

“Unintended Consequences”: Reforms, Race, and the Schooling Experiences of
Mexican Emergent Bilinguals in a New Destination High School

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Latina/os constitute the largest ethnic or racial minority in the United States at 54 million people, and are projected to reach 128 million, or 30 percent of the population, by 2060 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). Additionally, the number of Latina/o students in US public schools has steadily increased from 8.6 million in 2002 to 12.1 million in 2012 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Although this growing Latina/o population is made up by an incredibly diverse mix of peoples, Latina/os as a group continue to struggle to meet traditional measures of school success, such as high grades, average or above-average test scores, and graduating prepared for a college setting. In fact, this struggle has become so severe that Gándara and Contreras (2009) have termed it the “Latino education crisis.” Some of the major issues facing Latina/o students are disproportionate placement into remedial or special education tracks, underfunded and under-resourced schools, and high drop-out rates (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Valverde, 2006; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002). Moreover, education research on the schooling experiences of Latina/o students has shown schools to historically assist in the marginalization of Latina/o students through segregating tactics, assimilationist principles, and deficit discourses (Valenzuela, 1999; Valverde 2006). Therefore, as our Latina/o population continues to grow, it is all the more necessary to understand the schooling experiences of Latina/o children.

Furthermore, while US Latina/o communities have traditionally been situated in the American Southwest, Florida, and large urban cities, Latina/os are now migrating to “new destinations” such as rural areas, small cities, and suburban neighborhoods across the country. Researchers have shown the importance of analyzing immigrant experiences in these new destinations where communities are often unfamiliar or even unwelcoming to non-White, non-

English speaking newcomers (see, e.g. Martinez, 2011; Smith & Furuseth, 2006; Zúñiga & Hernández-León, 2006). Namely, the body of research known as the New Latino Diaspora (Murillo & Villenas, 1997) refers to the recent phenomenon of Latina/os moving to regions in the US where there has not traditionally been a visible Latina/o presence. Researchers (Hamann, Wortham, Murillo, 2015; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002) examining this phenomenon have found a variety of ways that Latina/os and non-Latinas/os within the New Latino Diaspora are making sense of one another with evidence of both “model minority” views as well as deficit oriented perspectives (Wortham, Mortimer, & Allard, 2009). These mixed reactions indicate the importance of not viewing “newly” formed immigrant communities as monolithic entities (Wortham & Rhodes, 2015) and instead point to a need for qualitative investigation in order to provide a nuanced examination of immigrant experiences in these new destinations.

At the same time that the Latina/o student population expands across the country, standardized test scores continue to show a significant “achievement gap” between them and their White peers. In response to this “gap,” neoliberal education reforms have pushed an accountability and assessment driven agenda that assumes uniform standards and assessments will result in increased “performance.” Consequently, school districts have responded to the demands of high-stakes testing by emphasizing test preparation (Au, 2013) instead of addressing learners’ unique needs. This overemphasis on testing has had detrimental effects on schools and learners across the country by exacerbating historic inequalities, dividing communities, and further privatizing public education (Gorlewski & Porfilio, 2013; Ravitch, 2013; Valenzuela, 2005).

Emergent Bilinguals (EBs)¹ arguably suffer the harmful effects of high-stakes assessments even more as the emphasis on testing in English takes away opportunities for content learning, denies learners of their “bilingual condition,” and makes high-stakes testing the “de facto language policy” (García & Torres-Guevarra, 2010; Harper & de Jong, 2009; Menken 2008; Wright & Li, 2008). Although significant research has been done exploring the roots of these policies (Au, 2009; Gorlewski & Porfilio, 2013; Lipman, 2011; Ravitch, 2013) as well as how they have affected Students of Color and Emergent Bilinguals in traditional immigrant destinations and in urban school districts (Bartlett & García, 2011; Harper & de Jong, 2009; Menken, 2006; 2008; Valenzuela, 2005; Wright & Li, 2008), more research needs to be done in order to understand how they are playing out in new immigrant destinations, particularly in the lives of multilingual and multicultural populations. This begs the question, how are schools in new destination communities responding to an increase in Latina/o students and Emergent Bilinguals during an era of high-stakes assessment and accountability reforms?

Purpose of Study

This study addresses that question by using critical anthropology of education policy approaches (Koyama & Varenne, 2012; Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009; Shore & Wright, 1997; 2011) and Latina/o Critical Race Theory (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso,

¹ The reauthorization of the Bilingual Education Act in 1978 began to refer to students whose native language was not English or who have limited English literacy skills as “Limited English Proficient” (LEP). The majority of educators and education researchers typically favor the term “English Language Learner” (ELL) when referring to this population. However, in this study, I choose to use the term “Emergent Bilingual” (EB) (García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008) because it better describes learners’ rich cognitive and linguistic repertoire and rejects a monolingual lens on language. Even though this label is somewhat problematic because it conveys a never-ending state of language emergence and development, it still acknowledges learners’ bilingual identities. Still, throughout this dissertation, I will also continue to use the term “ELL” when referring to teachers or programs within my study because that was the label that was used at the school site.

2002) to qualitatively investigate how one high school, situated in a new destination community, is addressing the needs of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals and the role race, policy initiatives, and budget cuts play in those experiences. This traditionally White, working class community has changed significantly over the past 20 years, as it has become a new immigrant destination and has also recently experienced an economic depression. As a result, the school district is struggling to serve a changing population of both poorer and more diverse students. Furthermore, the district is also trying to serve this population with fewer resources after suffering major budget shortfalls from state budget cuts. At the same time, the high school is also undergoing initiatives to redesign curriculum in order to increase the district's performance evaluation, increase ACT scores, and align with Common Core State Standards. These initiatives are part of larger market-based educational reforms that hold schools accountable for student success through uniform standards and high-stakes assessments. This one-year critical ethnographic study examines the "unintended consequences" of these policies on both MEBs and their teachers. MEBs not only struggled with racial microaggressions from this working class White community, but also with disconnected curriculum and testing policies that did not address their needs. Although the district and participants discussed in this study are unique, this study adds to the understanding of how Latina/os are experiencing new destination schools and how new destination districts are understanding, responding to, and enacting high-stakes assessment and accountability policies. My findings conclude that pressures to achieve high standardized test scores and state accountability ratings overshadowed the needs of Emergent Bilinguals and ignored the everyday racism Mexican students faced.

Research Questions

I initiated my inquiry with the following research questions:

- What are the situated educational policy worlds that affect Mexican Emergent Bilinguals in high school?
 - What are the histories and rationales for these worlds?
 - How are these worlds connected?
 - What are the pathways through which these policies are implemented?
- Who are the policy actors that shape and form the implementation of these policy worlds?
 - Are some voices privileged over others? Why?
 - Where and how is the student's voice represented in the formation and implementation of these policy worlds?
- What do these policy actors do to define, shape, interpret, understand, enact, resist, and/or accept the associated policy worlds?
 - What factors impact these policy actors' views and responses?
 - How do these policy actors view themselves and their role in these policy processes?
 - How do these policy actors view their position in these processes with respect to the other actors involved?
 - What is the role of language, ethnicity, race, class, and gender in policy actors' positions within these policy processes?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following literature review provides the necessary background to understand the historical and social context of this study as well as the theoretical underpinnings that inform this investigation. Both empirical and theoretical literature is presented in order to provide a nuanced examination of the various policies and practices influencing the schooling experiences of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs). The review begins with an overview of the role of neoliberalism in education and how it impacts the ways social disparities are addressed. This ideology is then questioned by a Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) analysis of the educational disparities Latina/o students, specifically Mexican students, face in schools in relation to the historical marginalization of Mexicans in the US. Finally, the review concludes by connecting these ideas and issues to a situated examination of Wisconsin as a new immigrant destination within the New Latino Diaspora.

Summary

For the past 35 years, neoliberal ideology has increasingly occupied the economic, social, and political domains of life. Simply put, neoliberalism emphasizes the right for individuals to engage in free market capitalism above all else. This means that notions like social welfare, equity, and the collective good are dismissed in favor of efficiency, competition, and privatization (Harvey, 2005). In US public education, this has meant increased privatization of public schools, testing and accountability policies, and standardization of school curriculum (Au, 2009; Gorlewski & Porfilio, 2013; Ravitch, 2013). The neoliberal worldview has also altered how historical oppression and educational disparities are addressed. For example, a neoliberal point of view calls for more accountability, efficiency, and school choice in public education to address the persistent educational disparities among Students of Color and White students. This

way of thinking ignores historical marginalization by employing the idea that we are all living on a “level playing field” and are given the same life opportunities.

Therefore, when examining the persistent educational disparities faced by Mexican schoolchildren, a neoliberal worldview would not connect the fact that Mexicans have been used as disposable laborers and treated like second-class citizens ever since the US took over one-third of Mexican land in the mid-19th century (García, 1980; Johnson, 2005; Ngai, 2004). Instead, a neoliberal mindset would take a colorblind (Davis, 2009; Omi & Winant, 2014) approach to addressing these issues by emphasizing equality over equity and applying ideals of individual perseverance. However, a Latina/o Critical Race Theory (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) approach to these issues sheds light on the role of historical discrimination and everyday microaggressions in these educational disparities.

My study utilizes this framework to examine the enactment of education policies and their related practices in the schooling experiences of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs) in a new destination high school. This high school is situated a small Wisconsin city that has recently experienced a significant influx in Latina/o, predominantly Mexican, immigrants. Although considerable research has investigated the educational experiences of Latina/o students in more traditional immigrant destinations (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Valverde, 2006), research examining immigrant experiences in new destinations has found complex conceptualizations of how Latina/os and non-Latina/os understand one another (Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo, 2015). This study speaks to the diversity found with MEB populations as well as their similar racial positioning within new destination schools, and also investigates how new destination school districts are, or are not, addressing the needs of this population within the context of increased accountability and assessment reforms.

Neoliberalism in Education

Over the past 35 years, federal education policies have transitioned from equity-driven to market-driven education reforms as part of the larger neoliberal project. Neoliberalism is the almost total “freedom of movement for capital, goods, and services—in other words, the absolute rule of market” (Davis, 2009, p. 170). Some typical characteristics of neoliberal policies are solely economic measurements of worth, hyper-individualism and competitiveness, increased surveillance, and privatization of public goods and services. In education, these sorts of reforms have privatized public schools through voucher programs and charter schools, and increased high-stakes testing policies, teacher pay for performance initiatives, and the standards based movement. These market-based neoliberal reforms often emphasize “equal” policies over “equitable.” This implies an assumption that we are all on a level playing field and live in a meritocratic society where anything can be achieved through hard work. The following section traces this equity-driven to market-driven policy shift and discusses its implications on Latina/o education. (see Figure 1 for a concise timeline).

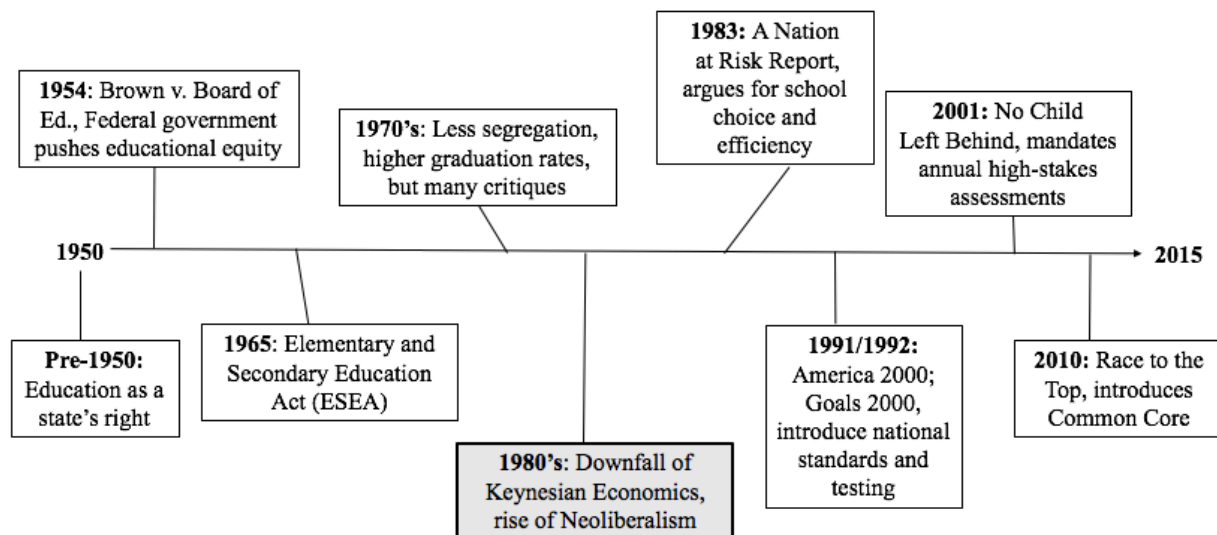


Figure 1. Timeline of Federal Education Policies (1950-2015).

Equity-Driven Reforms to Neoliberal Education Policies

Historically, the US federal government had little to no involvement in K-12 schooling, leaving decision making and management primarily in the hands of the states. However, in response to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s, the federal government began to supersede state and local authority to address state-sanctioned racial discrimination. In many ways, the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which officially desegregated schools, provided a catalyst for additional federal education acts and fueled larger social justice movements calling for greater educational opportunities for historically oppressed groups (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act. By 1965, the Johnson administration introduced the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as a means for the federal government to address school inequalities. The ESEA was part of the Johnson administration's "War on Poverty," which also included the Social Security Act, the Food Stamp Act, and the Economic Opportunity Act. These reforms carried forward Kennedy and Roosevelt's legislative agendas and built on Keynesian economics where the federal government was seen as playing a key role in promoting the welfare state and ensuring economic and social well being. The original 30-page ESEA document concentrated on funding schools with high numbers of low-income students, providing library and other book materials, supplementing educational services, promoting educational research, and strengthening the Department of Education. The original declaration of policy stated,

In recognition of the special educational needs of children of low-income families and the impact that concentrations of low-income families have on the ability of local educational agencies to support adequate educational programs, the Congress hereby declares it to be

the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance (as set forth in this title) to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means (including preschool programs) which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children (Section 201, 1965).

This declaration exemplifies the law's equity-driven intent to assist poor and historically marginalized populations.

Furthermore, three years after originally passing the ESEA, the 1968 Bilingual Education Act (BEA) was added as a response to immigrant activism. Up until then, non-English speaking children were typically placed into English only classrooms. This created a situation where children not only did not understand what was going on, but also where they had trouble acquiring other academic content. The BEA offered Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) more inclusive education and provided them the "right" to bilingual education (Pyon, 2009). Although vague, the BEA provided the foundation of other progressive reforms at public schools throughout the country, such as eliminating non-Spanish-speaking rules, repealing English-only laws, and establishing bilingual education policies at the state level (San Miguel & Donato, 2010).

By the mid-1970s, it seemed as though the 1965 ESEA was producing significant progress in terms of desegregation and increasing the graduation rate of Students of Color (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). However, unequal funding persisted across the country, and activists also began to question if equal school access was really the answer, given the prevalence of institutional racism, sexism, and nativism. At the same time, many conservatives were opposed to desegregation measures, bilingual classrooms, and progressive gender reforms (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Furthermore, after going through the Watergate scandal and Vietnam War, the US

public's confidence in the government decreased dramatically, which added to the criticism of federal education policies (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

The rise of neoliberalism. By the late 1970s, Keynesian economics that promoted strong state intervention in employment, economic growth, and citizen welfare, which had been the dominant economic theory since World War II, began to fall out of favor as the US was experiencing high inflation and unemployment. This created a large economic and ideological debate over how to respond, either by increasing state control and further promoting the welfare state or reducing federal aid and “liberating” the market. The idea of further state control threatened the wealthy and powerful, who at the same time saw how the recently implemented neoliberal economic policies in Chile had created great wealth for the economically elite there, causing them to attempt to do the same in the US (Harvey, 2005). In fact, Duménil and Lévy have gone so far as to conclude, “neoliberalism was from the very beginning a project to achieve the restoration of class power” (2004, as cited in Harvey, 2005, p. 13). Indeed, neoliberalism is commonly associated with large wealth gaps, but is also built, or sold, on the persuasive ideals of individual human freedom. With the 1980 presidential election of Ronald Reagan, neoliberal theory had effectively won the ideological battle and ushered in an era of neoliberal “common sense” (Gramsci, 1971), that decreased social welfare programs and increased the privatization of public services.

In brief, neoliberalism was developed by a group of economists at the University of Chicago in the 1950s working with the economic theories of Milton Friedman (who later served as an advisor to both Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher). To borrow David Harvey's (2005) definition, neoliberalism proposes that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by

strong private property rights, free markets, and free trades” (p. 2). In other words, neoliberal theory sees unregulated markets as profitable, private enterprise as efficient, competition as innovative, and the government as a market maintainer but not regulator. In fact, neoliberal theory posits that the state should create markets if they do not already exist (such as water, land, or education) but then step back and let them go unregulated in order to let the market play out. Furthermore, in this worldview, individuals are seen as rational consumers who are *responsible and accountable* [my emphasis added] for life’s successes and failures (Harvey, 2005). Thus, under this ideology everyone has an equal chance at success, as long as he works hard, and any failure is attributed to a lack of effort or a lack of investment in one’s own human capital. This line of thinking simply does not account for systemic inequalities and even goes so far as to posit that if a person does not succeed in the existing market, he should harness his natural entrepreneurial spirit and create a new market.

A Nation at Risk. The neoliberal turn from equity-driven to market-driven reforms in education can be marked by the National Commission on Excellence in Education’s 1983 “A Nation at Risk” report. This report discusses a crisis in American education that is in need of reform and introduces neoliberal principles of choice and efficiency, arguing that public schools were monopolies without competition. The language of the report is urgent and daunting, stating that its creation was a product of the Secretary of Education’s concern about “the widespread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our educational system” and desire to solicit the “support of all who care about our future” (n.p.). The report discusses a crisis in American education that is desperately in need of reform so that America does not lose her dominance to global competition. The report echoes Cold War fears asserting, “The educational

foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people” (n.p.).

Although “A Nation at Risk” did meet some criticism for its pessimism and data misrepresentation, it was widely embraced by most when first released (Vinovskis, 2009). In fact, in many ways this report saved the Department of Education, which President Reagan had previously planned to eliminate, and put education in the national spotlight. Following the report’s release, Reagan held numerous regional meetings to discuss its contents and also oversaw the release of several other educational reports that affirmed the great danger American schools were facing. Some of the major recommendations the report gave were curriculum changes, increased achievement standards and assessment, upgraded materials, longer school days, competitive and performance-based teacher salaries, and alternatives to teacher preparation programs.

America 2000 and Goals 2000. Following “A Nation at Risk’s” recommendations, within three years of its publication, 26 states raised graduation requirements and 25 states instituted comprehensive education reforms that revolved around testing and increased course loads (Au, 2013). By 1991, President George H. W. Bush introduced the America 2000 plan calling for “World Class Standards,” voluntary national tests for 4th, 8th and 12th graders, school choice programming, and report cards to measure school progress (Vinovskis, 2009). Despite President Bush’s claim to be the “education president,” the America 2000 plan ultimately failed in the 1991 Congress because of criticism over the use of federal funds for private school choice. However, the Bush administration was able to circumvent Congress and implement much of its plan by working directly with states. In fact, by 1993, 44 states had voluntarily partnered in the America 2000 plan (Vinovskis, 2009).

This widespread state support demonstrates the US's ideological shift from supporting welfare programs to neoliberal ideals of choice and competition. In fact, when President Clinton entered office in 1992, marking the first democrat in the White House in 12 years, he not only continued Bush Sr.'s education reforms to raise standards and increase accountability, but he also expanded upon them with his own Goals 2000 plan. In 1994, the Clinton administration approved the reauthorization of the ESEA as the Improving American Schools Act. This new incarnation of an act originally intended to provide funding to poor schools, aligned federally funded programs with state standards. By the mid-1990s, the market-based approaches that had attained economic hegemony with the "Washington Consensus" had now fully infiltrated the educational sphere. In fact, every state but Iowa administered a state mandated test by the year 2000 (Au, 2013).

No Child Left Behind. By 2001, Congress quickly and bipartisanly passed George W. Bush's 670-page reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Continuing what George W. Bush called the "Texas Miracle," NCLB is a high-stakes accountability model that reduces knowledge to test scores and mandates annual reading and math tests for children in grades 3-8 and once in high school (Ravitch, 2013; Valenzuela, 2005). Under this act, states are responsible for reporting test scores to the federal government, dividing scores by learners' race, socioeconomic status, learning disabilities, and English proficiency in order to track "progress." States are also charged with monitoring schools' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), labeling schools as "in need of improvement" if they do not meet annual targets, and administering punitive sanctions, such as school closures or takeovers, if targets continue not to be met. NCLB also encouraged the development of charter schools to offer more "choice." Prior to NCLB, charter schools were sparse and seen as teacher controlled

spaces for experiential learning and teaching. However, NCLB altered this purpose and recommended that failing schools be taken over by charter schools, many of which are run by for-profit corporations that employ predominantly non-unionized teachers (Ravitch, 2013). Ultimately, the effects of NCLB can be felt through the hundreds of millions spent on testing, a more narrowed curriculum, restricted pedagogical practices, and distorted student, teacher, and administrator relationships (Au, 2009; Lipman, 2011; Ravitch, 2013; Valenzuela, 2005).

NCLB also required all students, in all schools, in all states to reach the impossible task of 100% test proficiency by 2014. However, as 2014 grew closer, the majority of public schools were marked as “failing” by NCLB standards, which opened the door to private enterprise capitalizing on market opportunities to open charter schools and tutoring companies. Also during this time, there was no additional funding for upgrading facilities, buying new materials and resources, increasing teacher salaries, or adding incentives to attract more qualified teachers (Au, 2013). Instead just the opposite happened: more funding was diverted to charter schools and testing, and the teaching profession became increasingly disparaged. In fact, in the state of Wisconsin in 2011, public school funding was cut by more than \$1 billion while teachers received a pay cut and effectively lost all collective decision making.

Race to the Top and Common Core. NCLB has succeeded in making testing and accountability measures the “common sense,” so much so that it is hard to imagine alternative policies. Furthermore, Barack Obama’s 2010 Race to the Top (RttT) competition only took the ideals of NCLB a step further. RttT required states to adopt Common Core State Standards (CCSS), expand charter schools, and implement teacher “effectiveness” measures in order to be eligible for additional funds and to avoid NCLB’s punitive measures for not meeting 100% proficiency by 2014 (Ravitch, 2013). The competition focus of RttT enticed entrepreneurs,

consultants, and vendors (many of whom were backed by the Gates Foundation) to enter grant proposals in the hopes of profiting from federal education dollars. In the end, the US Department of Education awarded \$350 million to two assessment developing consortia, PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) and SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium), both of which have strong corporate/government ties. In fact, PARCC is managed by Achieve Inc., whose members had a significant role in writing the Common Core State Standards (Schneider, 2015).

Furthermore, even though the Obama administration claims that these standards came together from joint collaboration by teachers and communities, the reality is that the CCSS (the basis of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the vast majority of all public schoolchildren in the United States) was originally developed by a 24-member working group that contained mostly private education consultants from organizations like Achieve and testing companies like ACT and The College Board (National Governors Association, 2015; Schneider, 2015). Despite the lack of collaboration and transparency in writing the standards, and the fact that the first draft was not released until 2010, 46 states had already publicly committed to the standards by the summer of 2009 (Governor's Education Symposium Report, 2009). This information indicates that the true goals of CCSS are not in the best interests of students and teachers but rather in the interests of private consultants, testing companies, and politicians.

Neoliberal Policies and Emergent Bilinguals

In addition to the previously discussed effects of the test-centric NCLB and RttT on learners, these policies have also had specific consequences for Emergent Bilinguals (EBs). School districts are mandated to assess EBs on state-designed assessments without consideration of the individual student's level of English acquisition or how long s/he has been in the US.

Ultimately, these schools and districts can also face severe consequences if EBs do not demonstrate progress rapidly enough (Matas, 2012). Consequently, although NCLB does not specifically require English-only instruction, the high importance placed on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) effectively positions English as superior and devalues the native language (Pyon, 2009). Moreover, NCLB also eliminated the 1968 Bilingual Education Act (BEA) and replaced it with the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act. As the title suggests, this act is much more concerned with English skills rather than developing the native language, leading to the affirmation of English only instruction in schools. This puts EBs at a disadvantage in their literacy development and academic content acquisition as well as their ability to secure a positive cultural identity.

Neoliberal Colorblindness

Neoliberalism's free market ideology, which prioritizes the individual pursuit of economic gain, has resulted in an increased wealth gap, the privatization of community schools, and the destruction of labor unions. Moreover, although neoliberalism appears on the surface to be only about class, its adverse effects on civil rights reforms and on People of Color, in general, have made it just as much about race (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Davis, 2009; Omi & Winant, 2014). In fact, Omi and Winant (2014) argue that neoliberalism owes its success to the convergence of capitalist interests with right-wing, post-Civil Rights era ideology. This means that the growth of neoliberalism was driven by a need to protect the status-quo after progressive Civil Rights movements (i.e. feminism, Black movements, Chicano activism) demanded race and gender equality, wealth redistribution, labor rights, and anti-imperialism. Furthermore, neoliberalism enabled those in power to develop a new racial ideology of "colorblindness" after Civil Rights movements successfully deterred the use of overt racism, sexism, and nativism.

Colorblindness works through a variety of tools, like “code words” and “reverse racism,” that veil racial bias and other forms of social marginalization. For example, code words such as “welfare queen” have come about to simultaneously discredit black mothers and decrease social service programs (Omi & Winant, 2014). Likewise, notions such as reverse racism have developed to undermine racially inclusive reforms, such as affirmative action. Thus, colorblindness extends the neoliberal economic assumption that all individuals, regardless of social class, have an equal opportunity for financial success to an assumption that all individuals, regardless of social class, race, gender, or ethnicity, have an equal opportunity for financial success.

Although the literature on colorblindness focuses primarily on the experiences of African Americans, colorblind racial ideology has also adversely affected Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans. For example, notions of colorblindness can vividly be seen through immigration reforms and debates that frame undocumented immigrants as “criminals” and “illegal aliens.” Likewise, neoliberal reforms, such as free trade policies, have significantly contributed to current immigration trends by displacing agrarian Mexican populations, which has dramatically increased Mexican immigration to the US (Bacon, 2013). Likewise, colorblind code words and discourses have been used to work against bilingual education and promote English-only policies. Thus, it is important to look past colorblind discourses and examine larger socio-historical trajectories when investigating the experiences of Mexican immigrants, and other Students of Color, in US public schools. The following sections will provide such an investigation by utilizing Latina/o Critical Race Theory and examining the role of US policies towards Mexican immigration. This framework rejects the meritocratic notions espoused by

neoliberal colorblindness through an examination of historical power systems that have been used for subjugation.

Social Construction of Mexicans as the “Non-Native Other”

The movement and living conditions of Mexican immigrants in the US have been officially regulated by the country’s economic, immigration, and social policies. Historically, these policies have been used to request and receive Mexicans as workers in times of labor shortages, and suppress and deport Mexicans in times of labor surpluses. Thus, these policies and their related practices have constructed the Mexican migrant into a one-dimensional, unskilled laborer to be used by White-American employers when it is convenient and profitable for them. This conceptualization of a Mexican migrant rejects the ideas of permanence, familial roots, or community building, as if this population should not settle on White colonized land, forming the idea of what I am referring to as the “non-native other.”

Currently, Mexican immigrants in the US number over 11 million and account for about 30 percent of all US immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2011). Despite these significant figures, Mexican immigrants often struggle to migrate to the US with appropriate documentation as the American visa process generally favors individuals with capital; namely those who have formal education and are considered “skilled” laborers (Rosenblum & Brick, 2011). As a result, many Mexican immigrants are “undocumented.” In fact, of the total undocumented immigrant population, Mexicans account for 58 percent, or 6.5 million people (Passel & Cohn, 2011). Furthermore, a considerable number of Mexican immigrants possess limited English skills, which puts them in even more disadvantaged positions to navigate the larger social structures and government institutions. This combination of not being “documented” and not being English dominant serves as the rationale for othering this population in a way that facilitates their social

positioning as a subaltern class. However, utilizing a Latina/o Critical Race Theory approach reveals the “hidden” positioning of this population by challenging the dominant ideologies.

Latina/o Critical Race Theory

Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) is a theoretical branch extended from Critical Race Theory (CRT). Delgado Bernal (2002) defines CRT and LatCrit in education as,

A framework that challenges the dominant discourse on race, gender, and class as it relates to education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups. Critical Race and LatCrit theorists acknowledge that educational structures, processes, and discourses operate in contradictory ways with their potential to oppress and marginalize and their potential to emancipate and empower (p. 109).

A LatCrit lens allows for an examination of the historical power systems that have been used for subjugation and for a discussion of brighter possible futures.

