important person in his life," which reflects a framing that signifies a kinship bond.

Likewise, *Mc Oz* commentary of his BPMP femtor *Ivette Ohh* elucidates the manner by which he has been positively influenced through a modeling of an empowerment behavior, as well as, identifying with the hardships and resiliency associated with being an undocumented person in U.S. society. Specifically, *Mc Oz* mentions having a personal rapport with *Ivette Ohh*'s story which displayed years of youth leadership and activism demonstrated in her being co-founder of BPMP, a student activist who organized school walkouts and being an undocumented student. Thus, *Mc Oz* recognition and acknowledgement of *Ivette Ohh*'s empowerment behavior as a leader, coupled with her struggles and resiliency as an undocuscholar, cumulatively help generate a femtoring relationship that encompasses a kinship bond.

In sum, study participants explicitly cited having femtoring/mentoring relationships that are perceived to have to have a familial connection or kinship bond. I theorize that this kinship/familial connection occurs because Chicax-Latinx youth participants established a personal identification with their mentors/femtors *testimonios*. By getting to know their femtors/mentors' personal or educational testimonio and observing their modeling of empowerment behavior, youth participants were able to see a mirror of themselves in their femtors/mentors life story, struggles, aspirations, and resiliency. Additionally, their femtors/mentors provided them with models of people whom they can grow up to become in life.

Yet again, Yosso conceptualization of familial capital can provide an illuminating lens to illuminate how femtoring/mentoring relationship are perceived by Chicax-Latinx youth as having a familial/kinship bond. Drawing from the literature on communal bonds within African American communities, funds of knowledge of Mexican Americans, and pedagogies of the

home, Yosso theorizes on the model lessons and consciousness that Chicax-Latinx students learn from their kin/familial relationships. Yosso (2005) states:

Our kin also model lessons of caring, coping and providing (*educación*), which inform our emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness (Reese, 1992; Auerbach, 2001, 2004; Elenes et al., 2001; Lopez, 2003). This consciousness can be fostered within and between families, as well as through sports, school, religious gatherings and other social community settings. Isolation is minimized as families “become connected with others around common issues” and realize they are “not alone in dealing with their problems.” (p. 79)

Hence, I assert that the youth participants’ personal identification with the life *testimonio* and/or *Educational Testimonio* of their femtors/mentors is central to the process of how youth participants obtain “model lessons of caring, coping and *educacion* which then informs their emotional, moral educational and occupational consciousness.” Similarly, Yosso illuminates the role of social community settings as spaces that specifically foster “emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness.” The *Advancing Justice* AS youth programming at *West* and *East* sites are those social community settings for youth participants to develop their transformational resistance consciousness.

Lastly, the familial capital lens helps us understand that youth participants’ perceptions of femtors/mentors with a kinship bond are rooted in a space that promotes a feeling of being “connected with others around a common issue” and the realization that “they are not alone in dealing with problems.” Thus, *Advancing Justice*’s BPMP and UV give youth participants an opportunity to engage femtors/mentors who inspire them to follow similar educational, occupational, and activist pathways, while simultaneously, creating femtoring/mentoring relationships that have a familial type bond. As a result, I contend that Chicax-Latinx youth participants experienced a socialization process that cultivated a motivation for social justice action. In this next section, I present the role that femtors/mentors played in providing authentic

care during moments of challenge/struggle which also motivated youth participants to have a motivation for social justice.

Authentic Care During Moments of Challenge/Struggle

When *Ivette Ohh* was a 15-year-old high school student she struggled with embracing her undocumented citizenship status. Prior to mentorship from her mentor *Gurrola*, she carried feelings of fear, anxiety and self-doubt when it came to her belief that having a positive and hopeful future was actually attainable while being undocumented. Educational and life goals such as attending and graduating college, getting a good paying job and have the monetary resources to buy a house for her mom and younger siblings seemed to be aspirations that were not possible due to her citizenship status. As a result, she felt that her existence was symbolically like “living in the shadows” within U.S. society. However, *Ivette Ohh* was able to shift the self-defeating perceptions (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal 2001) of her undocumented status from a deficit-based social identity to a point of self-empowerment with the support of her BPMP mentor *Gurrola*.

In this next passage, *Ivette Ohh* explained how *Gurrola* utilized an empowerment framework to assist her in embracing her power, agency and resiliency as an undocumented youth. *Ivette Ohh* stated:

When I think back to my tenth-grade year I wasn't aware of the Undocumented Unafraid movement. I think that the movements now for undocumented people and students are lot bigger than it was before, for sure! So, I feel that a lot of people were living in the shadows, and I felt like I was living in the shadows as an undocumented student and I wouldn't talk about it with nobody. *Gurrola* would always tell me “You have power!” And that's when the whole empowerment thing came in. He would always say “You have power as a student, you have rights, you know! Yes, you're undocumented but you still have rights, you still have power to do stuff! You are part of something bigger, look at all these other undocumented people who are fighting back!!” I think that *Gurrola* really gave me that feeling of empowerment when it came to my immigration status. I can honestly say that *Gurrola* would tell me all that because he really cared about me. By doing that he lifted me up and empowered me. I became more comfortable with my

status and didn't let it depress me like before, you know. I was like you know what, it's part of my identity, it's like who I am, I should acknowledge it and I should not give up or not let it be a negative thing. Even though I know it comes from real life issues and real-life challenges. I know those are real too, but I feel like at that time 15-year-old *Ivette Ohh* was like you know what, its coo that I have power and this is a part of who I am. And I can't run away from it and I just have to accept it and do the best that I can with it.

