BLACK AND BROWN RELATIONS IN SOUTH L.A.: A MIS-EDUCATION

BY

ABEL CORREA

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Educational Policy Studies in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2010

Urbana, Illinois

Masters Committee:

Professor Laurence Parker, Chair
Professor James D. Anderson
Associate Professor Richard Rodriguez
Abstract

I examine race relations between African Americans and Latin@s in the context of Southern California. Both groups have been historically discriminated, and are now participating in activities that some may call “racist” towards one another. This thesis departs from the Southern California “race riots” in school settings during the early 1990’s. As a result, the students were punished by the Los Angeles Police Department as an instrument of order. Although “order” was brought back to the local high schools, minimal action was taken about the so-called "race riots" root causes. There was no talk about the circumstances in place where black and brown youth live, make up the high populations of residents, nor the lack of resources that are non-existent in the community. There was a lack of sound initiatives aimed at assisting this crisis in Southern California.

Communities in the Los Angeles region are places where youth have very little opportunities, resources, or [outlets to make it out] of the mire community. The main purpose and concern(s) in this thesis is to expose and attempt to unpack the real consequences, violence and ignorance both communities African American and Chican@/Latin@ are left to face. The events that occurred in these schools were blamed on the individual [students], disregarding the conditions and lack of resources South Central Los Angeles residents continue to face. I expose narratives, real life experiences on how attitudes towards one another [African Americans and Latin@s] complicate race relations, but also how both groups maintain and participate in perpetuating racial superior ideas and reproduce "racist" forms of discrimination towards one another. I also
discuss how African Americans and Latin@s take advantage of the racial fissures to benefit individuals as opposed to assisting both communities. I examine how these ideologies can have grave consequences in the future. Furthermore, I will shed light on how these ideologies have come to be [and exercised, played, came to function, and get exercised]. Moreover, who are the beneficiaries of racial tensions in the long run? Lastly, I suggest some potential solutions for the inner city youth in places such as South Central Los Angeles /Southern California in an effort to try to undo ideologies that have been normalized by black and brown residents of South Central Los Angeles.
Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Literature Review ........................................................................................................1

Endnotes .....................................................................................................................................47
Chapter 1

Literature Review

“...the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in the American world, - a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world.”

-W.E.B. Du Bois

“... not just the cops, but the homies, you gotta watch out for.”

-E-40

And we gotta realize the boys on the East Side--You call em ESE’s I call em allies” -

-ICE T

"It wouldn't be L.A. without Mexicans...
Black love, Brown pride is the sets again"

-Tupac Shakur

"Crips, Bloods, and Mexicans -- Together,
Forever, Tonight."-Anonymous
Tagger[1992 L.A. Uprising/"riots"] South Central L.A.

Some of the occurring problems with African American and Chican@/ Latin@
problems in many of the schools overlap. At the same time they are seen as everyday
normal outcomes of the conditions that are expected from Los Angeles Unified School
Distric (LAUSD) public schools. Also most of the authorities and people in power have
accountability and place the blame on students that have let down the adults. One of the
High School’s principal’s explained that the students acted like "animals". Another over
arching element in all this is that the blame has been constantly blamed on gangs or as a
result of gang problem. Moreover, the mere reporting about these inter ethnic scuffles
leaves room to identify the fights as all gang related. This makes the violence easier to be
dealt with by the police and not ignore the looming ethnic fights and tensions in places
such as South Central Los Angeles. A very dangerous explanation for dealing with the rising tensions. This same pattern of severe punishment towards the Chican@/Latin@ youth over problems more complex than just gang rivalry get misrepresented by the media and get ignored by the authorities in order to avoid asking tough racial questions that Chican@s/Latin@s and African Americans have towards one another.

There have been several instances where race relations between minority groups have gone awry. Many of these racial groups have lived in close proximity to each other and at times been together in similar struggles against many adversary forces. These forces have denied them rights and equal privileges that range from intermarriage to keeping certain groups out of the schools due to segregation policies. Throughout this thesis I would like to illustrate how race relations between African Americans and Latin@s have resulted in some members of each of these groups participating in activities that some may call racist towards one another. I will focus on Southern California for my examples.

What inspired me to write about the relationship(s) between African Americans and Latin@s in Southern California was the “race riots” in Southern California schools during the early 1990s. In a local FOX channel 11 newscast the footage clearly shows that there are misunderstandings of each other’s culture. Where one of the administrators refers to the Chican@/Latin@ youth as “Spanish Kids”. Meanwhile an older Spanish speaking Latin@ woman is being calmed by her daughters. She yelled at the other black administrators and parents looking “why are you doing this? Because I am Mexican”. As this mother pleads with the administrators and everyone in between to stop the violence, questions are left unanswered on both sides.
These violent events were labeled by the media as a “race riot” that occurred in a southern California Inglewood High school between African Americans and Chican@s/Latin@s in 1990. Events that were not solved and have been back to haunt Southern California’s LAUSD and adjacent school districts in Southern California. A majority of the African American and Chicano@/Latin@ youth were punished by the Los Angeles Police Department as a means to bring back order. Although order was brought back to the local high schools, little to no actions were taken to understand or remedy the root causes of the so called "race riots" between Latin@s/Chican@s and African Americans. There was no talk about the circumstances where black and brown youth live, the make up the high populations of residents, or the lack of resources in the community or that in 2005 the Los Angeles Unified School District only graduated 39% of Latinos and 47% of African Americans, compared with 67% of whites and 77% of Asians. [LA TIMES 2005] Nor was there any long term initiatives aimed at resolving this crisis in Southern California.

