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Theory, Research, and Practice
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Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America

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3 Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America
A Brief History

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Introduction

This chapter discusses and explains the evolution of Latino education in the United States from the 1890s to the present. It examines, in broad strokes, the growth of Latinos over the twentieth century and the ways in which they have impacted and been impacted by education.

Although we use the term “Latino” as an umbrella group for several nationality groups whose country of origin is in the Spanish-speaking countries of Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America, the literature generally refers to the history and educational experiences of mostly Mexicans and, to some extent, Puerto Ricans. Occasionally, the literature describes the educational experiences of Cubans, especially those residing in Miami-Dade County, Florida, after 1959. The experiences of Central and South Americans, the most recent Latino groups to come to the United States, have not yet been written. Within this context then much of our historical analysis of Latino education will focus on Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and, to some extent, Cuban Americans.

The term “ethnic Mexicans” will be used to refer to all individuals of Mexican origin, whether they were citizens or not. Other terms such as “Mexicans” and “Mexican Americans” will also be used interchangeably with ethnic Mexicans. In a few cases, special terms such as “Hispano” or “Spanish American,” labels utilized by Mexican origin individuals in New Mexico and Colorado, will be used, especially if we make reference to their history and to their educational experiences. The term “Anglo” will be used to refer to white Americans of European descent.

We argue that during the twentieth century education was both an instrument of reproduction and an important site of contestation. With respect to the former, education, in all of its forms, served to reproduce a highly stratified society aimed at ensuring the political and cultural hegemony of the dominant Anglo group in the society and the socioeconomic subordination of Latinos. Education also was a site of contestation as reflected in the actions taken by Latinos. These individuals did not passively accept their educational fates and either resisted, subverted, or accommodated the marginalization and conformist intentions of this education. Latinos, likewise, sought to use education to promote their own identities and to improve their socioeconomic status in American society. The result has been many decades of conflict and tensions in the educational arena.


The Latino population increased and became more diverse during the twentieth century. Prior to 1890, three groups of Latinos, for the most part, resided in the United States—Mexicans,
Cubans, and Puerto Ricans. The largest of these groups were the Mexicans and most of them lived in the American Southwest. Over 100,000 Mexicans lived in the United States by the turn of the twentieth century. Next in importance with respect to size of population were the Cubans, then the Puerto Ricans. Cubans comprised a small but significant group of political exiles, entrepreneurs, and tobacco workers. By 1900, approximately 20,000 had immigrated to the United States. The majority lived in Florida. Puerto Ricans, although extremely few—less than 500—were comprised of political exiles, enterprising entrepreneurs, a handful of students and both field hands and factory workers who migrated from the campos and pueblos of Puerto Rico to northern U.S. cities and other parts of the United States.

The size of these three groups grew during the twentieth century but at varying rates and at different points in time. Cuban migration fluctuated and trickled in between 1899 and 1958. Cuban immigrants came to the United States before 1960 because of employment opportunities. Many of them left after several years, but a significant number settled in the United States, mostly in south Florida.

Puerto Rican migration also increased during these years. It began as a trickle in the early part of the twentieth century and soon grew into a large wave after the Second World War. American citizenship was granted to Puerto Ricans in 1917; in later years, cheap airfares and aggressive recruitment by agribusiness and industrial interests contributed to their emigration to the United States. Puerto Ricans settled on the East Coast, the Midwest, and Hawaii. Most of them, however, chose New York City.

The number of Mexicans, unlike Puerto Ricans and Cubans, increased dramatically during the twentieth century. They came in waves. Over one million Mexicans came to the United States during the first major wave from the 1890s to 1930. This wave was temporarily halted during the Great Depression and for a brief period a reverse migration occurred because of repatriation. Approximately 460,000 Mexicans were repatriated and sent to Mexico from 1929 to 1937. The next wave came from 1941 to 1964. Prompted by the labor shortage during the Second World War, Mexicans came with papers (legally), without papers (undocumented), and as braceros or temporary contract/guest workers. Over six million immigrants with documents and an unknown number without documents came during this period.

Mexicans came for many reasons—to work in the developing industries of the United States, to escape the ravages of the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1920, and to search for better lives. Moreover, aggressive recruitment efforts by American agricultural and industrial interests, rapid economic development in the country, and changes in immigration policy also encouraged transnational migration of Mexican workers.

Mexicans historically had settled in the border areas of the Southwest, but during the twentieth century they moved out of these traditional areas to other parts of the Southwest, the Midwest, and the Pacific Northwest.

Latinos in the United States were diverse in many ways and, among other things, had distinct histories of race, class, and culture. Prior to 1900, the Cuban population were larger than the Puerto Rican population. Between 1900 and 1960, the Puerto Rican population exploded. Thus, by 1960, while there were three Latino groups in the United States, the two largest were Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. These groups tended to share certain social, economic, political, and cultural characteristics. They were politically powerless, economically impoverished, occupationally concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, and socially alienated and discriminated by the dominant society.

Cubans shared many cultural and linguistic similarities with Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, but they were socially and economically distinct and numerically small during this period. Their numbers did not increase significantly until after 1959.
Patterns of Latino Education in the United States

The subordinate and culturally distinct positions of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans posed significant challenges for public schools over the decades. Schools, for the most part, were unable and unwilling to meet these challenges. They ignored their multiple needs or else, because of assimilationist ideology and deficit perspectives, interpreted them in such a way that the differences brought by these children had to be eliminated. In many cases, the schools responded not to the genuine needs of this diverse group of children but to those of other stronger political and economic interests who sought to use schools as instruments of cultural conformity and of social and economic subordination.

The history of these two groups indicates that schools served a reproductive function and sought to ensure that they remained a subordinate group by providing them with only limited access to separate, inferior, subtractive and non-academic instruction. The patterns of Mexican American and Puerto Rican public education reflected these marginalization and conformist intentions.

Community Exclusion from Power

One of the most important patterns of Latino education to emerge during this period was that of community exclusion from power. When public education originated in the second half of the nineteenth century, Latinos were provided with varying degrees of inclusion in important decision-making positions in teaching and in the governance and administration of the schools. For example, in the 1873–1874 school year, Hispanics comprised 77 percent of the total number of county superintendents in the New Mexico territory. Two decades later they comprised less than 33 percent of the county superintendents. By 1930, their numbers became insignificant. One of the last superintendents was Nina Otero Warren, who administered the Santa Fe County Schools from 1919 to 1929. By the second quarter of the 1900s, for all intents and purposes, Latinos were absent from important positions of power in education.

The pattern of structural exclusion continued in the post-World War II era as a growing number of Latinos asserted themselves and fought for increased access to these types of positions. Greater representation of Latinos in education did not increase appreciably until after the 1960s.

A few exceptions to the general pattern of community exclusion from the structures of power in education existed in the twentieth century, e.g., there were the instances of community control of the schools in several small communities in southern Colorado and in at least one rural district in West Texas.

Inequitable Student Access

Latino students, unlike community members, were not excluded from the education process. Most pre-college age students were provided with access to public education, but two major groups of students continued to be out of school during the first half of the twentieth century—the children of agricultural workers and secondary school age youth.

College age students, on the other hand, were only provided limited and inequitable access to institutions of higher learning, although there were no laws that prevented Latinos from attending them. Less than 5 percent of Latino students were enrolled in higher education during these years.