In this passage, Gurrola utilized an empowerment approach that focused on promoting the development of a positive self-identity and resiliency. Gurrola's pedagogical approach was geared toward reframing *Ivette Ohh*'s undocumented student identity from being perceived from a deficit perspective, but shifted instead toward an identity of resiliency. More recently, within the Undocumented Unafraid immigrant justice student movement, undocumented students are embracing the social (and student) identity of being called an *Undocuscholar*. An *Undocuscholar* is a student who embraces their undocumented immigration status as an intersection of their social identity that provides forms of knowledge production and resources that can support their educational persistence within the educational U.S. system. Hence, *Ivette Ohh*'s reframing of her undocumented immigration status from a negative connotation, which had caused her feelings of depression, to then seeing her undocumented status as an asset in her resiliency and empowerment is reflective of an *Undocuscholar* identity.

In addition, *Curly Sunshine*, an 18-year-old BPMP youth participant mentioned how she was given authentic care from her BPMP mentor, *Johnny Rockit*, during times of struggles with her mental health. *Curly Sunshine* is a 19-year-old gender non-conforming Chicana who was born and raised in Downtown Los Angeles. She grew up in a mixed citizenship status home with her mother and two older sisters, all of whom are undocumented. During her childhood, she would go to work with her mother as a street vendor to assist in translating with English speaking customers. Based on those life experiences, *Curly Sunshine* has strong communication

skills and carries herself as a natural leader. She joined the BPMP program during her tenth-grade year and instantly became an active participant taking on several leadership roles. Also, in high school, she founded the first ever LGBTQIA student club on campus to address the hostile environment and lack of visibility of LGBTQIA students on campus.

On a related note, *Curly Sunshine* was trained and served as a youth organizer for the Gay Straight Alliance of Southern California. Upon graduating from *West*, she was accepted into a California State University and moved out of her home to live in the dorms. In this next passage, *Curly Sunshine* explained how her BPMP mentor provided critical support during her struggles with mental illness:

I know that I could always go to you *Johnny Rockit* and I knew I would not feel ashamed about my mental illness. When it first happened, I was scared and did not know how to deal with it. My family did not know what to do and I was in a manic state, so things were very intense you know. But when I first got hospitalized, the first person I thought of calling was *Johnny Rockit*. I knew that I could call on (him) for help and not feel bad about having problems with being bipolar. (He) even helped me with my education at Cal State to make sure that I would not be dropped out. (He) took me to campus and was really there for me and I will always remember that . . . Even though I am learning how to deal with my bipolar stuff, I know that this mental illness is not going to stop me in life. I am always going to fight against oppression! I am always going to fight for my people!

The above passage illuminates the high level of authentic care that *Curly Sunshine* received from her mentor *Johnny Rockit* during one of the most challenging times in her life. In a moment of fear and mental health challenges, coupled with the demands of being a university student, *Curly Sunshine* knew that her mentor *Johnny Rockit*, would be a source of support and guidance during a moment of crisis and trauma.

It becomes clear the femtor/mentor relationship displayed between *Curly Sunshine* and *Johnny Rockit* was grounded in the BPMP “safe space” environment and femtoring/mentoring relationships of trust that enables youth participants to share their life struggles. Under these conditions, *Curly Sunshine* was able to share her mental health issues and feel stigmatized or

dismissed. Frequently, urban Chicana-Latina youth do not have access to community spaces or services that address mental illness and overall mental wellness. As a result, Chicana-Latina youth and overall community members are not fully aware on how to address and access services relative to issues of mental health and wellness. In this case, Curly Sunshine, as a BPMP youth leader, had a direct connection of a community of support and resources to ensure that her mental health difficulties would not compromise her educational aspirations at the university.

Furthermore, utilizing a Community Cultural Wealth lens, Johnny Rockit's support for Curly Sunshine was not solely an expression of familia capital, but it was a manifestation of navigational capital. Yosso (2005) states, "Navigational capital acknowledges individual agency within institutional constraints, but it also connects to social networks that facilitate community navigation through places and spaces including schools, the job market and the health care and judicial systems (p. 80). Hence, under the guidance of her mentor *Johnny Rockit*, she was able to access the navigational capital necessary to get complete the documents and meet with academic advisors in order to take a medical leave of absence and prevent academically dismissal from the University. Thus, *Curly Sunshine's* opportunity for future social mobility and occupational opportunities due to being a college graduate were able to be sustained during a moment of health difficulties.

Furthermore, *Brenda Cee*, a 16-year-old Salvadoran-American BPMP youth participant, echoed the role that authentic caring played in her struggles to overcome alienation caused by bullying and depression. She grew up in the Rampart/Pico Union area of downtown Los Angeles. During the early 1990s, *Brenda Cee's* father migrated from El Salvador and her mother migrated from Durango, Mexico. She joined BPMP in the second semester of her ninth-grade year. Since she was struggling academically in her first semester at *West*, counselors

issued *Brenda Cee* mandatory after-school tutoring at the library. One day, however, tutoring services were moved to the cafeteria and BPMP was facilitating a school inequality workshop focused on the educational disenfranchisement occurring at *West*. She joined the BPMP workshop and was extremely engaged, learning about the injustices of the educational system. After meeting with her parents and school counselor, she received parental permission and administrative approval to participate in BPMP, along with tutoring services as an academic intervention to prevent school pushout.