The main purpose and concern(s) in this paper is to expose and unpack the realistic consequences, violence and harm that both African American and Chican@/Latin@ communities are facing due to the ongoing ‘race riots’. The events that occurred in these schools in South Central Los Angeles/Southern California were blamed on the individual [students] behavior and not much talk made the news about the conditions and lack of resources in South Central Los Angeles nor on the changing racial make up of once predominant African American communities. Furthermore, I will attempt to give solutions to the racial conflicts in Southern California between African
Americans and Chican@s/Latin@s that many times get labels as gang fights and the tensions get handed over to the authorities as delinquent behavior.

I will use personal accounts and narratives about how attitudes between African Americans and Latin@s have unfolded towards one another. And how African American and Latin@’s misconceptions make them complicit towards each other’s oppression in many instances. I will argue how these types of inter ethnic violence and tensions between African Americans and Chican@s/Latin@s are often complicitous in one another’s oppression. Moreover, how the inter-ethnic conflicts between Latin@s/Chican@s and African Americans towards one another maintain, precipitate, and perpetuate racial superiority ideas. These ideas reproduce "racist" dangerous forms of discrimination towards one another ending up in deadly and violent consequences. I wish to also build on the works of Critical Race Scholarship and Asian American Scholar Eric Yamamoto. Who touches on this subject when he attempted to talk about the inter-racial relations between Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians two non-white groups that have tensions in Hawaii.

My attempt is to illustrate how the tensions between African American and Latin@s have grave consequences for both communities of color. Lastly, I will shed light on how these tensions have played out in and function in communities of color. Who are the beneficiaries of racial tensions? Lastly, I will suggest and point to potential solutions aimed at the Latin@/Chican@ African American inner city youth in places such as south Central Los Angeles /Southern California where most of these events have occurred in public schools, in an effort to try to introduce new forms for potential alliances of both groups. What are the positive possibilities that the media is not focusing
Can Chican@s/Latin@s and African Americans co-exist in places such as South Central Los Angeles? In an effort to untangle some misunderstanding that African Americans and Latin@s have toward one another. We must not rule out that both Latin@ and African American groups are oblivious to one another, nor that both groups operate exclusively. We need to be clear that this is not an all or nothing subject. Some of my interventions will build off a combination from women of color feminist/activism, urban culture, and activist opportunities that have emerged in the present and in the past between both groups. It is time for solutions that have been taking place and many times and unseen, invisible, ignored by the mainstream mediums, and many times not acknowledged.

Before we begin we must understand intersectional points where race can be a fluid not deceiving factor of populations shared in the hood/barrios. LatCrit spoke to my ideas best and towards interracial conflict in South Central Los Angeles between African Americans and Latin@ groups. Above all how Chican@s/Latin@s and African Americans play a complicitous and dangerous role in each others oppression in everyday encounters between members of the both groups in Southern California. Never the less it is important to explore how one oppressed group attempts to act privileged by the act simultaneously subordinating another racialized group.

I will retell accounts and events I have witnessed first hand and that family members and kin have witnessed living in communities that consist of African Americans and Chican@s/Latin@s residents places such as South Central Los Angeles, Watts, and Inglewood.
It is important to begin by discussing the LatCrit framework of what it means to live in places such as Southern California under the current xenophobic, anti-immigrant hegemonic climate and how this effects the education of the previously mentioned oppressed groups within the United States and what it entails for all Chican@s and Latin@s who get affected by these policies whether they are Spanish Speaking, a U.S. citizens or have an “illegal” status. Furthermore, I want to illustrate these racial fissures by using narratives that I have witnessed first hand with the Los Angeles Police Department, friends and family.

In the U.S. a black/white racial binary has been produced and reproduced. Its reification serves to make racial categories appear natural. This Manichean view leaves no room for those who do not fit within its structure. Kamala Visweswaran argues that the black/white polarization of race “has never been adequate for understanding the place of Asians (or Native Americans and Latinos) in U.S. racial formations” (82). The effect of polarization is in being symbolically “whitened” or “blackened” fails to consider how these groups forge their own racial categories. Latino Critical Theory by providing a possibility in which to analyze a population that disrupts the Black/White binary. Furthermore, Critical Race theory has been instrumental and is the base for the creation of Latino Critical Theory. Latino Critical Theory scholar Margret E. Montoya and Francisco Valdez reminds us that “LatCrit scholars understand “Latinas/os” to be a multiply diverse Diaspora of individuals, with commonalities and differences based on the usual categories of identity made salient in North American law and policy: race, color, class, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability, ideology, and others.”  

[Montoya and Valdez 2009]
LatCrit has taken the complexities of Latin@ communities to further uncover the racial hierarchy, and racisms that exist under the Latin@ umbrella term. LatCrit explores the implications for Latin@s that can be racialized as African American or White when first arriving to the United States. LatCrit also addresses issues along the lines of citizenship, immigration and discrimination that occurs within the Latin@/Community.

