Introduction

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In the 1960s and 1970s, students from predominately Chicana/o schools organized massive protests to demand a host of educational reforms that included improved schooling conditions, better preparation for higher education, the implementation of bilingual instruction, and much more. Overall, they demanded an educational system that would treat them with greater dignity and respect. Decades before that, with the Lemon Grove incident (1931) and the *Mendez v. Westminster School District* (1947) case, Mexican and Chicana/o parents were among the first to file lawsuits denouncing the practice of school segregation for Mexican-origin children (Alvarez 1986; Bermudez forthcoming). There have been numerous instances of the continued unrest and dissatisfaction with the education of Chicanas and Chicanos in the United States. For example, in 1968, thousands of East Los Angeles students walked out of school, denouncing the poor educational practices within the Los Angeles Unified School District. They were building on the legacy of protests of Mexican-origin activists from the 1930s to 1950s, the broader Chicana/o and civil rights movements, and the anti–Vietnam War protests of the time. The 1968 East L.A. Walkouts or Blowouts became a model of student resistance and youth empowerment wherein students used direct action to demand social justice. It is no mistake that in 2006 and still today, students have staged walkouts demanding justice for their communities. Similar walkouts and acts of resistance by students have been seen in

opposition to unfair legislation such as California Propositions 187 (anti-immigrant), 227 (antibilingual education), and 21 (youth criminalization), as well as many more that go unreported by the national media.

As a result of social movements in education, there have been several developments, including desegregation, bilingual education, affirmative action, multicultural education, Chicana/o studies, better school financing, migrant education, and much more. Still, students and their families continue to feel underserved and dismissed by institutions of education. According to the Chicana/o educational pipeline based on U.S. Census data, fewer than 10 percent of Chicanas/os who start elementary school in the United States pursue and complete a bachelor's degree. An overwhelming 56 percent of Chicana/o students drop out or are "pushed out" of school—a statistic that has remained the same or worsened since the 1970s (Yosso 2006, 3). As critical educators, we use the phrase "push out" instead of "drop out" to recognize the role of institutions in the increasing number of students who leave school early, recognizing that students' decisions to pursue high school diplomas and higher education are impacted by outside forces as well, including teachers, counselors, administrators, and legislators.

In 2006 we witnessed a nationwide Chicana/o and Latina/o community protest against the unfair treatment of immigrants in the United States. With the passing of HR 4437 in the House of Representatives in December 2005, students once again took to the streets to make it known that they would not stand for the continued and exacerbated criminalization of undocumented immigrants. HR 4437 (the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005) called for a seven hundred–mile fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, local legal authorities to aid in deportation procedures, an increase in fines and criminal charges for undocumented people and their employers, and a host of other demands. It further declared undocumented people and anyone who "aids or assists" them felons. There was a national outcry against the inhumanity and criminalization that the bill suggested for immigrants. Currently, we are dealing with the positive and negative aftermath of HR 4437. The bill was not passed in the Senate, but several items within the bill were reintroduced and passed into law at a later time. Deportations and increased anti-immigrant sentiment and legislation are soaring. However, the large-scale resistance to social injustice that was catalyzed in 2006 has left us with a legacy that continues

through activism, organizing, voting, civic engagement, and consciousness raising. The numbers of youth engaged in this movement are extremely significant. Throughout the nation, Latina/o students and their parents were at the forefront of organizing efforts, including student walkouts. Their efforts of resistance went beyond the immigration debate as they denounced racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. Student contingencies at immigrant rights marches held posters that read: "Brown Is Beautiful!" "Chican@ Consciousness for All," "What Happened to No Child Left Behind?" and "Queers Are Immigrants Too!" This book speaks to many of the concerns of these students and their educators; it provides a space wherein their voices are represented.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

This book is a collaborative effort by Chicana/o scholars in the fields of Chicana/o studies, ethnic studies, women's studies, and education to collect the research and experiences of people who have worked historically and are working presently on a vision of social justice for Chicana and Chicano youth and communities. Most often, we envision our path to social justice through education. Thus, we closely study the work and struggles of Chicana/o scholars, parents, teachers, students, and community members to learn from their practices, their acts of resistance against subordination, and their transformative movements toward social justice.