In order to provide a clear and complete description of LatCrit, it is necessary to discuss the theory from which it came, Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT first appeared in the 1970s through Derrick Bell (1976) and Alan Freeman’s (1978) work to develop new approaches to understanding racist social mechanisms as a response to slow-moving reforms following the 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights era (Delgado & Stefanic, 2000; Taylor, Gilborn & Ladson-Billings, 2009). Although rooted in Critical Legal Studies, CRT draws from several fields (anthropology, history, sociology, continental social and political philosophy), ideas (feminism, the American Civil Rights movement, Social Justice movements), and scholars (W.E.B. Du Bois, Michel Foucault, and Frantz Fanon to name a few). CRT sees race as a social construction and racism as a pervasive and deeply rooted structure in an American society that is dominated by

White privilege. CRT attempts to “talk back” to the dominant discourse by offering counter-narratives, often taking the form of storytelling, to deconstruct and reconstruct new social realities (Delgado & Stefanic, 2000).

A key component of CRT is its rejection of meritocracy and liberalism. CRT challenges the assertion that the law is colorblind by showing that the master narrative comes from privilege and power and thus paints a false image of meritocracy. In other words, CRT dismantles the notion that anyone can achieve success as long as they work hard by highlighting prevalent and complex structural inequities and institutional racism (Delgado & Stefanic, 2000; Taylor et al., 2009). More recently, CRT scholars have extended these ideas to the notion of intersectionality in order to recognize that race alone does not account for disempowerment (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Intersectionality is a multi-dimensional approach that examines the intersection(s) of “othered” social identities (such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, and language) to explore the co-operations of systems of power and discrimination. Intersectionality extends W.E.B. DuBois’s notion of double consciousness, which he described as the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (1903, p. 8), to the idea of multiple consciousness, thereby complexifying the black-white binary.

Perhaps Gloria Anzaldúa best expresses the notion of multiple consciousness, which she refers to as the “New Mestiza Consciousness,” in her 1987 book *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Anzaldúa uses autobiographical essays, poems, legends, and historical accounts to describe the pain and separation the border has caused. Through both English and Spanish, Anzaldúa explores the US/Mexican border as well as borders of race, gender, and sexuality. She writes,

Because I, a *mestiza*,
continually walk out of one culture

and into another, because I am in all cultures at the same time.

alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro

me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.

estoy noreteada por todas las voces que me hablan

simultaneamente (p. 99).

This excerpt unapologetically flows between English and Spanish, which illustrates Anzaldúa's multiple identities, languages, and cultures that make up her multiple consciousness.

LatCrit also embodies this notion of intersectionality. According to Delgado Bernal (2002), "LatCrit is a theory that elucidates Latinas/Latinos' multidimensional identities and can address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression" (p. 107). Thus, LatCrit rejects the "ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses" and "insists on analyzing race and racism by placing them in both an historical and contemporary context using interdisciplinary methods" (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 314). Pérez Huber, Lopez, Malagón, Velez, and Solórzano (2008) have further theorized LatCrit to the notion of Racist Nativism as a way of talking back to dominant discourses about Immigrants of Color as well as understanding their experiences. They define Racist Nativism as,

The assigning of values to real or imagined differences, in order to justify the superiority of the native, who is to be perceived white, over that of the non-native, who is perceived to be People and Immigrants of Color, and thereby defend the right of whites, or the natives, to dominance (p. 43).

This framework is especially useful in researching and understanding the experiences of Mexican migrants in the US, a place that has a long history of wanting Mexican labor but not Mexican people.

Likewise, LatCrit scholars (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015b) have begun using the concept of “racial microaggressions” to help connect institutional racism to the lived experiences of People of Color. Pérez Huber and Solórzano (2015a) define racial microaggressions as:

...everyday manifestations of racism that people of color encounter in their public and private lives. Specifically, they are a form of systemic racism in which verbal or nonverbal assaults are directed toward a person of color, often automatically or unconsciously. They are often based on not only a person of color’s race/ethnicity but also how they intersect with other real or perceived differences of gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, accent, or surname. The impact of racial microaggressions is cumulative, taking a psychological and physiological toll on those who are targeted (n.p.).

Racial microaggressions are not only painful for the person who receives them but they are also indicators of larger institutional racism. Furthermore, racial microaggressions in schools can significantly impact students’ educational experiences and learning outcomes (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a). The following section uses the tenets of LatCrit to connect the historical trajectories of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the US to structural inequalities and the positioning of Mexican children in US schools.

Tracing the Social Positioning of Mexicans in the US

The treatment of Mexicans as second class citizens and disposable laborers can be traced back to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which ended the Mexican-American War and extended the US border as far south as the Rio Grande and as far west as the Pacific Ocean. Following this, Mexicans, who overnight became foreigners in their own land, began working newly established American-owned agricultural, mining, and railroad projects. Throughout this

time, many Mexicans lost their land and were subsequently forced to work for these industries at low salaries and in generally poor conditions. The number of Mexican laborers increased even more after the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. During this time, one poorly treated immigrant group (Mexican) was swapped for another (Chinese) and used in a similar manner. As individuals fled the violence of the Mexican Revolution between 1910- 1920, labor numbers also increased. Despite the fact that many of these new migrants were skilled laborers back in Mexico, they were all viewed the same by White-American farm and industry owners (Ngai, 2004). Furthermore, work opportunities opened up even more when American soldiers were fighting in World War I. In spite of the persistent need for immigrant labor throughout this time, it was common for Mexican workers to be mistreated and poorly compensated (Ngai, 2004).

The year 1924 marked a turning point in the story of Mexican labor in the US. In that year, the Immigration Act of 1924 established the first formal border patrol and made it so undocumented immigrants were considered fugitives. The eugenics movement was also at its peak in that time which provided the “science” to support a racist national quota system. Even though this system did not apply to countries in the Western Hemisphere, it assisted in fueling anti-immigrant, racist sentiments. By the 1920s, at least three quarters of California's 200,000 farm workers were Mexican or Mexican-American. Ngai (2004) argues “the formation of the migratory agricultural workforce was perhaps the central element in the broader process of modern Mexican racial formation in the United States” (p. 131). Even though agribusinesses needed Mexican laborers, social and economic segregation persisted in order to maintain White, European American dominance.

By 1930, the United States was dealing with massive poverty and unemployment brought on by the Great Depression. Mexicans were positioned as one of the scapegoats for these issues

and became targets of severe discrimination. This toxic environment brought about the Mexican repatriation program, which forced the removal of about 2 million Mexican and Mexican-Americans from California, Colorado, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and New York, approximately 60 percent of whom were US citizens. This operative form of “ethnic cleansing” deeply damaged Mexican-American community and family ties throughout the United States, with its effects still being felt to this day (Johnson, 2005).

By World War II, the US was in need of cheap and accessible labor once more, which brought about the Bracero temporary guest-worker program. The program began in 1942 as a bilateral US-Mexico initiative emphasizing agricultural employment and mandating a minimum wage, housing, and medical requirements; however, most of these benefits were eliminated over time (Hanson, 2009). Although the Bracero program was meant as a more controlled means of labor migration and a solution to the “illegal immigrant problem,” numerous Mexican workers who were unable to enroll in Bracero (for whatever reason) ended up entering illegally as “wetbacks” (Ngai, 2004). As the numbers of “wetbacks” increased, so did the disparaging discourse that surrounded Mexican labor migrants. In response to the “wetback problem,” as they referred to it, the Eisenhower Administration, lead by Attorney General Herbert Brownell, conducted Operation Wetback in 1954 aimed at rounding up and repatriating massive numbers of Mexican “illegal aliens.” This operation did indeed “repatriate” 1.3 million Mexican nationals as well as codify the border patrol as a formal military apparatus (García, 1980). In spite of Operation Wetback, the Bracero program stayed in place until 1964. By then, the strong demand for low-wage foreign labor had been firmly established and communities in Mexico had come to depend on emigration as a primary income source.

Up until that point, labor had been the core of US policies towards Mexico and Mexicans. However, following the termination of the Bracero Program in 1964 and the implementation of strict quotas for Mexican immigrants in 1968, a new way for US interests to benefit from Mexican labor transformed into a focus on trade relations. At that time, the Mexican government launched the Border Industrialization Program establishing *maquiladoras*, or assembly plants, along the US-Mexico border that employed low-wage Mexican labor to assemble US goods (Hanson, 2009). Raw materials used in the *maquiladoras* were imported duty-free from the US and completed goods were exported back to the US with duty only being paid on the value added by the Mexican costs. By the early 1990s, the *maquiladoras* grew immensely, employing about a half of a million Mexicans, drawing workers from other parts of Mexico, and exporting about 40 percent of all Mexico's exports.

Working in tandem with the previously discussed ideological shift toward neoliberal policies, in 1994, these trade practices gained more legitimacy with the passing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This agreement, which was signed by the US, Mexico, and Canada, agreed to eliminate tariffs over 15 years, effectively tearing down most barriers to capital mobility, at least for those who had capital to begin with (Fernandez-Kelly & Massey, 2007). Despite the treaty's border openness towards capital investments, it strengthened borders against labor migration. NAFTA successfully increased US investments in Mexico, but it has also increased the privatization of Mexico's collective farms and eliminated agricultural subsidies for Mexican farmers while allowing subsidized US products to be exported to Mexico. This has resulted in millions of displaced Mexican peasants who had previously owned or worked small farms in Mexico (Bacon, 2013; MacDonald & Carrillo, 2010). Furthermore, NAFTA's labor rules have not provided Mexican workers with any gains to workplace rights;

thus, Mexican workers' inability to unionize made factory worker wages fall by more than 20 percent during the first five years of NAFTA's implementation (Ruiz, 2006).

Following the implementation of NAFTA, the stringent Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) was passed that included additional illegal immigration measurements. The IIRIRA was passed during a particularly high point of anti-immigrant sentiment when California had just passed Proposition 187 that barred undocumented children from attending public school and undocumented immigrants from using emergency services. The IIRIRA increased border security, barred undocumented individuals from using non-emergency services, regulated "illegal alien" arrests and processing, and put additional criminal measures on immigration violations (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2010). Additionally, the IIRIRA required immigrants who had been unlawfully present in the United States for more than 180 days and less than 365 days to remain outside of the US for at least three years before they could re-enter legally, and immigrants who had been unlawfully present for more than 365 days were required to wait 10 years before re-entrance. The IIRIRA effectively increased immigrant deportations while severely limiting resources these immigrants had to fight deportation orders.

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, US government policies shifted their focus to notions of security and control. This has resulted in an even larger increase in the criminalization of immigrants as well as a militarization of the border. Between 2002 and 2006, the Bush administration passed five additional laws that illustrate this agenda. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 established the Department of Homeland Security that now controls immigration enforcement, citizenship services, and the US Border Patrol. The USA Patriot Act of 2002, extended by President Obama in 2011, is officially an "... Act to deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world, to enhance law enforcement investigatory tools, and

for other purposes.” Critics of this act have argued that it grants widespread surveillance powers without any form of transparent oversight (Rosen, 2011). The Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002 added 3,000 more immigration inspectors and investigators, mandated universities to keep closer track of international students, and increased security scrutiny of visa applicants from countries where the government believed terrorists to be. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 increased border control and visa requirements. Lastly, 2006’s Secure Fence Act provided the largest increase to border control by building a 700-mile wall on the US border as well as authorizing increased checkpoints, cameras, satellites, and border patrols (White House Fact Sheet, 2006).

Plainly stated, all US immigration policies (historically and currently) foster the positioning of Mexican immigrants, and subsequently Mexican-Americans, as disposable laborers and not permanent neighbors, creating the notion of the “non-native other.” These policies reinforce racist nativist (Pérez Huber et al., 2008) notions, making it reasonable to dehumanize Mexican immigrants. However, despite the strength of these policies, Mexican immigrants have endured and established communities and families throughout the US. This establishment can be seen through the consistent increase in the amount of Mexican and Mexican-American children in US schools, thus making schools both a reflection of larger social marginalization and discrimination as well as a site of potential change and resistance.

Latina/os in US Schools

The demographics of the United States have changed dramatically over the past 40 years. In 1970, the vast majority of the US population was classified as either White or Black. However, from 1970 to 2000, the population of people considered by the US Census as neither White nor Black grew from 2.9 million to 35 million (US Census, 2002). The majority of this

growth was from Latina/os, who despite coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, together currently make up the largest ethnic or racial minority in the United States (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). Additionally, the number of Latina/o students in US public schools has steadily increased to over 12.1 million in 2012 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Historical Positioning of Latina/o Schoolchildren

Mexican schoolchildren, who both currently and historically make up the largest US Latina/o demographic, have dealt with issues of segregation since the mid 19th century. In fact, even though a 1946 federal court case (*Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County*) deemed separate Mexican schools to be unconstitutional because they considered Mexicans to in fact be White, local authorities have historically utilized both covert and visible strategies to establish all-White schools and isolate Mexican students. Some of the reasons segregation proponents have historically given for separating Mexican and White students include racial or cultural inferiority, improper hygiene, unreliable attendance, or linguistic differences (San Miguel & Donato, 2010). Throughout the 1960s, White schools were often much better resourced and staffed than segregated Mexican schools. Likewise, teachers at the Mexican schools were often White instructors who had either just entered the teaching profession or who were being punished for something (San Miguel & Donato, 2010). Although Latina/o activists in certain areas of the American Southwest sought to combat these hateful practices by opening and controlling their own community schools (i.e. Mexican Americans established a school district in Del Rio, Texas in 1929), the experiences of Mexican schoolchildren have most often been marked by cultural domination that deprive individual students and maintain social power dynamics. In fact, San Miguel and Donato (2010) argue that

schools have historically served a “reproductive function” that seeks to maintain Latina/o students as “a subordinate group by providing them with only limited access to separate, inferior, subtractive and non-academic instruction” (p. 29).

Educational Issues and Disparities

Despite the great diversity this group represents, Latina/os historically and currently face similar educational disparities. Latina/os statistically perform much lower than their peers on standardized tests. Moreover, not only do these students perform lower, but this achievement gap also seems to widen over time. For example, the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report card showed that eighth-grade Hispanics scored 27 points lower than Whites in math while fourth-grade Hispanics scored 20 points lower (Valverde, 2006). Likewise, Mexican and Mexican-American students, specifically, possess the highest national high-school dropout rate of any ethnic or racial group (Valverde, 2006).

Latina/os are also disproportionately placed in remedial or special education tracks (Valverde, 2006; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002). This often occurs because schools place students who do not come from English speaking homes, or homes that provide academic literacy, in lower-performing groups starting at a very young age. Once placed in a lower track, it is usually difficult to jump to higher courses. The effect of this is that students’ academic fate is often decided at a very young age, which contributes to the fact that Latina/os are more segregated than any other group (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Additionally, there are strong connections between educational attainment and parental income, with nearly 40 percent of Latina/o students coming from homes where parents have not completed high school (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). In fact, only 1 out of 10 Latina/os have gone to college compared to 4 out of 10 Whites (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Poverty also plays

a significant role in the quality of schools Latina/os attend because low-income Latinas/os are much more likely to attend underfunded and/or under-resourced schools (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

However, Valverde (2006) argues that much of Latina/o “underachievement” is caused by public schools’ subtractive assimilation practices that force students to “conform (accept), resist (with adoption), or reject (drop-out)” (p. 8) their schooling experiences. Likewise, Ladson-Billings (2006a) has argued that the persistently discussed “achievement gap” needs to be re-conceptualized as an “education debt.” She argues that Students of Color should not be held responsible to “catch up” to their White peers, rather “the historical, economic, sociopolitical, moral decisions and policies that characterize our society have created an education debt” (p. 5) that is up to our society to repay to these students. These arguments directly speak to the significant role structural inequality and historical marginalization play in the schooling experiences of Latina/o students.

Bilingualism

As previously mentioned, language was one of the primary rationales for segregating Mexican schoolchildren from their White peers. Today, language continues to be one of the most important educational issues for both Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) and Latina/os, as over 70 percent of EBs in the United States come from homes where Spanish is spoken (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Furthermore, EBs often struggle with acquiring academic content because of their limited English abilities. Linguists have asserted numerous advantages to being bilingual, such as increased cognitive capacity, cultural understanding, and academic skills. However, despite the passing of several federal acts supporting EBs, the bilingual condition of many Latina/o students has often been constructed as a problem and is blamed as the primary cause of

educational disparities for this population. This section will examine the federal policies impacting language use in school and connect them to the larger Latina/o immigrant experience.

Bilingual Education

After the passing of the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) in 1968, the Supreme Court furthered the rights of English learners with 1974's *Lau v. Nichols* that ruled "sink or swim" instruction to students with limited English abilities was a violation of the Civil Rights Act and required schools to provide supplementary assistance (Pyon, 2009). Unfortunately, the gains made by such decisions have suffered numerous defeats in recent decades. Namely, the modern "English-Only" movement has continued to use English as a "nativist" marker to justify racial prejudice or marginalization. For example, the lobbying group ProEnglish states its mission is to "defend English's historic role as America's common, unifying language, and to persuade lawmakers to adopt English as the official language at all levels of government" (proenglish.org, n.p.). This sort of discourse is reminiscent of that of nativist parties at the turn of the 20th century that pushed for immigrants to take literacy tests and passed legislation barring the use of languages other than English (e.g. Wisconsin passed the Bennett Law preventing education in the German language in 1890).

Unfortunately, these sorts of movements have resulted not only in discourse but also in legislation. For example, "English for the Children," led by software entrepreneur and former California candidate for governor Ron Unz, pushed the passing of California's Proposition 227 in 1998. This initiative effectively eliminated bilingual education, forced California public schools to teach "Limited English Proficient" students entirely in English, and only allowed students one year of additional English support classes. Subsequent "English for the Children" ballots have also passed in Arizona in 2000 and Massachusetts in 2002. While "English for the

Children” uses colorblind claims that bilingual education prevents immigrant children from learning English and accessing societal opportunities, the vast majority of language education research supports the use of a child’s native language in educational settings (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 2000; García & Wei, 2014; Krashen, 1996; Menken, 2008; Valdés, 2001). This indicates that English-only initiatives are operating under racist nativist ideologies rather than grounded and substantiated theoretical frameworks.

Immigrants’ Right to Public Education

In addition to legislation attacking bilingual education and language support services, there have also been numerous attacks on simply providing immigrant children an education at all. In fact, in 1975 the state of Texas enacted legislation that allowed school districts to charge tuition to undocumented public school students. Although this law was subsequently found to be unconstitutional by district and state courts, Texas went on to take its case to the Supreme Court as *Plyler v. Doe*. Ultimately, the court ruled 5 to 4 against Texas, concluding that “whatever his status under the immigration laws, an alien is surely a ‘person’ in any ordinary sense of that term” (as cited in Lopez & Lopez, 2010, p. 21), and is thus protected under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Despite its final ruling, the mere fact that the personhood of undocumented immigrants was brought into question speaks to larger discriminatory notions concerning immigrants; in this case, Mexican immigrants, who are by far the largest immigrant group in Texas.

Furthermore, *Plyler v. Doe* was not accepted by all as there have been numerous challenges to its decision. Perhaps the most notable contestation by an individual state was the highly publicized aforementioned California Proposition 187, passed in 1994 that, among other things, denied undocumented students access to free public education. Although Proposition 187

was later deemed unconstitutional, the disparaging and blameful discourses surrounding it speak to the general attitude towards “illegal aliens.” One portion of the Proposition actually read, “Californian citizens have suffered and are suffering economic hardship...personal injury and damage caused by the criminal conduct of illegal aliens in this state” (as cited in Lopez & Lopez, 2010, p. 29). This statement utilizes colorblind code words and neoliberal economic measurements of worth to justify not allowing children to attend school. This legislation also speaks to a larger discriminatory sentiment towards Mexican immigrants who also make up the largest immigration group in California.

Most recently, Arizona, Alabama, and Nebraska have also all put forth legislation that challenges various principles of the *Plyler* case. For example, in 2011 Alabama passed the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, H.B. 56 which contained a provision that “mandates public schools to check and report on the legal status of their students and their students’ parents” (Fitz, Wolgin, & Garcia, 2012, p. 8). Although the provision was ultimately removed, the effects were still felt as school districts around Alabama reported marked decreases in the attendance of Latina/o students. This law, along with all other attempts to prohibit undocumented students from attending public schools, has little to do with the children themselves and much more to do with creating and maintaining power and social dynamics where immigrants, specifically Mexican immigrants, are not welcome. These laws function both to foster mechanisms to fault Mexican immigrants with the ills of society and also to sustain derogatory discourses and beliefs about Mexicans, Latinas/os, immigrants in general, People of Color, and people who speak languages other than English.

In addition to understanding national policy implications in the experiences of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs), it is also crucial to examine the specific social situating of MEB

populations within individual communities. MEBs are an extremely heterogeneous population in terms of ethnicity, formal schooling experiences, parental education background, and socioeconomic status (Suárez & Todorova, 2009). However, together MEBs make up not only the majority of EBs in the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2015), but also the majority of EBs in the state of my study (Wisconsin). Wisconsin is unique from many other regions in that its MEB population is relatively “new”. This means that many of the more established communities in Wisconsin have had limited interactions with Mexican immigrant communities and it is unknown how many will respond to their new neighbors.

New Latino Diaspora

Latina/o migration to the US has historically been situated in the American Southwest, Florida, or in large urban areas such as New York or Chicago. However, Mexicans and other Latina/o groups are now spreading to new destinations throughout the US where there has not traditionally been a visible Latina/o presence. For example, according to the Pew Research Center (2013), all 10 of the US counties with the top Hispanic growth rates from 1980 - 2011 were in new destination communities in new destination states (Georgia, South Dakota, Mississippi, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina). The recent body of research that has emerged to explore the experiences of Latina/o immigrants in these new destinations is referred to as the New Latino Diaspora (NLD) (Murillo & Villenas, 1997). The majority of empirical research on the NLD has taken place in the US South, primarily in Georgia and North Carolina, followed by the Midwest (Lowenhaupt, 2013). Experiences for Latina/os in the NLD often differ from immigrant experiences in more traditional settings as immigrants in new destinations often lack the cultural and social networks present in gateway

communities. Therefore, context of reception is extremely important for understanding immigrant experiences in the NLD.

Schools provide a particularly important place to investigate the NLD because schools in new destination communities are in a situation of serving more linguistically and culturally diverse students than ever before. Research on education within the NLD has shown a lack of bilingual staff to serve learners that, in turn, has led to linguistic isolation and cultural misunderstandings (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002). However, many of the other major issues that have appeared in NLD research are the same struggles that have been found in Latina/o education in general. For example, researchers in the NLD have found evidence of deficit perspectives, cultural bias, segregating tactics, and assimilation practices (Brunn, 2002; Hamann, 2003; Martinez, 2011; Murillo, 2002; Wortham & Contreras, 2002). At the same time, researchers have also found that new immigrant identities within non-traditional communities can vary tremendously, with evidence of both “model minority” (Lee, 1994) views as well as deficit-oriented perspectives (Wortham, Mortimer & Allard, 2009). These mixed reactions indicate the importance of not viewing “newly” formed immigrant communities as monolithic entities (Wortham & Rhodes, 2015) but instead point to a need for qualitative investigation in order to provide a nuanced examination of immigrant experiences in these new destinations.

Wisconsin as a New Immigrant Destination

The Latina/o population in the state of Wisconsin has increased substantially over the past few decades, growing from 62,000 in 1980 to 336,000 in 2010 (Applied Population Laboratory & University of Wisconsin Extension, 2014). As a result, Wisconsin schools have experienced a considerable influx in non-English speaking immigrants. For example, the number of students classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) almost doubled to over 50,000

students from 2000 to 2010 (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2010). About two-thirds of all immigrants in Wisconsin come from Mexico with the vast majority of schoolchildren who are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) speaking Spanish as a native language (Applied Population Laboratory & University of Wisconsin Extension, 2014).

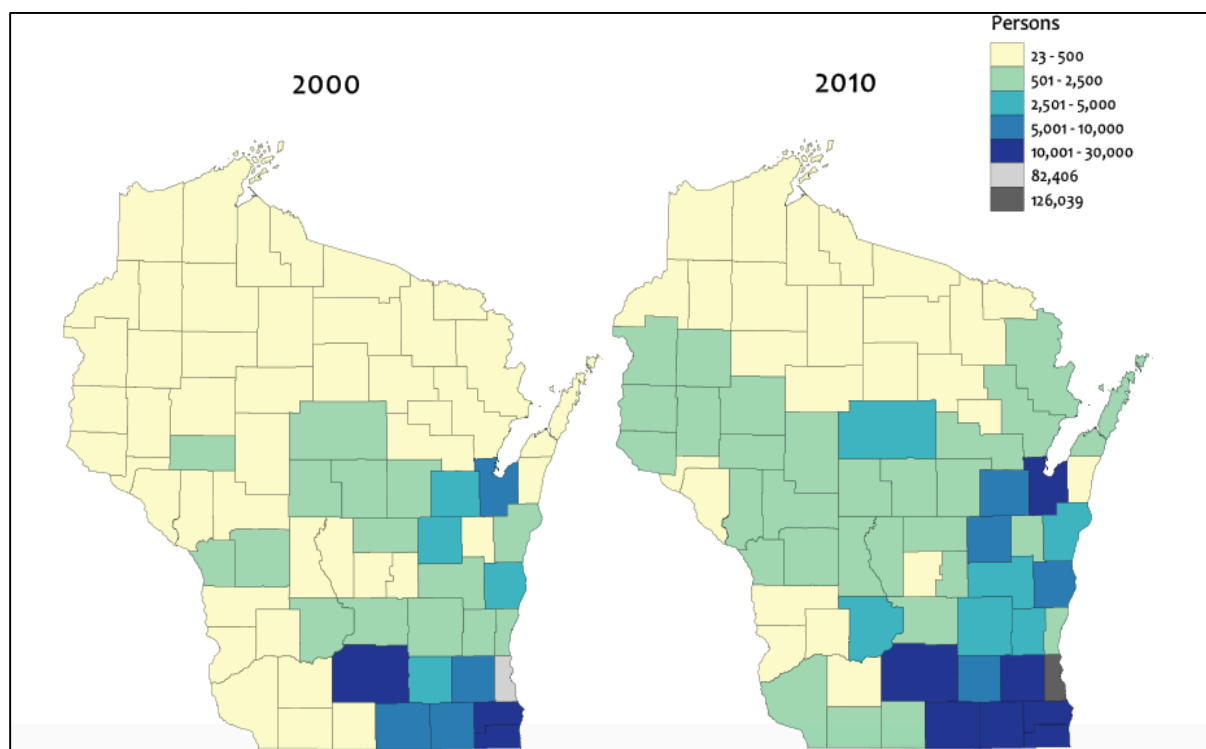


Figure 2. Maps of Latino Population Numbers in Wisconsin Counties, 2000 & 2010. (UW Applied Population Laboratory & University of Wisconsin Extension, 2014)

As Figure 2 illustrates, the Latina/o population growth has occurred not only in urban areas of Wisconsin, like Milwaukee and Madison, but throughout the state. Many of these communities are predominantly White rural areas or small cities that have not historically had Latina/o residents. As a result, many of the school districts that are experiencing an increasing EB population are not accustomed to serving linguistically and culturally diverse learners. For example, Lee and Hawkins (2015), who examined five such communities, found that educators in these districts had a tendency to push assimilative practices and view EBs in a deficit manner. Additionally, they also found that Wisconsin districts with growing EB populations struggle both

to find qualified staff to serve these learners as well as the funding to pay them. This is not surprising when taking into account that in 2011 the state of Wisconsin enacted its historically largest education cut at \$1.2 billion, including \$792 million in direct kindergarten-12th grade aid. Likewise, Lowenhaupt (2015), in her study of education in Wisconsin's New Latino Diaspora, found that despite the state's bilingual education policy, "support for Spanish-speaking ELLs varied widely both within and across schools...suggesting a lack of resources, strategy, or coherence in the design of educational support for these students" (255). This research speaks directly to the issues faced by the community where my study took place.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the conceptual framework I used to inform and understand this research. The primary components of this framework are the role of neoliberalism in education reform and Mexican migration, the historical social positioning of Mexicans (and Latina/o in general) both in and out of US schools, Latina/o Critical Race Theory, and the recent phenomenon of Latina/os settling in new destinations, such as rural communities in Wisconsin. I have argued that in that past 30 years, civil rights fueled federal education reforms that emphasized equity have shifted to market-driven reforms that emphasize standardization, privatization, and efficiency. This shift follows the larger neoliberal movement that prioritizes economic measurements of worth and assumes all individuals have an equal opportunity for economic success. This ideology ignores historical oppression, adversely effects civil rights gains, and further marginalizes People of Color. However, by employing LatCrit, the "hidden" power dynamics behind current social and educational disparities are revealed and the educational experiences of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals can be more deeply understood. This analysis examines the subaltern positioning of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the United

States as “non-native others” and connects it to the current educational disparities faced by MEBs. My study utilizes this framework to qualitatively examine the experiences of MEB youth in a new destination high school to offer an in-depth understanding of the school and community reception, the schooling experiences of these youth, and the role of larger policies processes. The following chapter (Chapter 3) will provide thorough descriptions of my study site, participants, methodology, methods, and analysis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Utilizing anthropology of education policy as a lens, my one-year critical ethnography investigated the policies and practices that influenced the educational experiences of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs) at Albert High School in River City, Wisconsin². Data collection for this study involved artifacts (i.e. policy documents, demographic data), participant observations of the 14 student, teacher, and administrator participants, and 1-2 semi-structured formal interviews with each participant. Data analysis involved thematic and inductive coding of field notes, interview transcripts, researcher memos, and artifact data. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of my research methodology and methods. I will also provide an in-depth description of my research site, participants, data collection, and analytic process.