In hopes of getting to the crux of the Black and Brown tensions in Southern California I will turn to Lat Crit as the tool. In an effort to understand that Chican@/Latin@rs are not just struggling with black and white issues, but are also struggling in what Mutua (1999) calls the shifting “bottom” argument. Using this argument he calls for directing the shift and focus of thinking, and to shift our analytical tools when we are trying to understand the experiences of different groups (1999: 1216). The following are real accounts that will exemplify the complexities of real everyday lives experiences between Chican@rs/Latin@rs and African Americans in Southern California. Encounters that occur on a day-to-day basis with consequences that can be dangerous, disastrous, and harmful for all the groups involved. This analysis is my message for practitioners of Latin@ Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory and other scholarship to participate in the dialogue and pay attention to what Chican@/Latin@ communities are experiencing and will continue to occur if we don’t take immediate actions. The real-life conflicts and threats affects the growing Latin@ populations as well as the African American populations.

Moreover, in an effort to shed light on a critical perspective about black and brown conflict in Southern California and other parts of Los Angeles. I provide examples from current situations that Latin@s face on the ground level and the micro-aggressions
and macro-aggressions aimed towards Latin@s whom are often profiled as easy crime targets by other oppressed people of color, in this case African Americans.

There is much talk about African influence in the America but does that mean that Latinos or Mestizos are Black? What about Native American heritage or Spanish heritage which many Latin@s/Mestizos share physical characteristics and or colonial beliefs? Some Chican@s/Latin@s regard light skinned to be superior. In places such as Southern California, which has its particular Mexican/Latino history, colonial influence, and presently racial tensions amongst Latin@s and African Americans, there seem to be local power struggles, and rifts between both marginalized groups from the top down\textsuperscript{vii}.

In a recent conversation with an African American woman, she mentioned that the government’s response to African American people’s after Katrina in Louisiana was not enough. Indeed it was minimal. She was clearly upset with the response the U.S. government took. I then commented to her about the fires in Southern California. In no shape or form was I trying to compare Katrina’s to the fires of Southern California. But my point was to talk about FEMA and emphasize that FEMA had also arrived to the tent city/evacuation centers in Southern California with the Homeland security/Border Patrol agents ready to deport Latin@s who were suspected of being undocumented in the United States. I then followed up “well imagine if many of the African Americans did not know how to speak English?” during the tragic Katrina disaster and were to get deported on the spot by government officials? The African American woman and friend was disturbed and angered by what I had commented to her concerning both of our situations and politics while discussing the governments responses to people of color in need of assistance. My intentions were not to upset her although we both agreed the U.S.
government should have given proper assistance to all people in times of tragedy especially at a moment where you have lost all your personal belongings and loved ones. We also both agreed that there should not be any government official asking you if you are a U.S. citizen in order to get a cot to sleep on that night. It was clear that this was a moment where the African American woman was upset with my take on the situation. My analysis was not welcomed in the form that I wanted it to be taken. My comments were taken as an attack to her ethnic group/background, which were not my intentions. Although we both agreed at certain points there was some tension after the conversations ended. This was a situation that was not new to me but I refused to participate in the oppression Olympics. A game that would measure which one of our ethnic groups have suffered more discrimination or has been oppressed more that the other. I refuse to play but one that I know exist when dealing with other minorities/African Americans.

Although this encounter was not the crux in writing this paper it was sure a reminder that something needs to be addressed and acted upon when dealing with people of color that may seem to prioritize their causes or struggles over other people of color. This situation was also a reminder of how the oppressed groups in the United States need to check the tunnel vision perspective when dealing with other marginal/minority groups. There should not be oppression Olympics within historically oppressed groups. Why do these attitudes continue? What are the consequences of dealing with these types of attitudes within the United States? Can other oppressed groups understand that other oppressed groups face different consequences while living in the United States such as dealing with a day-to-day fear of deportation or fear of calling the police when a serious crime was committed towards them? These are not easy questions but some that need to
be addressed in places where whiteness is invisible. What I mean to say is that at one point in history it was easier defined to say “the man” is keeping me down. What do you call it when other people of color act as the gatekeepers towards other minorities? Should this be called racism?

**Racial Encounters: Experiencing “illegality”**

In Watts part of South Central Los Angeles, and a predominantly African American Chican@s/Latin@s face situations that easily turn to anger towards others each other. I turn to an account of a family friend I will call Jose, to protect his identity. The second example is about a group of students that requested me to speak to their high school Chican@ student organization in southern California.

Jose, who lives in a predominantly African-American community along with other Chican@s/Latin@s in South Central Los Angeles, recounted an incident that he had while he was cashing his check from work. After Jose finished cashing his check at the local liquor store, two African-American men who witnessed his actions approached him. Jose cashes his paychecks from work at the local liquor store because he is not a legal resident of the United States and the storeowner doesn’t require him to show California identification. At the local liquor store as with many local shops they don’t require such formalities in poor communities of color such as Watts. Immediately, after leaving the liquor store Jose was robbed at knifepoint by the two African-American men who took his money and fled. Scared for his life, Jose was left with no money. He has now developed hatred/fear of African-Americans in his neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles.
Jose was too scared to call the police thought he would be questioned by the Los Angeles Police Department and then deported to Mexico. Jose felt that speaking to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) would lead to his arrest and that might raise a red-flag which could lead to the suspicion of his legal status. Jose chose not to call the LAPD for fear that they might question his legal status based on inability to speak English, thus making matters worse for him. Jose was left to fend for himself, and without that week’s paycheck, he was left with fear, uncertainty, and hostility towards his robbers based on their race. Jose was not a random target. The African American males that robbed Jose understood his vulnerability that led to his attack. This incident raises concerns for the Chican@/Latin@ community. In short, Latin@s such as Jose including youth in South Central Los Angeles are also vulnerable to be attacked by African Americans due to not having a legal status in the US, or have proficient English speaking skills, which can have dangerous consequences and serious repercussions.