Here, *Brenda Cee* shared the difficulties with bullying and depression during her middle school years and how that changed when she joined BPMP. *Brenda Cee* commented:

I know that *Johnny Rockit*, *Tim Teezy*, and *Ivette Ohh* really do care about me and they care about all of us. They always reach out to us when we aren't doing well like in school or in our personal stuff. And they support us through a lot. I remember back when I was in middle school, I had really, really bad problem with depression. I felt like I had no one at school for me other than my older sister that I could trust. And when she left to high school I was alone. I never wanted to go to school. And I didn't go a lot of the times...

But when I got to BPMP it was different. *Johnny Rockit*, *Ivette Ohh*, and *Tim Teezy* all made me feel accepted to the group right from the very first time I walked into BPMP at the library. I remember I wasn't even supposed to be there! LOL! At BPMP, the mentors (and femtors) have encouraged me to pass my classes and graduate high school. They are there for any questions or help that I may need for any of my classes. *Johnny Rockit*, *Tim Teezy* and *Ivette Ohh* all have been a true inspiration to me and I really do consider them my mentors (and femtors). Even though they always care about us, we still try to make sure that they are okay too. We're like a family. The bond will always be there.

This passage reveals the authentic caring perceptions that *Brenda Cee* felt from her femtors/mentors in BPMP. She referenced her middle-school experience to provide context on her past struggles with mental wellness and low school attendance; which we know can be a precursor to low academic performance, resulting in school pushout. If we couple *Brenda Cee's* middle school experiences, with her ninth-grade academic challenges, it can be argued that

Brenda Cee was a “high-risk” student who was on track to be pushed out of *West*. In fact, in LAUSD, the highest levels of school pushout occur during the ninth and tenth grade. Thus, *Brenda Cee*’s participation in BPMP provided her a community of support with femtors/mentors that expressed caring relationships that had provided her inspiration to graduate high school. In many ways, *Brenda Cee*’s BPMP experiences with familial-kinship type bond were able to provide her the similar support she once received from her sister.

Additionally, she highlighted a reciprocity of support that she feels as a youth participant to her BPMP femtors/mentors. She emphasized a genuine desire to also ensure that her BPMP femtors/mentors are feeling supported. Using Yosso’s familial capital model, it becomes clear that *Brenda Cee* was able to improve her resiliency and become inspired to finish high school due to her “chosen family” of BPMP femtors/mentors. Under these conditions, *Brenda Cee*’s involvement in BPMP provided both a mental wellness and academic intervention in her life.

Conclusion

In sum, study participants cited that femtoring/mentoring socializations, familial/kinship bonds, and authentic care/radical acceptance during moments of immense life challenges all contributed to their motivation for social justice action. The “Rose that Grew from the Concrete” framework provided a conceptual lens to better understand the youth development of urban Chicanx-Latinx youth within society. By framing urban Chicanx-Latinx youth as “concrete roses” and allocating focus on the necessity for “concrete roses” to develop “strong roots,” it becomes evident that the cultivation of an empowered social (and intersectional) identities are fundamental to for their growth and resiliency. In order to fully contextualize the role that femtoring/mentoring roles play in the development of youth empowerment and transformative

outcomes among urban Chicana-Latina youth populations, I draw and build upon Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) *transformational (femtor) mentors* conceptual framework.

Initially, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) conceptualized the role that adult role models who are a member of one's racial/ethnic and/or gender group that display a commitment to social justice as *transformational role models* (Solorzano, 1998). However, they further theorized that there was a noticeable difference between a "role model" and a "mentor" in the support of youth developing a critique of social oppression and a commitment to social justice. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal state:

In the context of this study, *transformational role models* are visible members of one's own racial/ethnic and/or gender group who actively demonstrate a commitment to social justice, whereas *transformational mentors* use the aforementioned traits and their own experiences and expertise to help guide the development of others (Blackwell, 1988; Solorzano, 1998b). Thus, a mentor is involved in a more complex relationship than a role model in that she or he is someone who participates in one's socialization and development." (p. 322)

Additionally, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal sought to identify character traits and conduct that exhibited *transformational(femtorship) mentorship*. They asserted that "leadership style, personality and behavior of individuals who were involved in student's extracurricular activities" expressed transformational mentorship (p. 323). Ultimately, they contended that present-day Chicana and Chicano youth identify transformational mentors (and femtors) as influential people who inspired and socialized them to be concerned with and struggle for social justice issues in their school and community. Thus, it becomes evident that there is a direct interrelationship between the development of transformational resistance youth outcomes and femtoring/mentoring relationships.

Furthermore, this study findings further solidified the role that femtors/mentors engaged in to support the development of a commitment to social justice action among Chicana-Latina

youth participants. Based on the study's findings and cultural intuition of over 15 years of youth empowerment work experience, I began to theorize on the character traits and the framework for one to be what Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) deem a transformational femtor/mentor.