Qualitative Research

Although there are certainly times and places where numbers matter, not everything can be counted. My goal was to research and understand how situated policies and their related practices shape the experiences of Mexican EBs at one particular high school. In order to do this, I see qualitative research as the most appropriate means of investigation. Qualitative research privileges depth over breadth, which can offer a richer and more complete data set to explore and investigate people's lived experiences. Furthermore, qualitative research allows for a study of not only the phenomenon itself, but also an in-depth understanding of the social world in which that phenomenon is situated. Additionally, as Cresswell (2007) claims, "we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships" (p. 40). For me, this is essential because I wanted to enable my participants to share their perceptions, insights, and ideas.

² Names of all places and people have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Anthropology of Education Policy

A crucial focus of my research was the enactment of macro-level educational policies, structures, and ideologies in the micro-level, daily, lived experiences of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs) and the educators who work with them. In order to observe these actions, I used an anthropology of policy approach (Koyama & Varenne, 2012; Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009; Shore & Wright, 1997; 2011). This qualitative approach uses “ethnographic tools” to investigate policy from inception through implementation, examining assumed power elements as well as policy actors’ roles and understandings of policy in practice. My detailed examination of one specific school offers a “window” into understanding the schooling experiences of MEBs in general as well as the enactment of larger educational policy processes. Therefore, while one could regard research physically conducted in a specific school as a bounded case study, I am using an anthropology of policy approach because it offers a more fluid lens to connect historical trajectories with participants’ daily lived experiences.

Traditionally, education policy has been analyzed through top-down, technical-rational approaches. Hamann and Rosen (2011) argue that these approaches,

Take a narrower, more formal, and primarily instrumental view of policy; it assumes a neat distinction between policy and practice and often a linear, unidirectional relationship between them; it attempts to apply positivistic principles and methods from the natural sciences to explain and predict educational policy processes... (p. 463).

This view does not address the assumptions and concerns embedded within policies nor does it account for the different forms policies take upon implementation, what Levinson, Sutton, and Winstead (2009) refer to as “appropriation.” Contrastingly, Shore, Wright and Però (2011) argue that policies are “not simply external, generalized, or constraining forces, nor are they confined

to texts. Rather, they are productive, performative, and continually contested” (p. 1). From this view, policy may limit agency, but it does not negate it. Policy is an instrument of power to shape and legitimize identity construction through categories such as “citizen,” “criminal,” or “alien,” but it does not necessarily control the action that is carried out. For example, federal immigration policies may construct individuals who cross the border without appropriate documentation as “criminals,” but that does not mean that individuals will stop crossing the border. This view of policy not only looks at how policies come from above (investigating the connection of power among policymakers), but also how these policies are interpreted, enacted, and resisted on the ground.

By viewing policy in this manner, one is able to remove the mask of neutrality and expose dominating forces as well as the effects of their domination. For example, Shore and Wright (2011) argue that when policy is viewed anthropologically, it is read “as cultural texts, as classificatory devices with various meanings, as narratives that serve to justify or condemn the present, or as rhetorical devices and discursive formations that function to empower some people and silence others” (p. 7). Levinson, Sutton, and Winstead (2009) also conceptualize policy as normative discourse. They argue that policy provides a view of how the world *ought to be* through “a set of statements about how things should or must be done, with corresponding inducements or punishments” (p. 770). This allows the researcher to investigate both how things are prescribed as well as how they actually play out.

In order to conduct an anthropology of education policy investigation, the first question to address is *what is the policy*. This question, which on the surface seems simple, challenges a blind acceptance of policy by asking who created it and why. This cannot be taken for granted as power dynamics emerge when the history, background, and rationale of a policy is explored.

Within this examination, the policy itself can be seen as a normalizing principle that dictates how things should or ought to be. After this is established, the next question is *what is the policy actually doing*. This allows for a critical examination of how power is produced and reproduced and reveals the underlying significance of race, class, gender, sexuality, language, and ethnicity. However, this question also allows an opportunity for actor agency, demonstrating that it is still possible for individual actors to resist (Apple, 1982). It is invaluable to explore this phenomenon because such resistance provides potential sites of transformation, which ultimately make real change possible.

Additionally, an anthropological policy approach views *practice* as the everyday activities performed by individuals, or groups, “that are both constrained and enabled by existing structures, but which allow the person to exercise agency in the emerging situation” (Sutton & Levinson, 2011). These are the socially constructed interactions that occur between a wide range of diverse, interconnected policy actors and the policy worlds that exist around them. From these interactions, policies are created, shaped, proposed, interpreted, enacted, and resisted.

Ethnography

Following an anthropology of education policy approach, ethnography is the most appropriate method for investigating how policies and practices influencing MEBs play out in their daily lives. Ethnography has a holistic nature, which seeks to understand what people actually do, not what they say they do, nor what society says they should do (Banks, 2007). In discussing the history of ethnography, Clair (2003) states, “ethnography is a practice and an expression with a capacious historical past that necessarily includes philosophical, political, spiritual, and aesthetic elements” (p. 3). Ethnography grew from colonial beginnings where most ethnographers were Europeans, or individuals of European descent, who traveled or lived in

colonialized territories and documented the “primitive” native peoples. Often times these early ethnographers were greatly influenced by their own cultural biases, which caused them to draw comparisons and come to extreme conclusions that othered, and usually belittled, the non-European culture (Claire, 2003).

By the early 20th century, anthropologists such as Franz Boas (1891), Margaret Mead (1928), and Edward Sapir (1930) began to see the threat colonial culture posed on the native peoples and attempted to “save” or “preserve” cultural stories, ways of life, and language (Claire, 2003). There were also challenges around this time to the “othering nature” ethnography had served. For example, W.E.B. Du Bois was a critical pioneer in that he not only recognized but also critiqued imperialism’s inherent prejudice towards People of Color through his ethnographic portrayal of Black Americans in *Souls of Black Folks* (1903). Throughout World War I and II, more varied ethnographic and auto-ethnographic accounts were also written by individuals, such as Bronislaw Malinowski (1922), Claude Lévi-Strauss (1955), and Marcel Mauss (1967). These accounts expanded ethnography’s unit of analysis as well as emphasized the participants’ point of view.

Critical Ethnography

By the mid-20th century, critical theorists began to promote the cultural study of power to examine aspects of exploitation and domination (Clair, 2003; Foley, 2010). Through this study, social scientists explored the work of neo-Marxists and cultural theorists to explain issues of class and collective agency in culture. By 1977, Paul Willis was arguable first to employ these perspectives in an ethnography when he examined the working-class “lads” in England. At that time, feminist scholars, such as Simone de Beauvoir (1989) and Betty Friedan (1963), also began to use ethnographic tools to illustrate society’s patriarchal nature. bell hooks (1981) and other

female Scholars of Color took these ideas a step further by examining the White middle-class bias of these early feminist works. Moreover, with the advent of post-structural and post-modern theories, the notion of researcher reflexivity took hold, calling for researchers to further examine power relationships and how participants' lives are represented. Postcolonial theorists have also posed critical questions of ethnography that ask if ethnography with its historical roots as the study of the Other, can effectively challenge the master narrative when it has already done so much to help create it (Clair, 2003). Thus, critical ethnography incorporates critical theory's analysis of power in the study of culture and works towards an ultimate goal of societal transformation.

Tools of Ethnographic Research

The traditional tools used in ethnographic research are participant observation, interviews, and artifacts. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) define participant observation as a "method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture" (p. 1). Moreover, what is learned through participant observation informs how other aspects of the research, such as interviews, are conducted. Participant observation allows the researcher to become immersed in participants' daily lives as well as develop relationships with the participants. Throughout this process, it is also necessary that the researcher maintain ethical integrity by being open and honest with participants and obtaining informed consent. Additionally, it is important to note the strong distinction between participant observation and observation. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) define pure observation as seeking as much as possible "to remove the researcher from the actions and behaviors so that they are unable to influence them" (p. 21). Examples of this might be if a researcher videotapes an interaction or observes

through a one-way mirror. Finally, DeWalt and DeWalt (2011, p. 5) provide the following key elements of anthropological participant observation:

- Living in the context for an extended period of time
- Learning and using local language and dialect
- Actively participating in a wide range of daily routines, and extraordinary activities with people who are full participants in that context
- Using everyday conversation as an interview technique
- Informally observing during leisure activities
- Recording observations in field notes
- Using both tacit and explicit information in analysis and writing

Another commonly used tool in ethnographic research is interviewing. Seidman (2006) defines the goal of the interview as having “the participants reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study” (p. 15) while Weiss (1994) states the purpose of interviewing as offering “access to the observations of others” (p. 1). Interviews can be conducted in several different ways. A survey interview, most commonly used in quantitative research, will have pre-decided answers for the participant to mark. Qualitative interviews, on the other hand, are generally more open, take more time, and have a more conversational nature. A qualitative researcher’s interview protocol can range from a more structured question set to a more open list of probes. Additionally, ethnographers will often informally interview a participant several times before conducting a formal interview.

Ethnographic Field

Traditionally, an ethnographic unit of analysis is limited to a “culture-sharing” group (Cresswell, 2007, p. 71) that is studied from a particular field site, such as a village or

neighborhood. In the early 20th century, this was typically limited to “traditional societies” who were studied by Europeans or European Americans. For example, Margaret Mead (1928) went to Samoa to study adolescent Samoan girls, and Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) went to Papua New Guinea to study the sea-faring Kula people. As previously mentioned, critical scholars have pushed back on traditional colonial understandings of culture in order to dismantle Western paradigms of knowledge and civilization (Fanon, 1963; Said, 1978; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Villenas, 1996). Thus, the who and where of ethnography has since been reconceptualized to include a wide range of groups, peoples, and societies. In fact, Erickson (1984) argues that what makes a study ethnographic is not its unit of analysis, but that it “treats a social unit of any size as a whole” and that it “portrays events, at least in part, from the points of view of the actors involved in the events” (p. 52). This could be anything from a family, to a workplace, to a school, or to a classroom.

Ethnography in Education

Over the past 30 years, ethnographic educational studies, conducted in schools, have become more common and have offered valuable insights on American education. Namely, there have been many studies focused on immigrant and Latina/o students’ experiences in formal schooling, which speaks to ethnography’s usefulness when studying these populations (e.g., Dyrness, 2007; Hawkins, 2005; Lee, 2005; Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). While these studies have ranged in how they conceptualized their ethnographic field, (with variations in studying parents, students, and/or teachers) researchers long-term, comprehensive presence within these fields offer complex and thorough depictions of their participants’ realities. As a result, these investigations offer useful, meaningful, and important understandings of these populations, and also offer an opportunity for marginalized voices and perspectives to be heard. Still, as Erickson

(1984) reminds us, not all standard methods of ethnography can be performed in schools. For example, a school, unlike a village, only takes place for so many hours a day. Therefore, school ethnographers must consider that “most of what happens inside the school is somehow related to what happens outside it” (Erickson, 1984, p. 60).

Critical bifocality. Weis and Fine’s (2012) notion of “critical bifocality” also speaks to the relationship between everyday ethnographic stories in education and larger structural and social mechanisms. Weis and Fine (2012) define critical bifocality as,

...a way to think about epistemology, design, and the politics of educational research, as a theory of method in which researchers try to make visible the sinewy linkages or circuits through which structural conditions are enacted in policy and reform institutions as well as the ways in which such conditions come to be woven into community relationship and metabolized by individuals (p. 174).

This framework offers researchers a lens by which to trace individual actions and relationships, which are documented through ethnographic fieldwork, to structural systems embedded in larger contextual and historical understandings. This allows critical educational ethnographers to explain the relationship between participants’ everyday actions and the broader social and economic domains in which we live.

Multi-sited Ethnography

Traditional ethnographic sites have also been altered by our changing global landscape, which has changed the relationships between the local and the global (Marcus, 1995). This means that as our units of analysis become less fixed, it is necessary to create more fluid conceptualizations of the ethnographic field as multi-sited. For example, Marcus (1995) discusses that in addition to studying people, an ethnographer may also be interested in studying

things, metaphors, stories, or conflicts. In order to study these diverse topics of interest, he has developed various “following techniques.” Each of these techniques highlight the idea of following “something” through time and space without a fixed location. For example, a “follow the people” technique could be used to follow immigrants through their migration process, or a “follow the thing” technique could be used to follow money through an economic system. Additionally, these techniques can also be used for less concrete objects such as “metaphors” or “stories.” In these cases, the idea is abstractly traced through various social realms, which may reveal new insights on its significance as well as its understanding.

Shore and Wright (2011) have built on Marcus (1995) to include the idea of “follow the policy.” This approach aligns with their conceptualization of an anthropology of policy’s ethnographic field site to include not only policymakers but those who influence policymakers as well as those who are influenced by the policy. This also aligns with Koyama and Varenne’s (2011) view of policy actors as all people involved and/or affected by the policy in question. In this multi-site approach, “field” becomes the full range of relevant people, places, and actions, and “sites” become the parts of the greater field (Wright, 2011). Still, because this conception of the field is entirely too vast to ethnographically study, Shore and Wright (2011) advocate selecting “small sites that open windows onto larger processes of political transformation” (p. 12). This means that in order to study a particular policy, set of policies, or policy actors, one must choose specific site(s) from which to follow those policies and/or policy actors.

Therefore, because the object of my study is the fluid interpretations of education policies and practices affecting Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs), I imagined my ethnographic field as all people, places, actions, and institutions associated with the policies affecting MEBs,

regardless of their physical location. However, I investigated this field from the situated perspective of one Wisconsin high school in order to deeply understand one particular context.

Site Description

River City, Wisconsin

I situated my “window” of investigation at Albert High School in the small city of River City, Wisconsin. River City, a community of about 60,000, is the sort of place where farm meets factory, where a field of grazing dairy cows is only a few miles from smokestacks. Wisconsin has been, and continues to be, a farming state. In addition to leading the nation in the number of dairy farms, Wisconsin also produces a substantial amount of beans, cranberries, and carrots as well as beef, pork, and even Christmas trees (Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom, 2015). At the turn of the 20th century, however, Wisconsin also saw a significant shift to manufacturing as part of a larger US industrialization. Early industries in Wisconsin such as fur, mining, and logging eventually lead to later industries like papermaking, meatpacking, and automobile manufacturing (Wisconsin Historical Society, 2015). This second industrial wave lead to the creation of a large assembly plant in River City, making it one of the many small farm/factory cities in the state.

For much of the 20th century, River City’s industrial plant served as the city’s major employer, providing high-wage, union jobs for workers to “count on.” However, neoliberal policies of the past 30 years (i.e. free trade acts), globalization, and technological advances have caused a great decrease in American industrial employment. River City exemplifies the impact of this deindustrialization, as its major assembly plant began to reduce jobs and then eventually closed around the same time as the 2008 Recession. The plant closure sparked a severe economic depression within the community, similar to the economic struggles suffered by many other small US cities after losing their industrial bases. As a result, the city’s population has declined,

decreasing the tax base and leaving behind high unemployment and increased poverty. The effects of this depression can also be felt in their schools where the number of economically disadvantaged³ students in the district has more than doubled to over 50 percent by the 2013-2014 school year (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

Budget cuts. Shortly after River City's plant closure, the state of Wisconsin elected conservative Scott Walker as Governor in 2010. Governor Walker's first order of business was to pass the state Budget Repair Bill that effectively stripped state employees (including teachers) of collective bargaining rights, cut benefits and take home pay for state employees (including all public school staff), and enacted the state's largest education cut at \$1.2 billion, including \$792 million in direct kindergarten-12th grade aid. These cuts have adversely affected the River City school district with an approximate \$10 million budget shortage in both the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years. In response, the district cut more than 100 teaching positions, increased class size, and lost a significant number of experienced teachers to early retirement. In fact, the district's Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Dr. Zimmerman, told me that although they were eventually able to get back 50 of the lost positions, they had to cut "back to the bone" with the support staff taking the biggest hit. He said they were forced to cut their "library-media in half, academic learning coaches in half, guidance staff was reduced...everything in that area was reduced to absolutely what the state required" (interview, November 12, 2014). Many of the eliminated or reduced positions were those that directly served marginalized groups, such as Emergent Bilinguals. Thus, this already struggling community has had to deal with additional financial burdens following these extreme budget cuts.

³ The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (http://lbstat.dpi.wi.gov/lbstat_dataecon) defines "economically disadvantaged" as falling into one of the following categories: eligible for free lunch, eligible for reduced lunch, or eligible for needs-based programs based on household income.

Additionally, because the River City community was already suffering economically from the plant closure at the time of the budget cuts, the ELL Program Coordinator Melissa Baker told me that the district did not want to increase property taxes “on people who were already unemployed” to compensate for the lost state funds (interview, October 2, 2014). This is an extremely important point because, following the effective elimination of teacher’s unions and collective bargaining, school districts around the state can now compete with one another by offering teachers higher salaries to persuade them to stay or leave a district. This means that wealthier school districts that have higher property tax bases can offer teachers and other school officials higher salaries than poorer school districts (like River City) with lower property tax bases. Certainly this new teacher “marketplace” (Beck, 2014) can financially benefit some “good” teachers or teachers who teach in-demand subjects, but it also makes it extremely difficult for poor schools, like River City’s, to retain those teachers. Indeed, this has probably contributed to the fact that River City began this year (2015-2016) with over two dozen vacant positions (Channel 3, 2015, n.p.). In fact, local newspapers in Wisconsin have reported teacher shortages around the state from fewer people becoming teachers, more people leaving the profession, and others deciding to leave a district only weeks before the school year begins because of receiving a better offer elsewhere (Linscheid, 2015; Murphy, 2015). Ultimately, for River City this means they are in a situation of trying to serve a poorer population with fewer resources.

Changing Demographics in River City

River City, like much of Wisconsin, has also seen a substantial increase in its Latina/o population over the past 15 years. In fact, according to a 2014 report from the UW-Madison Applied Population Laboratory (Long & Veroff, 2014), Wisconsin’s Latina/o population

increased by almost 150,000 people from 2000 to 2010 (193,000 to 336,000), with the majority (70%) coming from Mexican heritage. According to the US Census, River City's Hispanic/Latino population more than doubled from 2000 to 2010. Table 1 provides more detailed information on the demographic change in the community.

Table 1			
<i>River City Demographic Percentages (number rounded to the nearest tenth)</i>			
	2000	2010	Percentage Change
White alone	95.3	91.7	Decreased 1.9%
Hispanic/Latino	2.6	5.4	Increased 117.6%
Not Hispanic/Latino	97.4	94.6	Decreased 2.9%
Black alone	1.2	2.6	Increased 117.2%
Asian	0.9	1.4	Increased 49.6%
American Indian	0.2	0.3	Increased 28.1%
Two or more races	1.2	2.1	Increased 82.6%
Some other race	1.0	2.0	Increased 106.3%
US Census, 2015			

River City's increasing Latina/o population has also meant that its schools have seen an increase in Latina/o learners. To put these in perspective, of the 424 public school districts in Wisconsin, River City ranks in the top ten districts with the largest number of "Limited English Proficient" students who are also Spanish proficient (Long & Veroff, 2014). This means that River City schools have had to respond to a tremendous increase in diverse and non-English speaking learners while simultaneously struggling with budget cuts and a financially struggling community.

Albert High School

Of the two high schools in River City (Albert and Tucker), Tucker High School has historically served more diverse and low-income students. However, this has also changed recently as Albert High School has received more Students of Color and students living in poverty. Table 2 provides a biannual comparison of Albert High School's student body from

2000 – 2014. Some of the significant changes are that the total percentage of Students of Color grew from 5 percent in 2000 to 20 percent in 2014. Likewise, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students grew from 7 percent to 38 percent. Also, the number of students classified as ELL⁴ increased dramatically after 2006, from virtually no students to approximately 50 students per year. Lastly, the total enrollment number began to decline in 2008, which coincides with the city’s assembly plant closing.

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Total Enrollment	1770	1803	1820	1846	1664	1638	1634	1628
Economically Disadvantaged (Percentage)	132 (7%)	186 (10%)	221 (12%)	225 (12%)	361 (22%)	523 (32%)	603 (37%)	615 (38%)
Total “Limited English Proficient”	1	0	8	47	56	62	72	48
Total White (Percentage)	1681 (95%)	1677 (93%)	1669 (92%)	1649 (89%)	1446 (87%)	1345 (82%)	1335 (82%)	1291 (80%)
Total Hispanic (Percentage)	30 (2%)	40 (2%)	38 (2%)	56 (3%)	94 (6%)	127 (8%)	133 (8%)	138 (9%)
Total Black	42	68	78	97	85	59	61	91
Total Asian	12	11	23	32	29	40	35	29
Total American Indian	5	7	12	12	10	13	7	4
Total Pacific Islander	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	4	2
Total Multiracial	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/	n/a	51	59	73
Total Students of Color (Percentage)	89 (5%)	126 (7%)	151 (8%)	197 (11%)	218 (13%)	293 (18%)	299 (18%)	337 (20%)

Programing for emergent bilinguals. Because River City schools have seen such a dramatic increase in students classified as “Limited English Proficient” (LEP), they have had to restructure programs, hire more staff, and add more resources to serve this population. According

⁴ Although the term “English as a Second Language (ESL)” is typically used to refer to program models and the term “English Language Learner (ELL)” is used to refer to students in these programs, I am using the term “English Language Learner (ELL)” to refer to programs and teachers in this study as it was the term used by the school.

to the District ELL Program Coordinator Melissa Baker, who was previously an ELL teacher, the River City programming for Emergent Bilinguals has grown tremendously since she began in the district 20 years ago (interview, October 2, 2014). She told me that when she began teaching, the district had about 100 LEP students, the majority of whom were Southeast Asian refugees. At that time the district served those learners through magnet schools, such that all EBs would be bused to certain schools that provided services. However, beginning in 2000, the number of students classified as LEP began to grow with an increase in native Spanish speaking learners. Because of this increase, and because of the fact that these learners lived throughout the city, the district decided to move to a neighborhood school model where all schools provided ELL services. Since then, ELL programming throughout the district has grown tremendously. In the 2014-2015 school year, the district had a total enrollment of 10,400 students, 875 of whom had an LEP classification. However, Ms. Baker also pointed out that of those 875 students, 160 have effectively tested out of receiving ELL services and are only currently being monitored. That means there were approximately 715 students in the district who received ELL support in 2014-2015, 47 of whom attended Albert High School (interview, October 2, 2014; wishdash.com).

Albert High School utilizes an ELL program model that provides both sheltered English instruction and supported mainstream instruction. New ELLs are identified through completion of the home language survey that asks if other languages are spoken in the home, and/or transfer of student records. Upon identification, potential ELLs take the state-mandated ACCESS for ELLs standardized assessment to test English language proficiency. This test scores students' English proficiency on a scale of 1 – 6, 1 being least proficient and 6 being most proficient. ELL staff then creates an Individual Learning Plan for each student. Learners who score a 6 will generally test out of receiving ELL services, but will still be monitored, while students scoring 1-

5 will receive ELL support. Albert High School provides four types of sheltered instruction courses, and also supports and/or co-teaches all mainstream courses that are attended by students who receive ELL services. These services will be described further in a later section.

Data Collection

I began my research by gathering all relevant artifact data, such as formal written policies, demographic data from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and newspaper articles about Latina/o families and students in the area before entering the field. This data was read in order to have a better understanding of the current issues in the community and in the school.

Participants

Upon entering the field, I recruited the principal of Albert High School and the District ELL Program Coordinator as participants and interviewed them in order to gain a better understanding of the important education policy issues and of the Latina/o population at the school. After interviewing the principal, she introduced me to the three ELL teachers at the school who I also recruited as participants. At that point, I was given access to observe the school's ELL classes. Through this time in the classroom, I recruited six student participants who fit the inclusion criteria of self-identifying as Mexican and currently receiving ELL services. Later, the Spanish Bilingual Paraprofessional, the District Secondary School Curriculum Coordinator, and the District Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment were also recruited as participants because students and teachers identified them as playing significant roles in the policies and practices affecting MEBs at Albert High School. Table 3 provides an overview of the participants, including their grade level or work position; following this table, I provide a more detailed description of the participants.

Table 3		
<i>Participant Summary Table</i>		
Focal Participants		
Students	Teachers	Administrators
Lucas, 12 th grade	Amelia Becker, Bilingual Paraprofessional	Melissa Baker, District ELL Coordinator
Guadalupe, 12 th grade	Ryan Bowden, ELL Teacher	Nicole Schmidt, Principal
Beatriz, 11 th grade	Anna Kovalenko, ELL Teacher	Kathy Strand, District Secondary School Curriculum Coordinator
Manuel, 10 th grade	Alex Neumann, ELL Teacher	Lee Zimmerman, District Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Vanessa, 9 th grade		
Isabel, 9 th grade		

Teachers. Albert High School's three full-time ELL teachers all agreed to participate in this study as did the school's only Spanish language paraprofessional. All four of the teacher participants are comparatively new teachers and have worked in the River City School District for a relatively short period of time. Mr. Neumann has been at Albert High School the longest of the four, for three years, while Mr. Bowden, Miss Kovalenko, and Mrs. Becker have all been there for two years. They explained the recent turnover of teachers through a combination of increased retirement after the Budget Repair Bill and ideological differences between certain teachers and district administrators concerning how much sheltered instruction EBs should receive (field notes, October 10, 2014).

All four of the teacher participants varied in background and native language. Mr. Bowden is a native English speaker from the Chicago area, Mr. Neumann is also a native English speaker but is from a nearby medium-size Wisconsin city, Ms. Kovalenko is a native Russian speaker from Russia, and Mrs. Becker is a native Spanish speaker from Chile. Of the four

teacher participants, only Mr. Bowden planned to be an ELL teacher at Albert High School for the foreseeable future. Mr. Neumann often expressed a desire to move into school administration while Miss Kovalenko discussed returning to graduate school because she wanted to teach at the postsecondary level. Finally, although Mrs. Becker said she enjoyed her position at the school, she was unhappy with her part-time appointment and also stated that she would prefer to work with younger learners. Interestingly, in the year following this study (2015-2016), only Mr. Neumann and Mr. Bowden returned to Albert High School.

Albert High School offered both sheltered instruction for ELLs and supported instruction in mainstream classes. There were six sheltered instruction courses; three Academic Skills courses that focused on assisting ELLs with completing assignments, correcting assignments, or preparing for exams, two English for Mastery courses that were intended to assist ELLs with their English language development, an International Seminar that was meant as an alternative to the freshman seminar for students with beginning English skills, and a Newcomer English course meant for recently arrived students. Mr. Neumann taught the International Seminar, the Newcomer English course, and one of the Academic Skills courses. Mr. Bowden and Miss Kovalenko each taught one Academic Skills course and one English for Mastery course. Mr. Neumann, Mr. Bowden, and Miss Kovalenko were also responsible for team teaching mainstream classes that ELLs attended. Based on their educational background, Miss Kovalenko typically supported language classes, Mr. Bowden supported social studies classes, and Mr. Neumann supported math and science courses. Additionally, because of their Spanish language abilities, either Mr. Neumann or Mrs. Becker would support mainstream courses that native Spanish speaking newcomers attended.

Administrators. I also recruited four administrators, the school Principal, the district's Director of Curriculum and Assessment, the district's ELL Program Coordinator, and the district's Secondary School Curriculum Coordinator, who played key roles in the policy formation and implementation process. These four administrators either self-identified or were identified by others as key actors in deciding how policies were enacted in the district and at the school.