This incident reflects what Nicolas De Genova and Ana Ramos Zayas (2003) describe as the “politics of citizenship.” That is, the way differences and inequalities are elaborated in terms of ‘citizenship’ and ‘immigration.’ They situate the institution of U.S. citizenship as a mode of producing social inequality and racialized subordination within the larger framework of U.S. nationalism as a racial form. Jose’s assault manifests the ways in which the institution of citizenship creates modes of racializing the “illegal” other. Undocumented citizens become a vulnerable target given their deportability status, or what De Genova explicitly calls “illegality” (2005). Moreover, Jose becomes susceptible to victimization by other disenfranchised oppressed groups in South Central with an overlapping even greater fear of the state/authorities. Lastly, in a Gramcian sense
the institution of citizenship creates “common sense” ideas of belonging (Hall 1994). In this case the ideas of belonging have not been favorable towards Latin@s/Chican@s and if they are undocumented you are at a double the risk.

In another incident I was asked to speak to a group of MEChistas at Inglewood High School in 1999. I was asked to speak to a group of students about Cesar Chavez and the importance of the farm workers movement and contributions to Chican@/Latin@ political causes and impact he had on the Chicano student movement. Inglewood High School M.E.Ch.A had invited me as an effort to also acknowledge and speak about the importance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to all students regardless of being African American or Chican@/Latin@. This was in an effort to respond to racial tension and animosity the Chican@s/Latin@s and the African Americans were going through at the time. The M.E.Ch.A members told me that when they had an assembly on Cesar Chavez that many of the African-Americans got up and left the assembly. Similar to what had occurred in 1990. Two years prior to the Rodney King court case and L.A. uprising that occurred. During the early 1990’s in the city of Inglewood Chican@s/Latin@s did not have the upper hand in a school district that is predominantly administered by African-Americans. The Chican@s/Latin@s felt that they were being targeted, discriminated against, and isolated by the African-American administrators in Inglewood and that many of the Chican@s/Latin@s felt they were subjugated to the power of these administrators.

Once again the Chican@s/Latin@ students sensed the animosity occurring in an institution that has interracial conflict with African American and Latin@s in the past. These situations have been created by the “illegality” discourses in the media, along with convoluted views about one another. In this case African-American administrators in
positions of power, such as the principals, teachers, and local authorities that were viewed as complicit in the process of keeping the status quo. To the Chican@/Latin@ students of Inglewood High School it seemed that the odds were against them. The African American students along with Chican@/Latin@s experiences were not fully addressed.

Ideas and misconceived notions are that African Americans have learned in the mainstream. Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez states, “First is the worldwide economic recession in which the increasingly grim struggle for sheer survival encourages the scapegoating of working-class people -- especially immigrants, especially those of color - - by other working-class people. Martinez points to globalization of racism is mounting rapidly. Second, and relatedly, the reorganization of the international division of labor continues, with changing demands for workers that are affecting demographics everywhere. History tells us of the close relationship between capital's need for labor and racism. If that relationship changes, so may the nature of racism [Martinez 1993]. These relationships and conflicts are being played out by African American and Chican@/Latin@ students. Within the Black White binary African American students may have adopted these attitudes towards Chican@s/Latin@s partly due to signifiers Latin@s/Chican@s carry with “their language,” “ambiguous accents,” and “questionable legal status.” This could have been the factor that made the Chican@s/Latin@s feel inferior, manipulated and cheated by another African American group.

Chican@s/Latin@s are racialized as “other” within the US. This entails that they often have to overcome a multidimensional language and assimilationist ideologies as well as citizenship issues, which have often been denied and/or ignored by the state. Martinez states Today, not a week goes by without a major media discussion of race and
race relations that totally ignores the presence in U.S. society of Native Americans, Latinos, Asian/Pacific Americans, and Arab-Americans. “[Martinez 1993]

The Chican@/Latin@ students felt that the African Americans were now allowing them to express freely what Chican@/Latin@ culture had to offer to all the cultural groups that make up Inglewood High. The Chican@s/Latin@s students told me felt abandoned and isolated because of their cultural background and not being able to assimilate to the main-stream culture nor up to par in African American’s culture were forcing upon them. Making matters worse some of the Latin@ students felt disappointed because they had to vote on what type of music was going to be played at the prom dance. Arguments between both groups erupted when the Latin@ students were demanding some Spanish music as opposed to the popular hip-hop at the time. The Chican@s/Latin@s Students felt that this too was a move to keep them in their place and keep them under control.

In 2005 the Los Angeles Times reported once again another similar incident involving racial tensions between African Americans and Latin@s. One to point out is that in all instances alleged gang members started the ‘riots’. This is to point out that all problems once again were not racial but an urban melee that was due to the bad apples in the neighborhood. The L.A. Times stated at the very end of the article “Jefferson High School, south of downtown Los Angeles, draws its enrollment from a community that has dramatically shifted over the past three decades from black to Latino. It pointed that from 2003-2004 3,547 students were Latin@ and only 305 were African American. Moreover the Los Angeles Unified School distric was comprised of 541,514 Latin@s and only 88,271 African Americans mean while Asian, Whites, Pacific Islanders and Native
Americans made up the *Other category came in at 117, 224. And similary to the 'riots' in 1990 attitudes towards one another persist. One latina student stated about the African Americans “the blacks are always whining about slavery”. And African American student stated “too many Mexicans who can’t even speak English”. In addition the L.A. times quoted L.A. Youth Magazine where Latin@ students spoke proudly about defending their “Mexican Ancestors” when fighting off African American students. The Latin@ student felt that fighting against African American would pay honor to his immigrant heritage. Furthermore in an effort to reduce gang affiliated white T-shirt was banned. What followed was Chican@s/Latin@s wore brown t-shirts in order to express brown pride and African American students wore black t-shirt in order to signify black pride.