The emerging tenets of Transformational Femtorship/Mentorship are:

1. *Intentionality*. There is an axiological theoretical foundation to engaging in youth empowerment work that centers on a motivation to share and model values that foster humanization, interconnectedness to humans and the earth, and a desire to generate social justice outcomes. Femtoring/mentoring approach that is rooted in a holistic humanizing youth development approaches that put upfront that struggling youth of color are "Concrete Roses;" and the femtoring/mentoring intentional goal is to support their empowerment and healing to break through "The Concrete," that is, the structural forms of oppression and violence in their lives.
2. *Authentic Care & Radical Acceptance*. Femtors/mentors are guided by a deepened sense of humanity and compassion for youth growth and development. It is imperative that the authentic caring and radical acceptance relationships are intersectional in approach and practice. For example, the utilization of the indigenous epistemological concept of *In Lak Ech* provides a framework to cultivate human interconnectedness and radical acceptance of human beings of all intersectional social identities.
3. *Chosen Family/Kinship Bond (i.e., being a "Real One")*. Build community relationships that model familial and kinship bonds in which the level of trust and support that is provided reflects a deepened sense of human interconnectedness, care, and community membership.
4. *Testimonio Pedagogy (i.e., "Your Story is your Strength")*. The utilization of femtors/mentors' testimonio, lived experience and experiential knowledge to provide support and guidance to their femtees/mentees. More specifically, they cite a common or personal struggle to build a relationship of trust and knowledge sharing so that the femtee/mentee can personally identify with their transformational femtors/mentors. In addition, there needs to be a praxis-based femtoring/mentoring pedagogy in which transformational femtors/mentors model and put into practice their critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice for their mentees/femtees. The development of transformational resistance consciousness can also occur by both femtors/mentors and femtees/mentees collectively engaging in actions, activities and relationships that put their transformational resistance consciousness into practice/action.
5. *Reciprocity of knowledge sharing*. There needs to be a reciprocal relationship of knowledge sharing between both the transformational femtors/mentors and the youth. The sharing of networks, resources, expertise, navigational capital, and critical frameworks is not just solely shared by the transformational femtors/mentors, but is also gained by learning from the youth being supported. Simply, transformational

femtors/mentors share their knowledge and resources and also learns from the youth and community. This process of reciprocity will enable of a cultivation of “good soil” that connects “Concrete Roses” to access and utilize critically needed resources (e.g., “Trees know how to irrigate other trees to get water” and move to ensure that they all share “the light” (consejos, material resources, love, and more).

Lastly, my theorizations of the emerging tenets of transformational femtors/mentors is a first step in operationalizing the role that femtoring/mentoring relationships have in facilitating youth empowerment and transformational resistance outcomes among Chicanx-Latinx youth populations. The critical role that femtoring/mentoring relationships have in the development of critical agency and resiliency must be furthered researched and theorized. With the guidance, love, and support of their transformational femtors/mentors, Chicanx-Latinx youth can overcome or negotiate crisis; identify the systems of oppression and apply a structural analysis to change them; access material, cultural, and social resources; and support their development of a healthy racial and ethnic identity.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This dissertation was an examination of how urban Chicax-Latinx youth developed a critique of social oppression and a motivation for social justice in a community-based AS youth leadership development program. Youth collaborators reported that engagement of “safe space” and ethnic studies and Critical Race Theory (CRT) frameworks to their development of a critique of social oppression. In addition, Youth participants indicated that femtoring/mentoring relationships played a critical role in their development of a motivation for social justice. I contend that the kinship/familial bonds, authentic caring relationship building and radical acceptance, and inspiration to follow similar educational/professional/justice work are characteristics of *Transformational femtorship/mentorship* (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). In this chapter, I address the study’s implications for theory, educational research, policy, the field of teacher education, and youth worker practitioners. Lastly, I conclude by discussing areas of future research and practice.

Implications for Theory

In terms of implications for theory, the study furthers our understanding of how Chicax-Latinx youth developed a critique of social oppression and a motivation for social justice—Transformational Resistance (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). This study expands the discourse in Critical Race Theory in Education and youth resistance theoretical constructs by specifically identifying the critical role that facilitation of youth development spaces, curriculum and pedagogy, and femtoring/mentoring relationships directly contribute to the development of Transformational Resistance outcomes. There is a paucity of educational and critical youth studies theoretical constructs that examine and explain how youth of color—and Chicax-Latinx

youth specifically—engage in resistance behaviors that foster the development of critical inquiry and agency.

This study also builds upon CRT theoretical underpinnings by highlighting the particular role that the interrelationship of indigenous epistemological praxis, as well as de-colonial practices have in cultivating Transformational Resistance outcomes among Chicanx-Latinx youth. Lastly, this dissertation study illustrates the importance and need for the creation and expansion of theoretical constructs be praxis-driven. By understanding the complexities of Transformational Resistance among urban Chicanx-Latinx youth enables critical scholars and youth empowerment practitioners to develop theoretical constructs that are not only culturally responsive but aim toward generating transformative outcomes.

Implications for Educational Research

In terms of educational research, this study illuminates evidence that social justice-based, after-school youth development programs can serve as a vital intervention to school pushout of Chicanx-Latinx youth. Thus, our research of these programs must be more comprehensive, as afterschool programs increased their responsibility to retain students. Further, in light of the recent efforts to develop ethnic studies curricular offerings for K–12 settings, it becomes imperative that we closely study the high levels of youth engagement and transformational resistance outcomes cultivated by employing Ethnic Studies and CRT curriculum and pedagogy in outside-the-classroom educational settings. Beyond the academic gains and social connections that link students closely to their schooling environment, Ethnic Studies-based curriculum and pedagogy offer students added benefits in the areas of identity formation, development of a critical, intersectional consciousness that locates students as actors, and a much deeper commitment to advancing social justice causes. Thus, this study offers insights for

studying non-academic growth patterns developed within non-traditional educational settings, as well as an youth empowerment worker practitioner approach to community-based research practices.