In a few cases, political and school leaders took affirmative steps to increase Latino access to higher education. In the Southwest, for instance, political leaders and community activists
established a university aimed at attracting Latino students from the rural parts of the state or else encouraged members from the community to attend a few select institutions in their local areas. Among the institutions encouraging and allowing large numbers of Hispano students to enroll were New Mexico Highlands University, Western New Mexico University, Northern New Mexico Normal, New Mexico State University, and Adams State College in Southern Colorado. Significant numbers of Hispanics also were encouraged and did attend religious institutions such as St Joseph’s College and St Michaels College in New Mexico.

On the East Coast, a few universities recruited Cuban teachers and college age youth in the years from 1899 to 1901. American universities also actively recruited students from the island of Puerto Rico during the years from 1903 to 1907. Several thousand Cubans and over 500 Puerto Rican students successfully enrolled in these institutions during these years.

These efforts were relatively successful in increasing Cuban and Puerto Rican access to higher education in these years, but the mixed-race population posed dilemmas for host U.S. institutions during an era of racial segregation. Afro-Cubans and dark-skinned Puerto Ricans were not allowed to enroll in white institutions but were welcomed by historically Black Colleges such as Hampton and Tuskegee.

Separate and Unequal Education

Although some Latino students attended integrated schools, the majority enrolled in separate classrooms or separate school facilities. The phenomenon of Latino school segregation, mostly confined to Mexican Americans, originated in the middle part of the nineteenth century, but, between 1890 and 1960, it expanded significantly to other parts of the country. Segregation was confined to the elementary grades from 1890 to the 1920s. It expanded to the secondary grades as early as the mid-1920s largely due to the growth in the Mexican school-age population.

State officials played an important role in the expansion of school segregation by sanctioning its presence and by funding local requests for increased segregation. Residential segregation, demographic shifts in the population, and economic conditions likewise greatly impacted the expansion of segregation in the twentieth century.

School segregation increased, although no legal statutes mandated such isolation, as was the case with African Americans and other racial minority groups. Local authorities used a variety of administrative means to establish these schools and developed several reasons for segregating Mexican children. Some argued that these children had lice, were dirty, or were irregular in attendance because of migration. Others noted that segregation was necessary because they were racially and culturally inferior to white children. Others still argued that Mexican children slowed instruction of English speakers and had a language handicap.

Segregated schools were in many respects unequal to those provided for Anglo children. These schools generally were older than those for Anglos, their school equipment was generally less adequate, and per pupil expenditures extremely low.

The unequal nature of public education for Latinos also was reflected in other measures, especially teacher standards. For the most part, the staff of these schools was less appropriately trained, qualified, and experienced than that of Anglo schools. In many cases, the teachers were sent to the segregated schools as a form of punishment or to introduce them to the teaching profession. Once their punishment was over or once they became expert teachers, they tended to leave these segregated schools.

Not all schools were inferior and substandard. A few of them were equal in many respects to those found in Anglo communities. In 1946, however, the federal courts in the Mendez vs. Westminster School District case found that separate but equal facilities were inherently unequal because they denied these children social equality and because segregation fostered antagonisms and inferiority where none existed.
Institutional Treatment: The Advent of Administrative Bias

Another pattern of Latino education dealt with institutional treatment in general and with administrative bias in particular. Mexican and Puerto Rican children were institutionally mistreated in these schools.

In the early part of the twentieth century, Latino children were classified as intellectually inferior on the basis of biased intelligence tests scores. In most cases, Latinos, like other racial and ethnic immigrant children, scored relatively low on intelligence tests and lower than Anglo students. Scholars interpreted these test scores as indicative of their innate abilities. After the Second World War, testing expanded to include not only intelligence but language and aptitude. Latinos continued to score low on standardized tests. In this period, however, scholars abandoned the genetic interpretation of test scores and replaced it with one based on cultural attributes and behaviors.

Educators used these biased test score results to classify Latino children, mostly Mexican and Puerto Rican, into one of at least four categories—educationally mentally retarded (EMR), slow, regular, or gifted. Because of their low test scores, Latino children, for the most part, were classified as either EMR or slow.

Once Latino children were classified in this manner, they were systematically placed in so-called “developmentally-appropriate” instructional groups, classes or curricular tracks. These curricular tracks were comprised of all other children with similar abilities. At the elementary level, Latino children were assigned to mostly slow-learning or non-academic classes. At the secondary level (junior and high schools), administrators assigned them to non-academic classes, most of which were either vocational or general education courses. Once placed in a curricular track, students generally remained there until they graduated from high school or until they dropped out.

Mexican and Puerto Rican students also were mistreated by teachers and other students. Teachers, for the most part, were insensitive or oblivious to the cultural and special educational needs of Latinos. Although some of these teachers were caring instructors, the majority had low expectations for them and, at times unwittingly, ridiculed them for their culturally distinctive traits. Many Latino children were punished simply for speaking Spanish at school or in the classroom. In some integrated classes, teachers interacted with Anglo students more and had less praise for Latino children.

The peers of Latino students likewise mistreated and ostracized them over time. A quote from one of Paul Taylor’s many studies of Mexicans in the 1920s illustrates what he called the severe “hazing” Anglo children subjected these students. “Some Americans don’t like to talk to me,” said one Latino youth in 1929. “I sat by one in high school auditorium and he moved away. Oh my God, it made me feel ashamed. I felt like walking out of school.”

The policies, procedures, and practices utilized by school administrators, teachers, and students served to stratify the student population according to various categories and to reproduce the existing relations of domination in the classroom. They also served to deprive Latinos of opportunities for success.

Curriculum

Another pattern of Latino education dealt with the curriculum and with both the lack of academic rigor and its subtractive character. Simply stated, this pattern indicated that during the twentieth century the curriculum for Latino children became increasingly imbalanced, that is, it began to emphasize non-academic instruction at the expense of academic learning. The academic curriculum either was diluted in an effort to make it more practical and utilitarian or else...
it decreased as a result of the introduction of more practical courses, especially vocational and general education classes.\textsuperscript{40}

In a few cases, vocational education served as a means of upward mobility for Latino students but this was rare. The majority of secondary school students were provided more non-academic instruction and trained for low or semi-skilled jobs and minimal participation in American society.\textsuperscript{41}

The curriculum also became linguistically and culturally subtractive. By subtractive we mean that the curriculum constantly devalued, demeaned, and distorted the children's linguistic and cultural heritage and systematically sought to eradicate it from the content and instruction of public education.\textsuperscript{42} The latter was reflected in the campaign against diversity that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This campaign, in part, led to the establishment of English only policies throughout the nation and to the development of no Spanish-speaking practices found in most public school systems with significant numbers of Latino students.\textsuperscript{43}

The campaign against diversity also led to the devaluation of the Mexican cultural and historical heritage in the schools and to its exclusion.\textsuperscript{44} The devaluation of the cultural heritage was apparent in Americanization programs established for these children and in the attitudes of public school teachers, administrators, and staff towards Mexican culture in the schools. The exclusion and distortion of the Mexican heritage was apparent in the schools curricular textbooks and instructional materials.\textsuperscript{45}

In sum, curricular, instructional, and language policies were aimed at meeting the subtractive, i.e., assimilationist and cultural conformist intentions of the public schools.

**Performance**

Except for Cuban Americans, the historiography of education suggests that the history of Latino academic performance has been solely one of unprecedented underachievement. We refute this myth and suggest a more diverse pattern of school performance for Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. These children had a checkered pattern of academic performance, not merely one of underachievement. This pattern was characterized by a dominant tradition of underachievement and a minor one of school success.