And once again the violence was attributed to rumors that Latin@ gangs in the area were planning the “…massacre of blacks in retaliation for a drug rip-off by a local black gang”. This was later found out to be a baseless threat by authorities. The L.A. Times then added that “In the 25 years, the student body has gone from 31% Latino to 92% and that African American numbers declined in attendance in the 1990’s from 34,000 to less than 22,000 meanwhile the Latino population grew from 105,000 to 121,000 according to the U.S. Census.

During the 1960’s civil rights movements there were alliances, the power movements, between both the African Americans and Chican@s/Latin@s that challenged the system. In George Mariscal’s book Brown Eyed Children of the Sun, Mariscal points at how Native American, African American leaders along with Chican@s got together in more that one occasion to discuss issues and concerns affecting communities of color at
the time. Although these events did not make headline news today these alliances seem to be part of the invisible. Furthermore, the alliances between Latin@s and African Americans of the 60’s rarely headlines in the newspapers. African American and Chican@/Latin@ alliances are needed today more than ever.

African American groups are intermarrying, and both groups also have established some networks whether in the formal or in an informal economy. The Black power movement and Chicano Movement did have contact and strategize together. Several instances exemplify these alliances. Social justice advocate and activist Angela Davis recalls one of her best Chicana friend from the San Francisco Bay Area Victoria Mercado. Angela Davis and Chicana writer activist Elizabeth Martinez had a forum at the University of Santa Cruz in Northern California in 1993. During this conference entitled “Coalition Building Among People of Color” meeting both women answered tough questions regarding coalition building between groups of color. During this conference Davis agreed with Martinez stating when asked about coalition building with other ethnic groups.

…We need to be more flexible in our thinking about various ways of working together across differences. Some formations may be more permanent and some may be short-term. However, we often assume that the disbanding of a coalition or alliance marks a moment of failure, which we would rather forget. As a consequence, we often fail to incorporate a sense of the accomplishments, as well as of the weaknesses, of that formation into our collective and organizational memories. Without this memory, we are often condemned to start from scratch each time we set out to build new coalitional forms. [Davis Martinez 1993]

During the Tom Bradley’s mayoral election in Southern California was a great feat for African Americans and Chican@/Latin@s who was elected into office 1973-1993. Mayor Bradley also expressed and thanked the Latino voters who backed him up during his election. Former Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley was outspoken about the
segregation and discriminatory policies within the Los Angeles Police department. This was due to his past experiences as a retired member of the LAPD himself. Bradley’s campaign must be remembered because it also united the Latin@ votes alongside with African American votes and other minorities in the early 1970’s.

However, even in the context of these alliances Michael Jones-Correa reminds us how “as cities underwent racial succession in the 1960’s and 1970’s, with African Americans acquiring proportionally greater weight in the governance of cities and with more Blacks being elected both as mayors and as council members, urban institutions themselves were relatively immune to change” (Jones-Correa: 2000: 137). He also reminds us that in the aftermath of the 1992 rebellion in Southern California, issues dealing with attempting to ease racial tensions the city of Los Angeles response was handed over to the private sector since the consensus was that more economic development was needed in order to help out the impoverished conditions in places like South Central Los Angeles.

Ultimately, the city made a committee called Rebuild Los Angeles (RLA) as a response to the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion. RLA seemed to be the salvation of the city but was not. Jones-Correa argues “…Rebuild Los Angeles was an attempt by the city’s administration to hoist responsibility for dealing with the crisis on someone else and, to let the city, particularly the mayor’s office, walk away free and clear.” (Jones-Correa: 2000:152).

The Chican@/Latin@s students saw the African-American community [faculty and staff] members as gatekeepers or untrustworthy. Meanwhile white supremacy and the black white paradigm seems to be upheld, unchallenged and invisible.
Knee Jerk Responses in Southern California interracial conflicts

Some of the consequences of the disapproval of the treatment of Chican@s/Latin@s can lead to major damage as seen in the L.A. rebellions of 1992 but can also spill over into educational settings from k-12 and even college. The types of conflicts witnessed by both African Americans and Chican@s/Latin@s only leave open space for ignorance and false notions of racial superiority towards another. Take for example; the following incident.

A Latin@ anti-Black sentiment was developing at Jefferson High School in South Los Angeles, where the two groups fought violently and traded insults over a period of months in the spring of 2005. One large fight began after a Latino shouted at a group of Black student athletes, “Go back to Africa!” (Griffin, D. A. R., G. A. Elmer: 2006.) Additionally, when a group of Latina students consoled a Black girl who had been beaten in the fight, other Latinas accused her of “having ‘no pride in your own people.’” An anonymous Latino student who participated in the fight later wrote that he had to “stand up for my family, my Mexican ancestors . . . my heritage that I’m really proud of. I felt good defending my race . . . Many of my friends who knew I was involved in the fight asked me, ‘Aren’t you proud that our people are at war with the Blacks?’” (Griffin, D. A. R., G. A. Elmer: 2006:71). Latinos constituted 92% of the 3,800–student body at Jefferson High; Blacks numbered only about 300 (Griffin, D. A. R., G. A. Elmer: 2006). The effects of these attitudes that Chican@s/Latin@s have towards each other’s group continues to travel further than just high school. The convoluted reasoning and statements in the aforementioned quote illustrate the lengths Chican@s/Latin@s strive
towards when attempting to justify their frustrations with and against African Americans.