Implications for Policy

The Study provided practical implications for policy in both youth development and educational outcomes. First, there needs to be an increase in funding for community-based social justice youth development programs as a prevention/intervention strategy to school pushout for urban Chicax-Latinx youth populations. Policymakers must acknowledge and understand that urban Chicax-Latinx youth exist in communities, schools and programs that are underfunded and under-resourced. Thus, there needs to be a paradigm shift away from criminalization and incarceration of Youth of Color and a move toward prevention and intervention strategies that foster critical youth agency and resiliency. There needs to be government funding streams that surpass law enforcement and mass incarceration budgets. There must be funding to increase the development of community-based youth organizations that provide opportunities and access to leadership development programs, jobs, counseling services, femtoring/mentoring relationships, Hip Hop arts, and indigenous-based cultural education.

In addition, we must professionalize the field of youth work similar to the teaching profession. Youth workers need to have access to increased educational opportunities at the university or within certification programs that foster the professional development necessary to garner salaries and benefits that enables years of practice and leadership development. Currently, traditional AS programs are staffed by young adults, ages 18 to 21 years old, who are paid below the living wage. As a result, there is a large sector of AS youth workers that are unable to perceive a future career in youth development work. This prevents AS youth workers

from being able to grow and develop their programming and mentoring/mentoring practice. Similarly to veteran teachers having years in the classroom, AS youth workers ability to engage in years as a practitioner will ultimately lead to effective leadership and innovation as they learn to adjust to needs of the youth being served.

Congruently, the study findings suggest that schools need a renewed investment in partnerships with community-based programming grounded in the development of a strong social political identity rooted in a positive self-identity. Community-based youth organizations such as *Advancing Justice* that focus on the empowerment and mentoring/mentoring of Youth of Color need to be perceived and treated with the same measure of value that our schools have within society. The reality is that urban schools are not fully equipped, resourced, or trained to deal with the holistic development of urban Chicax-Latinx youth that are experiencing high levels of structural/institutional violence within their homes, communities, and society as a whole. Schools needs to be mandated to partner with community-based youth organizations that focus on youth development programming that address the pain and trauma experienced by Chicax-Latinx youth in a culturally relevant and responsive way. By doing so, schools will be able to prevent the school pushout and school-to-prison pipeline outcomes for Chicax-Latinx youth populations.

Implications for Youth Development

This study highlighted the role that After-School (AS) youth development programs that utilize a youth empowerment framework can contribute to positive youth development outcomes for Chicax-Latinx youth populations. In order to apply a youth empowerment framework that inclusive of the diverse needs and lived experiences of Chicax-Latinx youth, there needs to be an interdisciplinary approach in developing Positive Youth Developmental (PYD) outcomes.

More specifically, there needs to be an increase of social justice, youth development approaches that are grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT)/Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), Ethnic Studies, and Indigenous epistemologies. By doing so, there can then be critical frameworks that support a holistic approach in youth development work that takes into consideration the diverse needs and lived experiences of urban Chicanx-Latinx youth populations. The study provided numerous examples of how Ethnic Studies (i.e., Hip Hop song projects) and indigenous epistemological world view (i.e., *In Lak Ech*) contributed to improved agency and resiliency, social-emotional learning outcomes, as well as, positively impacting overall mental wellness.

Also, the shift toward a youth empowerment framework in the field of youth development sets the foundation for youth development models (and programs) to have a holistic approach with the intention of cultivating transformative outcomes. Youth development conceptual models that utilize a youth empowerment framework is designed to increase personal and social awareness and foster a motivation for personal and social change. Therefore, this study provided tangible examples of transformative outcomes that can occur with social justice praxis-driven approach was applied to an AS youth development program. Under these conditions, the Study expanded the youth development discourse and provided critical scholars and practitioners with an opportunity to better address the youth developmental outcomes of urban Chicanx-Latinx youth.

Areas of Future Research and Practice

Building on the findings of this study, I aim towards developing a Chicanx-Latinx Youth Development model that specifically draws from Critical Race Theory (CRT)/Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit), Ethnic Studies, indigenous epistemologies, and youth development literature. In doing so, I hope to generate a conceptual model that centralizes a youth

empowerment approach that provides a holistic approach to facilitate the healthful mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual growth of Chicax-Latinx youth. By creating a Chicax-Latinx Youth Development model, we as scholars and youth worker practitioners can inventory existing best practices in curriculum and pedagogical approaches that facilitate positive youth development outcomes. Simultaneously, we can collectively begin to operationalize the Chicax-Latinx Youth Development model to generate innovative curricula and pedagogical practices that moves the construct from theory to practice.

In addition, it is imperative that Chicax-Latinx youth themselves are also a part of the process of theorizing, developing, and implementing a Chicax-Latinx Youth developmental models that cultivate youth empowerment, healing, and overall transformative outcomes. The lived experiences and experiential knowledge of urban Chicax-Latinx youth are essential to ensuring that the positive youth developmental models are culturally relevant and responsive. It must be noted that Chicax-Latinx youth populations are not a homogenous group; indeed, a variety of factors can shape their PYD outcomes. Social identity constructs such as generational status, citizenship status, age, and ability can all influence the curricular and pedagogical approaches needed to ensure that positive youth development impacts are holistic and transformative.