At the forefront of critical education research are theories that contest schooling practices that maintain the subordination of "oppressed" people, including but not limited to poor, working-class, female, ethnic/linguistic minority, undocumented, disabled, and queer students, as well as many other marginalized and discriminated populations.[1] Paulo Freire's work is the foundation for many of our efforts in this area, as he outlined a theoretical model for working with oppressed students many years ago. He primarily focused on people oppressed by their condition as exploited workers, but his theories have been expanded to include many more discriminated groups. Freire argued that dehumanization is the "result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed." He also asserted that "sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so" (1994, 26). Hence, the oppressed will not be able to tolerate their continued oppression and

dehumanization and will eventually have no other recourse but to resist and seek out their own liberation. According to Freire, the oppressed can and should be transformers of their world, and they can do this through a liberatory praxis, which includes critical consciousness/education, or *conscientización,* and action.

Henry Giroux (1983) wrote that a radical pedagogy will be achieved only when we better understand the relationships among power, resistance, and human agency. That is, there are power dynamics at play within schools that are systematically disenfranchising particular students based on certain aspects of their identities and background. However, there are also many ways that these students and their educators are strategically resisting oppression and "push-out" factors. Marginalized students and their allies have human agency, and they are surviving and thriving using their education and critical consciousness to navigate an unjust system. The majoritarian perspective that posits that all students have an equal opportunity and access to education is heavily contested by the work of critical scholars. We recognize the injustices, but also realize there are ways to change the expected outcomes.

Chicana and Chicano critical race education scholars Daniel Solórzano and Dolores Delgado Bernal expand on Giroux's discussion of resistance as they examine the oppositional behavior of students from a critical race perspective. They analyze the experiences of the students involved in the 1968 East Los Angeles school walkouts and the 1993 UCLA Chicana and Chicano studies protests to explore a kind of student behavior called "transformational resistance." Solórzano and Delgado Bernal wrote, "*Transformational resistance* . . . refers to student behavior that illustrates both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice. With a deeper level of understanding and a social justice orientation, transformational resistance offers the greatest possibility for social change" (2001, 319).

Whereas some people believe that oppositional behavior and resistance are static, we recognize that there is much fluidity within them. For instance, an individual can exhibit behavior that can be both conformist and transformative in that we sometimes choose to work within institutions that are extremely conformist and reduce our visions of social change based on our limitations within those institutions. However, even when we participate in institutions that maintain racist, classist, sexist, homophobic and hetero-

sexist, and citizenist perspectives and hierarchies, we may be working toward transformative social change by challenging these structures from within them as well as outside of them.[2] We believe this to be dramatically evident in the work of educators and students participating in institutions of education. As critical race theorists in education indicate, education has the power to both oppress and liberate (Solórzano and Delgado Bernal 2001). Furthermore, Alejandro Covarrubias and Anita Tijerina Revilla extended Solórzano and Delgado Bernal's resistance paradigm to shift from a "critique of social oppression" to a "multidimensional consciousness of social oppression" to extrapolate on the idea that a critical consciousness, or *conscientización,* is complicated by examining the intersectionality of race, class, gender, sexuality, citizenship, and many other socially constructed categories that reinforce power dynamics in our society. They wrote, "*Multidimensional consciousness* consists of a sophisticated critique of how multiple, intersecting structures of domination (e.g., racism, capitalism, sexism, heteronormativity, etc.) interact with each other and impact one's social and political situation as part of an historical condition" (2003, 466). Hence, a critical multidimensional consciousness is not simply being race conscious or gender conscious but rather a commitment to developing a *conscientización* about *all* forms of injustice. In addition, there is a shift in the resistance diagram from "motivated for social justice" to commitment to social justice. "Commitment to social justice in this context is understood as the commitment to engage in a process of transforming all relations of inequality, whether they are individual or systemic, both understood as political" (ibid., 467).

It is the concept of transformational resistance that this book focuses on as we examine the role of activism in the educational past and present of Chicanas and Chicanos. Hence, this book and the contributors of this book actively seek to document and problematize the experiences of people who are working to build individual and collective multidimensional consciousness while also committing to social justice movements. We view the positive changes for Chicanas and Chicanas in education as a result of activism that can be seen as transformational resistance.