Contrary to popular opinion, then, a small but increasing number of Mexicans, Hispanos, and Puerto Ricans experienced school success. These experiences complemented the historic pattern of academic success common among Cubans in the United States.\textsuperscript{46} Two distinct groups comprised the achievers in the Latino community during these years—those who completed secondary school and those who got a college education.\textsuperscript{47} These students experienced a pattern of school success, not academic failure. They were the unsung heroines and heroes of their respective Latino communities.\textsuperscript{48}

Despite this pattern of success, most scholars have only focused on documenting and explaining the tradition of underachievement, probably because it was the dominant trend in the Latino school population.\textsuperscript{49}

The consequences of this dominant tradition in school performance led to limited economic mobility, stunted political participation, and restricted social development. In other words, it led to the continued marginalization and subordination of the growing Latino population.

**Emerging Forms of Latino Responses**

The use of schools for cultural conformity and for social and economic subordination by dominant groups led to the emergence of a complex pattern of contestation and adaptation within the Latino community. We want to underscore that ethnic Mexicans and Puerto Ricans did not passively accept these policies and practices. Before the civil rights era of the 1960s and 1970s, Latinos responded in number of ways. Their responses were reflected in five major strategies.
**Encourage Non-Public School Attendance**

One of these strategies focused on supporting and encouraging their children to enroll in Catholic, Protestant, and community-based schools. In many cases, they encouraged attendance in Catholic or Protestant schools to challenge conformist intentions and inferior or exclusionary educational opportunities. They also established community-based schools to challenge cultural conformity, to undermine/subvert exclusionary mechanisms, and to improve academic achievement.50

In the late 1890s, for instance, ethnic Mexicans opened a community school, El Colegio Altamirano, in Hebronville, Texas, a small rural community in the southern part of the state. Its purpose was to help the community maintain its cultural identity during the era of Americanization. This school, in existence until the early 1930s, opened with an enrollment of over one hundred children and was maintained by the Mexican community of Jim Hogg County. “The Mexican colony at Hebronville,” noted Jovita Gonzalez, a well-known scholar and resident of that area, “is making superhuman efforts to maintain a school, not only for its own welfare but primarily to honor the land which was given to us by the noble, liberty loving Mexican insurgents”51

The Mexican community founded other schools aimed at promoting ethnic identity and at challenging cultural conformity during the early twentieth century. Community activists established the Colegio Preparatorio in Laredo, Texas, in 1906 and the Escuela Particular in 1909 in Zapata County also in south Texas. In July 1910, the latter community school held a public examination and a “fiesta escolar” (school festival) for the community. An additional private school taught by Maria Renteria was opened in Laredo, Texas in 1911.52

Other examples of schools for cultural maintenance were the Mexican Consul-sponsored schools found in several states of the Southwest during the second half of the 1920s. The primary purposes of these schools were to oppose Americanization of Mexican children in the public schools in general and to promote their Mexicanization in particular.53

**Promote Community Access to Power**

The second major strategy focused on promoting the structural inclusion of Latinos in school governance, administration, and instruction. Although more historical research needs to be done on power and politics in the Latino community, the little we have indicates that few were elected or appointed to these positions.

One important exception to this general pattern of exclusion occurred in the San Felipe barrio of Del Rio, a small border town in West Texas. In this community, Mexican Americans established their own school district in order to ensure that they would be elected to policy-making positions and hired in the schools as administrators and teachers. Between 1929 and 1972, they had significant control of all their public schools.54

What occurred in Del Rio is uniquely important for two major reasons. First, it is an example of Mexican American agency in education. Second, it shows the diversity of approaches to educational equality. Instead of integration, the traditional strategy utilized by community activists to achieve equality, the residents of Del Rio pursued a strategy of self-determination.

Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans also supported the hiring of public school teachers.55 Legislators, educators, and community activists either developed policies or pressured local school districts to recruit Latinos as teachers in the public schools and enacted legislation to increase the supply of Latino teachers.56

The most well-known piece of legislation was passed in New Mexico legislature in 1909. This law called for the establishment of the Spanish American Normal School in El Rito, New Mexico. This school emphasized the training of Hispano teachers for Spanish-speaking children.57
Promote Student Access to Education

The third strategy focused on promoting the equitable access of students to the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary grades. Latinos developed organizations and initiatives aimed at increasing enrollment in both public education and in public higher education. Promotional activities can be readily seen in the years after the Second World War. In these years, especially the 1950s, both LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) and American G. I. Forum engaged in back-to-school rallies, lobbied local educators to open schools for migrant and non-migrant children, supported the enrollment of Latino children in high school, and established college scholarships for older students. Individuals in the Mexican American Movement (MAM) organization in California during the 1930s and 1940s also avidly promoted cultural pride, self-improvement, and a college education. Government officials in Cuba and Puerto Rico, as well as community organizations on the mainland, likewise promoted the education of Cuban and Puerto Rican children in U.S. schools. This is especially the case between 1900 and 1910.

Promotion of Quality Academic Instruction

Another strategy focused on the promotion of quality academic instruction. In this historical period, most of the information we have is on Anglo educators. These individuals, for the most part, rejected inferior instructional practices and promoted innovative programs or policies aimed at improving the instruction and academic achievement of Latino children. The promotion of reading reforms in the 1920s, project-based teaching in the 1940s, and pre-school English-language instruction in the 1950s, were some of the specific innovations proposed during these decades.

A few educators also occasionally promoted school-wide reforms aimed at improving Latino school achievement. One of these was Lloyd Tireman. He established several community schools for Hispano children in the 1930s and early 1940s aimed at accomplishing such a goal. Despite his commitment to improving the academic achievement of Hispano children through comprehensive school reforms, several scholars have noted that he was well-intentioned but misguided in his efforts.

Promotion of Pluralism

Latinos also promoted pluralist policies and practices and in doing so indirectly challenged the cultural conformity intent of public education. They promoted a linguistically inclusive curriculum. This meant that they promoted the inclusion of non-English languages, especially Spanish, in the schools. Two distinct strategies were used. One of these was legislative and aimed at challenging English only policies for the public schools and allowing the use of non-English languages as languages of instruction in them. The other strategy focused on pedagogy and encouraged the use of non-English languages as either subject matter or specific methods for teaching in the schools.

Latinos, particularly Mexicans, likewise promoted a more positive and dynamic view of their community’s history and heritage in education than did mainstream scholars. The dominant interpretation of history in the early part of the twentieth century either omitted the presence of Latinos or portrayed them in a negative light. Some Mexican Americans did not accept these views and provided what Garza-Falcón called “counter-narratives,” i.e., interpretations that countered or corrected the omissions and dominant negative images Anglos had created of Latinos as culturally monolithic, socially unstratified, and racially deficient. These counter-
narratives indicated that ethnic Mexicans were culturally diverse, internally divided by class, religion, customs, and language, and economically and politically deprived. In other words, the works mentioned by Garza-Falcón showed that Mexicans were gente decente, i.e., people of worth, not merely some demeaning stereotype.

Contest Discrimination

A final response to education was contestation. Latino parents and community people directly confronted the issues of school discrimination and took steps to eliminate it. This led to the emergence of a concerted campaign against discrimination in public education. Scholars have referred to this as the quest for educational equality.

This quest for educational equality focused on contesting at least four specific policies. First, through a variety of mediums such as community newspapers, juntas de indignación (indignation meetings), and conferences, Mexican Americans protested a host of discriminatory and exclusionary policies and practices.

Mexican Americans also challenged the testing of Spanish-speaking children. George I. Sanchez was one of the most important scholars to lead this challenge. Sanchez provided a critique of the intelligence testing of Mexican American children and questioned the validity, results, and explanations of I.Q. tests. He refuted the innate capacity or racial basis of intelligence and argued for a serious consideration of environmental and linguistic factors in interpreting test scores.