In closing, I argue that the study of Chicax-Latinx youth resistance can provide critical scholars and youth worker practitioners with the conceptual models and practice necessary to make a transformative impact in the lives of our youth.

In order to humanize Chicax-Latinx youth, we need to frame their growth and development as being “Roses that Grow in Concrete.” This will enable us to understand why Chicax-Latinx youth may have “damaged pedals,” that is, untreated pain and trauma that can

lead to self-destructive behaviors. In doing so, we can begin to address the reasons why a “Rose,” that is, a Youth of Color would need to grow within “Concrete,” that is, the structural/institutional forms of violence and oppression within their communities and society as a whole. We need to embrace urban Chicax-Latinx youth with love, care, hope, and material support necessary to ensure they are able to be empowered, resilient, and agents of change within society.

REFERENCES

- Acosta, Curtis. (2014) "Dangerous Minds In Tucson: The Banning of Mexican American Studies and Critical Thinking In Arizona," *Journal of Educational Controversy*: Vol. 8 : No. 1 , Article 9. Available at: <https://cedar.wvu.edu/jec/vol8/iss1/9>
- Acosta, Curtis. (2014) Huitzilopochtli: The Will and Resiliency of Tucson Youth to Keep Mexican American Studies Alive, *Multicultural Perspectives*, 16:1, 3-7, DOI: 10.1080/15210960.2013.867239 **To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2013.867239>
- Acuña, R. (1996). *Anything but Mexican: Chicanos in contemporary Los Angeles*. London: Verso.
- Acuña, R. (2011). *Occupied America: A history of Chicanos*. Boston: Longman.
- Akom, A.A., Cammarota, J., & Ginwright, S. (2004). Youthtopias: Toward a new paradigm of critical youth studies. *Youth Media Reporter* 2(4): <http://www.youthmediareporter.org/2008/08/>
- Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. M. Landreman (Ed.), *The art of effective facilitation* (pp. 135-150). Stylus Publishing, LLC.
- Bauman, S., Ritter, M. K., Romero, A. J., & Edwards, L. M. (2014). Risk Factors for Latina Adolescents' Mental Health and Well-Being. Preventing adolescent depression and suicide among latinas. , 35-46.
- Bernal, D. (1998). Grassroots Leadership Reconceptualized: Chicana Oral Histories and the 1968 East Los Angeles School Blowouts. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 19(2), 113-142. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3347162> doi:1
- Brayboy, B M K J. (2005). Transformational Resistance and Social Justice. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 36(3), 193-211.
- Bulhan, H. A. (1985). *Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression*. New York: Plenum.
- California Department of Education. (2014). Education Data Partnership: CDE, Edsource and FCMAT. Retrived from: <http://www.ed-data.org>
- Cammarota, J., & Romero, A. F. (2009). A social justice epistemology and pedagogy for Latina/o students: Transforming public education with participatory action research. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2009(123), 53-65.
- Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (Eds.). (2010). *Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion*. Routledge.

- Cammarota, J. (2011). From hopelessness to hope: Social justice pedagogy in urban education and youth development. *Urban Education, 46*(4), 828-844.
- Cammarota, J., & Romero, A. (2011). Participatory action research for high school students: Transforming policy, practice, and the personal with social justice education. *Educational Policy, 25*(3), 488-506.
- Cammarota, J. (2014). The social justice education project. *Raza Studies: The public option for educational revolution, 107*.
- Carter, R. T. (2007). Racism and psychological and emotional injury: Recognizing and assessing race-based traumatic stress. *The Counseling Psychologist, 35*, 13-105.
- Clark, V. P., & Creswell, J. W. (2011). Designing and conducting mixed methods research. *Retrieved on July, 25, 2014*.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2016). Creating Brave Spaces within and through Student-Faculty Pedagogical Partnerships. *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education, 1*(18), 1.
- Covarrubias, A (2005). Agencies of transformational resistance: Transforming the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality oppression through Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) and praxis. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, United States -- California. Retrieved February 16, 2011, from Dissertations & Theses @ University of California. (Publication No. AAT 3218658).
- Covarrubias, A. (2011). Quantitative Intersectionality: A Critical Race Analysis of the Chicana/o Educational Pipeline. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 10*, 86-105.
- Covarrubias A., Lara. (2013). The Undocumented (Im)Migrant Educational Pipeline: The influence of Citizenship Status on Educational Attainment for People of Mexican Origin. *Urban Education* January 2014 vol. 49 no. 1 75-110
- Covarrubias, A. & Revilla, A. (2003). Agencies of Transformational Resistance: Dismantling injustice at the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality through LatCrit Praxis. *Florida Law Review. 55* (1), 459-477.
- Damon, W. (2004). What is positive youth development? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 591*, 13-24.
- Delgado Bernal, D. (1998). Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology in Educational Research. *Harvard Educational Review, 68*, 555-582.
- Delgado Bernal, D. (1999). Chicana/o education from the civil rights era to the present. In J.F. Moreno (Ed.), *The elusive quest for equality: 150 years of Chicano/Chicana education*, (pp. 77-108). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review.