Furthermore, the racial superior notions expressed by the Latino@s here reinforce how they ascribe towards a cast system where being Latin@ is better than being black: and positioning themselves as defenders of Latin@s during the fight. The violent acts towards the African Americans were justified because they felt they felt they were standing up and protecting the Latin@ culture. In addition the Latin@s saw this as an act where the interethnic conflict was o.k. And necessary. On the other hand white supremacy is almost invisible. Critical Legal Scholar Eric Yamamoto describes points to “who is winning from all this?” Who is gaining from the conflicts?

Due to the frustration, wrong-targeted aggression and mistreatment, both groups have heard of in incidents such as Jose’s and the students at Inglewood high schools and see them as an ongoing battle between the two groups. Chican@s/Latin@s might engage in acts as previously described as a moment to retaliate due to the situations that are occurring in places like South Los Angeles. Meanwhile the opportunities for aligning both groups becomes almost impossible while overarching issues such as poverty, crime, police brutality and a decrease in community resources get pushed aside. Racial animosity between both groups only worsens the already broken down delicate lines of communication that Chican@s/Latin@s and African Americans face in Southern California.

These nuances and fissures with in African Americans and Chican@/Latin@s are dangerous when attempting to get to root causes of conflicts. According to Tacho “Competition for resources and status may also serve to generate and maintain group
stereotypes. Fear of competition may underlie policies dealing with welfare, crime, affirmative action and immigration.” play out on the everyday level as well as in the institutional level where the Lain@ power brokers seem to be exempted from the ground level occurrences and dangerous battles that have life threatening consequences, as the previous examples have illustrated for us. Racial, class and language differences are a great challenge that for both sides to understand. These ground level incidents need to be interrogated on how they operate within the larger racial hierarchies that stem from mainstream culture. To place the blame on certain individual leads us nowhere”(2002:27).

We need to also understand what is going to happen to Chican@s/Latin@s that are now becoming the majority. What can be gained and what can be lost for the residents of a community where both minorities share the similar circumstances ignored by politicians. The African American community must be reminded about individuals such as Ted Hayes, a homeless activist who was for the deportation of Elvira Arellano and undocumented immigrant woman who was in sanctuary in the north side of Chicago. Homeless activist Ted Hayes showed up to protest Elvira’s stance. A political stance that ended up in her deportation from the United States back to Mexico in 2007. Ted Haye’s actions must also be seen as sending the wrong message to the Chican@/Latin@ community. And Chican@/Latin@s must also understand that Ted Haye’s actions do not represent the African American community as a whole. Clearly, then these moments need to be talked about by African Americans and Chican@s/Latin@s when dealing with issues about immigration and individual actions that can be seen as being complicit towards another people’s oppression. These are similar to what happened to Jose and
what had happened at Inglewood high school. And in the end was all interpreted by the media. Moreover no one spoke about the mixed messages it sends and what the consequences are for both communities. These type of instances can be quickly seen as another tangible example/moment by newly arrived Latin@ immigrants as an attack towards them, and Chican@s as well. Meanwhile notions that the African Americans continue to work against Latin@/Chican@ gets reinforced similarly to Jose, or the students at Inglewood High School. These types of political stance can only make matters worse for the African Americans and Latin@s/Chican@s which share spaces in places such as Southern California that need better resources and educational systems. Furthermore, these types of political alliances with the anti-immigrant right winged group are also a set back to the historic relations both groups shared during the power movements of the 1960’s.

Historically Latinos have been recognized as white, according to the U.S. census and legal courts. One of the most poignant laws which has had a legacy of effects the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and how Mexicans were categorized as white, but in practice their rights as citizens were denied, as anthropologist Martha Menchaca contends that Mexicans/ Mexican Americans were subordinated by whites and the legal system after the treaty. Today the courts have continued that legacy by trivializing, blurring, and not recognizing the rights of Mexicans/Mexican Americans. These notions have continued along with anti-Mexican/Latin@ sentiment to the contemporary era in Southern California. On the contrary some Chican@s/Latin@s can pass as white [Cheryl Harris]. Unquestionably, Chican@s/Latin@s feel that they should defend these privileges at any cost. Moreover, these types of attitudes of racial superiority leave
Chican@/Latin@s who darker skin characteristics along with African American at the bottom of the color cast system. (Tacho Mindiola). With this in mind Critical Race Theory falls short on what Chican@/Latin@s are up against. To balance out this equation I will use a (LatCrit) approach in an effort to address the multiple-layers/obstacles that Latin@s face within a Black/White racial paradigm that Mutua (1999) has sketched out for us. And some of the potential prospective that Latino Critical Theory may have for Chican@/Latin@s.