The third form of discrimination they contested was unequal funding of public education. Indicative of these types of struggles were those waged by George I. Sanchez at the state level in New Mexico during the 1930s and Eleuterio Escobar in San Antonio, Texas, from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Finally, Latinos, especially Mexican Americans, directly challenged school segregation. For most of the twentieth century, Latinos in the community identified school segregation as the most despicable form of discrimination practiced against Spanish-speaking children and as the major factor impeding the educational, social, and economic mobility of the community.

Prior to the 1920s, the struggle against segregation was highly localized and quite sporadic. For instance, Mexican Americans conducted a few boycotts or voiced their opposition to segregation in the local Spanish-speaking media or at community-sponsored conferences. In the 1930s, the struggle against segregation assumed a more systemic character as Mexican American organizations began to file lawsuits against this school practice. This movement increased after the Second World War as a growing number of ethnic Mexican organizations diversified their attack against segregation. Spurred in large part by returning veterans, these organizations filed a variety of lawsuits against segregation in different states and lobbied state authorities to issue policy statements against this practice and pressured them to investigate pervasive forms of school segregation.

Although Mexican Americans won most of these lawsuits, segregation practices continued because of widespread opposition from local school officials and white communities.

The 1960s and Beyond: Latino Education in the Contemporary Period: Introduction

In the contemporary period, from 1960 to the present, the Latino community experienced dramatic changes. Despite these changes, education continued to be both an instrument of reproduction and a site of contestation.
Changes in the Latino Population

The Mexican origin population in the United States increased from 3.4 million in 1960 to over 21 million in 2000. These figures do not take into consideration the millions of undocumented persons who are living and working in the United States.77

For most of the twentieth century Mexicans were concentrated in three major areas of the country: the Southwest, the Midwest and the Northwest. During the latter part of this century, they also began to settle in significant numbers in the southern and eastern parts of the country.78

The Puerto Rican population, in turn, jumped from less than 1 million in 1960 to over 3.4 million four decades later. Most of the Puerto Ricans settled in the eastern and midwestern part of the United States although some were found in Hawaii.79

The Cuban population jumped from around 79,000 in 1960 to slightly over 1.2 million in 2000. Cubans came to the United States in four different waves. Cubans were distinct from all other Latino groups in that a significant proportion came to the United States as exiles, not as immigrants.80 The vast majority settled in Florida, especially in Dade County.81

The first wave, prompted by the Cuban revolution, brought about 200,000 to the United States between 1959–1962. The second wave started in 1965 and ended around 1973. This wave took place because Fidel Castro allowed individuals already in the United States to bring those relatives who wanted to leave Cuba back with them. During 1965–1973, two out-going flights per day from Cuba to Miami brought 260,500 persons into the United States. According to Grenir and Perez, this was the largest of all the waves, but was less politically intense. The third wave occurred in 1980, and those that came are known as Marielitos because they left Cuba from the Port of Mariel. The final wave occurred in the mid-1990s. Those who came during these years were the balseros, individuals who left Cuba in homemade rafts. For some unknown reason, less attention has been given to this wave by historians.82 Social, class, and racial differences distinguished the different waves of Cuban immigration and the various responses by government officials to their arrival, including school officials.83

In addition to these three groups, this United States also experienced a significant growth of Spanish-speaking immigrants from South America, Central America, and the Dominican Republic. Dominican and South American immigration increased in the 1960s. Central American immigration also began in the 1960s but experienced significant increases in the following decades.

Dominicans came to the United States in relatively small numbers. In most cases, they fled political violence instigated by the United States.84 South American immigration especially from Colombia also increased appreciably during the 1960s. Most of these immigrants settled in New York City.85 Included in the group of Central Americans were Salvadoreños, Guatemaltecos, Nicaraguenses, and Panameños. Their total number increased from less than one half million in 1960 to several million four decades later. Political conflict, poverty, and social unrest in the home countries, as well as global economic fluctuations, and changes in U.S. immigration policies contributed to their increase.86

By 2000, Latinos became the largest minority group in the country. They totaled well over 35 million and comprised close to 13 percent of the total population.87

Despite the diversity of race, national origins, and class, the majority of Latinos were Spanish speakers, culturally distinct, and economically poor, i.e., they were a subordinate population.88 They lived in overcrowded, substandard homes and in poor residential neighborhoods throughout the country. Many of them, especially children and women, were traumatized by political violence in their home countries and various forms of state and personal violence against them on the trip to the United States and while in the country itself. Although there has been an improvement in their social, economic, and political status over time, Latinos are and continue...
to be a subordinate and marginalized population in the United States and are treated as such by mainstream institutions, including public schools.

**Continuities and Discontinuities in the Patterns of Latino Education**

During the latter part of the twentieth and early part of the twenty-first centuries, the patterns of Latino education changed as a result of new social, economic, and political factors. These factors differentially impacted them and led to some discontinuities or slight modifications of existing patterns and to the continued or strengthening of others.

**Discontinuities in Patterns**

During this period, two distinct patterns were significantly changed—the pattern of structural exclusion and one aspect of the subtractive curriculum. The pattern of structural exclusion from governance, administration, and teaching was disrupted and replaced with one of token inclusion during this period. In the post-1960 years, Latinos gained increased access to important positions in all of these areas. More particularly, they were elected to the state legislatures, to state, county, and local boards of education, and to state and private university board of regents. They also were hired in increasing numbers as superintendents, principals, teachers, counselors, and faculty members. A new development in this period was their appointment or election to federal policy-making positions in Congress and in the Department of Education. Despite their increased access, Latinos continued to be severely underrepresented in all of these positions. Their inclusion, in other words, was not significant but token in nature.

The token inclusion of Latinos can be observed in local school board representation, especially in major urban areas where Latinos comprise a significant proportion of the school age population. In places such as Houston, Chicago, and Los Angeles, for instance, Latino representation went from zero percent in 1960 to 22, 17, and 14 percent, respectively, in 2006. Despite this increase, Latino representation failed to keep pace with their overall percentage in the school age population. Latinos, in other words, continued to be severely underrepresented in these school districts.

However, not all communities experienced token representation. Some districts saw rapid and significant change in school board representation. In some cities, such as McAllen, Laredo, Mission and Edinburg, Texas, Mexican American school board representation increased from less than 10 percent to over 80 percent between 1960 and 2000. Significant representation however was concentrated in small or rural areas containing few numbers of Spanish-speaking children.

In the final analysis, however, Latino school board representation remained extremely low. National data for 2004, for instance, shows that Latinos in the early twenty-first century only comprised 3.8 percent of local school board members throughout the country. Whites and African Americans, on the other hand, represented 85.5 percent and 7.8 percent, respectively.

Another pattern that underwent significant modification was the linguistically subtractive curriculum. Prior to the 1960s, Spanish and other non-English languages were excluded from the public school and constantly repressed, discouraged or devalued. This changed after the passage of the federal bilingual education act of 1968. This bill led to several important developments including the elimination of no-Spanish-speaking rules at the local school level, the repeal of English only laws throughout the country, and the passage of state bilingual education policies throughout the country. Between 1968 and 1978, for instance, over thirty-four states both repealed their English only laws and enacted bilingual education policies.