- Bernal, D. D. (2001). Learning and living pedagogies of the home: The mestiza consciousness of Chicana students. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(5), 623-639.
- Bernal, D. D. (2002). Critical race theory, Latino critical theory, and critical raced-gendered epistemologies: Recognizing students of color as holders and creators of knowledge. *Qualitative inquiry*, 8(1), 105-126.
- Diversi, M., & Mecham, C. (2005). Latino(a) students and Caucasian mentors in a rural after-school program: Towards empowering adult-youth relationships. *Journal of Community Psychology. Special Issue: Youth-Adult Relationships in Community Programs: Diverse Perspectives on Good Practices*, 33, 31-40.
- Duncan-Andrade, J. (2005). An examination of the sociopolitical history of Chicanos and its relationship to School Performance. *Urban Education*, 40:6, pp. 576-605.
- Duncan-Andrade, J.R., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of Critical Pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from theory to practice in urban schools*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Duncan-Andrade, J. (2009). Note to educators: Hope required when growing roses in concrete. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(2), 181-194.
- Durlak, J. A., Taylor, R. D., Kawashima, K., Pachan, M. K., DuPre, E. P., Celio, C. I., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). Effects of positive youth development programs on school, family, and community systems. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 39(3/4), 269-286.
- Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). *The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. Retrieved from: www.casel.org.
- Elenes, C. (2013). Nepantla, spiritual activism, new tribalism: Chicana feminist transformative pedagogies and social justice education. *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies*, 5(3), 132-141.
- Franquiz, M., Carmen Salazar, M. (2004). The transformative potential of humanizing pedagogy: Addressing the diverse needs of Chicano/Mexicano students. *The High School Journal*, 87(4), 36-53.
- García, M., Castro, S. (2011). *Blowout!: Sal Castro and the Struggle for Educational Justice*. University of North Carolina Press.
- García, D. G., Yosso, T. J., & Barajas, F. P. (2012). "A few of the brightest, cleanest Mexican Children": School segregation as a form of mundane racism in Oxnard, California, 1900-1940. *Harvard Educational Review*, 82(1), 1-25.

- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Ginwright, S. (2011). Hope, healing, and care. *Liberal Education*, 97(2), 34-39.
- Ginwright, S. (2016). Hope and healing in urban education: How urban activists and teachers are reclaiming matters of the heart. New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Ginwright, S., Cammarota, J. (2002). New terrain in youth development: The promise of a social justice development approach. *Social Justice* 29(4):82-96
- Gonzales, A. (2014). *Reform without Justice: Latino Migrant Politics and the Homeland Security State*. Oxford University Press.
- González, G. G. (1990). *Chicano education in the era of segregation*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, Inc.
- Hamann, E. T. (2016). The Changing Challenges of Transformational Resistance. A Response to "Building the Dream: Transformational Resistance, Community-Based Organizations, and the Civic Engagement of Latinos in the New South". *Democracy and Education*, 24(2), 15-.
- Heck, K. E., & Subramaniam, A. (2009). Youth development frameworks [Monograph]. Davis, CA: 4-H Center for Youth Development, University of California.
- Holley, L. C., & Steiner, S. (2005). Safe space: Student perspectives on classroom environment. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 41(1), 49-64.
- Howard, T. C. (2002). Hearing footsteps in the dark: African American students' descriptions of effective teachers. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 7(4), 425-444.
- Howard, T.C. (2008). "Who really cares?" The disenfranchisement of African American males in PreK-12 schools: A critical race theory perspective. *Teachers College Record*, 110(5), 954-985
- Howard, T.C. (2010). *Why race and culture matters in schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Howard, T. C. (2013). *Black male (d): Peril and promise in the education of African American males*. Teachers College Press.
- Huber, L. P., Lopez, C. B., Malagon, M. C., Velez, V., & Solorzano, D. G. (2008). Getting beyond the 'symptom,' acknowledging the 'disease': Theorizing racist nativism. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 11(1), 39-51.