In chapter 1, Carlos Tejeda writes from the perspective of a decolonizing pedagogue, challenging the educational system's desire to create "schooling for subservience." He points to the 1968 East Los Angeles Walkouts or Blowouts as an important event in history in which a shift took place for those

being educated for the purpose of creating a subordinated workforce. Beginning in this chapter and filtered throughout the book, we commemorate the walkouts for the significant impact they make on the legacy of Chicana/o student and community activism in the area of education.

Adriana Katzew and Lilia R. De Katzew focus on the production of art and media by Chicana/o youth as a form of protest. They point to art as one of the core elements of the Chicana/o movement that served as a consciousness-building tool and nurtured a sense of pride for the community historically. They further argue that art and visual culture continue to play a central role in Chicana/o social movements today.

Alejandro Covarrubias builds on his earlier work on "Agencies of Transformational Resistance" to offer a more descriptive analysis of the function and potential of such organizations. ATRs are organizations or collectives that work to create community, offer resources and skills, promote multidimensional consciousness, and provide hope for members of the collectives that social change is possible. Covarrubias shares an example of an ATR by describing the success of one Los Angeles community-based organization.

Edward M. Olivos and Carmen E. Quintana discuss the importance of the role of parents in the commitment to social justice. They examine the history of the walkouts and compare the experiences of bilingual and bicultural students and parents from the 1960s to the present. Despite all the work that was done, the problems of the past have persisted. Olivos and Quintana advocate for the need to politicize parental involvement and call on parents to look at the role they played in the 1968 walkouts as a model for ways to deal with the discrimination that Chicana/o students are facing in schools today.

Rita Kohli and Daniel G. Solórzano follow up by discussing racial discrimination between People of Color and within groups of color. They draw connections among racism, white supremacy, and racial hierarchies to illustrate how these phenomena transfer into internalized problems of People of Color. They call upon People of Color to critically assess the impact of such discrimination and to work toward coalitions as they document the experiences of high school students in Los Angeles who are taking the initiative to build cross-race coalitions.

Xico González, Eracleo Guevara, Alejo Padilla, and Marianna Rivera

describe concretely a school called La Academia del Barrio Telpochcalli, which was created as a direct result of Chicana/o activism in education. This school is an example of praxis—theory and action that connect a multidimensional consciousness with a commitment to social justice. Both educators and students push forward a vision based on transformational resistance. In this chapter, the authors give an overview of the creation of the school, a historical context and its connection to critical pedagogy, and the lessons learned from the perspective of the educators.

In chapter 7, the authors discuss the current status of Chicana/o education and the outcome that we witnessed nationally in 2006. Evelyn M. Rangel-Medina and Anita Tijerina Revilla document the experiences of the Las Vegas Activist Crew who were responsible for the grassroots movement that shut down the Las Vegas Strip—the epicenter of commerce in town—on May 6, 2006. Again, they draw parallels to the 1968 Blowouts, but they further document the status of schools and the backlash on immigrant people from the perspective of the student activists organizing the movement locally. In their chapter, they illustrate the incredible work of student activists who essentially were the driving force of the immigrant rights movement in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Finally, Margarita Berta-Ávila and Julie López Figueroa conclude this book by illustrating the role of identity and activism in the schooling experiences of Mexican-origin students. They argue that based on the lessons learned from the legacy of Chicana/o activism in education, we are poised at an important place where we can draw on these experiences to create and implement a Chicana/o pedagogical framework that does not ignore the history of Chicana/o discrimination and actively rejects student subordination.

NOTES

1. The use of the word "queer" is related to the community-activist practice of using the term "queer" as a reclaimed and redefined label that acts as an umbrella for many nonheteronormative identifications including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexed, questioning, allies, and fluid. It is a term that holds political significance and is heavily associated with the gay and queer rights movement.

2. "Citizenism" is anti-immigrant behavior or ideologies that result in the belief of the superiority of people who are classified by the state as citizens of a nation. This

state- and federally sanctioned classification results in a system of unearned advantages for citizens and unwarranted discrimination of noncitizens, such as denial of basic human rights and dignity.

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