The successful repeal of restrictive language policies and practices in the schools, as well as the continued growth of bilingualism in the society, led to a backlash in the 1980s and 1990s.
In this period, repressive language legislation resurfaced and became increasingly widespread. This was reflected in policies aimed at undermining, dismantling, or repealing bilingual education legislation at the national and state levels and at formulating and enacting English only policies. In states such as California, Arizona, and Massachusetts it became illegal to use Spanish and other non-English languages for the instruction of all children in the public school during the mid- and late 1990s.\textsuperscript{94} Between 1984 and 2004, over twenty-five states enacted English-only laws.\textsuperscript{95} Bilingual education policies also came under attack in countless cities such as Houston, El Paso, New York, Chicago, and Miami. Educators responded in many cases by curtailing the use of these languages as mediums of instruction and implementing English only classes.\textsuperscript{96}

**Modification in Patterns**

Several patterns of Latino education—student access to education, administrative bias (testing), the imbalanced curriculum, and the culturally subtractive curriculum—were slightly modified but not significantly changed during the post-1960 years. Because of limited space, we will only briefly discuss one of these—student access to the pre-school, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary grades.

By the 1960s, the vast majority of Latinos, for the most part, had gained parity in access to the elementary and secondary grades but they had not gained equitable access to the pre-school grades or to post-secondary education. Access to both the pre-school and the post-secondary grades increased gradually but inconsistently during the post-1960 years. By the early twenty-first century, however, Latino children were among those least likely to attend preschool. In 2001, for instance, approximately 36 percent of Latino preschool-aged children participated in a preschool program. In comparison, 64 percent of black and 46 percent of white children attended preschool that year.\textsuperscript{97} No significant change had been made by early 2007.\textsuperscript{98}

A similar development occurred in higher education. As we noted earlier, less than 5 percent of Latinos were enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States before 1960.\textsuperscript{99} Although their enrollments steadily increased over the years, they continue to be underrepresented in most colleges and universities. Latino undergraduate enrollments grew from 3.8 percent in 1976 to 4.2 percent in 1980, and from 4.4 percent in 1984 to 6.5 percent in 1991.\textsuperscript{100} By 1997 the percentage of Latinos in degree granting institutions increased to 8.6 percent.\textsuperscript{101}

It is important to note, however, that while the percentage of Latino enrollments steadily increased, most were enrolled in community colleges. In 1999–2000, for instance, 60 percent of Latinos attending post-secondary institutions were enrolled in two-year colleges, the largest percentage of any other racial and ethnic group.\textsuperscript{102} This is problematic, noted Patricia Gandara, because “no more than 5% of these students will actually go on to complete a B.A.”\textsuperscript{103} Indeed, the number of Latinos attending four-year colleges and universities out of high school was very small. A 1998 survey, for example, found that of all the first full-time students attending public universities in the United States, 82.6 percent of freshman were white, 7.2 percent African American, and 1.4 percent Latino.\textsuperscript{104} As Michal Kurlaender and Stella Flores note, Latinos showed the lowest rate of entry into four-year institutions and had the highest participation rates at two-year colleges.\textsuperscript{105} Although community colleges have benefited many groups over time, critics note that they “can actually exacerbate race and class inequalities in educational attainment.”\textsuperscript{106}

**Continuity and Strengthening of Patterns**

Although most aspects of Latino education were modified or reformed, three patterns continued to be immune to change and actually strengthened during the post-1960s: segregation, unequal schools, and uneven school performance.
Despite federal court rulings, legislation, and community protests, Latino children continued to attend separate school facilities. Data suggests that their segregation increased significantly between 1968 and 1998. In the former year, more than half (54.8 percent) of Latino students attended predominantly minority schools across the nation. (Predominantly = a school with over 50 percent of Latino students.) Three decades later, three-fourths or 75.6 percent of these students were enrolled in such schools. In this year, 70.2 percent of African American children were attending predominantly African American schools. Thus by 1998, Latinos were more segregated than even African American students. These children were not only segregated in their own schools, they also experienced resegregation in desegregated schools. This type of “academic” segregation, noted Richard Valencia, was as invidious as segregation on racial grounds.

The pattern of unequal education, similar to school segregation, continued and strengthened during the post-1960 years. Latinos not only attended segregated schools, they attended unequal ones. During the past four decades, additional resources were provided for these schools because of federal legislation and litigation. Despite these additional resources, these schools continued to be unequal in many respects. Many of these schools were understaffed, inadequately funded, overcrowded, and substandard.

The final pattern experiencing little change during the post-1960 years was that of uneven school performance. Latinos continued to have a major tradition of poor school performance and a minor one of school success but most scholars continued to focus on the former, not the latter. Despite this emphasis, scholars in this period offered more complex and nuanced explanations for the underachievement than in previous decades.

Intensification of Latino Responses

During these years, Latino responses to education intensified. Their diverse responses in many ways expanded and increased the historic quest for educational equality initiated in the early part of the twentieth century.

Contestation

During these years, Latinos pursued several major strategies. The most well-known was that of contestation. Several different types of educational policies and practices were contested during the decades under consideration.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, for instance, youth, community, and parent activists as well as community-based organizations challenged a host of exclusionary and discriminatory school practices at the local level. Some of the most important were inequitable and unequal treatment of Latino children in the public schools, Anglo control of schools, an Anglo-centric curriculum, the suppression of their language and culture, and the exclusion of their community from the schools. In both Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities, a variety of tactics were used, including walkouts, boycotts, protests, and litigation to challenge school discrimination at the local level in this period.

Most activists however generally tackled specific forms of discrimination in education. Three particular types of policies were targeted—school segregation, unequal schooling, and testing.

The struggle against school segregation originated in the early twentieth century but it was renewed in the late 1960s. Activists took local school districts to court, applied pressure on federal agencies to investigate and eliminate segregation against Latinos in the public schools, and supported pieces of legislation encouraging integration and opposing those that undermined it. Towards the latter part of the 1970s, activists abandoned this strategy because opposition to integration by whites, the increasing burden of desegregation on minority communities, including Latinos, and the increased dependence on bilingual education as a more effective strategy.
of reform encouraged this action. In the meantime, segregation increased, and, by the early twenty-first century, Latinos were the most segregated group in the country.\(^\text{114}\)

Unequal funding of schools was another form of discrimination contested by Latinos. For decades, schools serving these children had been underfunded, overcrowded, and inferior. During the 1960s, some of these inequalities were remedied as a result of demands from community groups and an influx of federal funds. The buildings, in many cases, were replaced with more modern facilities, qualifications of teachers increased, and per pupil expenditures improved. Despite the increased funding and channeling of resources to Latino schools the source of inequality—the state funding of public education—remained in place. In the late 1960s, Mexican American activists targeted state financing of public education and challenged it in the courts.

The two most important cases filed by these activists in the late 1960s were in California and Texas—the *Serrano vs. Priest* and the *Rodriguez vs. San Antonio ISD*, respectively.\(^\text{115}\) These cases exemplified the two major approaches taken by activists set on challenging inequities in school finance. Those in California pursued their strategy in the state courts; activists in Texas took their case to the federal courts. During the 1970s, the California Supreme Court ruled on behalf of Mexican American plaintiffs in the California case. The U.S. Supreme Court, in contrast, ruled against them in Texas.