Unlike the four teacher participants, the four administrator participants all had 20 or more years of experience in education. Also, although backgrounds varied for administrator participants in terms of coming from rural or urban areas, all were White, middle-class Midwesterners. The principal of Albert High School, Dr. Schmidt, was previously an English high school teacher in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area for about five years. She then moved to River City about 10 years ago to work as the vice-principal of Albert High School. Following the retirement of the previous principal, she was promoted to the principal position, where she has been for six years. As previously mentioned, the district's ELL Program Coordinator, Melissa Baker, has worked in the district for 20 years as both a teacher and administrator. The district's Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Dr. Lee Zimmerman, has also worked in the district for a considerable amount of time. He began as a secondary school music and history teacher, then became an elementary school principal, then a middle school principal, and now has been in his current position for five years. On the other hand, the district's Secondary School Curriculum Coordinator, Kathy Strand, only began at the district the summer before this study. However, prior to working in River City, she held school counseling and administrative education positions in a large Wisconsin city for over 20 years. Also, all administrator participants have some graduate schooling in Education; Principal Schmidt and Dr. Zimmerman

both hold PhDs, Ms. Strand is currently pursuing her PhD, and Ms. Baker holds a Master's degree.

Students. The inclusion criteria for student participation in this study was to self-identify as Mexican, currently receive ELL services, and attend Albert High School. Therefore, although this study specifically examines the experiences of MEBs, the openness of the inclusion criteria also allows for a considerable amount of diversity among the participants in terms of age, gender, English level, educational success, and family background. Of the six student participants, three (Lucas, Guadalupe, and Manuel) were born in Mexico and three (Beatriz, Vanessa, and Isabel) were born in the US. However, although Beatriz was born in the US, she was raised in Mexico from ages 4 to 15, then recently moved back to the US. The student participants also varied in their English language proficiency level; Vanessa and Isabel were upper level, Lucas and Guadalupe were mid-level, and Beatriz and Manuel were lower level. Participants also included both males and females and varied from 9th to 12th grade. There was also variation among educational attainment, family status and living situation, economic level, and out-of-school responsibilities. These variations will be described at length in the next chapter (Chapter 4).

Participant Observations

Weekly participant observations at Albert High School were conducted from October 2014 through May 2015. These observations centered around my 10 student and teacher participants and utilized a protocol that emphasized policy implementation and participant understanding or reaction to policy implementation. Furthermore, during observations I took special note of the role of language, race, class, and ethnicity. The observation protocol used in this study can be found in Appendix A.

All of my student participants were enrolled in at least two of the sheltered instruction courses that my teacher participants taught. Therefore, during my weekly observations, I would attend at least three sheltered instruction courses per day, rotating them by week. I also observed a variety of core content courses attended by my student participants and team taught by my teacher participants. I attended English 9, English 11, Consumer Math, Algebra I, Global Studies, and Humanities with the most frequency because at least three of my participants were present in those courses. In addition to attending formal classes, depending on the day, I also ate lunch with both student and teacher participants, attended teacher meetings, and had informal conversations with student participants after school. During participant observation, I recorded notes of the day and later wrote full field notes after leaving the field. I conducted a total of 120 hours of participant observation.

Interviews

I also conducted semi-structured formal interviews with each of the participants that ranged from 25:00 to 65:00 minutes in length. Additionally, I conducted follow-up interviews with two participants (District ELL Coordinator Melissa Baker and Principal Schmidt) that ranged from 30:00 to 50:00 minutes in length. Interviews with student participants centered on student backgrounds, family life, schooling experiences, and language use as well as questions pertaining to things I had noticed during participant observation. Interviews with teachers and administrators focused on policy enactment, professional role at the school, and impressions of Latina/o student at the school. The interview protocols used in this study can be found in Appendices B and C. A total of 9 hours and 20 minutes of interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Researcher Positionality

My research is epistemologically grounded in what Anyon (2009) has termed “critical social theory” which includes “various types of scholarship that critique domination and subordination, promote emancipatory interests, and combine social and cultural analysis with interpretation, critique, and social explanation” (p. 2). Specifically, my intellectual development has been significantly shaped by the work of critical scholars, such as Paulo Freire (1970), bell hooks (1994), and Antonio Gramsci (1971) as well as the work of Critical Race and Latina/o Critical Race theorists and Postcolonial theorists. I recognize that my epistemology informs my understanding of the world and cannot be separated from my researcher identity.

Likewise, my identity as a White, middle-class Wisconsinite also has implications for how I understand my research and how I am positioned by my participants. While I cannot claim insider status as a MEB, I can claim an insider understanding of the cultural practices of small, working class Wisconsin communities. There are many similarities between where I grew up and where my study took place as both are predominantly White, working class, small Wisconsin cities that are a mix of industrial laborers and farmers. Therefore, I was able to identify with many shared cultural practices, community understandings, and linguistic particularities.

At the same time, my Spanish language abilities, my knowledge of Mexico from living there, and my experiences as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher gave me some shared cultural and linguistic understandings with the MEBs in my study. Nevertheless, despite this shared knowledge, student participants still positioned me as a *maestra* (teacher) even though they knew I was a researcher and that they were participating in my research study. For example, although I told student participants that they could call me Bailey and use the informal “*tú*” form when conversing with me, they insisted throughout the year to use the more formal

“*usted*” with me and refer to me as either “*maestra*” or “*maestra* Bailey.” This speaks to both the Mexican cultural practice of showing respect to teachers and people who are older as well as the fact that they still saw me as a middle-class, young White woman who fit the profile for what they considered a “teacher.” Likewise, teachers and administrators in my study seemed to view me as “one of their own.” This also speaks to the fact that most Wisconsin teachers are White middle-class females. Therefore, I believe that while my social identity made it more difficult to develop trust and bonds with MEBs, it made it easier to gain trust and have open dialogue with administrators and teachers.

Data Analysis

Throughout data collection, I continually wrote daily field notes and researcher memos to later assist my analysis. Upon leaving the field, I began to conduct data analysis. I first listened to all interviews, completed their transcriptions, and memoed my impressions. I then printed and read all field notes, interview transcripts, and research memos to look for preliminary patterns and/or ideas that stood out. Using Dedoose qualitative analysis software, I uploaded all artifacts, field notes, researcher memos, and interview transcripts and began preliminary coding. My first cycle coding produced over 100 preliminary codes. Table 4 provides a list of these preliminary codes, organized by category. These categories included, “participants/people,” “class/course,” “relationships,” “policy,” “testing,” “themes,” “schooling.” “Participant/people” codes referred to my participants or other important people, “class/course” codes referred to classes my participants took, “relationships” refers to relationships among my participants and other key people or groups, “policy” refers to various formal policies, and “testing” refers to when testing occurred or was discussed. The “themes” and “schooling” code categories are less straightforward. In general, “schooling” codes referred to pedagogical or structural elements of school,

and “themes” referred to a broad range of patterns and concepts I noticed in the data. It is also important to note that much of the data was coded with more than one code, and I also had a code for quotes that stood out to me.

Participants/ People	Class/ Course	Relationships	Policy	Testing	Themes	Schooling
Academic learning coaches	Newcomer English class	MEBs and White peers	Special Education Policy changes	Testing	Race/ Discrimination/ Diversity	Immigration grant
Amelia Becker	English for Mastery	MEBs and other EB groups	Decision making	CBAs	Frustration/ anxiety	Kids attitude about school
Beatriz	Academic Skills	Teacher's attitudes about students and school	Redesign Initiative	ELL Accommodations	Future	Charter school
Chinese students	English 9	Teacher's opinions on parents	Federal/ State	STAR test	Bravery and perseverance	School's physical environment
Dr. Lee Zimmerman	English 11	Interactions among MEBs	CCSS	Teaching to the test	Poverty	College
Dr. Nicole Schmidt	International Seminar	Co teaching	Funding	Math retake	Crime and Punishment	Learning
Guadalupe	Consumer Math	Admins and teachers	Teacher pay	CBAs as	Legality	Teacher expectations
Isabel	Algebra 1	Admins and students/ families		Career and college ready	Troublemakers	Course requirements/ Curriculum
Kathy Strand	Global Studies	Unity among Latinos			Unintended consequences	Pedagogy
Lucas	Humanities	Immigrant reception			Catching up	Differentiation
Manuel	English 10				Rowdy students	ELL programming
Melissa Baker	US History				Lacking materials	ELL classification
Miss Kovalenko	Sheltered Classes				Motivation	Student interests
Mr. Bowden	ELL meeting				Gang issues	Grades
Mr. Neumann					Language	Sherman Alexie book
Families of ELLs					Students working	Teacher turnover
Vanessa					Typical days	Tucker
Vice Principal					Homesick-Mexico	
					Moving in US	

After completing first cycle coding, I went through several additional coding cycles to further analyze data and produce final thematic categories. As Saldaña's (2012) states, this transition period from first cycle to second cycle coding was at times an "awkward" (p. 187) process. This means that I had to employ several different coding techniques, have discussions with others about my data in order to process my thoughts, and produce more analytic memos to get my thoughts on paper. In the second cycle coding, I used theoretical coding, focused coding, and also thematic coding techniques (Saldaña, 2012). I also drew upon Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990) to pull codes together into my findings. Still, the data analysis did not stop there. Because of the iterative nature of qualitative research, analysis has continued every time I read, discuss, or even think about my study. Therefore, there have been numerous times while writing this dissertation that I have gone back to the data.

Trustworthiness

Most quantitative researchers use notions of reliability, validity, and generalizability to refer to how sound or accurate the research is and if it can be reproduced. While some qualitative researchers have tried to adjust those standards to fit qualitative work, others have rejected quantitative measurements for qualitative research and put forth new standards. For example, Maxwell (2010) still uses the term "validity," but offers a distinct checklist for qualitative researchers. Items on that checklist include, "intensive, long-term involvement," "rich data," "collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings," "using a variety of methods," "respondent validation," inclusion of "discrepant evidence and negative cases," and use of "quasi-statistics" and "explicit comparison" (p. 283-284). While many qualitative researchers may deem this checklist appropriate to judge the quality of qualitative research, Maxwell's list still employs a positivist viewpoint of truth in inquiry.

On the other hand, Finlay (2006) rejects the traditional positivist evaluation and argues that qualitative research “needs to be argued for and justified against established criteria” (p. 3) in order to avoid criticism for simply being qualitative research. She puts forth a different set of criteria: rigor, ethical integrity, and artistry. She states that the term “trustworthiness” is often used by qualitative researchers in place of “validity.” To her, this term encompasses both rigor and relevance. With respect to “ethical integrity,” Finlay offers the **4 C’s** [bolding present in the original text] of qualitative research: clarity, credibility, contribution, and communicative resonance. Finally, to describe “artistry,” she discusses the importance of presenting work in a powerful and persuasive manner.

While Finlay’s (2006) definition of qualitative “trustworthiness” may be open to a variety of interpretations, it aligns with the multiple understandings of qualitative inquiry as well as qualitative researchers’ deep involvement and commitment to their participants. Throughout my study, I have tried to use Finlay’s criteria for trustworthy research by spending extensive amounts of time in the field and with my data, communicating the voices of my participants to the best of my ability, and trying to write persuasively to ultimately help produce social transformation.

Limitations

Arguably, one of the limitations of this study is that it is “just” one school. This speaks to a common critique of qualitative research having sample sizes that are too small to make generalizations (Cresswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2010). While I agree that what happens at Albert High School in River City does not transfer to what happens at all schools in all towns, and what happens at Albert High School this year does not necessarily mean that the same will happen next year, an in-depth examination of one place at one time does offer valuable insights and

understandings of the whole. Furthermore, a complex understanding of the policy and practice interactions in one district adds to the knowledge of how interactions operate on a larger scale. Additionally, another potential limitation of this study is that it did not directly involve family members of MEBs nor did I conduct home visits. Although these questions warrant further research, they were outside of the scope of this study.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the study's methodological approach, data collection methods, and analytic process. This chapter has also described the research setting, site, and participants. A major issue to keep in mind throughout reading the subsequent chapters is that River City is a changing community. River City has experienced a significant demographic and economic shift in the past 20 years that ultimately has an effect on how immigrant communities and other Communities of Color are received. This also means that River City schools are serving a poorer and more diverse student body than ever before with less state and local resources. The following chapters (4 – 6) will discuss my analytic findings. Chapter 4 uses ethnographic portraits of student participants to illuminate both key educational issues for MEBs as well as the heterogeneous nature of this population. Chapter 5 focuses on policy enactment and connects large-scale market-based educational reforms to participant experiences. Finally, Chapter 6 uses counter-storytelling to illustrate the racialized experiences of MEBs in River City and examine both the internalization as well as rejection of dominant narratives concerning this population.

Chapter 4: Who are Mexican Emergent Bilinguals? Highlighting Key Issues through Ethnographic Student Portraits

It is essential for educators and education policymakers to have a strong understanding of the key issues in Latina/o education, such as language and immigration, particularly those facing Mexican and Mexican-American schoolchildren, who make up our largest Latina/o demographic, in order to better serve this growing population. At the same time, it is also important to understand the heterogeneous nature of these learners. Often times, Mexico is viewed by the dominant US culture as a uniform place made up by a homogeneous people. However, Mexico is actually an extremely diverse place comprised of a multitude of languages, cultures, and ethnicities. Thus, in order to better serve Mexican and Mexican-American schoolchildren, a strong understanding of this population's diversity is also needed. This heterogeneity can be seen through my six student participants; whose diverse backgrounds illustrate the wide variation in what it means to be "Mexican." This chapter uses ethnographic portraits of student participants to highlight both the key educational issues for Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs) and also to draw attention to the heterogeneous nature of this population.

Key Issues for Mexican Emergent Bilinguals

In this study, I am defining Mexican Emergent Bilinguals as US schoolchildren who self-identify as Mexican and who receive ELL services. I have estimated that the total population of MEBs in the US is approximately 2.3 million⁵. Wisconsin serves approximately 1 percent of this

⁵ According to the Migration Policy Institute, there were approximately 5 million ELLs in US schools in 2014 and about 73 percent of all ELLs speak Spanish. This indicates there are approximately 3,650,000 Spanish speaking ELLs. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, 65 percent of all Spanish speaking immigrants in the US come from Mexico (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, Cuddington, 2013). Therefore, 65 percent of 365,000 people is 2,372,500 people.

this number, 23,000 learners⁶. My definition includes both children who were born in Mexico and migrated to the US as well as children of Mexican descent who were born in the US. Thus, while other researchers may want to distinguish these populations from one another, I am arguing that the commonalities in their experiences warrants examining this population as a whole. Nevertheless, as this chapter will argue, educators must recognize that even though MEBs and their families share common historical trajectories and key educational issues, the heterogeneous nature of this population necessitates further attention. The following section discusses key issues that concern this population, including migration trends, economic factors, and cultural and linguistic considerations.

Immigration

While it is arguably common knowledge in the US that migration from Mexico has grown, the specific details of this migration trend are less commonly discussed. A 2010 Mexican Federal Government Report (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2010) examined the greater migration trends from Mexico to the US and found that in addition to increasing numbers, there were also shifts in the gender of migrants, the Mexican states from which migrants came, and their length of stay in the US. Figure 3 highlights the Mexican municipalities with the highest migration numbers; the areas from which the most migrants came are darker while the areas from which fewer migrants came are lighter. The majority of these municipalities are in the central and west-central Mexican states of Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Querétaro, and Zacatecas and on the border of the south-central states of Puebla and Oaxaca.

⁶ According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction there were 33,113 Spanish speaking ELLs in the state of Wisconsin in 2014. UW-Madison Applied Population Laboratory estimates that 70 percent of all Spanish speaking immigrants in Wisconsin come from Mexico (Long & Veroff, 2014). Therefore, 70 percent of 33,113 is 23,179.

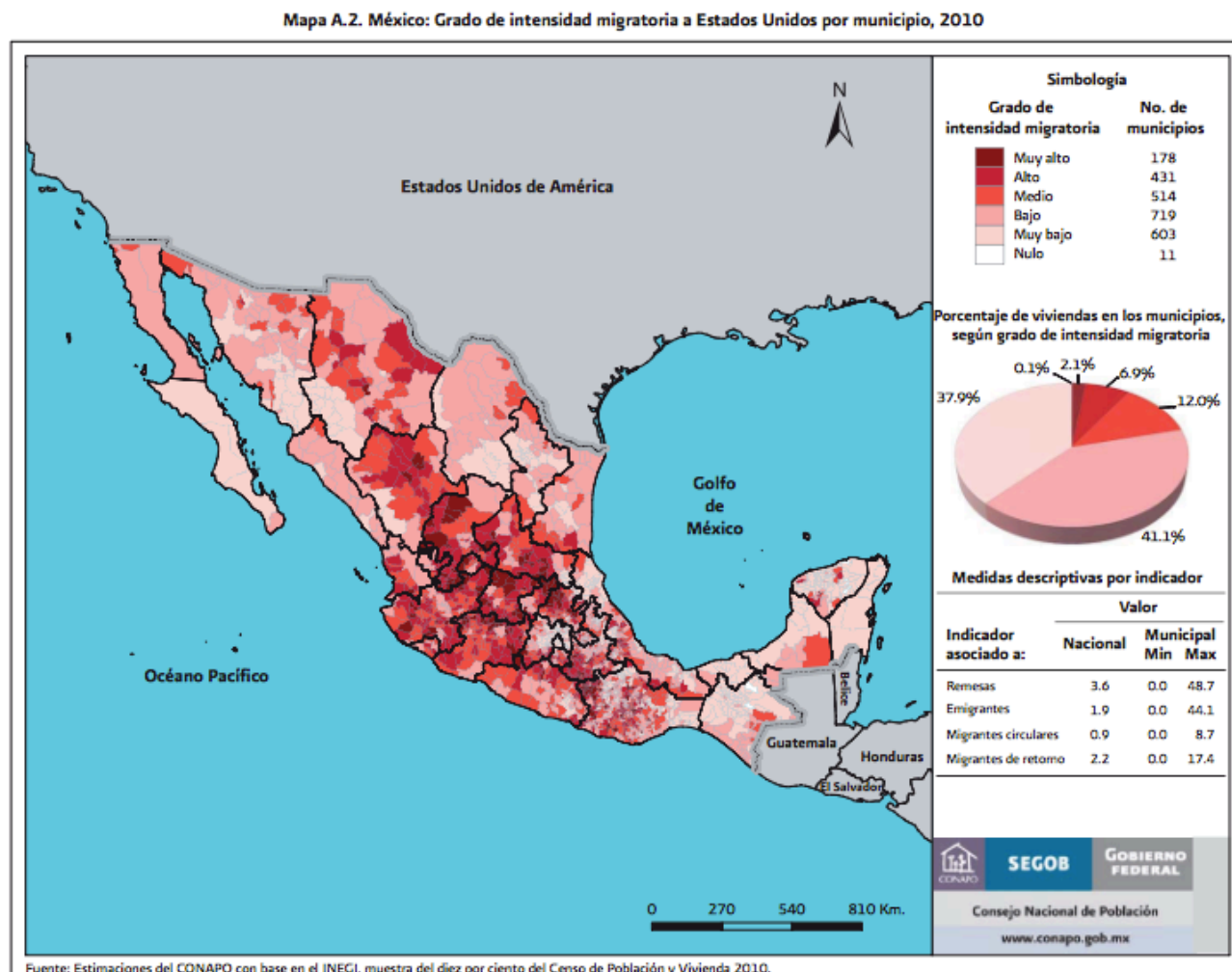


Figure 3. Map of Migration Intensity to the US by Mexican municipality. (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2010)

This report (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2010) connects Mexican migration to the Bracero Program, which began in 1942. During this time, a significant number of Mexican migrants traveled predominantly to the southwestern US for work. The report argues that the majority of migrants at that time were men who stayed for short periods of time. They also argue that the majority of these migrants came from what they refer to as “traditional” migration states (Aguascalientes, Colima, Durango, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Nayarit, San Luis Potosi, and Zacatecas). Following the elimination of the Bracero program in 1964, migration from these “traditional” migration states continued at similar rates despite the increased difficulty of

obtaining proper documentation. The report argues that throughout the 1980s, migration increased because of the Mexican economic crisis. However, migration from the northern region of the “traditional” migration states decreased at that time while migration increased from other central states, namely Morelos and Hidalgo. They estimate that the approximate 2.2 million Mexicans living in the US in 1980 doubled to over 4.4 million by 1990 (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2010).

Furthermore, the report (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2010) argues that following the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, not only did migrant numbers increase exponentially, but also the very nature of Mexican migration began to change. They claim that throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s more women migrated to the US, Mexican migrants were generally staying longer, and migrants were coming from more diverse regions in Mexico. They argue that while the “traditional” migration states accounted for about 50 percent of Mexicans who migrated to the US between 1995-2000, this region only accounted for 40 percent between 2005-2010. At the same time, numbers from central states (namely Hidalgo, Morelos, Puebla, and Querétaro) and southern states (namely Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Veracruz) increased. In addition to the increasing number of Mexican migrants in the US (8.1 million in 2000 and 11.9 million in 2010), migrants who have settled in the US over the past 30 years have had families and children. The report estimates over 20 million second and third generation Mexicans now live in the US (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2010). More recently, however, migration numbers have decreased with approximately one million Mexicans leaving the US and returning to Mexico in the five years following the 2008 Recession (Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015).

It is important for educators and education policymakers to understand this information in order to have a better understanding of who MEBs and their families are and why they have come to the US. The top 10 states from which Mexican migrants originate (Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Puebla, Querétaro, and Zacatecas) are located in the multicultural central region that has been plagued by drug cartel violence. For example, the state of Michoacán, where over one million Mexican migrants originate (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2010) is the original home of the Purhépecha people who still account for about 3 percent of the state's population (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, 2001). Unfortunately, this state is also one that has been hit hardest by drug violence with both La Familia Michoacana and the Knights Templar cartels having home bases in the state. In fact, according to PBS, over 160,000 people have died in Mexico because of drug related violence in the past 10 years (Breslow, 2015).

It is important for educators to be aware of the histories and issues of the home areas of the MEBs that they serve. For example, drug violence has become an increasingly common reason for Mexicans to leave Mexico and migrate to the US. The violence and corruption in some parts of Mexico has become so severe that 89 journalists have been killed and another 17 have gone missing since 2000 (Reporters Without Borders, 2016). Likewise, "ordinary" citizens have increasingly been kidnapping targets with activists estimating that 76 kidnappings occurred every day in 2013 (Partlow, 2014). The severity of this issue came to the global stage in 2014 with news of the disappearance of 43 student-teachers in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero (another state with high migration numbers). It was subsequently found that these students were murdered by drug traffickers with government connections (Tuckman, 2015). This violence, and the subsequent fear it imparts, has affected numerous Mexicans across Mexico. Additionally, many

Mexicans have had friends and/or family that have been directly impacted. Thus, it is essential that educators realize that students may come from backgrounds of trauma, and that they are sensitive to these issues when working with MEBs and their families.

Economic Factors

Increased drug violence is a more recent reason for Mexican migration to the US, whereas economic concerns have been the primary catalyst since the Bracero Program. Mexico has struggled with poverty and economic crises for some time. In the 1970s, after discovering large oil reserves off the coast of the Gulf Mexico, Mexico borrowed heavily from foreign banks only to later discover that much of the oil was low grade, causing them to go deeply in debt. This debt eventually led to the devaluing of the Mexican peso in 1982, which led to increased inflation and an economic recession that caused the Mexican government to take out another large foreign loan (this time from the United States) (Hamnett, 2006). For the Mexican people, this has meant decreased wages and increased unemployment. This crisis worsened after the previously discussed NAFTA was implemented in 1994. By the year 2010, almost half of all Mexicans lived in poverty with over 10 percent living in extreme poverty. The states with the highest percentages of people living in poverty in 2010 were Chiapas (78.5), Guerrero (67.6), Oaxaca (67.4), and Puebla (61.2) (National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy, 2012), which also happen to be four of the states with increasing numbers of Mexican migrants to the US. However, even though these economic struggles are a direct cause of migration to the US, Mexican immigrants who find themselves in such situations are less likely to obtain a US visa since the US immigration system generally favors “skilled” workers with formal education. Unfortunately, the majority (64 percent) of adult Mexicans have not completed high school (grades 10-12), with rural Mexicans often having even less formal education

(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2013). Thus, although educational attainment rates in Mexico have improved within the past 10 years, there are still significant gaps.

These issues are important for educators and education policymakers in the US because they directly speak to the life experiences of MEBs and their families. Many Mexican migrants who come to the US have limited job prospects because of a lack of formal education and sometimes a lack of documentation. This often means that the families of MEBs will have to work more than one job, and MEBs will be responsible for assisting with household expenses or household labor. Therefore, although scholars (Dyrness, 2007; Valdés, 1996) have shown Latina/o parents' deep commitment to their children's education in the US, their understanding of formal schooling and the ways in which they assist their children with their formal schooling may look different than those of White, middle class parents.

Fear, Stigma, and the Impact of Being Undocumented

Educators must also be sensitive to another major immigration issue, the challenge of obtaining proper documentation and/or living in the US without those documents. It is estimated that there are approximately 11 million undocumented Mexican migrants currently living in the US (Passel & Cohn, 2011). While the previously discussed *Plyler v. Doe* grants public education to all children regardless of documentation status, there are still numerous challenges and fears associated with living in the US without documents for MEBs and their families. To begin, adolescent MEBs who lack proper documentation have limited postsecondary options (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010). While students can currently apply for the federal government's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to obtain a two-year permit to defer removal action and receive employment authorization, it is far from a "path to citizenship" (US Citizenship and

Immigration Services, 2016). Furthermore, DACA does not grant federal student aid for college. In fact, in many states across the country (including Wisconsin) undocumented students are not eligible for in-state tuition at state universities no matter how long they have lived in that state. Thus, although DACA may offer a brief peace of mind regarding the fear of deportation, it also continues the US's long tradition of viewing Mexicans as disposable laborers who are only eligible for limited-term work permits. Additionally, applying for DACA also carries the risk of providing the federal government with personal information that could later be used against a person depending on future administrations' views on immigration.

Likewise, the fear and stigma associated with being undocumented affects numerous MEBs and their families (Abrego, 2011). Even if an MEB were born in the US, he or she may be struggling with having undocumented parents or with being separated from his or her family because of the immigration process (Humans Rights Watch, 2007). This fear can be an overwhelming burden for MEBs, their families, and their communities. In fact, mental health professionals have argued that undocumented migrants are more likely to deal with issues of isolation, exploitation, fear, stress, and depression (Holmes, 2011; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005). These issues undoubtedly impact MEBs' schooling experiences, which warrants additional services and understanding from the educators and education policymakers who work with them.

Language and Culture

As previously discussed, Mexico is made up of a very diverse population in terms of race, class, and ethnicity. While the majority of Mexicans are considered *mestizos*⁷, over 12 million Mexicans (about 13 percent of the total population) self-identify as indigenous and speak one of Mexico's 62 officially recognized indigenous languages (Minority Rights Group

⁷ The term "*mestizo*" is used in Latin America to refer to someone of mixed Spanish and Native American ancestry.

International, 2008). The indigenous peoples of Mexico have suffered historical oppression for centuries. Spanish colonizers subjugated indigenous groups through forced assimilation that attempted to destroy indigenous languages, cultures, and religions, and forced labor through the *encomienda* system. However, indigenous Mexicans have survived and persisted, which can be seen through the enduring presence of indigenous languages and cultures in Mexico today. Still, indigenous Mexicans are more likely to have less formal education than their *mestizo* counterparts as well as less access to economic capital. Furthermore, the implementation of NAFTA allowed cheaper agricultural products to be imported into Mexico, making it more difficult for indigenous farmers to sell their crops (Gonzalez, 2011). This has contributed to the increasing migration from southern Mexican farming states (such as Oaxaca and Chiapas) that generally have higher indigenous populations (Bacon, 2014). Thus, indigenous Mexicans have arguably made up an increasing portion of the MEBs in US schools, which indicates that educators need to be aware of their unique cultural and linguistics needs.

Additionally, educators must also consider the cultural and linguistic needs of the Spanish-English speaking MEB majority. While there is considerable debate over the “best” way to educate emergent bilinguals, recent research has affirmed that bilingualism (or multilingualism) does not hinder language acquisition but rather positively affects an individual’s linguistic and educational development (Bhabha, 2004; Canagarajah, 2013; Cummins, 2008; Gutiérrez, 2008; Kramsch, 2009; Pennycook, 2010). This research shifts the research paradigm away from both “subtractive” bilingual practices (Lambert, 1974) that expect learners to eventually stop using their native language as they learn English as well as “additive” bilingualism (Lambert, 1974) that expects learners to have one language and then gain another. Instead, more recent bilingual theories and research, such as Ofelia García’s concept of

“translanguaging” (2009), recognize the bilingual condition of Emergent Bilinguals through more fluid and dynamic notions of language meaning and interaction. According to García and Li (2014), translanguaging

...does not refer to two separate languages nor to a synthesis of different language practices or to a hybrid mixture. Rather translanguaging refers to *new* [emphasis in original] language practices that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories, and releases histories and understandings that had been buried within fixed language identities (p. 21).

Translanguaging also reflects the deep relationship language has with cultural identity. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) also addresses this idea by writing about her fluid Chicana language practices. She writes,

So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language. I cannot take pride in myself...Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate (p. 59).