On the one hand LatCrit is an attempt to dig deeper into what we can call when people of color act in discriminatory and harmful ways. Can it be called racism when one minority group lashes out derogatory epithets to another? Is it possible that an English-speaking minority group can act as a gatekeeper (i.e. keep out) to other non-English speaking people/residents of the United States? Can there be points of interests where both Chican@/Latin@s and African American groups can come together and work as a unit? The blurry lines and ideas both groups have about each other need to be explored in depth through new brave lenses, for the sake of the new battles that both groups face. I provide examples and possible solutions for both these groups that still fight for many of the scares resources. Both groups who have are over represented in prison and in the military service, and also have the lowest numbers on college campuses. One Commonality between African Americans and Chican@/Latin@s extends to the legacy of injustice from the authorities and police agencies such as the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in Southern California that both African Americans and Latin@ groups have experienced.
Furthermore, both black and brown youth in the inner cities and throughout the state of California’s are currently being affected by Arnold Schwarzenegger state policies with help from Chican@Latin@ and African American politicians in Southern California. One of the most recent attacks by the state are policies such as gang-injunctions, RICO and “tough on crime” stances are endangering our communities and hurting the poor working class Latin@s and African Americans in Southern California. These policies make 3 or more gang members to be hanging around together a crime. These gang injunctions although for known gang members is another form of targeting people of color in Southern California and many times aimed at Chican@Latin@s and African American youth. Once again policy directed at the offspring of the growing number Latin@ and African American. Due to relocation of residences and leaving the state due to better opportunities or inability to live in the high cost parts of Southern California. Many African Americans and Latin@s have moved to places such as Moreno Valley, Lancaster, and San Bernardino in an effort to also leave the dangers of urban areas in Los Angeles.

Such actions mentioned must be taken as a warning to multicultural scholars. We should focus close attention on how white supremacy operates within the Latin@ community and how interethnic violence between both groups maintains the states hegemony operating for the sake of the status quo. Moreover, how Latin@s have been racialized or can be easily dismissed by other minorities who tend to view them as “illegal”/non-citizen or are invisible by the system because of their undocumented status in the United States. In addition I would like to add how language discrimination

________________________
can leave Latin@ groups alienated and by fellow Latin@s and African Americans.

Lastly, I want to examine how an English speaking ability along with legal
citizenship/status in the United States also means having the capacity of exploiting those
that don’t have US status or language are taken for granted by U.S. citizens.

Surrounding the conflict we must keep in mind the framework of what it means to
live under the current xenophobic, anti-immigrant hegemonic climate and how this
effects the education of the previously mentioned oppressed groups within the United
States and what it entails for all Chican@s and Latin@s who get affected by these
policies whether they are Spanish Speaking, a U.S. citizens or have an “illegal” status.
Furthermore, how the interracial conflicts between African Americans and
Chican@s/Latin@s entail in the long run.

Conflicts Between Oppressed Groups

Scholars have the responsibility to straightforwardly analyze conflicts between
oppressed groups. We need to contextualize what being black or brown in America
means.

At the same time CNN’s launched a three part special “Latino in America”.
CNN's Latino in America's program that mostly celebrated and interpreted what it means
to be Latin@ in the United States focused on a few of the problems Latin@s face in the
U.S. but no mention of interethnic conflicts. The program towards the end addressed
racial problems Latin@s experience but left the audience perplexed and promoted
assimilation, pathologized Latin@s and trivialized their futures. These ideas can be
harmful, romanticized, and reductive of the harsh reality that both Chican@s/Latin@s
continue to witness in places such as southern California. Romanticized notions of black and brown unity create further room for confusion and disarray.

Another incident in South Los Angeles area is discussed by Daniel A. Rochmes and G. A. Elmer Griffin in The Cactus that Must Not Be Mistaken for a Pillow: White Racial Formation Among Latinos. An indicator of the atrocious crimes committed between both black and Latino groups. In September of 1991, the Los Angeles Times reported that someone set fire in front of a Latino family’s apartment in the predominantly Black Jordan Downs housing project in Watts. In the chaos of the fire, the Latino father whose apartment was ablaze shot a Black neighbor trying to rescue the family. Police speculated that the neighbor was shot after the Latino man mistook him as the arsonist. In the days that followed, “some Latino residents demanded . . . that segregated buildings be set aside for them within the predominantly African-American complex.” One Latina tenant “acknowledged that such a move might exacerbate racial tensions between her and her Black neighbors” but “contended it [segregation from Blacks] is the only way for Latinos to feel comfortable”(2007: 86).

Meanwhile the California state legislature and laws are targeting both African American inner city youth along with Latin@ youth. Some of the examples of this type of treatment towards both African American youth and Latin@ youth were the main theme of Governor Swarzchnegger’s idea for the tough on crime initiative CALGRIPxiv. In this initiative the governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger is going to approve to put GPS devices on high-risk gang members similar to sex offenders. The governor of California has also stated that he will increase the number actually going towards fighting gang member which Sacramento politicians and L.A. officials have
called “urban terrorists”. The tough on crime talk mentions nothing about gun control or how there are little or no opportunities for youth in the inner cities. No talk about the educational system that does not work for Chican@/Latin@ and African American youth.

This statewide initiative that will target will also keep track of gang members from north to Southern California. Governor Schwarzenegger also mentions in his proposal a witness protection program it seem like a actually better witness protection program that will secure peoples safety when coming forward to “snitch” or tell on gang activity.