The struggle against unequal schools did not end in the 1970s. It slowed down but then picked up steam in the 1980s as activists pursued new litigation and political tactics with renewed vigor.\(^\text{116}\)

A final form of discrimination challenged by activists and educators during this period was administrative bias in the schools, especially the use of testing and its impact on the classification, placement, and promotion of Latino children in public education. Two forms of contestation emerged during these decades—legal and scholarly. The legal challenge against testing in the schools began in the late 1960s and 1970s. The cumulative effect of litigation led to changes in the testing and placement of students in these types of classes during the 1970s and 1980s.\(^\text{117}\)

Scholarly contestation of testing emerged during the 1960s and continued throughout the next several decades. Towards the latter part of the 1990s and into the early twenty-first century, many of these scholars extended their critiques to high stakes testing and its adverse impact on Latinos in the public schools.\(^\text{118}\)

High stakes testing was also challenged legally and politically in the late 1990s, especially in Texas, the state leading this effort.\(^\text{119}\) In the early twenty-first century, the struggle against high stakes testing became national in scope because of the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Since its enactment, an increasing number of organizations, professionals, and community activists have publicly opposed high stakes testing and supported the introduction of legislation allowing for multiple assessment criteria for students.\(^\text{120}\)

**More Than Contestation**

The quest for equality was not only about eliminating various forms of discrimination in education, it was also a struggle for power, inclusion, quality education, and pluralism. Latino activists and educators wanted schools that were free from discrimination as well as schools that reflected their community and its cultural and linguistic heritage. They also wanted schools that met their academic needs as well as their social, economic, political and cultural interests. Let us elaborate briefly on each of these new thrusts in activism.

First, let’s look at the quest for power. In addition to struggles against discrimination, for the past four decades Latino activists and educators have sought power to make decisions about education impacting their own children. The quest for power has been reflected in the struggles aimed at promoting community access to important decision making positions in three major areas of public education: school governance, educational administration, and teaching.\(^\text{121}\)
The struggle for power in New York City during the 1960s and 1970s underscores this new thrust in Latino responses to education and how difficult it has been to gain and maintain power. Puerto Ricans, in conjunction with African American activists, conducted boycotts, pickets, and mass mobilization struggles in an effort to gain community control of the local school boards in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Their efforts led to temporary control of three local school districts in that city (I.S. 201, Two Bridges, and Ocean-Hill Brownsville), to the increased hiring of Latino administrators and teachers, and to the establishment of bilingual education programs. This access to power however was short-lived and by the mid-1970s, established school elites regained control of the schools.

The struggle for power was not only limited to the local boards of education. It also applied to the superintendency, to the principalship, to teachers, and to all other types of professional positions in the local schools. In a few cases, the struggle for access to these positions stirred up unfortunate tensions between Latinos and African Americans.

Activists also struggled against exclusionary measures and for inclusion or full access of Latino students to public education. In the 1970s, for instance, activists struggled against the exclusion of undocumented immigrant children from the public schools. In later decades, they focused on gaining Latino student access to full day kindergarten classes and pre-kindergarten classes.

At the post-secondary level, community activists protested the lack of access to higher education and supported the recruitment of Latino students to the undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, college students engaged in radical action such as taking over buildings or demonstrating on behalf of increased recruitment of Latino students to the universities. In later years, they turned to institutional mechanisms such as Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) and Chicano Studies or Mexican American studies programs, to increase Latino student access to higher education and to improve their retention in these institutions.

Towards the latter part of the twentieth century and into the early twenty-first century, community activists struggled for the establishment of higher education facilities in their own communities.

Another major strategy utilized by Latinos focused on promoting or improving quality academic instruction. Unlike the decades before the 1960s when the majority of reformers were Anglos, in this period an increasing number of educators, scholars, and community groups were Latino.

Activists utilized two major approaches to promote quality instruction. One of these focused on developing or gaining access to innovative curricular programs aimed at improving the academic achievement of Latino students; the other focused on promoting comprehensive school changes to ensure the same goal.

The former approach originated in the early twentieth century but expanded after the 1960s. A variety of specific innovations such as compensatory, adult, bilingual and migrant educational programs were promoted as a way of improving the academic achievement of Latino children in the 1960s. Most, however, began to concentrate on bilingual education. Bilingual education was viewed as the best means for bringing about significant changes in the way the schools educated these children and in addressing the linguistic, cultural, and academic concerns raised by these children.

Latino educators and activists did more than simply promote specific reforms or innovations. During the 1990s, a select group of superintendents, principals, and teachers began to promote comprehensive changes in schools educating Latino students. Many of these individuals had bold visions of school change and were successfully initiating curricular, instructional, and administrative changes from within the schools aimed at transforming underachieving schools and districts into high achieving ones. Among the new visionaries during the 1990s and early twenty-first century were Joseph Fernandez and Ramon C. Cortines, both school chancellors of
New York City during the 1990s, and Dr. Abe Saveedra, superintendent of Houston Independent School District, Michael Hinojosa, superintendent of Dallas ISD, and Hector Montenegro, superintendent of Ysleta ISD.132

Community organizations also proposed comprehensive school reform plans. One of these was the Inter-cultural Development Research Association (IDRA). For over four decades, this organization has been in the forefront of school reform and has consistently fought for quality education in American life.133 Recently, it developed the Quality Schools Action Framework (QSAF). This school reform plan, developed in collaboration with schools and communities in Texas and other parts of the country, offers a model for assessing school outcomes, identifying leverage points for improvement, and focusing and effecting change.134

The model is based on three premises. The first is that if the problem is systemic, the solutions must address schools as systems. The second is that if we support student success, then we have to develop a vision, and that vision for children has to seek outcomes for every child. School success, IDRA notes, is for all children “no matter where they come from, no matter the color of their skin, no matter the side of town they come from, no matter the language they speak.” And the third premise of this framework is that schools are not poor because children in them are poor or black or brown. Schools are poor because we have poor policies, poor practices and inadequate investments.135

A final strategy used by activists during these years focused on struggling for a pluralistic curriculum, i.e., for the valuing and utilization of non-English languages and cultures in the schools. Since we have already covered their efforts to promote language in the schools, this section will focus on promoting Latino culture in education. Two major reforms were promoted: the revision of school textbooks to include Latino heritage and the incorporation of Latino culture in the schools.136

During the 1960s and 1970s, activists protested the culturally exclusive policies and practices of local schools and demanded the inclusion of their heritage in the textbooks and in the schools.137 Most of the textbooks in these decades said little if anything about the role and contributions of Mexican origin individuals or about any other Latinos. Moreover, if any comments were made it was only about Mexican Americans and, as the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights noted in the early 1970s, they usually tended to be “negative or distorted in nature.”138

By the 1980s, school textbooks gradually and grudgingly acknowledged Latino contributions to the building of the United States but in very stereotypical ways.139 All Latinos, not simply Mexican Americans, were viewed negatively in these textbooks.

Textbooks continued to portray Latinos in stereotypical ways into the 1990s. Barbara Cruz, for instance, noted that secondary history textbooks in the early part of this decade still viewed Latinos (Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans) as “lazy, passive, irresponsible, lustful, animalistic, and violent.”140 Two well-known historians noted that not much had changed by the late 1990s. History textbooks had more information on Latinos but they continued to have incomplete or stereotypic coverage of them and of their contributions to the larger society.141

The struggles to include the Latino cultural heritage in the schools were more successful than the textbook revision efforts. During the 1980s, the federal recognition of Hispanic heritage month encouraged the partial institutionalization of Latino culture in the schools. The rapid growth of immigration from Mexico and Central and South America during the latter decades of the twentieth century spurred and expanded the inclusion of Latino culture in the schools. By the end of the century, hundreds of thousands of schools throughout the country celebrated the cultural traditions of Latinos and Latinas in the public schools. In fact, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives authorized and requested to issue annually a “proclamation designating the week including September 15 and 16 as ‘National Hispanic Heritage week.’”142 Educators from across the nation are encouraged to celebrate Latino contributions in America. Numerous web sites have been created to “help teachers focus attention on the contributions of people of Hispanic heritage to the history of the United States.”143
Beyond Public Schools

One final observation. Most people assume that the quest for equality focused solely on public education but this is historically incorrect. It also included efforts aimed at supporting or establishing private schools.