Anzaldúa’s words highlight the importance of recognizing and legitimizing the fluid nature of bilingualism, specifically Latina bilingualism. This underscores the need for US educators and education policymakers to recognize the intimate relationship between MEBs’ language and culture.

Highlighting Key Issues through Participants' Lived Experiences

The lives and experiences of the six Mexican Emergent Bilinguals who participated in this study speak to the key issues of migration, socio-economic concerns, culture, and language that I have discussed. These six student participants represent a wide range of what it means to be both Mexican and a Mexican Emergent Bilingual. Each of the students (or their families) came from different regions of Mexico and had different points of reference when discussing Mexico. For example, how students understood Mexico varied significantly depending on whether or not they were raised there. Those who came to the United States later in life had vivid memories of Mexico and expressed a longing to return, while those who were born and raised in the United States had little point of reference besides stories told by family members. Nevertheless, even though only four of the six student participants were raised in Mexico, all six self-identified, and were identified by others, as Mexican.

An additional commonality among participants was that they were all also classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) and received English Language Learner (ELL) services. Still, all six had different opinions of their language abilities. Some participants considered their English to actually be stronger than their Spanish, while another participant considered herself completely bilingual, and another was tri-lingual as she spoke an indigenous language with her family. Additionally, student participants who were raised in the US seemed to have less outside responsibilities as their families had been here longer and were more established. On the contrary, the recently arrived students had to take on more obligations such as looking after younger siblings and cousins or working jobs outside of school.

Still, all participants reported dealing with emotional and financial obligations that many of their non-immigrant peers were not dealing with. For example, all but one of the student

participants came from a mixed immigration status family, and all six of the student participants spoke of dealing with poverty related issues ranging from living on the “wrong side” of town to the burdens of family unemployment. These situations placed tremendous emotional, and sometimes financial, stress on the students and their families. Thus, it is essential that educators working with MEBs and education policymakers who take part in the creation and implementation of policies affecting MEBs take notice of these issues when serving this unique population.

In the following sections, I provide ethnographic portraits of each of the student participants that provide a rich picture of their lives and highlight how their experiences relate to broader issues that impact MEBs. Each of these portraits is accompanied by an artistic sketch that is not a direct depiction of the participant, but shares similar characteristics. I am including these sketches to help humanize the portraits and the research. With these portraits, I hope to offer the reader a better idea of who these learners are as well as how their experiences relate to the larger issues facing MEBs across the country.

Student Portraits

Beatriz

Beatriz is a quiet, mature 16-year-old. Despite her shy demeanor, she is always fully “made-up” with fashionable clothing. Beatriz’s typical days are busy. She gets up at 6:00, gets ready for school, and then helps her aunt get her niece ready. She eats breakfast at school after her uncle drops her off because she says there is not enough time at home. After school,



Figure 4. Beatriz (Siebers, 2016)

she goes home and quickly eats before leaving for one of her two jobs at a local restaurant and store. After working, she returns home and works on homework.

Although Beatriz was born in River City, she moved with her parents and two younger brothers to her parents’ small town near Toluca, Mexico when she was four. She says she does not remember much of her first four years in the US and considers Mexico to be her home. However, three years ago, her parents made the difficult decision to send her back to River City to attend high school even though they could not go with her. Her parents do not have the necessary legal paperwork to migrate to the US, but Beatriz’s aunt and uncle live in River City and agreed to allow Beatriz to live with them. In Mexico, she lived on a farm with her parents and brothers. In River City, she lives in a small home with her aunt, uncle, and 6-year-old niece. Beatriz reported being excited when she first returned to River City because she wanted to get to know where she was born. However, soon after arrival she missed her parents and her town and wanted to return home, but her uncle convinced her to stay. He told her that it would be better if

she stayed and studied so that she could learn English and get a better job. Her aunt and uncle believe being here is “*una oportunidad más grande* [a better opportunity]” (interview, February 3, 2015).

However, at school she reported dealing with people who are “*racistas* [racists]” (interview, February 3, 2015). She recounted several incidents of receiving strange looks or remarks when speaking Spanish with her friends or listening to Spanish music. She stated that in her freshman year, she met some Americans “*que eran muy racistas porque gritaban groserias* [that were very racist because they yelled bad things]” (interview, February 3, 2015), which made her think they did not like Mexicans and did not want them to be here. She also stated that her older cousin, who graduated from Albert High School a few years ago, experienced the same sort of incidents, saying that “*también eran muy racistas con él y también le gritaban ‘mexicano’* [they were racist with him too and they also yelled ‘Mexican’ at him]” (interview, February 3, 2015).

Even though Beatriz says that she likes Mexico better, she is slowly getting used to life here and stated she expects to be here for the foreseeable future. She seems to miss her parents very much and always becomes quite sad whenever she talks about them. She says she does not get to speak with them as often as she would like because there simply is not enough time. She wants to return to Mexico and be with them again, but her younger brother Roberto has just arrived to River City the summer before and she needs to stay and help him. She says there are also plans for her other brother to come here in the next year or two. She states that it is her responsibility to stay here and help her brothers and it would be selfish for her to leave. Now she is considering applying for a school scholarship that would pay for her to go to college and get an education degree as long as she agrees to come back to the district to teach. She told me that

she thinks she would like to be a teacher; however, she would prefer to work with younger children because high school students are “disrespectful” (interview, February 3, 2015).



Figure 5. Guadalupe (Siebers, 2016)

Guadalupe

Guadalupe is an active but soft-spoken 18-year-old senior. She loves playing soccer and also recently took up boxing. After school, she likes to visit with her favorite teacher Miss Kovalenko and then goes home to help her sister-in-law prepare supper or goes to work at a local department store. She says her home is always busy because she lives with her mother, father, two brothers, sister-in-law, and baby nephew.

Although Lupe is from Oaxaca, she came to Wisconsin 10 years ago when she was 7. Prior to living in River City, her family had lived in another Wisconsin town for six years but then moved to River City for employment reasons.

She says her family is very supportive of her education and urges her to take advantage of every opportunity. Her father attended school in Mexico only through sixth grade and then began working on his family’s coffee farm, while her mother was sent away from home as a child to work as a maid in a larger Mexican city. The family is originally from a small village in Oaxaca and speaks an indigenous language called Chinanteco. Lupe considers herself to be multilingual. Although her parents speak both Chinanteco and Spanish, she typically speaks Chinanteco with her mom. She also says she speaks Spanish with her friends and English at school. Even though Lupe arrived to the US over 10 years ago, she says she still struggles with English. She says that

“understanding the big words can be hard” and that she is “still not really good at speaking English but [she] tries” (interview, October 20, 2014).

Lupe plans on being a real estate agent after graduating. Although she admits to not looking into the process very much, she says she was told by the real estate agent who worked with her parents that if you pass a test you can be an agent and that the income of the job varies by how many houses are sold. Lupe also says she is not sure where she will go in the future. Her plan is to stay in River City for the next few years then maybe go to California where she has other relatives. She also is planning a trip back to Oaxaca to see her grandmother.

Manuel

Manuel is a sweet and smiley 15-years-old sophomore who loves soccer. Manuel arrived to the US just a few months before the study began and is living with his uncle’s family in River City. After school and on the weekends, Manuel works at his uncle’s restaurant, which he says is one of the reasons he came to River City.



Figure 6. Manuel (Siebers, 2016)

Prior to coming to the United States, Manuel lived in a small town in eastern Jalisco with his father while his mother lives in Texas with his four siblings. He says that his father wanted him to come to the US to have more opportunities and to get away from the dangers of living in Mexico. He told me that his cousin had recently experienced a mugging and beating that had frightened him and his dad. After this incident, Manuel left for Texas to live with his mother.

However, his mother sent him to River City to work at his uncle's restaurant because it was a "good job," (interview, December 3, 2014) and he could be a help to his uncle.

When Manuel arrived at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, even though he was almost a complete beginner with his English skills, his teachers considered his math and science skills to be strong. However, as the year progressed, he seemed to increasingly struggle academically. Through my observations, he seemed to become increasingly tired and disengaged as the year went on, and also struggled with computer literacy. He told me he often gets frustrated in class because he cannot understand the teacher or because he knows the answer but does not know how to say it in English. He said he also feels frustrated when White students stare at him for speaking Spanish with the bilingual paraprofessional. By the end of the school year, Manuel often spoke about missing Mexico and missing his family. He says he considers Mexico to be home and would ultimately like to return after finishing school.

Lucas

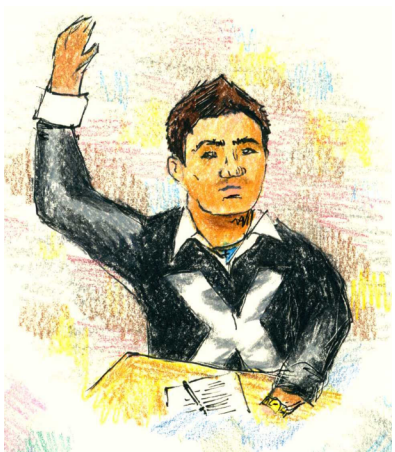


Figure 7. Lucas (Siebers, 2016)

Although Lucas is known throughout the school as a "trouble maker," he says his favorite things to do are write and hang out with his friends. Still, he says most days he struggles to make to it school on time and that he often does not return to school after lunch. I can also attest to observing him act up in class, skip class, and not complete work numerous times throughout the year. Still, despite the school attendance inconsistencies and "behavior" issues, Lucas says he is very responsible at work. He and Manuel have family ties and work at the same restaurant. Lucas

began working there when he was 15-years-old as a dishwasher, but has slowly worked his way up and now proudly boasts of being trusted with the keys to lock up at night.

Unfortunately, Lucas was also dealing with severe academic struggles to the point that by his senior year he was so credit deficient that he would not be able to graduate on time. This meant that Lucas would have to transfer to the alternative high school if he wanted to have any chance at obtaining a diploma. River City's alternative high school had a reputation among Albert High School's ELL teachers as a place "slacker" students can go and get an "easy" diploma. In fact, Mr. Neumann told me, "The kids who end up going to [the alternative school] are the ones who repeatedly refuse to take advantage of services that we've provided" (interview, October 20, 2014). However, Lucas told me that he was not happy to transfer schools because all of his friends were at Albert High School. Also, he told me that he was avoiding telling his mother about the transfer because he knew it would "upset" her (interview, January 20, 2015). Thus, the narrative the teachers provided for Lucas's transfer did not match the one he provided me.

Before Lucas's transfer, he told me that he was not sure what he was going to do after high school even though he was already in his senior year. He said he has thought about moving to California or Texas, where he has extended family, but that he will probably just continue working at the restaurant.



Figure 8. Vanessa and Isabel (Siebers, 2016)

Vanessa and Isabel

Vanessa and Isabel’s narratives are together because they were almost inseparable throughout the school year. They are best friends and often joke how they are each other’s only friends. Because they have almost all of their classes together, and even conducted their formal interview with me together, most of my participant observation and discussion with them involved both of them.

Both Vanessa and Isabel are 15-year-old freshman who were born in Wisconsin. Vanessa was born and raised in River City and lives with her mother, father, and three brothers. Isabel was born in a town near River City and then moved to River City about five years ago. Isabel lives with her mother and brother, and her father lives in Mexico with her two half brothers. Although both girls are classified as LEP and receive ELL services, they consider themselves bilingual speakers with Isabel going so far as to say that her English is better than her Spanish.

They are both cheerful and happy girls. Vanessa is very talkative both in and out of class and Isabel always seems to be giggling about something. They explain to me that the transition from middle to high school this year has been a big change. They tell me that the teachers’ expectations are higher, the school work is tougher, and their classmates try to act cooler. But they are very outgoing and say they have friends from many different cliques. They both love to dance in their spare time and are a part of the school’s hip hop dance club. They tell me that their club is very diverse saying that they “have black people, Mexican, a couple of White, but mostly

mixed,” but that they have had to deal with harassment on social networks from “White preps” on the all White cheer and pom pom teams (interview, December 17, 2014). They tell me that they think people need to be more open-minded and that it is hard sometimes because some of their White peers will make offensive statements and then act like they are joking.

Neither Vanessa nor Isabel have to work outside of school and both say their parents have been very supportive of their schooling. Isabel tells me how proud her mom is of her having been on the honors list last year. She also told me that her mom went back to school in the US for an associate’s degree because she wanted to leave her factory job and get a job in a medical field instead. Vanessa’s parents have been pushing her to focus on her schoolwork and avoid boyfriends so that she can go to college. She tells me that her dad went to high school in Mexico but her mom did not because they did not have enough money. Still, she said that both of her parents have encouraged her to learn and maintain her Spanish literacy by teaching her to read in Spanish.

Although neither of them is certain where they will be in the future, they are the only two student participants who confidently saw themselves going to college. Both of the girls consider themselves role models for their younger brothers and would like to pave the way for them to be able to do well in school and go on to college. Vanessa thinks that someday she would like to work in education and help people, and Isabel is toying between becoming a nurse or a graffiti artist.

Discussion

These brief ethnographic portraits of my student participants provide a snapshot into their lives and also highlight some of the key issues facing MEBs. Whether or not students were born in the US, most came from transnational family situations where some family members were in the US and others were in Mexico. In fact, Guadalupe and Vanessa were the only two student participants who were currently living with both of their parents. Both Lucas and Isabel lived with their mothers and siblings in River City, while their fathers were still in Mexico. Manuel and Beatriz, on the other hand, lived with extended family members. This family separation seemed to weigh heavily on students. In particular, Beatriz often brought up missing her parents and expressed sadness and frustration over them not being able to be with her. Unfortunately, her story is not uncommon; many MEBs across the country are dealing with separation from their loved ones because of the immigration process.

Likewise, the additional family and financial obligations many MEBs across the country are responsible for could also be seen through my participants. All four of the student participants raised in Mexico (Lucas, Guadalupe, Manuel, and Beatriz) held jobs outside of school. Lucas and Manuel had restaurant jobs while Guadalupe worked in a department store and Beatriz had a job at a restaurant and a store. All of the female participants also reported additional caretaking responsibilities. Both Guadalupe and Beatriz assisted in the care of young children who lived with them, while Isabel and Vanessa helped look after their younger brothers. Although these sorts of obligations are not uncommon with first-generation students (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999; Valverde 2006), it is important to recognize these additional responsibilities students have on top of learning advanced academic concepts in their “second” language. This may mean that students may not have as much time to devote to homework or

extracurricular activities, or may not be able to stay after school or come to school early.

Nevertheless, all six student participants consistently spoke of the educational support and/or encouragement they received from their parents and/or family members and articulated the idea of US education offering them “more opportunities” that they needed to take advantage of.

Furthermore, my student participants all represent a wide range of what it means to be an “emergent bilingual.” Linguistically all of the students spoke Spanish and English to varying degrees and were all receiving ELL services. However, the nature of their bilingualism and language preferences varied from student to student. Manuel and Beatriz both strongly preferred Spanish and considered English to be very difficult. This is not surprising considering the short amount of time both have been in the US and the fact that they speak Spanish the majority of time that they are outside of school. Lucas also prefers speaking in Spanish, but reported that he likes to write in English (interview, January 20, 2015). He told me that he likes to write in order to be creative and express his emotions, but that he never writes in Spanish. One reason for this is that he, like many MEBs, has not received any formal Spanish literacy instruction. On the other hand, Vanessa considers herself completely bilingual in English and Spanish and even told me that her parents have taught her to read and write in Spanish. Perhaps surprisingly, Isabel, who has lived in the US her entire life, reported that English is her preferred language even though she is currently considered “Limited English Proficient” by the school district. Finally, Guadalupe is tri-lingual as she speaks English at school, Spanish with her friends, and Chinanteco (an indigenous language) with her family. Of the three languages, she reported English to be most difficult for her even though she began formal US schooling in second grade. Thus, these student experiences represent the very broad and complicated ways in which bilingualism works.

Likewise, language was also one of the primary ways MEBs were racialized. Regardless of student participants' background, nationality, or socio-economic status, all student participants reported multiple incidents of racism and bias. This speaks to both the context of reception in River City and at Albert High School as well as to the larger socio-historical positioning of Mexicans as non-native others. The prevalence and severity of this positioning had a tremendous impact on the schooling experiences of MEBs and will be discussed at length in Chapter VI.

Finally, one of the most striking differences between student participants raised in Mexico and students raised in the US was their postsecondary expectations. Only Isabel and Vanessa, who were born and raised in the US, confidently planned to attend college. Although they were only freshmen at the time of the study, Vanessa already dreamed of being a pediatrician while Isabel planned to be a Registered Nurse if being a graffiti artist does not work out. In contrast, although Lucas and Guadalupe were in their senior years, neither was planning to go to college. Lucas believed he would continue at the restaurant while Guadalupe was debating taking an exam to become a real estate agent. However, Beatriz discussed the possibility of going to college and even considered applying for the district scholarship to become a teacher. Still, she was uncertain if that would be possible because of her caretaking responsibilities to her brothers.

Conclusion

As our Mexican and Mexican-American student population grows, it is all the more important for US educators to address their unique needs in schools. This chapter has provided a discussion and overview of some of the key educational issues pertaining to Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs). Specifically, this chapter has discussed the importance for educators and education policy makers to understand the significance of immigration issues, socio-economic

concerns, and cultural and linguistic factors when working with MEBs. These issues directly relate to the larger socio-historical positioning of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the US as well as to the impacts of neoliberal economic and immigration policies in the lives of MEBs and their families. Furthermore, this chapter has highlighted the significance of each of these issues through the diverse life experiences of the six MEBs involved in this study. These student portraits exemplify the role of immigration, economics, culture, and language in students' everyday lives and also illustrate how diverse this population truly is. Additionally, this chapter provides important context and background information for the arguments found in the subsequent two chapters; chapter V discusses the consequences of particular policy enactments on this population while chapter VI discusses the racialization of MEBs at Albert High School.

Chapter V: The “Unintended Consequences” of Market-Driven Educational Reforms on Mexican Emergent Bilinguals

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is part of the larger market-driven educational reform movement that emphasizes high-stakes assessment and accountability. These reforms follow a neoliberal worldview in which individuals are seen as rational consumers who are responsible for their individual pursuits of economic gain. Under this ideology everyone has an equal chance at success, as long as he works hard, and any failure is attributed to a lack of effort or a lack of investment in one’s own human capital. The more recent Race to the Top (RttT), which effectively required states to adopt Common Core State Standards (CCSS), expand charter schools, and implement teacher “effectiveness” measures, continues the logic of dismissing structural inequities and assuming all learners come to school with the same ways of learning and understanding. Furthermore, despite market-driven educational reform’s emphasis on school “choice,” which contains the embedded assumption that some schools are “better” than others, CCSS is built under the premise that if all students have the same standards and assessments then by default they have the same educational quality. This line of thinking ignores the importance of understanding and responding to learners’ diverse cultural and linguistic needs. Moreover, although some may claim that the Common Core standards themselves are not the problem because they represent “neutral” concepts all children should know, it is impossible to separate them from the multi-million dollar assessments they were designed to accompany. As a result, even though the curriculum is not explicitly prescribed, instruction is highly influenced by the ultimate testing that goes along with it, creating a test-preparation learning environment (Au, 2013).

Researchers have shown the severe implications of market-driven educational reforms on schools and learners. For example, Au (2013) and Cuban (2007) have argued that standardized assessments reshape teaching practices by narrowing both curriculum and instruction. Likewise, Koyama (2011) has argued that the narrow success measurements of standardized assessments reduce schools to data calculators and managers. Furthermore, numerous researchers (Fabricant & Fine, 2013; Lipman, 2011; Ravitch, 2013; Vasquez Heilig & Darling-Hammond, 2008) have also argued that these accountability and assessment reforms further disadvantage Students of Color by dispossessing community schools, excluding students, and undermining educational equity. For example, Valenzuela (2005) first drew attention to the ways in which high-stakes testing models do not address Latina/o students' needs after witnessing the educational disparities produced by Bush's "Texas Miracle," which served as the foundation of No Child Left Behind. Contreras (2010) has further argued that high-stakes testing models exacerbate historical inequalities for Latina/o students through implementing an "outcome oriented model... rooted in the deficit model paradigm" (p. 206). Moreover, Menken (2008) has shown the ways in which standardized testing policies have become the de facto language policy for Emergent Bilinguals (EBs), the majority of whom are native Spanish speakers.

Following an anthropology of education policy approach, this chapter identifies and describes particular policy initiatives that significantly impacted MEBs at Albert High School. These initiatives came in response to RttT and are situated within broader neoliberal policy worlds. This chapter discusses the enactment of these policies at Albert High School and their subsequent consequences for MEBs. It also provides a discussion of policy actors' roles, understandings, and responses. This discussion adds to our understanding of how high-stakes testing and accountability reforms are enacted in new destination districts, how policy actors are

responding to these reforms, and how these reforms are impacting the educational experiences of MEBs. My findings indicate that instead of providing a “level playing field” as proponents claim, these policies ignore and suppress learners’ individual and group differences. This resulted in numerous “unintended consequences” for MEBs and their teachers such as excessive testing, disconnected curriculum, and increased frustration and anxiety.

Key Policy Worlds

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RttT), which are both part of the larger neoliberal policy world (Shore, Wright, & Però, 2011), were the major policies that influenced the schooling experiences of MEBs at Albert High School. As previously discussed in Chapter II, these policies furthered market-driven ideals of competition, efficiency, standardization, and choice. However, as Shore and Wright (2011) argue, policies have “complex ‘social lives’ as people interact with them and as they in turn enter into relations with institutions and other artifacts” (p. 3). Thus, the enactment of particular policies can look very different on the ground than they do on paper. The following section will examine the enactment of these policies in Wisconsin, in the River City School District, and at Albert High School, as well as discuss the particular policy impacts on the lived experiences of MEBs.

Race to the Top and the NCLB Waiver

Although NCLB required 100% proficiency in test scores by 2014, it was clear by 2010 that the vast majority of school districts were not going to reach that goal. Therefore, as part of RttT, the Obama administration offered states “flexibility waivers” to avoid the 2014 deadline. However, in order to receive this waiver, states had to agree to implement, in the 2014-2015 school year, a federally approved standards and accountability system and one of the two multimillion dollar, federally-funded teacher and principal evaluation systems. Most states chose

to adopt Common Core State Standards (CCSS) with 46 state governors and superintendents signing on in 2009 (National Governors Association, 2015). Likewise, by the end of 2013, 24 states had signed up to use the Smarter Balanced assessment system (US Department of Education, 2013), and 22 states had agreed to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments (US Department of Education, 2013). By the 2014-2015 implementation year, 42 states and the District of Columbia were still CCSS members while seven states chose not to adopt the standards and one state adopted only part of them. It is also worth noting that by the beginning of 2016, only 11 states and the District of Columbia still plan to give the spring PARCC exam, 18 states plan to give the Smarter Balanced exam, and the remaining 20 states are giving their own tests. Thus, although RttT originally sought to create these standards and assessments to provide a uniform state-by-state comparison, many states have ultimately chosen to reject the standards and their related assessments, citing concerns over nationalized curriculum, financial costs, and the actual value of standardized testing (Brown, 2015).

The state of Wisconsin was one of that states that had agreed to adopt CCSS and the related Smarter Balanced assessments for the 2014-2015 school year. Additionally, in 2012, Wisconsin approved a \$7 million budget initiative to replace the previously used Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) with the ACT exam as the standardized assessment for high school students. This may seem strange at first glance, but both ACT and the College Board (SATs) were partners in developing the CCSS. In fact, the ACT website states,

...since ACT data, empirical research, subject matter expertise about what constitutes college and career readiness was lent to the Common Core development effort, significant overlap exists between the Common Core State Standards and the college and

career readiness constructs that ACT Aspire and the ACT measure (Clough & Montgomery, 2015).

Thus, the ACT aligns with CCSS. Or perhaps more aptly stated, CCSS align with the ACT. Moreover, ACT launched its Aspire versions of the exam in 2012 along with Pearson, who was also integral in implementing CCSS (Schneider, 2015). According to the ACT website, “ACT Aspire maps learner progress from grades three through high school on a vertical scale, anchored to the scoring system of the ACT” (discoveractaspire.org, 2015). This means that Aspire tests function as earlier versions of the ACT. Therefore, in the 2014-2015 CCSS implementation year, Wisconsin’s 9th graders took the ACT Aspire in both fall and spring, 10th graders took the WKCE in the fall and Aspire in the spring, and 11th graders took both the ACT and its related job skills test, Work Keys, in the spring.

Wisconsin Accountability System

In 2012, Wisconsin implemented a new accountability system that aligned with its NCLB waiver request (<http://dpi.wi.gov/accountability/historical>, 2015). As part of this system, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) “grades” school districts and individual schools through a “report card” on a scale of 0-100 for five categories of meeting expectations (see Figure 5 for an example). The primary indicators of school success on these report cards are test scores, graduation rates, and attendance. This is a very narrow measurement of what makes a school a good school, and there are many factors that it does not take into account, such as teacher-student relationships, student motivation, and schooling environment.

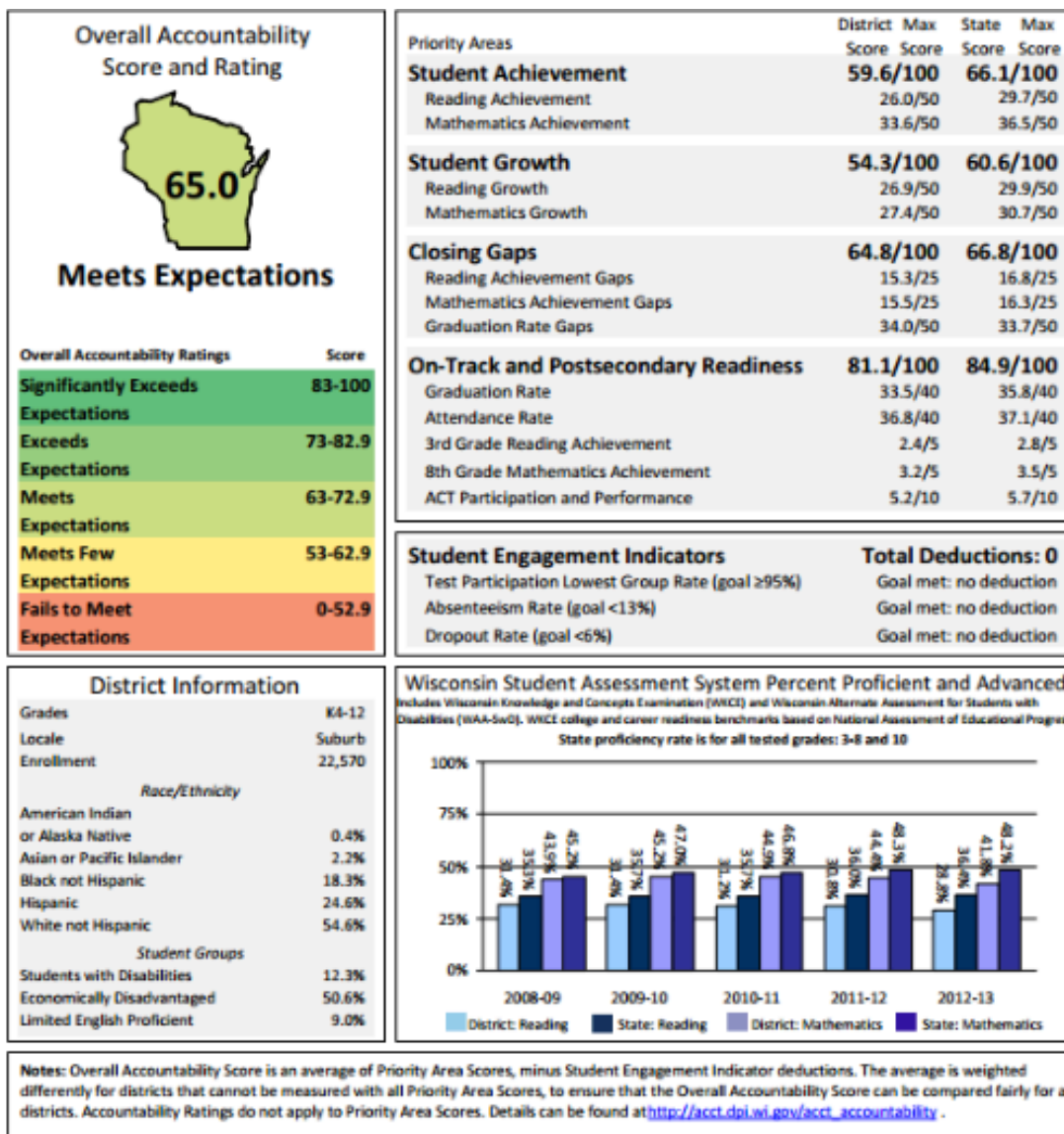


Figure 9. Example DPI Report Card. (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2014).