- Huber, L. P. (2009). Challenging racist nativist framing: Acknowledging the community cultural wealth of undocumented Chicana college students to reframe the immigration debate. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(4), 704-730.
- Huber, L. P. (2011). Discourses of racist nativism in California public education: English dominance as racist nativist microaggressions. *Educational Studies*, 47(4), 379-401.
- Johnson, K.R. & Hing, B.O. (2007). The Immigrant Rights Marches of 2006 and the Prospects for a New Civil Rights Movement.
- King, P. E., Dowling, E. M., Mueller, R. A., White, K., Schultz, W. Osborn, P., Dickerson, E. Bobke, D. L., Lerner, R. M., Benson, P. L., & Scales, P. C. (2005). Thriving in adolescence: The voices of youth-serving practitioners, parents, and early and late adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), pp. 94-112.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.
- Larson, R. (2006). Positive youth development, willful adolescents, and mentoring. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 34(6), 677-689.
- LGBTQ Youth and Education: Policies and Practices Author(s): Cris Mayo Publisher: Teachers College Press, New York ISBN: 0807754889, Pages: 160, Year: 2013
- Leonardo, Z., & Porter, R. K. (2010). Pedagogy of fear: Toward a Fanonian theory of “‘safety’” in race dialogue. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 13(2), 139-157.
doi:10.1080/13613324.2010.482898
- Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., & Von Eye, A. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), 17-71.
- Malagón, M. C. (2011). *Trenches under the pipeline: The educational trajectories of Chicano continuation high school students in California*.
- Mbugua, T. (2011). Fostering Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogy and Global Awareness through the Integration of International Service-learning in Courses. *Journal of Pedagogy*, 1(2), pp. 87-98. Retrieved 25 Jul. 2016, from doi:10.2478/v10159-010-0011-8
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education. Revised and expanded from*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation: Revised and expanded from qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mollie V. Blackburn & Lance T. McCready (2009) Voices of Queer Youth in Urban Schools: Possibilities and Limitations, *Theory Into Practice*, 48:3, 222-230, DOI: 10.1080/00405840902997485
- Moreno, J. F. (1999). *The elusive quest for equality: 150 years of Chicano/Chicana education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Educational Review.
- Muñoz, C. (1989). *Youth, identity, power: The Chicano movement*. London: Verso.
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (2001). *Dropout rates in the United States: 2001*. (NCES Publication No. 2002-114). Washington DC: Author.
- Orfield, G., Ee, J. (2014). *Segregating California's Future: Inequality and Its Alternative 60 Years after Brown v. Board of Education*. Los Angeles: UCLA Civil Rights Project.
- Palos, A. L., Mcinnis, E., Fifer, S. J., In Bricca, J., Amor, N., Dos Vatos Productions, Independent Television Service, ... Corporation for Public Broadcasting. (2011). *Precious Knowledge*.
- Patel, Leigh (2015). *Decolonizing Educational Research: From Ownership to Answerability*. Routledge.
- Patel, Leigh (2016) Pedagogies of Resistance and Survivance: Learning as Marronage, *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 49:4, 397-401, DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2016.1227585
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry a personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work*, 1(3), 261-283.
- Perez Huber, L. et al (2015). *Still Falling through the Cracks: Revisiting the Latina/o Educational Pipeline*. Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Research Report no. 19.
- Ponjuan, L., Clark, M., & Sáenz, V.B. (2012). "Boys in Peril: Examining Latino Boys' Education Pathways and Motivation towards Postsecondary Education: A Qualitative Study of Latino Boys in Florida and Texas Education Systems." University of Texas at Austin, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement website: http://ddce.utexas.edu/projectmales/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/TG-FOUNDATION-Qualitative-study_FINAL-DRAFT.pdf

- Ramirez, J. C. (2010). *"Don't Point the Deficit Finger at Me Foo!!!": Chicana/o school disengagement and re-engagement in West Los Angeles* (Unpublished master's thesis). California State University, Northridge.
- Rios, V. M. (2009). The consequences of the criminal justice pipeline on Black and Latino masculinity. *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 623(1), 150–162.
- Rios, V. M. (2011). *Punished: Policing the lives of Black and Latino*. New York: New York University Press.
- Riggs, N. R. (2006). After-school program attendance and the social development of rural Latino children of immigrant families. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 34, 75–87.
- Riggs, N. R., Bohnert, A. M., Guzman, M. D., & Davidson, D. (2010). Examining the potential of community-based after-school programs for Latino youth. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9313-1.
- Rodriguez, C. (2010). *Amoxtili the X codex: In Lak Ech, Panache Be, Hunab Ku and the forgotten 1524 debates*.
- Romero, Augustine, Arce, Sean, & Cammarota, Julio (2009). A Barrio Pedagogy: Identity, Intellectualism, Activism and Academic Achievement through the Evolution of Critically Compassionate Intellectualism. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 12, 217-233.
- Snyder, H. N., & Sickmund, M. (1999). *Juvenile offenders and victims: 1999 national report* (NCJ 178257). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Solorzano, D.G., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a Critical Race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, 36, 308-342. doi:10.1177/0042085901363002
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73.
- Stovall, D. O. (2016). *Born out of struggle: Critical race theory, school creation, and the politics of interruption*. Suny Press.
- Tintiango-Cubales, A., Kohli, R., Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., & Sleeter, C. (2015). Toward an ethnic studies pedagogy: Implications for K-12 schools from the research. *The Urban Review*, 47(1), 104-125.
- Torres, M., & Fergus, E. (2012). "Social Mobility and the Complex Status of Latino Males: Education, Employment, and Incarceration Patterns from 2000–2009." In Noguera,

- Pedro, Hurtado, and Fergus (2012) *Invisible No More: Understanding and Responding to the Disenfranchisement of Latino Males*. New York: Routledge.19–40.
- Tuck, E. (2012). *Urban youth and school pushout: Gateways, get-aways, and the GED*.
Routledge
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). American community survey. Retrieved April 10, 2016, from
<http://www.census.gov/acs>
- Valencia, R.R. (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFarmer.
- Valencia, R.R. (2002). *Chicano school failure and success: Past, present, and future*. New York, NY: RoutledgeFarmer.
- Valencia, R.R. & Black, M.S. (2002). “Mexican Americans don’t value education!”: On the basis of the myth, mythmaking, and debunking. *Journal of Latinos and education*, 1(2), 81-103.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Watts-Jones, D. (2002). Healing internalized racism: The role of a within-group sanctuary among people of African descent. *Family Process*, 41(4), 591-601.
- Yang, K. W. (2007). Organizing MySpace: Youth walkouts, pleasure, politics, and new media. *The Journal of Educational Foundations*, 21(1/2), 9-14.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Applications of case study research*. Sage publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage publications.
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race ethnicity and education*, 8(1), 69-91.
- Yosso, T.J., & Solórzano, D.G. (2006). Leaks In The Chicana and Chicano Educational Pipeline. Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Research Report no.13.