This long-standing tradition of non-public education continued in the post-1960 years. During these years, Latino students attended Catholic schools, Protestant institutions, and private secular schools established and staffed by members of the community. These latter institutions for the most part were quite diverse and included after-school programs as well as elementary, secondary, or post-secondary institutions. Most of these programs and schools were established primarily with private funds and tended to supplement public education. They peacefully co-existed with public school systems.

During the protest era of the 1970s and 1980s, community-based schools were aimed at promoting ethnic pride, Spanish-language maintenance, and academic achievement in a “culturally relevant” context. In many cases, Latino activists established these schools because the public schools were either unresponsive to their academic needs or hostile towards their cultural heritage.

Towards the latter part of the 1990s, Latinos, especially Mexican Americans, continued this private school tradition, but they moved away from nationalist schools and towards charter institutions. These institutions, unlike those in the 1970s, were not aimed at promoting cultural and linguistic maintenance nor at providing “culturally-based” academic achievement of Latino students. They were simply aimed at improving academic achievement in the barrio. Examples of charter schools include the Raul Izaguirre School, the George I. Sanchez School, the Yes Prep School, all located in Houston, Texas, and the Cesear Chavez Academy and the Dolores Huerta Preparatory High School in Pueblo, Colorado.

Although some Latinos have supported charter schools, the reform continues to be controversial. Critics argue that they are not genuine efforts aimed at improving public schools or that they take public funds away from public education and weaken rather than strengthen the primary means for instructing these children. Recent studies suggest that charter schools have not improved the educational achievement of minority youth, including Latinos.

Conclusion

We have shown that the history of Latino education is intricately linked to the nation’s social, political, and economic structures and is directly impacted by a variety of factors, especially immigration and migration from Spanish-speaking countries in the Western Hemisphere. Within this larger context, we have documented and explained the rapid growth of the Latino population in the United States and its relationship to education over a 100-year period. We argued that education was both an instrument of reproduction and a site of contestation.

With respect to the first argument, we noted that education was socially reproductive, that is, it was an instrument for reproducing a stratified social order whereby the dominant groups in the society maintained social, economic, and political hegemony or control over subordinate, racial, ethnic, and working-class groups. For Latinos, education became a means for maintaining the relations of domination that formed in the nineteenth century, and for delegitimizing and devaluing their cultural and linguistic identity. The schools, as we have shown, have not neglected or ignored Latinos. They have acknowledged them and taken concrete actions to ensure that Latinos remained a marginal population in the larger society.

Educators, policy makers, and school officials, for the most part, viewed Latinos as a subordinate and inferior group and treated them as such. Latino parents, especially Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, were viewed as racially and culturally unfit to assume important positions of power in the schools and excluded from the structures of governance, administration, and
teaching. Although there were some exceptions—especially in northern New Mexico—it was rare to find Latino teachers, principals, central administrators employed in public schools prior to the 1960s.

Latino children also were viewed as intellectually and culturally inferior and treated as members of a subordinate population. They were denied equitable access to elementary, secondary and post-secondary educational opportunities, placed in separate and unequal facilities, grudgingly offered a subtractive curriculum, and tracked into low ability and vocational classes. The ultimate consequences of these actions were patterns of mostly underachievement as indicated by high drop out rates, low test scores, and limited enrollment in universities.

Likewise, we argued that education was more than simply one of reproduction. It was a site of contestation, i.e., a public space where statuses and identities were negotiated, contested, and constructed amid significant social change. While those in control of education used the schools or tried to use them for eliminating cultural differences and for promoting the subordination of ethnic and racial minority groups, Latinos, for the most part, have actively challenged, subverted, adapted, rejected, reinterpreted, co-opted, or contested these efforts. Not only have they resisted the conformist and marginalizing intentions of the schools, Latinos have also fought for an education that was reflective of their own cultural and linguistic heritage and in concert with their social and political interests.

Current conditions for Latinos indicate that their struggles for pluralism and social acceptance and against cultural conformity and social and economic subordination are far from over. The obstacles they face in the present are formidable and the future looks bleak, given that there is an educational trajectory of continued unequal education, high dropout rates, increasing segregation, campaigns to eliminate bilingual education, and a historic backlash against Latino immigrants in the United States. These obstacles, however, will not halt the tremendous will of the Latino population to excel. This brief history suggests that the community’s determination to preserve its language and culture and to obtain an equitable and quality education will continue, and even escalate, in the years to come.

Notes

1. The notion of reproduction and contestation is similar to the methodology used by Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. and Richard Valencia to study the history of Latino education. See San Miguel Jr. and Richard Valencia, “From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest,” Harvard Educational Review 68, 3 (Fall 1998): 363–377, and Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., “Status of the historiography of Mexican American education: A Preliminary Analysis,” History of Education Quarterly 26 (1986): 523–536. These scholars use two approaches to analyze this history. The first approach—the plight of Latino education, or what we call reproduction, focuses on the development of education, on how it responded to Latino students, and on how these students fared in it. The second approach—the struggle aspect of Latino education or contestation—explores the manner in which Latinos responded to the types of education offered them.


22. In 1910 political leaders established the Spanish-American Normal School in El Rito, a community in northern New Mexico, for Latino students. On this school see Lynne Getz, *Schools of their Own*, 22–23; see also Guillermo Lux, *Politics and Education in Hispanic New Mexico: From the Spanish American Normal School to the Northern New Mexico Community College* (El Rito: Northern New Mexico Community College, 1984). In Southern Colorado two institutions served Latinos—the Adams State College and, for a short period, the San Luis Institute in the town of San Luis. For further information on these schools see Donato, *Mexicans and Hispanics in Colorado Schools and Communities, 1920–1960*.


25. The recruitment of Puerto Rican students to the mainland ended in 1907 as more funds were channeled into developing normal schools and a university in Puerto Rico. MacDonald, *Latinos in the United States*, 98.


35. These “new” deficit theorists frequently turned to the works of anthropologist Oscar Lewis who popularized the “culture of poverty” theory. The literature of the 1960s is replete with the new social constructions of the “culturally deprived” or “culturally disadvantaged” family, home, and child. For a review of these studies see The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice, ed. Richard R. Valencia (Washington, D. C.: Falmer Press, 1997).


42. In many ways it also sought to de-ethnicize or de-culturalize Latina/o children. See Joel Spring, Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality: A Brief History of the Education of Dominated Cultures in the United States (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997).


44. Joel H. Spring, Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality.

45. For a critique of Anglo views of Mexicans in American and Texas history see Carlos E. Castañeda, “The Broadening Concept of History Teaching in Texas,” Inter-American Intellectual Interchange, Institute of Latin American Studies of the University of Texas, 1943.

46. Perez, for instance, points to the high enrollment of Cuban students in the secondary grades and in institutions of higher learning in the U.S. starting as early as 1916. He also notes that between 1923 and 1958, several thousand Cubans enrolled in U.S institutions of higher education. This data suggests that Cubans in the U.S. have been relatively successful in American schools during the twentieth century. Louis A. Pérez, On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 406–412.

47. It cannot be ignored that some Latino war veterans benefited from the G.I Bill during the 1940s. Some received vocational training; others earned college degrees. See Donato, Mexicans and Hispanics in Colorado Schools and Communities, 1920–1960.