However, this accountability system has severe implications for schools, staff, and communities. In addition to the punitive measures attached to schools that do not “meet expectations,” the job performance of school officials is also predominantly judged on their report card scores. Furthermore, these scores also have considerable community impact as they greatly affect real estate in the district. For example, the Wisconsin Realtors Association (WRA) dedicates significant portions of its website to discussing the connection between school report cards and real estate value, stating, “School quality is a critical factor for parents with school-age

children who are willing to pay higher prices or accept a smaller or lesser quality home to get their children in the ‘right’ districts” (Conrad, 2012: n.p.). In this accountability and assessment era, the “right” districts are measured on state report cards primarily by standardized test scores. This narrow focus ignores larger and more complex aspects of learning and indicates just how “high-stakes” this sort of testing can be. Moreover, this type of evaluation further exacerbates unequal school funding by concentrating affluent families who want their children to attend the “right” districts in the same areas.

The “Redesign Initiative”

The River City School District administrators all consistently stated the importance of the DPI “report card.” To them, it was by far the most influential marker of the district’s success or failure and also the most powerful indicator of necessary changes. In fact, in the year the report cards began to be issued, the two River City School District high schools (Albert and Tucker) announced a multi-year project to adhere to the new accountability system as well as to boost test scores and align curriculum with CCSS. The project, called the “Redesign Initiative”, was defined in a district-wide newsletter as a “complete overhaul of the curriculum, beginning with 9th grade and rolling up to subsequent grades...with the ultimate goal of aligning curriculum with the Common Core and the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards” (School District of River City, 2012 p. 1). In addition to curriculum changes, other major components of the initiative were increased graduation requirements, a longer school day, and quarterly standardized assessments of core subjects. In a May 2013 interview with the local news station, the Albert High School principal also commented that, "This whole initiative is about making sure that our students leave Albert and Tucker High Schools ready to compete" (Channel 3, 2013, n.p.). District officials maintained that the success of the initiative would be measured by

state and federal standardized test scores, stating that the “...success of the process will be seen through increased scores on state testing, AP and ACT testing, and curriculum based assessment results, as well as the increased ability of graduates to find success in postsecondary learning” (School District of River City, 2012 p. 1). Therefore, not only is the Redesign Initiative an enactment of the market-driven reforms, but its official policy actors also employ neoliberal rhetoric like “compete” to discuss its potential success.

Curriculum Based Assessments

One of the major Redesign Initiative policies is the quarterly standardized assessments of core subjects that the district refers to as “Curriculum Based Assessments” (CBAs). These assessments are the brainchild of the district’s Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, Dr. Zimmerman, who first developed the idea as the principal of one of the middle schools. The tests are designed to track student progress, supervise teachers, and secure high test scores for the state reported assessments. The CBAs mirror annual standardized assessments, but are broken up by academic quarters. Although the CBAs were developed by a small group of the teachers and academic learning coaches from the district, they are based on CCSS and modeled on Smarter Balanced and ACT examinations that high school students are required to take.

Throughout the year, there was considerable debate among administrators and teachers over what exactly the CBAs were and how they were to be used. Some explained them to me as formative assessments, others as summative assessments, and others as a benchmark or “dipstick” to see where students were at academically. Likewise, some teachers used the CBA as their quarterly final exam while other teachers used a completely separate exam in addition to the CBA. These competing understandings illustrate the way that policy in practice can be much different than policy on paper. In fact, because there was so much variance among the ways in

which the CBAs were being carried out, the district created a two-page document during the 2014-2015 school year to provide its view of what the CBAs were supposed to be. In this document, the CBA is defined as a “benchmark assessment” to “evaluate students’ knowledge and skills relative to an explicit set of longer-term learning goals” (School District of River City, 2014, p. 1). It also gives the following purposes: “to communicate expectations for learning, plan instruction, monitor and evaluate learning, and predict future performance.” Finally, it provides a list of “parameters and procedures,” such as “90% of students should be able to complete [the CBA] in one class period,” the “CBA may be used as an assessment grade or as a term exam/final exam grade” but “may not account for more than 20% of a student’s semester term grade,” and “accommodations are used on all CBA administrations for ELL students as recommended in the Individual Record Plan (IRP)” (School District of River City, 2014, p. 2).

Through my observations, I came to understand the CBAs as sometimes a summative assessment for the material covered each quarter in the core subject classes and also as a type of “practice test” for the standardized assessments students took in the spring. However, regardless of the definition, the CBAs became the central focus of every school day as district administrators kept a very close eye on student CBA performance. Therefore, considerable time was spent each day discussing the CBAs, preparing for the CBAs, taking the CBAs, or correcting the CBAs. Core subject classes routinely began with a “practice” CBA question and often conducted CBA preparation centered activities. Administrators defended these actions by saying that the CBAs are the curriculum because they are based on the Common Core, which is what the school was legally required to teach. However, many of the teachers said that what they teach is more than just the CBA, but they still felt strong pressure from administrators to obtain high student scores.

Policy “Decision Makers”

Dr. Zimmerman, Principal Schmidt, and the principal of the other River City high school identified themselves and were identified by other sources to be the primary creators of the Redesign Initiative. Thus, they played significant roles in interpreting and enacting Wisconsin’s accountability reforms, which were a product of RttT’s NCLB waiver. Likewise, the Secondary School Curriculum Coordinator, Kathy Strand, was also identified as a prime “decision maker” in the ways the Redesign Initiative would be carried out. Although all of these district administrators were highly experienced educators, they lacked basic knowledge of EB needs, which ultimately caused them to produce policies that were not appropriate for the MEBs in my study. In fact, some district administrators even seemed to confuse the needs of Emergent Bilinguals with those of Special Education students. For example, in response to a question asking what changes to policies or practices affecting EBs should be made, the district’s ELL Program Coordinator Melissa Baker lamented that increased professional development is needed because “decision makers don't have background in the field of ELL or of language instruction, so they approach planning for ELLs from a monolingual special education framework instead of a language instructional, multilingual framework” (interview, October 2, 2014).

Likewise, in an interview with Kathy Strand, she not only misidentified the ethnicity of the second largest EB group, but she also continuously confused programs and services for Special Education students with those of EBs. For example, Ms. Strand made the claim that she believed many of the EBs were misplaced because they are in classes that were not “preparing them for the world beyond high school” (interview, February 18, 2015). However, when I asked her which classes she was specifically referring to, she cited a group of courses that are actually meant for special education students, not ELLs. When I informed her of this and stated that I was

not aware of any ELLs in those particular courses, she corrected herself by saying that she meant all classes that are “team taught” or “self-contained” (interview, February 18, 2015). Thus, although one can debate the best instructional methods for EBs, Ms. Strand’s argument was based on an assumption that the needs for EBs and special education students are the same. However, the sorts of support a student needs for language development is absolutely not the same as the support needed because of cognitive or developmental disabilities. Furthermore, even though Ms. Strand put significant importance on the “data” gathered from standardized test scores, she confused diagnostic and general assessment exams given to learners. She stated that she did not understand why ELLs take the ACCESS exam (a diagnostic to test English language proficiency) when there is the CBA (an in-house exam the school gives quarterly to test the general English curriculum) and even suggested that all ELLs should take the STAR exam (a test meant to test for learning disabilities) because it is “quicker” (interview, February 18, 2015). Again, this confusion illustrates her lack of understanding of EB needs and services.

Nevertheless, when applying the lens of critical bifocality (Weis & Fine, 2012), one is able to see that the lack of understanding of EB needs when discussing their services and programming is not a fault that lies with these individual administrators, but rather is a larger structural issue. These administrators are responsible for a large policy and curriculum scope and should not be expected to have expertise in all student sub-groups. However, even though they should not necessarily be expected to be “experts” on this population, there should be an expectation that all district administrators should have at least some basic knowledge of the cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of EBs and also that these sorts of large-scale policy decisions should involve people, like Melissa Baker, who have EB expertise. However, pressures to increase test scores and budget cuts that have reduced staff limit the ways “decision makers”

create, shape, and implement policies. In fact, because of Wisconsin's 2011 Budget Repair Bill, Ms. Baker's position was cut and then recreated as a position that combined the roles of three previous positions serving EBs. Therefore, because of the limited scope, diminished resources, and a general lack of knowledge of EB needs, policies were produced that do not serve EBs. Likewise, it is because of this lack of knowledge, communication, and resources that policies continue to be implemented even when EBs were clearly struggling. These issues could clearly be seen through the implementation of the Redesign Initiative in the lives of my six student participants and their teachers. The following sections will discuss the consequences of the Redesign Initiative on MEBs and highlight the importance for policy "decision makers" to incorporate a better understanding of the sort of educational issues facing MEBs that were discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter IV).

The "Unintended Consequences" of the Redesign Initiative

The narrow policies created and implemented by federal officials and district administrators with limited knowledge of EBs' needs have caused multiple "unintended consequences" (field notes, December 3, 2014) for MEBs, as one administrator put it, the most significant of which is the excessive amount of time spent taking tests, preparing for tests, and correcting tests. Likewise, in response to these policies, teachers at Albert High School shifted their pedagogical focus from using varied instructional methods and emphasizing language development to test preparation. These factors together have fostered an unhealthy learning environment with increased frustration, anxiety, and disengagement.

Teaching to the Test

EBs at Albert High School were responsible for taking each of the core subject CBAs for their grade level regardless of their English level. That meant that all 10th graders took the 10th

grade English CBA, regardless of English skills, after being in the US schools for at least one year. Contrastingly, sheltered English instruction courses at Albert High School were grouped based on English level, not grade. Therefore, ELL teachers at Albert High School, who each taught at least two sheltered English courses, were responsible for developing the language skills of a multi-age group as well as preparing them for up to four different English CBAs. All of this had significant pedagogical implications, reducing teachers' time to tailor curriculum and instruction and instead leading them to apply "teaching to the test" practices.

For example, the artistic depiction on the following page represents a field observation of one of Miss Kovalenko's sheltered instruction courses (field notes, October 6, 2014). In this class, she constructed a vocabulary game from one of the English CBAs' vocabulary sections. Some examples of the words on this list were "preponderance," "xenophobia," "misanthropist," "magnanimous," and "neophyte." Although she had gone through these words in a previous class, most of the students in the room were completely unfamiliar with them. These words were presented in a rote-memorization manner as if students were being drilled for a test. During this particular class, students were visibly lost with one of the students even asking her "Why do you wanna test me on these weird words I never heard" (field notes, October 6, 2014). Also, Guadalupe, who I was sitting next to, showed me the worksheet and asked me how many of the words I knew. They were so unfamiliar to her that she wanted to know if they were even used at all.

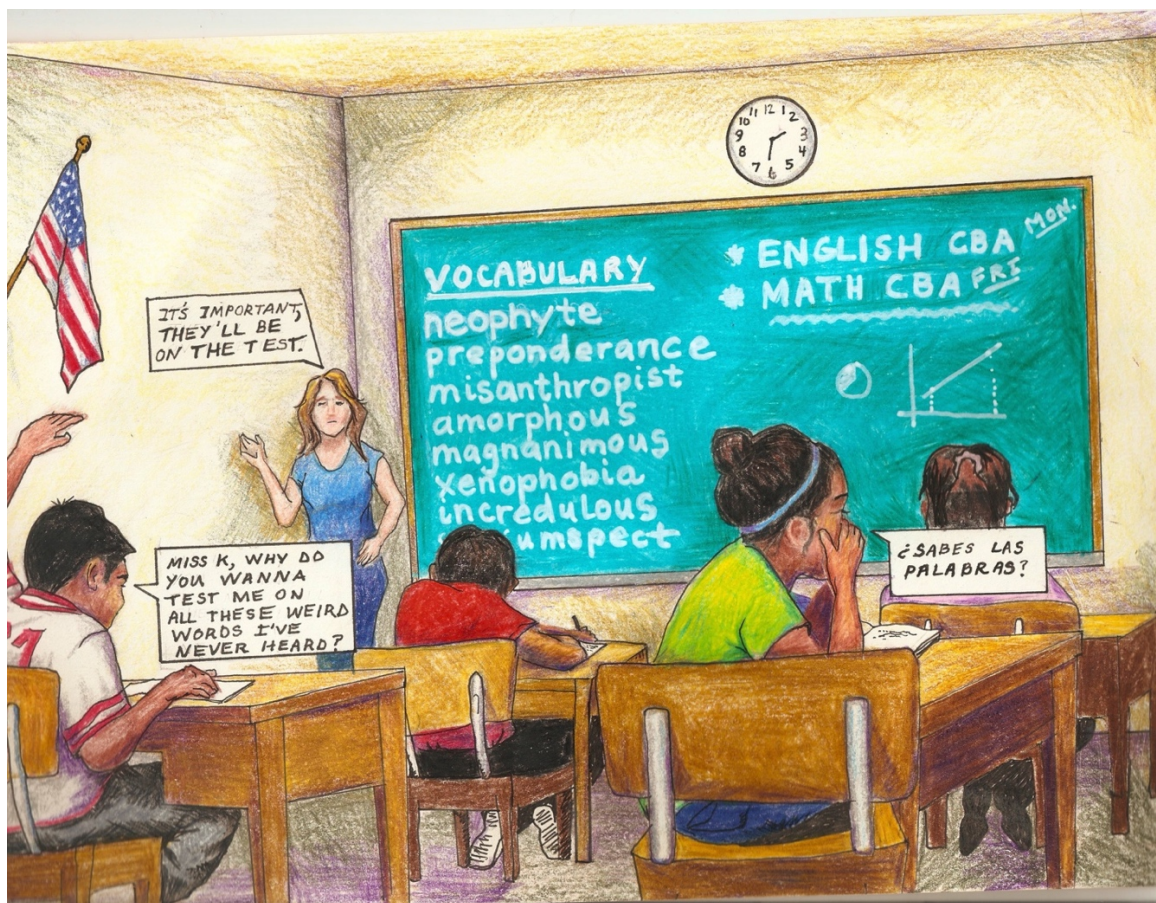


Figure 10. Drawing of Miss Kovalenko's Class (Siebers, 2015)

While these words are certainly worthy of being learned and these students are certainly smart enough to learn them, the rote-memorization fashion in which they were taught exemplifies how the words were meant to be tested, not meant to be learned and used. For example, the word “xenophobia” could certainly have been taught to a classroom filled with immigrant children in a more meaningful manner. Still, when considering the amount of material Miss Kovalenko is responsible for covering as well as the pressure she is under to produce higher test scores, the instructional methods are not so surprising.

However, when I brought up the issue of teaching to the test with Dr. Zimmerman, his response was that the ELL teachers should be “coaching” the students through the CBAs and “giving them practice” (interview, March 12, 2015). He told me that some teachers have

responded to him that that sort of instruction is like “teaching to the test,” but his response to them was “well yes you’re teaching to the test because that’s what we’ve said is important” (interview, March 12, 2015). He further provided the example of a driver’s education class by saying, “Didn’t the teacher teach to the test so that when you took the behind the wheel test, you took the written test, you could pass, isn’t that what that curriculum was?” (interview, March 12, 2015). However, numerous researchers have already discredited the notion that narrow instructional practices, like teaching to the test, and extreme pressure on teachers will yield a strong learning environment (Au, 2009; Cuban, 2007; Gorlewski & Porfilio, 2013; Lipman, 2011; Menken, 2008; Ravitch, 2013). Yet, this high-stakes testing environment seemed to increase tension and pit administrators and teachers against one another.

Excessive testing. In addition to issues with teaching to the test practices, another unintended consequence of the CBAs on EBs was excessive testing. EBs were allowed standard testing accommodations on the CBAs like translations, additional time, and opportunities to make corrections. However, this also meant that some of the tests that were designed to be taken in one class period would take EBs three or four times as long to complete. Ultimately, this took away valuable instruction time, frustrated students, and did not even offer any sort of reliable data in terms of what administrators were looking for. Students and teachers consistently complained about this loss of time and often wondered what the point was, with one ELL teacher explaining it to me as “all it is, is test, test, test” (field notes, October 22, 2014).

Still, Dr. Zimmerman maintained that the problem did not lie with the CBAs but with the teachers. He criticized teachers for blaming the test for the additional time and suggested that ELL teachers just need to spend more time pre-teaching the curriculum and teaching vocabulary (interview, March 12, 2015). He also did not see any problem with EBs scoring very low on the

CBA as long as there was growth between quarters, providing an example that it shows progress if an EB scores a 20% on the first quarter Math CBA but a 50% on the second quarter (interview, March 12, 2015). However, this statement is missing the bigger point of how detrimental it may be for a student to consistently take assessments that are beyond what they are ready for. Simply giving a student a more difficult assessment does not help prepare him/her, if anything it is a discouragement (Vygotsky, 1986). Additionally, Dr. Zimmerman's immediate criticism of teachers as the problem further illustrates the pressures of high-stakes testing and the need for policymakers to incorporate additional perspectives instead of resorting to a top-down approach.

Disconnected Curriculum

Other River City administrators argued that it is not a matter of "teaching to the test" because CCSS is all about "teaching to the skill" (interview, February 18, 2015). For example, Kathy Strand claimed that because Smarter Balanced assessments are Computer Adaptive, they do not allow for teaching to the test. She argued that their "struggle early on [was that] everybody kept saying you're teaching to the test, you're teaching to the test. You're teaching skills. So, if you are teaching skills, you're back mapping from this sort of target" (interview, February 18, 2015). Ms. Strand also pitted administrators against teachers by claiming that teachers have struggled to understand that they are supposed to teach "skills" not "content," saying that "the content is the method by which you teach skills, and you help to apply the skills" (interview, February 18, 2015). She continued to say that even though courses are still titled by content, such as a book title, it is "not about the books."

This line of thinking completely counters many other literacy education approaches (i.e., social justice approaches, multicultural education approaches) that place the "reading the world" before "reading the word" (Freire, 1970) at the center of the reading experience. It also goes

against more culturally responsive literacy practices that try to engage learners and promote literacy by using materials that reflect learners' lived experiences (Banks & Banks, 2003; Compton-Lilly, 2014; Ivey, 2014; Winn, 2011). However, instead of drawing on literacy teachers' expertise in these various educational approaches, Ms. Strand adopted the CCSS logic of skills coming before content. This again illustrates the dangers of top-down approaches that offer a limited understanding of learner needs.

Furthermore, "teaching to the skills" is in many ways actually worse than "teaching to the test" because not only is the final result a test preparation atmosphere, but also a disconnected curriculum. For example, while some of the ELL sheltered instruction time was spent on projects, books, or writing assessments that pedagogically connected and attempted to engage the learners, other time was spent on drilling disconnected vocabulary lists or reviewing isolated graphs and short comprehension articles. These practices also extended to the mainstream classrooms where teachers asked students to complete disconnected, test-preparation activities. For example, the following excerpt from my field notes illustrates how teaching 11th graders' persuasive writing was reduced to preparing them to write a persuasive essay for the ACTs.

Mrs. Berginger begins class by explaining that the students will be taking the CBA writing portion, which is a timed persuasive essay. She tells them that "I want to get you guys to a 4 score so a college admissions person will know you can write." They then begin with a practice CBA writing prompt with the intention being to teach them how to write a persuasive 5-paragraph essay in a short period of time. On the smart board is a document that states an example prompt from the ACT website (this is where the teacher said she found it) "*Educators debate extending high school to five years because of increasing demands on students from employers and colleges to participate in*

extracurricular activities and community services in addition to having high grades. Some educators support extending high school because they think students need more time to achieve all that is expected of them. Other educators do not support extending high school to five years because they think students would lose interest in school and attendance would drop in the fifth year. In your opinion...” The teacher then gives the example answer from the ACT website. She states that, “a lot of what they’re measuring is your ability to think.” This comment makes me wonder why is it a “they” who are measuring this and not the actual teacher who knows them? Students then make a T-chart comparing the pros and cons of the two sides, which seems like a good idea but they only have about five minutes to work on it and are only allowed to do this for the example, not for the actual test question. For the actual test question, there is no discussion of possible responses nor do students have time to really think about or organize their answers. The teacher warns them that they have to “take a stance” on the question or “you can’t get past a 1.” “If you want to get a score of proficient, let’s call it a C, you have to have a counterargument.” I’m struck by how this lesson seems more like test cramming and teaching test taking strategies than a writing class (field notes, October 22, 2014).

The reason that the class is doing this form of on-demand writing, which is anonymously judged by often flawed systems (DiMaggio, 2010; Farley, 2009), is because it is part of the ACTs that students will take in the spring both as a college entrance exam and as a state standardized assessment. However, this form of writing lacks any sort of critical thinking or group discussion that need to happen in order to construct a critical and thoughtful response to a controversial topic. Instead of engaging students to learn and write about the topic by discussing all relevant aspects of it in-depth (which would probably involve additional reading and writing activities,

videos, interviews, or debates), students were quickly taught strategies to obtain a higher score. Furthermore, students were supposed to be motivated to do this because some “college admissions person,” who they will never meet, needs to think they can write.

Still, when taking into account that Mrs. Berginger will be judged on these scores, it is not a surprise that the lesson is carried out in this way. It also is not surprising that while this lesson was going on, I observed several students either sleeping or playing on their cell phones. Furthermore, this was not an unusual sight in many of the classrooms. Whenever this type of disconnected test preparation activity was carried out, everyone in the room seemed to lack energy, excitement, or motivation. This would also be a time when many of the students would act out. For example, during one of my observations of Mrs. Akkerman’s English 9, she claimed that paper airplanes had become such a big issue that she demanded to collect handouts immediately after the students had finished the activity (field notes, March 4, 2015).

Frustration and Anxiety

This disconnected curriculum and test preparation environment created an atmosphere of frustration and anxiety that disengaged learners and caused teachers to lose patience in the classroom. Teachers began to use the same sort of accountability and blame discourses with their students that administrators used with them. Teachers criticized students for a lack of “achievement” by invoking deficit discourses (Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas & Deyhel, 1999) and blamed a lack of motivation on student indifference. Ultimately students did lack motivation; however, this did not stem from any sort of cultural inadequacies, rather it was a result of the schooling environment. This situation was exacerbated by how little formal decision-making power students and teachers had. Even when it was clear that current policies were not working for EBs, district administrators were unwilling to make adjustments, causing detrimental policies

and practices to continue. This situation also contributed to a high teacher turn-around where each of the three current ELL teachers had been at the school for less than three years.

Math CBA retake. One of the peaks of this cyclical blame game occurred after the first quarter math CBA. The following excerpt from my field notes details what happened:

Throughout the day, there was noticeably something going on with the math department. They had an “emergency” morning meeting before the school day began which caused the math teachers to arrive to their classes 5 minutes late. As I sat in on first hour Consumer Math, one of the school employees popped in her head to tell Miss Kovalenko that the math teacher for the course was running late because they were “in a meeting.” When she said this, Miss Kovalenko’s eyebrows raised, and it was clear something was happening. These secret meetings continued during lunch as a voice came over the school intercom summoning math teachers to a lunch meeting. Finally, in 7th hour, Mr. Neumann told Mr. Bowden and I what was going on. It turns out that students as a whole scored less than 70% on the recent math CBA. Because of this, per orders from Dr. Zimmerman, ALL students would retake the same CBA next week and every three weeks following that until students reached that 70% mark. They also would still take the second quarter math CBA as scheduled. Mr. Neumann said teachers weren’t happy and he and Mr. Bowden clearly were not happy either. They were frustrated that this testing was not only pointless, but it would also take away valuable class time and alter the teaching schedules (field notes, November 12, 2014).

Following this controversy, Mr. Simon’s Algebra class, which I regularly observed, markedly changed. His normal easy-going, patient demeanor became frustrated and short-tempered, and his normally creative lessons vanished in place of test preparation. In another class observation a

few weeks after the original math retake controversy, Mr. Simon had an outburst after students had been working for about 20 minutes because none of them were able to answer the problem they were working on. His frustration caused him to rant how students should know this information by now or they should just “get a pass to the library or drop the class if they don’t want to get anything out of it” (field notes, December 3, 2014). The students all became very silent while this was going on and began to complain about him when he left the room to make copies for students who had misplaced necessary worksheets. This incident showcases how detrimental high-stakes testing can be on student-teacher relationships and on learning in general. This knowledgeable, energetic, and understanding teacher became so filled with pressure and frustration that he could not keep calm in class anymore. As a result, students became frustrated with him, and received the impression that he did not care about them.

When I later brought up the circumstances of the math retake with Dr. Zimmerman, who essentially made the decision to take this action, he cited “poor teaching” and the inability to adhere to the curriculum as the primary causes (interview, March 12, 2015). He told me that because students were not even at 70% proficiency, they needed to “go back and reteach and retest to make sure that kids are getting what they’re supposed to get” (interview, March 12, 2015). He continued by stating that the teachers did not understand to do this on their own because they are too busy “racing through the curriculum” (interview, March 12, 2015) and are unable to evaluate their own effectiveness. He also said that math courses in the high school had been a problem for some time to the point that they had held a math “boot camp” for teachers over the summer. During the interview, he also left the room on two occasions to retrieve testing data to show me the low test scores in the high school math classes saying that “the data doesn’t lie! You can’t make it up!” (interview, March 12, 2015). When I then asked him if the scores had

improved through retesting, he admitted they had by only a little bit, less than he had hoped. Still, he maintained that his logic of drilling information, reteaching, and retesting was “pretty irrefutable” and “common sense,” but that the real problem was that teachers had never been held accountable before (interview, March 12, 2015). Again, this incident illustrates the disastrous consequences top-down, high-stakes accountability reforms can have on both administrator-teacher relationships as well as teacher-student relationships.

Furthermore, just as Mr. Simon lost his patience with his math class, so did many other teachers when students did not understand a concept or did not complete an assignment. However, instead of recognizing the relationship between student disengagement and the curriculum and testing policies, teachers blamed insufficient student progress on a lack of accountability, motivation, and family support. Thus, although teachers across the board recognized the problem of excessive testing, most of them still defended standards based reforms and assessments, which illustrates the hegemonic nature this ideology has attained (Au, 2009; Ravitch, 2013). As a result, teachers looked to cast blame upon students or other teachers which only continued the cyclic blame game.

For example, in discussions with ELL teachers about 11th and 12th grade EBs who were struggling, they blamed issues on bad habits that had formed with their previous teachers. They claimed that the previous teachers had “coddled” students and now they were trying to “change that culture” (field notes, September 30, 2014) to make the students more self-reliant and accountable. They also claimed that there was a marked difference between the upper-class EBs who received this “coddling” treatment and the younger students who were never exposed to it. They listed issues with these upperclassmen as having a “bad attitude about school” and being “unmotivated” (field notes, September 30, 2014).

Maybe motivation is the “problem”. Albert High School’s test driven environment placed extreme pressure on teachers to achieve high test scores, making classroom instruction look more like test preparation than pedagogical engagement. For EBs, issues of disengagement were even greater when taking into account the impact of the CBAs on their grades. According to Mr. Bowden:

It’s crushing for them (the ELLs) because they’ll get homework and participation points and then they get the CBA and it’s an F or a D and then their grade is sunk. Then they lack motivation and it’s been demotivating for the staff, we feel like we’re under a microscope now and we feel like if we don’t have those scores up, we’re going to have someone breathing down our neck (interview, December 17, 2014).

His statement clearly indicates the frustration that both teachers and EBs felt. The following interview excerpt from Isabel and Vanessa also illustrates the frustration and stress many students felt when taking these exams.

Bailey: What do you guys think about the CBAs?

Isabel: I get scared of them.

Vanessa: They’re just hard because they’re stuff that you don’t even know. Like how do they expect you to know it if nobody ever taught you it. Or you forget. Like they expect you to remember everything you’ve ever learned, I don’t remember what I learned this morning, how am I supposed to remember.

Isabel: I get really bad anxiety. Like whenever I get a test, especially the CBAs, especially tests that they are really focused on it and the school district will see it, like for ELLs, and they’ll give you the listening or writing tests and then I get scared and sweaty and I look around and I’m like oh my gosh I can’t do this and I usually sit for a bit then I

ask to go to the bathroom then I try to calm myself down and say it's ok, a little pep talk, and I go back in, and I do fine. And my cousin gets like that too and my cousin said that he had a really bad panic attack and I'm scared if that happens to me (interview, December 17, 2014).

Isabel and Vanessa's response demonstrates how detrimental high-stakes testing can be on students' psyche and academic confidence.

Furthermore, this frustration and anxiety was made worse throughout the school year when the district proposed connecting teacher evaluations to the CBA scores. About mid-way through the school year, the district unveiled a three-tiered pay-for-performance model that would tie teachers' salaries with educator effectiveness measures. This model came as a response to the NCLB waiver provision and the new Wisconsin accountability system that required new teacher evaluation systems. The River City School District chose to use the CESA 6 Effectiveness Project model, one of two approved by the state. This model evaluates teachers on "professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional delivery, assessment of/for learning, learning environment, and professionalism" (River City Times, 2015a, n.p.) and divides them into four performance categories. District administrators were heavily in favor of this move, with Dr. Zimmerman telling the local paper that the new system "assures accountability for both teachers and administrators and provides standards-based, performance-driven indicators that can be connected to a compensation formula" (River City Times, 2015b, n.p.). Although the performance pay system was eventually not passed, it was continuously debated by the school board throughout the year. Nevertheless, the effects of this pay for performance debate increased anxiety levels and added to an atmosphere among teachers, students, and

administrators where they would blame one another for low scores and/or unhappy learning environments.

Principal Schmidt was also aware of the pressure and stress the CBAs and their relationship to teacher evaluations placed on both teachers and students. She stated,

The CBAs were born of good intent, it was born to make sure that a student was learning the essential things they need to in a course and identify kids who aren't, and it should have been, it should be something really informative to us as teachers. We should be able to sit down together and say oh my goodness this particular hour scored so much lower or higher than other classes, what can we learn from that. But because these other layers of things were added on, it created some anxieties that we didn't anticipate because the district has also proposed that teachers' evaluation could potentially be connected to their pay and so this exercise in assessment, monitoring what our kids know and what they don't know, and what can we do to help them has suddenly been connected with all these other things that cause anxiety, end of year evaluation, potentially pay for performance, and so that for teachers brought the anxiety up (interview, May 29, 2015).

Principal Schmidt's statement indicates the need for policymakers to have a better understanding of student needs as well as more dialogue with people who will ultimately be affected by the policy in order to prevent these sort of unhealthy learning environments.

Will these Policies Continue at Albert High School?

At the end of the school year, I conducted a follow-up interview with Principal Schmidt. When I asked her about the excessive amount of time EBs spent testing, she acknowledged that it was a problem saying, "I think we all know that a student shouldn't be spending three days in testing," and claimed that "the CBAs are still a work in progress" (interview, May 29, 2015).

When I then asked her what she thought the “remedy” was moving forward, she acknowledged that it would not be easy but that the school was planning to implement “professional learning communities” (interview, May 29, 2015) where teachers teaching the same subjects and/or classes could meet to discuss the fundamental concepts students should learn each quarter. She hoped that what teachers would come up with would match the CBAs, but also recognized that if there is some sort of mismatch, “there has to be some pretty serious conversation about if that is because we’re not teaching what the CCSS are requiring.” She continued that if

...teachers all believe that the CBA measures what it is supposed to measure, in my mind there is no reason that you wouldn’t build your lessons around it, do formative assessments around it to make sure kids are ready for it, put your heart and soul into making sure that kids are getting it. But if you don’t think it’s what you’re teaching and it’s an outside thing, that’s where all this occurs (interview, May 29, 2015).

Thus, the question becomes, what happens when teachers, often with vast experience and knowledge, disagree with the curriculum that the state and federal government have put forward? Principal Schmidt accepted this quandary and further added that because they have

...standardized assessments that are aligned to those standards, there’s a lot of pressure to make sure that kids are scoring well on the Aspire, the ACT....so I believe the answer will come from these professional learning communities sort of grappling with where are we with our group, how does this make sense for us. I can’t stand in front of all of them and say here’s how we fix CBAs, we’ve attempted that...I have to take that and make sense of that for myself and our team (interview, May 29, 2015).

Although Principal Schmidt’s optimism and team-spirit should be respected, the problem of teachers not agreeing with the curriculum and assessments CCSS puts forth is not completely

solved through “professional learning communities” because their students will still have to take the same standardized assessments that will eventually be used to evaluate the school and the district. Nevertheless, having “professional learning communities” may offer teachers an opportunity to come together and communicate their concerns with administrators and with one another, which may ultimately help deconstruct the current top-down system.

Conclusion

Current accountability reforms rank districts and schools primarily on standardized test scores, with severe consequences for schools that “underperform.” Consequently, as districts clamor to achieve high performance report cards, test preparation is disproportionately emphasized while learners’ individual and group differences are ignored. Furthermore, even though research has consistently shown the detrimental effects of these high stakes testing policies on EBs (Menken, 2008; Valenzuela, 2005; Wright & Li, 2008) as well as on learners in general (Gorlewski & Porfilio, 2013; Ravitch, 2013), the accountability regime persists.

In River City, these accountability policies and practices are currently being implemented at a time when the school district is also struggling to serve a more diverse and a more socio-economically disadvantaged population with less resources. Thus, school officials are under a great deal of pressure to find cost-effective, uniform ways to achieve high test scores, which do not necessarily take into account the needs of EBs. At Albert High School, this mindset brought about the Redesign Initiative as a top-down, low-budget way to align with CCSS and increase ACT scores. However, this initiative has resulted in numerous “unintended consequences” for MEBs and their teachers, including excessive testing, disconnected curriculum, and increased frustration and anxiety. These policies discourage culturally responsive practices, further exacerbate socio-historical inequalities, and ultimately worsen the educational disparities they

are meant to address. Therefore, it is important that educators and education policymakers develop more comprehensive understandings of the needs of MEBs in order to prevent these sorts of policy enactments and to fully support learners. Furthermore, it is also necessary for educators to better understand the needs of MEBs to create a more supportive and inclusive environment. The following chapter will discuss implications of cultural and linguistic sensitivity and racial microaggressions in the schooling experiences of MEBs at Albert High School.

Chapter VI: Reproduction and Resistance: Examining the Racialized Identities of Mexican Youth in the New Latino Diaspora

In *Revisiting Education in the New Latino Diaspora*, Hamann and Harkau (2015) discuss emerging research on education in the New Latino Diaspora (NLD) and present several unanswered gaps in the literature, including the “role of race and racialized identities in Latino students’ school experiences in the new diaspora” (p. 15). Latina/o populations are growing substantially in places like the Southeast, which has historically experienced race as a Black/White dichotomy, and the rural Midwest, which has been dominated by Whites since the arrival of European settlers. In the state of Wisconsin, the population of Latina/os in public schools has increased dramatically, almost doubling from about 50,000 in 2004 to almost 100,000 in 2014 (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2014). Much of this increase has occurred in predominantly White, rural communities or small cities that have not historically had Latina/o residents, much like the site of my study. These areas are typically unfamiliar with Latina/os and lack the established immigrant communities or social networks found in more traditional destinations.

Recent research on the racialized identities of Latina/os in the NLD has found evidence of paternalism (Adair, 2015; Gallo, Wortham, & Bennet, 2015; Richardson Bruna, 2007), xenophobia (Rich & Miranda, 2004), and containment (Raible & Irizarry, 2015). For example, Raible and Irizarry (2015) found White educators in a Northeastern urban high school to position Latina/o students as trouble-makers with discipline problems, while Contreras, Stritikus, Torres, and O’Reilly Diaz (2015) found cultural and linguistic disconnects between Latina/o students and their non-Latina/o teachers in western Washington. Likewise, research on the schooling experiences of Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) in new destination school districts in Wisconsin has

found evidence of deficit mentalities and a lack of qualified staff (Lee & Hawkins, 2015; Lowenhaupt, 2015). These findings speak to the need to further consider how Latina/o students entering new destination communities are racially positioned, and how they position themselves, in order to better understand the experiences of this population and serve their educational needs.

In this chapter, I will describe how the situated social hierarchies of the United States, in general, and of River City, Wisconsin, in particular, manifested through the social positioning of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs) at Albert High School. MEBs were positioned in a deficit manner and were pressured to assimilate to White, English speaking norms. I argue that while MEBs internalized this raced and classed social identity as a response to a larger system of social reproduction, there were also examples of participant resistance through narratives of unity, bravery, and pride. Thus, while mixed responses by Latina/o students to the social pressures to conform have been documented by researchers examining this population in more traditional immigrant destinations (Valverde, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999), my research indicates that similar processes are also occurring in new destination communities. These findings highlight the challenges MEBs faced in this new destination community and emphasize the need to address social marginalization of this population in order to overcome educational disparities.

Social Reproduction and Resistance

Since Marx (1867) first critiqued capitalism's role in the reproduction of social inequality, scholars have recognized not only the powerful economic factors but also the cultural aspects that enable social reproduction and maintain power hierarchies. Notably, Bourdieu's (1986) analysis of reproduction highlighted not only the economic capital that facilitates societal reproduction, but also the social and cultural. His concept of "symbolic violence," which is "the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu &

Wacquant, 1992, p. 167), postulates that because systems of power appear natural to all parties involved, social actors do not question their place in the existing social hierarchies. Thus, the system is ultimately embodied in actor's daily behavior and action, and functions to maintain existing power dynamics. Likewise, Critical Race Theorists (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Taylor et. al, 2009) have conceptualized the mechanism that maintains power hierarchies as the "master narrative," which positions People of Color as inferior through majoritarian stories that are so pervasive that they come to be seen as natural.

Educational theorists (Apple, 1982; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Giroux, 1983) have argued that schools facilitate social reproduction through the unofficial, or unwritten, values, lessons, and expectations students learn in school. They have termed this phenomenon the "hidden curriculum" and offered examples such as working-class students learning to be quiet and punctual, and engaging in primarily rote work (Anyon, 1980). Researchers (Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999) examining the educational experiences of Latina/os have found a master narrative that attributes low educational attainment by Mexicans and Mexican-Americans to cultural and linguistic deficits, a lack of parental involvement, and an undervaluing of education in general. This master narrative subsequently manifests in the schooling of Latina/os through the implicit and explicit messages, the "hidden curriculum," they receive in schools, assisting the maintenance of Mexicans as a subordinate group.

Despite the power of social reproduction, individuals still have agency and researchers have found numerous examples of resistance. For example, Willis's (1977) working class "lads" developed their own oppositional culture in the face of marginalization from formal schooling, while McRobbie (1980) demonstrated that female youth have also developed their own "subculture" in opposition to dominant school norms. Likewise, researchers of Latina/o

education have found examples of resistance (Dyrness, 2007; Fernández, 2002; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Villenas & Deyhle, 1999; Yosso, 2006) that highlight potential breaks to the social reproduction cycle. For example, Dyrness (2007) documented resistance from Latina mothers who felt silenced by their children's school while Villenas and Deyhle (1999) examined seven ethnographic studies of resistance in Latina/o education.

Furthermore, scholars have also theorized how systems of social reproduction can be exposed and resisted. Freire (1970) offered the notion of *conscientização*, or critical consciousness, that uses the process of consciousness raising to expose unjust power systems and implicit biases. Scholars (hooks, 1994; Giroux, 2001) have built on Freire's work to develop critical pedagogy and social justice frameworks to empower marginalized groups and promote more equitable education systems. LatCrit scholars (Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995) have also highlighted the commonalities between Freire's work and CRT/LatCrit, such as challenging institutional claims of neutrality, showcasing structural power systems, and valuing the voice of oppressed populations.

Counter-storytelling

Critical Race Theory (CRT) promotes the importance of recognizing People of Color as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 105) and seeks to tell their stories in order to "talk back" to the dominant ideologies and to reveal social power dynamics. CRT uses personal narratives in the form of "counter-storytelling" to offer the experiences of marginalized individuals whose voices are often unheard, and to point to the ways that the dominant ideology creates "master narratives" about People of Color. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) contend that counter-stories also serve the important functions of building community among marginalized groups, presenting alternative possibilities, and teaching all individuals that

combining story and current reality can help construct new and richer worlds. They argue that a critical race methodology can bring necessary conversations about racism into the discourse on education and educational reform.

Furthermore, ethnography and CRT/LatCrit counter-storytelling can also be used in tandem. For example, Villenas and Deyhle (1999) advocate examining ethnographic work on Latina/o education “under a CRT lens” as it allows the researcher to clearly address “the racism behind the anti-immigrant, anti-Latino xenophobia of this country and the exploitation of transnational labor and migration” (p. 441). Other scholars (e.g. Duncan, 2005; Dyrness, 2007; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Valdes, 1996) have also advocated for and used counter-storytelling techniques to discuss and analyze ethnographic work. Ultimately, the goal of invoking counter-storytelling, “is not merely research for research's sake but it is research for social justice” (Villenas & Deyhle, 1999: p. 442). Thus, counter-storytelling can be a powerful tool for researchers to disrupt current power dynamics.

With this framework in mind, I will now offer an historical analysis of the social positioning of immigrants in River City, Wisconsin, situated within the larger migration history of Wisconsin and the United States in general. I will follow this analysis with a discussion of how this social positioning manifested at Albert High School through deficit narratives and offer counter-stories from student participants. These stories highlight the challenges MEBs faced in this new destination community as well as illustrate examples of both the internalization of and resistance to social subordination and marginalization.

The Role of Race and Class in Social Identity Formation in River City, Wisconsin

Although Wisconsin is home to a variety of culturally rich indigenous tribes, the majority of Wisconsin's current population (88%) is White (US Census, 2013). In fact, by the early

1900's the American government had either pushed out, forcibly assimilated, or killed the vast majority of indigenous tribes (Loew, 2001) with native peoples now accounting for slightly under 1 percent of the total population (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2014). White Wisconsinites are predominantly descendants of European immigrants (primarily Norwegian, Swedish, Swiss, Polish and German) who came to Wisconsin in the 19th and 20th centuries in search of more opportunities or in order to escape poverty and political turmoil (Long & Veroff, 2007). Although the European migrant groups who came to Wisconsin used to be considered quite distinct and even suffered significant prejudice from one another, decades later they are arguably now seen as part of one large "White" majority.

River City's history reflects Wisconsin's larger historical racial trends, with the majority (91%) of its current citizens being descendants of European migrants. Many of these European immigrants were drawn to River City in the mid-20th century when it began to experience widespread economic prosperity in both manufacturing and farming. This prosperity brought significant population increases and also brought some of the first Black citizens to the area. However, the influx of Black workers was not met warmly. Although I have not been able to locate any official paperwork on the topic, through personal interviews I have learned that supervisors at River City's large assembly plant began to address issues of racial discrimination in the 1980s and 90s (interview, May 29, 2015). Still, racial tensions persisted throughout the 1990s to the point where there was a visibly active Ku Klux Klan faction.

Around the same time, River City also experienced its first significant wave of Southeast Asian refugees. Many of these refugees had faced severe emotional and physical trauma in their home countries and did not have much experience with formal schooling. For the River City schools this meant a significant increase in the services for Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) and their

families. By the year 2000, large influxes of Spanish speaking immigrants began to move to River City. District ELL Coordinator Melissa Baker described this growth as very large and rapid saying,

Initially, when I started, we had about 100 students, they were almost all Southeast Asian refugees. And then in the fall semester of 2000, our program grew from 100 to 150 in one semester, all Spanish speakers, and it just continued (interview, October 2, 2014).

Because of this increase, by 2005, the River City schools moved from a magnet system to providing services for EBs in all neighborhood schools. They also added several program support positions including Ms. Baker's previous position as an ELL program support specialist. Notably, that position was cut in 2011 when the district experienced extreme budget cuts following the state's budget repair bill (interview, October 2, 2014). Currently, the number of students in the River City School District with the status of "Limited English Proficient" has grown from about 500 students in 2005 to almost 800 students in 2013 (Wisedash, 2015).

It was also in the 2000s, near the Great Recession of 2008, that River City's major assembly plant was forced to close. The closure of this plant, which had provided high-wage union positions for close to a century, was absolutely devastating for the River City community. One of the major state papers called it a "slow-motion economic crash" (Wisconsin News, 2008). Indeed, by 2009 the unemployment rate in River City was close to 15 percent and although it has improved since then, it still remains high among Wisconsin cities. Furthermore, many of the jobs former manufacturing workers took following the plant closure were at lower wages with fewer benefits. Additionally, many River City citizens have left in order to find employment opportunities elsewhere. In fact, the current income per capita in River City is about \$23,000, 13% less than the Wisconsin average and 15% less than the national average. The school district

has also felt the effects of this plant closure as it saw the percentage of economically disadvantaged⁸ students more than double from 25% in 2003-2004 to 52% in 2013-2014 (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2015).

In a sort of cruel irony, the same neoliberal principles that significantly contributed to the deindustrialization of the United States and the loss of unionized manufacturing jobs are also the same that have also helped displace millions of Mexican farmers who later have migrated to the United States. One of the major neoliberal initiatives of the 1990s was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), signed by the US, Mexico, and Canada in 1994, that eliminated tariffs and broke down trade barriers. NAFTA has had a devastating impact on agrarian populations in Mexico, as farmers have been unable to sell their produce because of the entry of cheap US products, and are subsequently forced to move to more urban environments to look for employment, move to border areas to work in factories, or try their luck on migrating *al norte*. Through this movement, the US has experienced a large influx of Mexican immigrants in the past twenty years at the same time as it has experienced significant deindustrialization. This has created a deadly catch-22 where Mexicans are put in the position of being economically forced to migrate while still not legally permitted to do so. While, David Bacon (2013) has helped reconceptualize Mexican migration as the “right to stay home,” arguing that US policies have effectively forced millions of Mexicans to dangerously cross the border and live as second-class citizens with an “illegal alien” status, racist nativist notions (Pérez Hubar et al., 2008) that enable Mexican immigrants’ social positioning as a subaltern-class are still pervasive (Delgado Bernal 2002; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

⁸ The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (http://lstat.dpi.wi.gov/lstat_dataecon) defines “economically disadvantaged” as falling into one of the following categories, eligible for free lunch, eligible for reduced lunch, or eligible for needs-based programs based on household income.

Albert High School has seen the effects of this larger migration apparatus through the growth of the Latina/o student population, from about 1 percent of the total school population in 2000 to almost 10 percent in 2015 (Wisedash, 2015). Additionally, the number of students considered “Limited English Proficient” has grown from 8 students in 2004 to over 70 in 2014. However, while River City schools are adjusting to serving an increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse population, MEBs are also adjusting to the social order of a predominantly White, working class community that is economically struggling and an environment that does not generally welcome diverse or non-English speaking learners. Furthermore, MEBs are entering a community that has not traditionally had a significant Latina/o presence and has a history of hostility towards non-White populations. Thus, it is important to understand how the school and community are making sense of MEBs within the larger social power system, as well as how MEBs are making sense of their new positioning. The following sections showcase participant counter-narratives that illustrate the racialized positioning of MEBs at Albert High School and their subsequent responses.

Discrimination and Deficit Perspectives

I'd like to say that Albert High School is a welcoming and warm environment, but I do know that those things [incidents of racial discrimination] happen. And I think it might come in part from River City society influences and also there's been a significant change in our socioeconomics and with that comes stress, strain...and we've just had more Families of Color move into our community and I don't know that the long-time natives of River City have made sense of what it means that 25 percent of the freshman class are Students of Color and 50 percent of the class lives in poverty – Principal Schmidt (interview, May 29, 2015).

Principal Schmidt's interview excerpt discusses a conflict among the long-term ideological beliefs within the River City community and the fact that the school's demographics are changing. She further elaborated on some of those conflicts by offering specific examples of racial bias against African American students. She stated that for over 10 years, the district has both disproportionately over-identified African American males with special education needs and also disproportionately suspended or expelled African American males. Although Principal Schmidt did not specifically offer any examples of racial discrimination towards Latina/o students, Albert High School's ELL teachers often discussed examples of biases from content teachers towards Latina/o students and/or towards EBs in general. For example, Miss Kovalenko reported that she believed that some of the non-ELL teachers at Albert High School stereotyped her Latina/o EBs. She claimed that many of the other teachers had low expectations for recently arrived students and she even reported an incident where one of the core content teachers was questioning the legal status of some of the Latina/o students (interview, December 3, 2014). In addition to the explicitly racist act of questioning someone's legal status, MEBs at Albert High School often faced racial microaggressions concerning their ethnic or linguistic identity.

Racial Microaggressions

Bailey: Do you think that that's a significant problem here? Not welcoming diversity?

Isabel: Sometimes because some people judge you or sometimes they say stuff to you and then say oh I'm just kidding

Vanessa: Yeah because if they can see that you take it offensively, then they'll be like oh well I'm just kidding, I'm just kidding, but we know they aren't kidding.

Bailey: What kind of stuff do they say?

Vanessa: Like if we speak Spanish or something, they'll say "this is America, speak English" (interview, December 17, 2014).

This example from my interview with 9th graders Vanessa and Isabel provides an instance of a racial microaggression, where even though the interaction was excused as “kidding,” it was still clearly perceived as a tool to other them. Racial microaggressions are the manifestations of institutional racism through the everyday forms of prejudice and bias People of Color face. These microaggressions are often subtle and come in many different forms ranging from assumptions about a person’s intelligence, social class, nationality, or language to denying the role of race in a person’s life experiences. Racial microaggressions have significant psychological, social, and even physiological impacts that can contribute to the marginalization of People of Color (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015a).

MEBs in this study experienced racial microaggressions at Albert High School from both teachers and peers. These microaggressions came in various forms ranging from low expectations by teachers to stereotyping from peers. Many of these microaggressions had something to do with a Latina/o ethnic identity or centered on speaking Spanish. In these cases, language was positioned as a nativist marker (Pérez Huber et. al, 2008) that served to both other MEBs and pressure them to assimilate to White, English speaking norms.

For example, one of the social studies teachers consistently referred to a Mexican-American student as Matthew instead of by his actual name, Mateo. Mr. Bowden, one of the ELL teachers, reported that Mateo was too polite to correct this teacher, but that the other boys in class, who were his friends, always giggled whenever she called him Matthew. Mr. Bowden explained that he believed this teacher did this because she was from a small farming community and did not have a strong cross-cultural understanding (interview, December 17, 2014).

Likewise, Vanessa claimed that certain teachers “treat us differently” (interview, December 17, 2014) because they are in the ELL program. She elaborated on this statement by explaining that she believed some teachers think they [Emergent Bilinguals] cannot do things on their own or are not able to speak sufficient English to participate in all class work. These examples speak to the social positioning of language at Albert High School as well as the importance of cultural competence among teachers in new destination schools.

Racial microaggressions were also felt by Mrs. Becker, the Spanish bilingual paraprofessional and one of the few People of Color on the school staff. Mrs. Becker, who is a Chilean national, reported enjoying her job because she liked her colleagues and the students she worked with. However, she also stated that she struggles to work with non-ELL students because they do not respect her. Mrs. Becker often accompanied recently-arrived native Spanish speaking students to their core content courses in order to translate and provide additional assistance. These classes were predominately made up of the school’s White, native English speaking majority. Mrs. Becker reported encountering several instances where White, native English speaking students would not listen to her, argued with her, and even threw a ball at her. For example, she discussed an instance where a girl in a social studies class refused to hand over her cellular phone after Mrs. Becker had repeatedly told her to stop using it. Instead, the girl continued to talk on the phone until Mrs. Becker alerted the student teacher (a 22-year-old White, native English speaking male), who was finally able to confiscate the phone. Therefore, even though Mrs. Becker is approximately 10 years senior to this student-teacher, is a paid staff member, and has more teaching experience, the White, native English speaking high school girl listened to him over her. Mrs. Becker reported being very upset by this incident and ultimately had the Assistant Principal speak with the student involved. However, Mrs. Becker also stated

that she was concerned about getting White, native English speaking students in trouble because she feared they would react by “being mean” to the MEBs she works with (interview, November 12, 2014).

Thus, although all of the staff and the MEBs I spoke with reported respecting and strongly valuing Mrs. Becker, from her perspective, the White, native English speaking student majority did not. The microaggressions Mrs. Becker faced from some of these students indicates larger issues of a lack of respect for People of Color as authority figures (Matias, 2013). This issue points to the need for a more diverse staff, which Principal Schmidt also recognized. However, when discussing the lack of diversity of her staff, Principal Schmidt reported that they have tried to recruit more diverse teachers, but the number of applicants has been limited. She also reported that she is hopeful that a recent district scholarship program, meant to pay for a teaching degree for qualified applicants who come from an ethnic or racial minority and agree to return to River City to teach, will improve staff diversity.

Additionally, at Albert High School, MEBs were socially positioned in culturally and linguistically deficit ways. They faced this positioning from core content teachers, peers, and even sometimes from their ELL teachers. This positioning came through linguistic and ethnic microaggressions as well as through discourses of a “culture of poverty.”

Culture of Poverty

Many of them are first generation or second generation, or many of them are generation 1.5, which are the most difficult students to teach. Their parents came uneducated by this country's standards...and because they see their parents “making it,” I mean well enough to support them and make sure they have enough to eat, and they don't die, and they have an apartment to live in, it's just the cycle of poverty, it's hard to break – Mr. Neumann (interview, October 20, 2014).

In this interview excerpt, Mr. Neumann discussed the idea of a “cycle of poverty” among his students, explaining that the majority of his students do not go on to college because they “are in poverty and they would be first generation” and because “a lot of times their families don’t understand US public education let alone the university and why it’s important and why it’s necessary” (interview, October 20, 2014). This example indicates that although ELL teachers displayed more cultural sensitivity in general, there were still instances of deficit perspectives or implicit biases among them. Therefore, instead of investigating the structural, pedagogical, or curricular reasons that may account for a student not attending postsecondary schooling, teachers would sometimes “point to students’ culture as the culprit” (Ladson-Billing, 2006b, p. 105) to explain why students were not succeeding.

Similarly, Miss Kovalenko claimed that many of her students were “working against the influences” of low socioeconomic backgrounds that cause them to “not follow through because they don’t have support at home” because their parents are working (interview, December 3, 2014). She explained that this resulted in challenges with classroom management. Likewise, Mrs. Becker, the Spanish bilingual paraprofessional, claimed that Mexican parents are “too trusting of their children” (interview, November 12, 2014), which causes them to believe the students over the teachers. These statements imply that parents of EBs do not value their children’s education or the judgments of their children’s teachers, and that EBs do not have the ambition to attend higher education.

These types of deficit discourses about Latina/o families not valuing education parallel what other researchers have found among educators concerning Latina/o immigrants (Valenzuela, 1999; Fernández, 2002; Villenas & Deyhel, 1999; Wortham, Mortimer, and Allard, 2009) and other communities of color (Yosso, 2006; Mitchell, 2013; Valencia, 1997). However,

all of my student participants consistently reported how much their parents cared about their educational success. Although there were many occasions where MEBs reported that their parents or guardians did not completely understand the American educational system or did not have enough English to communicate with school personnel, they did understand that they wanted their children to get good grades and graduate ready for life beyond high school. Even Lucas (interview, January 20, 2015), who was extremely credit deficient by his senior year, reported how much his mother cared and how upset she was that he was not doing better in school. Thus, teachers use of the “culture of poverty” as the “primary explanation for everything from school failure to problems with behavior management and discipline” (Ladson-Billings, 2006b, p. 104) speaks to the persistent problem of racial stereotyping and lack of cultural competency among White teachers (Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002) as well as a uniform White, middle-class view of parental involvement (López & Stoelting, 2010).

Student participants consistently spoke highly of the ELL staff, demonstrating that these teachers had developed strong rapport with their students. Nevertheless, these examples illustrate the deficit ways teachers positioned MEBs. For example, Mr. Neumann also claimed that his Latina/o students were not taking advantage of their opportunities to go to college saying,

Immigrant students and minorities have so many scholarships that are targeted just at them. I mean come on if you just take high school seriously; I mean there are people out there that want to give you money just because you're not White and just because you can't speak English. If you can show them that you have promise too, I mean that money is pretty much yours for the taking because so many minorities don't take advantage of those opportunities and I don't think they get that (interview, October 20, 2014).

This statement both demonstrates an exaggeration of the ease with which non-English speaking immigrants can obtain scholarships and also plays into the neoliberal ideology that the disproportionate failure of People of Color in public schools reflects a lack of initiative or entrepreneurial spirit. This example again speaks to a lack of recognition for the structural implications in student success or achievement and instead resorts to blame based on a cultural deficit model.

The master narrative (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) concerning MEBs at Albert High School positioned this population in a deficit manner with low expectations and linguistic bias. This social positioning could be seen through the stereotyping and racial microaggressions participants faced. While participants often responded to these discourses by internalizing them, there were also examples of resistance. This means that although the mechanisms of social reproduction were evident and functioned to maintain existing power dynamics, the cycle of social reproduction could also be disrupted. Participants resisted deficit positioning through narratives of unity, bravery, and pride that emphasized community building among MEBs and “talked back” to inferior conceptualizations of Mexican ethnic and linguistic identity.

Internalization of Social Discourses

Since Mexicans here, we get in trouble a lot. Because I don't know, we're just like that. We're crazy like that but... we just like to mess around a lot. Sometimes we all get together and we skip class or stuff like that, it's been worse when I first started high school it was like we didn't really care, but then we started to. Cause when I was a freshman, I was doing good, you know, I was doing good that year. But we all were freshmen and we had a friend in senior year and he didn't really care because he was going to graduate and he was like oh let's go here, and we just left. So we were in trouble the whole time, but I don't think it's anything about school, like the fact that we're crazy - Lucas (interview, January 20, 2015).