49. Sociological, cultural, and structural reasons have been given for the pattern of poor academic performance. During the years from 1938 to 1965, these three frameworks competed for ascendancy in the literature. By the early 1960s, the cultural determinist perspective became the dominant paradigm for explaining underachievement. The reason for this dominance was ideological—it absolved American society from placing blame for this social problem and placed it on the victims themselves. See Nick Vaca, “The Mexican American in the Social Sciences, 1912–1970,” Parts 1 (1912–1935) and 2 (1936–1970), El Grito, 3 (Spring 1970): 3–24; 16 (Fall 1971): 17–51.
54. Prewitt, “We Didn’t Ask to Come to This Party,” 33–44.
55. In some cases, Latinos themselves sought positions as teachers. The most well known was George I. Sanchez. For a brief overview of this aspect of his life see Getz, Schools of their Own.
57. See Lynne Marie Getz. Schools of their Own, 22–23; see also Guillermo Lux, Politics and Education in Hispanic New Mexico: From the Spanish American Normal School to the Northern New Mexico Community College (El Rito: Northern New Mexico Community College, 1984).
62. In addition to San José and Nambé, Tireman also worked in two other New Mexico communities—Cedro in 1932 and Taos in 1939. See Getz, Schools of Their Own, 92–95.
65. For a critical view of dominant interpretations of Mexican Americans in American history text-
books during the first half of the twentieth century see Carlos E. Castaneda, “The Broadening Concept of History Teaching in Texas,” *Inter-American Intellectual Interchange*, Institute of Latin American Studies of the University of Texas, 1943.


68. San Miguel, “Let All of Them Take Heed;” Gonzalez, *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation; Donato, The Other Struggle for Equal Schools*.


73. San Miguel, “Let All of Them Take Heed,” 117.


76. San Miguel, “Let All of them Take Heed,” 134.


78. For information on these new settlement patterns and their impact on education in the South see Stanton Wortham, Enrique G. Murillo, and Hamann, eds., *Education in the New Latino Diaspora: Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Westport, CT: Ablex, 2002).


80. Guillermo Grenier and Lisandro Perez underscore the distinct status of Cubans in the United States. They note that “[A]ny overview of U.S. immigration or of the Latino population is likely to note that the Cuban experience has been different, that Cubans represent a distinct group that should be viewed separately.” Grenier and Perez, *The Legacy of Exile*, 34.
81. In 1980 just under 60 percent of Cubans lived in Florida, about 20 percent in New Jersey and New York, and the remaining 20 percent was dispersed across the nation. Moreover, 87 percent of the Cuban population in Florida settled in Dade County, the greater area of Miami (Boswell and Curtis, *The Cuban-American Experience*, 108).

82. For a pictorial view of the “balsero phenomenon” of the 1990s see http://www.cuba-junky.com/cuba/blasers.htm.


84. Gonzalez, *Forced Sacrifice as Ethnic Protest*.


88. The only major exception to this generalization is the first and second wave of Cuban immigrants.


90. Contemporary data notes the percentage of Latino school board members in the following urban areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L.A.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>6 1 17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>9 2 22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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91. Examples of a few local school districts in rural areas of south Texas that had significant representation by 2003 were the following: McAllen, 57 percent (4 of 7 board members were Latinos); Laredo, 86 percent (6 of 7); Mission, 86 percent (6 of 7); and Edinburg 100 percent (7 of 7).


Latino Education in Twentieth-Century America

in the Minority: Expanding the Representation of Latina/o Faculty, Administrators and Students in Higher Education, ed. Jeanett Castellanos and Lee Jones, 15–43.


104. Romo and Salas, “Successful Transition of Latino Students from High School to College,” 108.


110. Nieto, for instance, underscores the pervasive and deplorable pattern of underachievement in New York City. She notes that in 1963 a “minuscule number of Puerto Ricans graduated from New York City high schools with academic diplomas.” Out of the 21,000 academic diplomas granted, 331 or 1.6 were awarded to Puerto Rican students. This was a stark contrast, she said, to the 150,000 Puerto Ricans living in New York at the time. Moreover, of the 331 Puerto Ricans that earned academic high school diplomas, only 28 went to college. Sonia Nieto, “Puerto Rican Students in U.S. Schools: A Troubled Past and the Search for a Hopeful Future,” in Handbook on the Research on Multicultural Education, ed. James Banks and Cherry Banks, 526.


52 Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. and Rubén Donato


120. For information on one Texas organization’s position see http://www.texastesting.org/TQABrief.htm. For its legislative agenda see http://www.texastesting.org/LegislativeSummary.htm.


122. These types of struggles occurred throughout the country. For studies aimed at gaining power in the Southwest see Navarro, Armando, The Cristal Experiment: A Chicano Struggle for Community Con-


125. The struggle for Latino access to the early grades continues into the present as illustrated by the support of the National Council de La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, for passage of the Improving Head Start Act of 2007. This bill, NCLR notes, “will significantly expand access to the nation’s premier early childhood and education program for Hispanic children, who represent the fastest-growing segment of the Head Start eligible child population.” See “News release: NCLR Applauds Passage of the Improving head Start Act of 2007,” May 3, 2007. Email sent to Dr. San Miguel by NCLR, May 3, 2007.


128. For an example of a community struggle to establish a university that would benefit Latino students living in the inner city see Bringing the University Home: The San Antonio community’s Struggle for Educational Access, ed. Louis Mendoza and Rodolfo Rosales (San Antonio, TX: Hispanic Research Center, 1999).

129. Among some of the better known activist scholars of the 1960s and 1970s were Jose Cardenas, Tom Carter, Alfredo Castaneda, and Josue Gonzalez. These scholars and others played leading roles in promoting school change in general, in supporting the enactment of culturally relevant educational policies such as bilingual education, and in the development of compensatory, migrant and bilingual educational programs in the schools. Prominent scholar Gary Orfield acknowledged the impact of the new Latino voices in educational research in the 1980s. See Gary Orfield, “Hispanic Education: Challenges, Research, and Policies,” American Journal of Education 95, no. 1 (Nov. 1986): 1–25.


Another well-known community-based organizations supportive of comprehensive school reform was ASPIRA.


In some cases, they also demanded the development of Latino history classes. The number of courses focusing on the Latino community briefly increased during the 1970s but only in a few schools. These types of courses, for the most part, were non-existent by the 1980s and 1990s. For efforts in Houston, see De Leon, Ethnicity in the Sunbelt.

Unlike activists in public education, those in higher education were highly dissatisfied with the pace of change in the history textbooks. Beginning in the late 1960s, they developed their own histories and their own courses. The new histories, for the most part, rejected the master narrative developed my mainstream historians and social scientists and created an alternative view of American development in general and Latina/o participation in that development. These scholars also established and taught Latino history and studies classes at the universities and pressured universities to develop courses dealing with Latina/o experiences in the United States. Well over 100 programs and a lesser number of academic departments and centers in Latina/o Studies were teaching Latino courses by the late 1980s. Most of these programs had anywhere between 3 and 30 courses specifically on the Latina/o experience. See Alan Edward Schorr, Hispanic Resource Directory (Juneau, AK: Denali press, 1988), pp. 327–330; Ramon A. Gutierrez, “Ethnic Studies: Its Evolution in American Colleges and Universities,” (157–167), in Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994).


146. For supporting charter schools as a response to the neglect of Latinos in the public schools see Richard Faries, “Charter schools triumphing as public ones fail,” *Houston Chronicle* (March 20, 2000), 23A. For the charter schools serving Latinos in Pueblo, Colorado, see “CDE Charter Search Results,” http://www.cde.state.co.us/scripts/chartersearchresults.asp


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