Lucas, who by the middle of his senior year was extremely credit-deficient, provides an example of how some student participants accepted the deficit positioning that was imposed on them. Lucas explained to me that he did not do well in school because Mexican students, like him, are “crazy,” meaning that they party and get into trouble. However, when I asked him if he thought all Mexican students behaved like this, he admitted that they did not. He then went on to explain that the ones who “grew up in Mexico and came here later” get into trouble while “the other Mexicans [who] were raised here” do not (interview, January 20, 2015). Lucas’s statement feeds into a deficit perspective that young men of color are “troublemakers” that has been well-documented by urban education researchers (Knight, 2015; Lopez, 2003). However, this stereotyping has only begun to be theorized within the NLD (Raible & Irizarry, 2015), which indicates a future need to examine the role of gender in Latina/o student experiences in new destinations.

Furthermore, Lucas also claimed that although it was difficult to change teachers’ perspectives of students who previously slacked on their work and then later tried to change, he

still maintained that it was his own fault for not succeeding in school because “your own future depends on yourself” (interview, January 20, 2015). Lucas’s dismissal of how his own social positioning in the school affects his learning outcomes speaks to the idea that all learners are on a level playing field and that learning is an individual responsibility. Indeed, all learners have at least some agency in their own experiences; however, it is also important to recognize that the social factors surrounding learning can greatly affect student outcomes.

Additionally, the power of social reproduction through the internalization of deficit narratives also impacted how MEBs saw themselves as English learners. For example, in a discussion about being labeled ELL, 12th grade Guadalupe stated that sometimes kids do not want to be labeled ELL because “sometimes people might think that you’re dumb or that there’s something wrong with you” (interview, October 20, 2014). She also explained that a tension existed between Mexican immigrant students who received ELL services and Mexican-American students who did not. She stated that she sometimes felt embarrassed to be ELL because people of her “own race” who were not in ELL classes judged the others who were (interview, October 20, 2014). Guadalupe’s example illustrates how nativist language identities can be leveraged even among students who share the same ethnic identity, which further fuels a deficit mentality about immigrant and bilingual students. Likewise, while the tension between Mexican and Mexican-American students has been documented by researchers in more traditional Latina/o immigrant settings (Valenzuela, 1999), this example indicates that Mexican and Mexican American students in new destination communities may be experiencing similar conflicts and pressures.

Narratives of Resistance

Although internalizations of deficit narratives were common at Albert High School, there were also several examples of resistance. This resistance could be seen through the counter-stories MEBs provided, which centered on the ideas of Latina/o unity, ethnic and linguistic pride, and immigrant bravery. These counter-stories provide an asset-oriented view of MEBs, which points to the strength and resilience of these students in the face of discriminatory practices and racist discourses.

Unity

They [Latina/o families] know that they only have each other here because they don't speak English...so they know they have to stick together – Mrs. Becker (interview, November 12, 2014).

Mrs. Becker, the Spanish bilingual paraprofessional, recognized a solidarity she saw among her Latina/o students and families, stating that she thought they were “very united,” like “a team” (interview, November 12, 2014). Although she observed certain advantages to this, she also said that it was “not always good” because it meant they would only speak Spanish with one another and not practice their English. She also stated that this unity meant that students would “cover for each other” (interview, November 12, 2014) even when someone had done something wrong. Still, she recognized the need for them to “stick together” (interview, November 12, 2014), which speaks to how Latina/os were positioned as others in the greater community and needed to come together for support.

Community building has long been important for recently arrived immigrants. Newly arrived immigrants often draw on their ethnic identities and transnational homelands in order to form bonds and organizations in their new homes (Zhou & Lee, 2013). MEBs at Albert High School drew on similarities among their ethnic identities to create such bonds. Likewise,

Latina/o families in River City recognized the importance of “sticking together.” This illustrates the significance of unity among Latina/o families in River City as part of the New Latino Diaspora.

Pride

*Yo he visto que aquí por lo mismo que los americanos a veces son racistas, algunos, a veces que los mexicanos ya no hablan español porque muchos por aquí ya no les gusta. Solamente no quieren que sepan que hablan español y no quieren hablar para que no son racistas con ellos. Eso lo veo, pero yo pienso que **you can be proud** porque yo me siento así. – Beatriz (interview, February 3, 2015).*

English Translation: *I have seen that here because the Americans sometimes are racist, some of them, sometimes the Mexicans don't speak Spanish anymore because many of the people around here don't like them. It's only that they don't want them to know that they speak Spanish and they don't want to speak [Spanish] so that they won't be racist with them. That's what I see, but I think that **you can be proud** because that's how I feel. - Beatriz (interview, February 3, 2015).*

This interview excerpt from 11th grade Beatriz discussed the racist responses she and her classmates received from their White American peers when speaking Spanish, which caused some of her classmates to stop speaking Spanish. This example illustrates how Spanish was deficitly positioned at Albert High School and how some of the Spanish speaking students internalized this deficit positioning by rejecting the Spanish language. Unfortunately, immigrant students' “dismissal” of their native language is not unusual. Many times the desire to assimilate outweighs the desire to preserve the family language. However, Beatriz strongly counters that idea with a narrative of pride for her Spanish.

Interestingly, not only does Beatriz's counter-story provide an asset-oriented view of bilingualism and firmly assert her linguistic pride, but she also translanguages between Spanish to English to do so. According to García and Li (2015):

Translanguaging goes beyond having to acquire and learn new language structures, rather it develops the integration of new language practices into one linguistic repertoire that is available for the speaker to be, know and do, and that is in turn produced in the complex interactions of bilingual speakers. Rather than learning a new separate 'second language', learners are engaged in appropriating new languaging that makes up their own unique repertoire of meaning-making resources (p. 80).

Thus, Beatriz is drawing on multiple languages and forms of meaning-making to make the important point of valuing Spanish as both a language and an identity at Albert High School. This means that for Beatriz, having "pride" in Spanish does not mean only using Spanish; rather, it is the valuing of her languages equally and integrating both of them into her complex linguistic repertoire.

Similarly, the following excerpt from my interview with Isabel and Vanessa (interview, December 17, 2014) also asserts bilingual pride in the face of deficit perspectives.

Isabel: When I was younger, I was embarrassed of ELL classes because people would be like what class do you have next and I'm like ughhh, just a class. Or one time I did say I have ELL and they're like "What's that!"

Vanessa: Or they're like, is that for like stupid people?

Isabel: Yeah they would say that to us.

Vanessa: And it's like no I'm just ELL, and they're like what's ELL, and I'm like it's for people who speak more than one language. And now they understand but back then

they'd be like oh is it for stupid people. And it's just like just because we're a different color doesn't mean we're not as smart as you are.

In this counter-story, Vanessa and Isabel discuss the discrimination they have faced for being “ELL,” which was also previously discussed by Guadalupe. In addition to reporting embarrassment, they also report others equating the ELL label, and the race of the majority of the ELLs, with stupidity. The association of race and intelligence is not unusual. In fact, the I.Q. test had its origins in the racist eugenics movement (Au, 2013). However, Vanessa and Isabel's counter-story directly goes against the idea that an ELL student and/or a Latina/o student is “stupid.” Instead, their narrative promotes the idea that ELLs are “people who speak more than one language,” asserting an assert-oriented view of bilingualism.

Bravery

I think they [Mexicans] are brave because of how they came and they want to get a good education and not even knowing how to speak English, it's brave for them to come to school and try their best - Guadalupe (interview, October 20, 2014).

Adding to the sentiment of pride, 12th grade Guadalupe stated that she thought Mexicans should be perceived as “brave” by their “American” peers because of the obstacles they have overcome. This idea of bravery counters many of the dominant narratives about Mexican immigrants. Mexican immigrants are often negatively stereotyped as “wetbacks” (Ngai, 2004), “bandits” (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015b), or “lazy” (Arellano, 2012). However, Guadalupe's narrative starkly contrasts this negative portrayal through ideas of courage and strength. From a LatCrit perspective, her counter-narrative not only recognizes deficit framing but explicitly contradicts it through an empowering lens. Furthermore, she points to migration and language,

two of the primary sources of deficit positioning, as the main reasons for Mexican students to be considered brave.

Discussion

Although Latina/o students at Albert High School were frequently qualified as “happy” and “outgoing,” they were also often positioned in a deficit manner as students who do not academically succeed because of linguistic or cultural deficits. This social positioning reflects larger historical power systems and issues of racial discrimination that manifested in the schooling experiences of these students. This research adds to the similar social positioning other researchers (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999; Valverde 2006) have documented concerning Latina/o students in more traditional immigrant communities and also adds to emerging research on the racial identities of Latina/o students in the NLD (Adair, 2015; Contreras et al., 2015; Gallo et al., 2015; Raible & Irizarry, 2015; Richardson Bruna, 2007; Rich & Miranda, 2004) Additionally, this study illustrates the diversity of MEB responses to this social positioning. While there were examples of internalizing societal discourses that positioned MEBs as culturally and linguistically inferior and pressured them to assimilate, there were also examples of participant counter-stories that talked back to deficit narratives and brought up necessary conversations about racism. These student narratives add to the literature on student experiences in new destination communities and speak to LatCrit’s broader goal of challenging meritocracy and liberalism.

At the same time, the stories of racial discrimination and microaggressions also call for much needed conversations on how to decrease and ultimately eliminate community marginalization of this population. In discussions with my participants about how they would like to address these sorts of issues at Albert High School, one theme that continued to appear

was language. For example, when I asked Beatriz her advice for how to counteract racist tendencies, she stated that the school should require that “*los alumnos tomaran más años de otro idioma en la high school*” - “the students to take more years of a foreign language in high school.” She especially recommended that students learn Spanish because “*es lo que se usa más* – “it is what is most used” (interview, February 3, 2015).

Likewise, several participants cited an incident in the 10th grade social studies class when the core content teacher asked Mrs. Becker to read an excerpt in front of the class in Spanish. The purpose of the exercise was for the majority of the class to understand how the Emergent Bilinguals in class felt everyday, and the teacher told the class that they “have to understand the impact of different languages and ethnic backgrounds” and that “we’re lucky to have such diversity” in class (field notes, November 3, 2014). All participants I spoke to about this event expressed both approval and appreciation for this action and saw it as an eye-opening occurrence for the White, native English speaking students.

This instance represents an example of using language to promote critical awareness (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Pennycook, 2004) and to raise critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). While this is only one example in an academic year filled primarily with uncritical pedagogy, it was still an example that strongly resonated with participants. Freire’s (1970) notion of *conscientização*, or critical consciousness, aims for an in-depth understanding of social power systems through a process of conscious raising that exposes unjust systems and implicit biases. Thus, while this example is limited, it still illustrates the need for more critical pedagogical work to be done at Albert High School.

Furthermore, towards the end of the year, Principal Schmidt also discussed actions the school was taking to address discrimination. The school has put together an “action research

project” with about 90 Students of Color from the freshman class (both Isabel and Vanessa are involved) to “identify problems,” such as “bullying, discrimination, and harassment,” within the school and to present proposals to the district for how to fix them. Principal Schmidt also cited other school groups on campus meant specifically for African American students that have served to inform her of incidents of racial tension and/or discrimination. Finally, Principal Schmidt stated that the school has begun putting together professional development initiatives for teachers to “be more culturally and linguistically responsive” (interview, May 29, 2015). This seems like a strong start to addressing major issues within the school and community; still, even Principal Schmidt acknowledged that they “need to do a lot in terms of cultural and linguistic sensitivity for teachers and students” (interview, May 29, 2015).

Moreover, it is important to interrogate what culturally and linguistically “sensitive” means. As previously discussed, Mexican immigrants in the United States have had a long history of being positioned as non-native others, and River City has also had a long history of racial tensions. Thus, addressing issues of marginalization must incite a questioning of personal biases that both pushes against race neutral (Leonardo, 2013) perspectives and pushes further than just recognizing differences. Examining counter-stories, like those from these student participants, can open up spaces for teachers, students, and community members to have tough conversations that challenge historical power systems and “ultimately turn the margins into places of transformative resistance” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 37). Likewise, these counter-stories promote asset-oriented views of MEBs as proud of their native culture and language and courageous for coming to a new land and taking on all of the uncertainties that come with it.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used counter-storytelling to examine the racialized experiences of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals at Albert High School, and connected those experiences to larger issues of marginalization of Mexican immigrants in River City, Wisconsin, and the United States. As educational disparities among Latina/o students persist, it is all the more important for educational researchers to examine the schooling experiences of learners through their own voices. Likewise, the experiences of immigrants in new destination communities, like River City, must be investigated in order to better serve learners. MEBs at Albert High School represent a wide variety of what it means to be Mexican as they come from a range of backgrounds. However, they all faced similar deficit framing and racial microaggressions. It is unreasonable to think that students will succeed in school while simultaneously coping with these tensions. Ultimately, elimination of the educational disparities that plague Latina/o communities cannot be done without addressing the marginalization of this population within the larger community. Thus, it is important to continue fostering asset-oriented views of MEBs such as the LatCrit counter-narratives of pride, bravery, and unity this study has provided.

Chapter VII: Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions for Future Research

In this study, I have argued that the historical positioning of Mexicans as non-native others and the shift towards neoliberal education policies have produced detrimental education policies that ignore the needs of Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs) and enable hostile racial environments. Through this ethnographic work, I have investigated the enactment of market-driven education reforms at Albert High School and examined the lived experiences of MEBs. I have shown both the heterogeneous nature of MEBs through the unique lived experiences of my student participants as well as the common issues each of them faced. Namely, I have shown that the schooling experiences of MEBs at Albert High School were marked by racial microaggressions based primarily on students' ethnicity and language. Furthermore, I have shown that the enactment of market-driven educational reforms at Albert High School had numerous "unintended consequences" for MEBs, such as excessive testing, disconnected curriculum, and increased frustration and anxiety. Ultimately, the school's overemphasis on high-stakes assessment and accountability policies created a test-driven environment that frustrated students and teachers and ignored larger issues of marginalization and discrimination.

This study speaks to the broader educational experiences of MEBs, which have been marked by deficit notions, pressures to conform to White, middle class norms, and a general lack of investment (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999; Valverde, 2006). The consequences of this dominant paradigm can be seen through the persistent educational disparities faced by Latina/o students in both Albert High School and around the country. My findings conclude that pressures to achieve high standardized tests scores and state accountability ratings overshadowed the needs of Emergent Bilinguals and ignored the everyday racism

Mexican students faced. My findings also indicate a need for additional cultural competency among educators and educational policymakers in order to better address MEB needs.

A key aspect of this study was the use of anthropology of policy as both a lens and methodology for exploring the schooling experiences of MEBs and the educators who work with them. This approach has significant implications for not only education policy but also for public policy broadly defined. Typically public policy is dominated by economists who do not usually examine the interpersonal, cultural, or contextual aspects of policy. Anthropologists, on the other hand, prioritize a “thick” description of participants’ lived experiences and offer a deeper cultural understanding and analysis. Therefore, an anthropological approach to researching policy views the policy itself as an object of analysis and examines the histories, assumptions, and “cultures” associated with the policy. Likewise, while traditional anthropology examines the experiences and positioning of historically marginalized groups, an anthropology of policy shows how this marginalization is part of larger power systems. This analysis pushes anthropology to reexamine what an ethnographic field really entails by questioning the notion of a geographically fixed site, and examining the interconnected relationships among individuals, communities, governments, institutions, and global enterprises. Therefore, an anthropology of policy approach prioritizes how policy is actually enacted on the ground rather than how it *should* be enacted.

This approach has allowed me to connect the large-scale policy worlds of free trade, immigration, and high stakes testing with the lived experiences of my participants. The MEBs who participated in this study were greatly impacted by free trade agreements that have significantly contributed to the increase in Mexican immigration and by the current and historical immigration policies that have helped frame Mexicans as non-native others. Anthropology of policy has also allowed me to connect the historical positioning of Mexicans in the US to River

City's hostile racial environment, which could be seen through the microaggressions participants experienced. This approach helped me connect these policies with the ideologies of free market capitalism, individualism, and competition, which are key cultural aspects of these policy worlds. Finally, an anthropology of policy illustrates the importance of anthropologists sharing their research findings with the broader public in order to promote more cultural, comprehensive, and humanistic understandings of social public policy.

Key Takeaways

In this study, I have defined some of the key issues facing Mexican Emergent Bilinguals (MEBs) as immigration, socio-economic concerns, and cultural and linguistic factors. Mexican migrants have long come to the US to escape poverty and search for economic opportunities (Consejo Nacional de Población, 2010; Ngai, 2004). This transnational work relationship was formally codified through the Bracero Program in the mid-20th century and has steadily continued since. However, since the passing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, migration numbers from Mexico have significantly increased with many immigrants permanently settling in the US. The exact reasons and mechanisms for this migration as well as the unique circumstances of each migrant depends greatly on the Mexican region from which they come and their unique cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. In the past 10 years, increasing drug violence has also become a major catalyst for immigration, particularly for individuals coming from areas controlled by drug traffickers (Breslow, 2015).

It is important for educators to understand these issues, histories, and conflicts in order to better serve the learners and families who have lived these experiences. Namely, educators need to be aware of the fear and stigma associated with being undocumented (Abrego, 2011), the emotional trauma that can result from immigration (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Holmes, 2011),

the poverty related issues that many MEBs live with (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Valverde, 2006), and the diverse ethnic and linguistic nature of this population (Bacon, 2014). Because a significant portion of MEBs are undocumented or have undocumented family members, many live with additional challenges and fears that documented students do not have. These students and their families must live “under the radar” to avoid deportation concerns and also have limited employment opportunities and educational access. Thus, this population often struggles with isolation, exploitation, stress, and poverty (Holmes, 2011; Sullivan & Rehm, 2005), which makes it much more difficult for MEBs to succeed in formal schooling. Additionally, the multilingual nature of many MEBs, and their families, deserves further consideration to nurture positive cultural identities and to foster academic growth. When educators and education policy makers do not have a strong understanding of these histories, issues, and concerns, it is more likely that MEBs will experience deficit positioning, hostile racial environments, and increased educational disparities. Therefore, is it essential for schools and school policy officials to include diverse voices and participate in relevant training that supports this population.

Educators also need institutional flexibility, resources, and support to address MEBs’ unique academic, cultural, and linguistic needs. However, because of current high-stakes assessment and accountability reforms, teachers and administrators have been pressured to increase standardized test scores and utilize prescriptive curriculum and instruction (Au, 2009; Ravitch, 2013). These market-driven education reforms dismiss structural inequities and operate under the assumption that all learners come to school with the same backgrounds, needs, and understandings. Thus, this top-down way of thinking directly contradicts the importance of understanding and investigating socio-cultural conditions in learners’ lives. Likewise, decreased investment in public education as a part of the larger neoliberal project has forced school districts

to increase class sizes, decrease programming, and reduce staff size (Au, 2009; Gorlewski & Porfilio, 2013; Ravitch, 2013). These cut-backs have further damaged schools' ability to serve MEBs and other diverse populations.

The education policies and practices affecting MEBs at Albert High School exemplify both the need for educators and education policy makers to have a stronger understanding of the needs of this population as well as the damage market-driven reforms can have on MEBs' educational experiences. The lack of understanding of the needs of this population, the overemphasis on standardized testing, and drastic budget cuts have had numerous "unintended" consequences for MEBs, including excessive testing, disconnected curriculum, and increased frustration and anxiety. Furthermore, this all happened within the situated place of River City, Wisconsin, which has a hostile racial history that is dominated by the working class White majority. However, River City's demographics have shifted dramatically over the past 10 years with River City schools serving a poorer and more diverse population than ever before. The increased poverty has happened predominantly as a result of the closing of the city's major assembly plant while the increased diversity has occurred predominantly because of an influx of Latina/o migrants.

River City's larger issues of race and class significantly impacted the educational experiences of MEBs in this study. Long-term citizens of River City were frustrated by the current economic conditions and were unfamiliar with their "new" Latina/o neighbors, which manifested in the lives of student participants through acts of discrimination, deficit perspectives, and racial microaggressions. MEBs in this study all consistently reported incidents of racial and linguistic bias from White peers and teachers. However, participants' responses to these acts varied, with examples of both internalization of deficit discourses as well as resistance.

Participants' narratives of resistance included ideas of unity, bravery, and pride and offer an asset-oriented perspective of this population. Their stories draw attention to issues of community marginalization that must be addressed in order to promote academic achievement and to the need to promote more culturally responsive pedagogy.

Implications

This study also has several implications for theory, pedagogy, and policy. This investigation points to the need for a more situated understanding of Latino Critical Race Theory and the New Latino Diaspora as well as the need to further theorize the notion of "colorblindness". Furthermore, this research supports the use of culturally relevant approaches with Latina/o students and Emergent Bilinguals and also pushes both formal and informal policy actors to further consider the needs of MEBs when creating and enacting education policy. The following section will further explore these implications.

Theory

In this investigation, I have drawn on Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and research from the New Latino Diaspora (NLD). While these approaches offer a critical lens for analyzing the experiences of Latina/os in new destinations, they also lack a thorough explanation for the importance of situated time and space. Because most of LatCrit's theory building has come from the point of view of traditional immigrant destinations, namely California (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001), there is a lack of theorization in LatCrit concerning the role of time and space in people's lived experiences. This means that much of LatCrit is grounded in particular historical and sociocultural understanding that not all regions of the US share. For example, LatCrit does not account for the differences in the experiences of Latina/os in California from those differences of Latina/os in Wisconsin. Furthermore, while the NLD tries

to explore those differences, it still assumes that Latina/os in new destinations have the same historical trajectories as Latina/os in traditional destinations, but are simply behind. It also lends itself to the notion that these spaces will always be “new.” This misses a bigger question of exploring the situated trajectories of Latina/os, which may look very different than they historically have in other spaces. This indicates a need for more longitudinal empirical research and theory building from situated spaces. For example, more research on Latina/o education in the Midwest could illustrate multiple, and alternative, trajectories, forms of understanding, and experiences that are not yet fully explained through LatCrit or the NLD.

Also this study points to the need to further theorize the notion of “colorblindness.” While much of the theory building on colorblindness comes from African American experiences (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Omi & Winant, 2014), there is a lack of understanding from a Latina/o perspective. Furthermore, although some of the current theoretical understandings can be transferred to Latina/o immigrant experiences (such as the English Only argument that bilingual education harms Latina/o students), much of the theory is insufficient for explaining the current overt discrimination towards Mexican immigrants from the current Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump. While this form of discrimination still employs the notion of “reverse racism,” it cannot explain the move towards more explicit forms of prejudice and hate. Therefore, Trump’s rhetoric, and the accompanying movements and actions it incites, necessitate consideration from a Latina/o perspective as well as from an intersectional analysis. Namely, it is worth exploring how the rise of this overt hate speech has come immediately following the two-term presidency of our first president of color, Barack Obama, the increased social acceptability of gay marriage, and the push towards multicultural education.

Pedagogy

This study also has several pedagogical implications. Schools serve an important role in bridging communities and promoting cultural acceptance and sharing. I have argued throughout this study that both education policymakers and educators must acquire a better understanding of the needs of MEBs. Likewise, this study encourages educators to apply an asset-oriented perspective of MEBs and actively engage in addressing community marginalization of this population in order to improve schooling outcomes. Applying social justice educational frameworks and employing cultural responsive practices are two sound ways to begin this process.

Therefore, this study supports the work of other critical scholars who have already advocated for the use of culturally relevant practices with Students of Color (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Wortham & Contreras, 2002). For example, Ladson-Billings (1995) argued that culturally relevant teaching must meet the following criteria, “an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the development of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness” (p. 483). My findings indicate that these criteria were not met at Albert High School as many students were academically struggling and there was a lack of cultural competence and a lack of critical consciousness. This indicates a need for more culturally relevant pedagogy at Albert High School, which would require additional training and support.

Policy

However, the lack of culturally relevant pedagogy at Albert High School is also related to the overemphasis on testing, disconnected curriculum, and increased frustration and anxiety, which came as a response to high-stakes assessment and accountability reforms. Current uniform

standards and assessments of neoliberal education reforms do not address the common issues faced by many MEBs, such as bilingualism, immigration, and racial discrimination. Nor do these policies allow space for educators to recognize the diversity found within the MEB population. In order for educators to do these sorts of things, they must have the flexibility, support, and resources necessary. Thus, this study calls for formal school policies to take greater care in understanding and addressing the situated needs of MEBs. This may involve increased training, additional expertise, and a priority shift away from testing-centric reforms. Likewise, it may involve placing more resources into schools and communities in order to address those needs. This directly speaks against the extreme budget cuts River City schools have faced in recent years.

Suggestions for Future Research

While this study has added to the gap in literature on how neoliberal education policies are impacting Latina/o students and Emergent Bilinguals in new destinations, more research is still needed on this topic, especially considering the rapid policy changes that occur at federal and state levels. For example, the multimillion-dollar Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was quickly implemented within a few years without any significant field testing or educational research. Subsequently, there have been many states that originally implemented CCSS and its associated tests in 2014-2015 only to decide a year later to change systems. These states are now in a process of deciding whether to keep the standards and also deciding what sort of assessments they would like to use (Camera, 2015). These very expensive decisions have direct implications for school districts, teachers, and students across the country, but are often made rapidly by people who do not have much educational experience. Therefore, it is very important that educational researchers, who are concerned about the ways these sorts of reforms impact

historically marginalized populations, continue to grow the body of research on this topic and also continue to publish to wider audiences. These audiences include school administrators, legislators, and community members.

This study also speaks to the need to continue exploring the role of race and gender in the experiences of Latina/o Emergent Bilinguals in the NLD. While considerable research has explored the role of language in the education of this population and pushed for more bilingual education services (e.g. Allard, 2013; Bruening, 2015; Lowenhaupt, 2015), there is still a lack of understanding concerning the role of race and gender in this population's social positioning. In my study, I found significant evidence that race played a major role in the experiences of my student participants. I also found some evidence that the social positioning of male MEBs was consistent with the deficit perspectives of young men of color that has been well-documented by urban education researchers (Knight, 2015; Lopez, 2003), while female MEBs were positioned as "good students". These findings indicate a need for further examination of the role of race and gender in Latina/o student experiences in new destinations in order to better serve these learners and provide a more culturally inclusive environment.

Finally, this research also indicates the need to study the experiences of undocumented MEBs and their families in new destinations. Most of the research that has examined the experiences of undocumented students has taken place in California (Abrego, 2011; Gonzales, 2011; Negrón-Gonzales, 2013). While this research is very important, it does not necessarily transfer to the experiences of undocumented youth in places like Wisconsin. For example, there are particular services, organizations, and cultural understandings about undocumented individuals in California that are not found in Wisconsin. For example, there are undocumented student groups found on University of California campuses while the University of Wisconsin

schools still cannot even grant undocumented students in-state tuition. Furthermore, there are more research support and mechanisms in place for researchers to recruit undocumented populations in California than in Wisconsin. Therefore, researchers outside of California must push for more opportunities and institutional support to investigate this under-researched population.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Classroom Observation Protocol

- What rules, or policies, are actively implemented in the classroom? By whom? Are these official/unofficial? Are they consistently enacted in the same ways?
- What rules or policies are ignored or resisted by students? By teachers? Are they always ignored? When and how?
- What acts of agency, if any, do Mexican EBs engage in?
- What language is spoken at particular times or during particular events?
- Does race, class, or gender ever seem to play a role?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol with Student Participants

- Where are you from? What languages do you speak? How long have you lived in Madison? In the US? How long have you attended X school?
- Can you describe your formal schooling experiences before coming to this school?
- Have most people in your family attended school? What were their experiences like?
- Can you tell me what a typical day is like for you?
- What do you like most/least about school?
- If you were the principal, what if any changes would you make to school?
- What do you think your family thinks about your school?
- Can you describe the situations where you speak each of your languages (here I am assuming the majority of my participants will be bilingual in Spanish and English to some degree with an additional possibility of also speaking an indigenous language).
- Can you tell me where you see yourself in five years?

Potential additional questions to discuss observations involving the participant.

- I noticed X happened in class, what did you think about that?
- I noticed X class seemed to be rather difficult, can you tell me more about that class?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol with Administrators and School Staff

- Can you describe your professional position and role in the educational policy making process?
- Can you describe how policies are formed?
- Can you describe the Latino/a immigrant population?
- Can you describe what typically happens when a recently arrived immigrant enters high school?
 - When did that begin? What is the rationale for that? Are there any exceptions?
 - Can you describe any interventions or policies the district has developed that are associated with this population? Are you aware of any federal or state policies that have been developed that concern this population?
- Has the population changed at all over your time in this district?
- Can you describe the Latina/o students more specifically? What similarities or differences do you see between them and other immigrant populations? What countries do most of the Latina/o newcomers come from?
- Which of the two high schools in this district have the most immigrants? Latina/o immigrants? Why is that? Can you describe any variation in how the schools address this population?
- Do you think any policy changes affecting this population should be made? Why/why not? Are you aware of other individuals or groups who are in favor or oppose policy changes? Who? Such as? Can you tell me specifically what their issues are?