This initiative is a tough on crime bill that has many problems. For one the people that are released from prison and are trying to get their lives together don’t stand a chance. Little hope it left for recovering gang members to once again be a “productive” member of society.” How can a former convicted criminal undo his or her record? What are the stigmas and consequences that one faces when he or she has a governmental tracking device on where they can locate their every move? The ethical issues in tacking down human like an endangered species on the national geographic channel? The irony is that gang life can also give you a short life span. Furthermore, there are many dangerous issues with what the governor of California has proposed for congress. Its seems like they are tweaking the language to go after inner city youth/gang members as “urban terrorists” in an effort to “take back the streets” on the other hand there is no clear vision of what will occur then.

Cal Grip does not promise if and how the bill will get the billions of dollars for better schools? Nor about money to go towards building affordable housing during the housing crash? The Cal Grip program will not guarantee the safety of people living in
the ghettos of LA, but will increase the budget of the oldest violent offenders towards the Chican@/Latin@ and African American residents of California. The Los Angeles Police Department. The current situation with “THE AVENUES” [gang] in the neighborhood where I grew up. Many gang youth and now adult Chican@/Latin@ males are being sough after similarly to John Gotti. Wire tapping and recording conversations are the new routines by the federal authorities investigating inner city gang youth[who are often times comprised of poor youth of color] (Vigil: 2002). The same methods used to inlirtrate the Italian American mobserts are being used to “crack down” on Chican@/Latin@ and African American gangs in the inner city. This brings them to the attention of the federal authorities which hands down tougher sentences and gives the authoritites the leverage to prosecute Latin@ youth as the mob. Not only do they send gang members to federal prsion in an effort to disband gangs such as the Avenues in Southern California but by using the RICO laws that they are using to go after chican@/Latin@ and African American youth. These methods are not new but have historically been used to monitor, repress and control people of color in this country.

**Abuses by other Latin@s towards immigrants:**

What role do the Latin@ Politicians play? Do they help or do they make matters worst? Jose’s vulnerability to be taken advantage of even extends to his own community including his own Latin@ group that may also take the opportunity to extort him in other ways, which may include not paying him on payday, or taking a cutxv from his check. Latin@s are also complicituous in the oppression of poor working class Chican@s/Latin@s communities [this is what I call the poverty pimping of the Latin@ community] thanks to vendidos[vii][11] Many types of schemes are frequently aimed at
newly arrived Latin@ immigrants by Latin@s as well as towards other Chican@/Latin@ populations. For example many newly arrived immigrants may become easy prey by other Latin@s/Chican@s who might take advantage that they know little about getting legal documentation and may solicit their money in order to get their U.S. citizenship paper work faster than the immigration lawyers. In these instances individuals take newly arrived immigrants cash and never get services in return for their payments. We must ask ourselves who benefits from these rip offs towards one another with interracial exploitations. **David Rodiger’s** in the *Wages of Whiteness* discusses how whites benefit from the exploitations minority groups do to one another. It also maintains whites positions of power unharmed by the interracial conflicts.

On the other hand raical attacks towards Chican@s/Latin@s in Southern California appears three fold chican@s/Latin@s have to deal with questionability from African Americans, Whites and upper middle class Chican@s/Latin@s within the community. These types of attacks and manipulations due to either language barriers, undocumented status puts the Chican@s/Latin@s at great risk of being mistreated and not getting the proper resources, wheather at school, work, or at an everyday outing. During the 1994 passage of proposition 187 in California made matters worst.

The mistreatments of Chican@s/Latin@s that get played out in the mainstream media, justice system and local everyday level perpetuate the idea that people can mistreat Chican@/Latin@s in a way that they are not human nor existant in the public sphere. These types of ideas and notions about Chican@s/Latin@s signify that they are racialized and disregarded without the fear of getting reprimanded by the authorities who are also accomplice to matters affecting undocumented Latin@s here in the United
States. For example in a recent killing of a young Mexican undocumented male in Pennsylvania 2008 was murdered by a group of high school students who were 'looking to beat up a beamer' found Luis Ramirez and was beat to death July 2008. One thing to be mindful of is that the perpetrator and the courts understand somehow that once the legal status of the victim is discovered, the crime itself gets overshadowed by the debate over 'illegal' immigration. These types of battles do not go unquestioned by the Chican@/Latín@ community. Outrage of the crimes resulted in an acquittal of some of the men and a civil case was filed after the crimes were reduced to a few years in prison for the Luis's murder.

Tough policing methods and policies from the [state], comes a clearing of the neighborhoods in an effort to gentrify the barrios for the sake of business those business ventures include Latin@ elites in power. The state's "takes back the streets" agenda is an effort to control business. Latin@/chican@ politicos really care about the certain people in the hood; brown youth are not at the top of that list. the biggest shame of it all is that the residents cheer on the police brutality and harassment /misconduct. At the same time youth in Los Angeles are not accounted for and are left out in the cold to fend for themselves. Being poor shouldn't be a crime. In places like L.A. there is less and less opportunity for the inner-city youth let alone grown residents that are fleeing the cities due to the recent economic collapse.

Moreover, going after youth gangs in L.A. is a 360 win for the politicians, police, [state], and desperate residents that don't want to try to solve the real underlying problems of racism, and police misconduct towards people of color/L.A. residents. People really think that locking everyone up and throwing away the key mentality will
alleviate the current situation. People need to wake up and hold the LAPD, and local politicians accountable for helping if not being an accomplice to the current conditions that all Southern California residents are fed up with: poor schools, lack of good job opportunities, and discrimination. On top of it all there is paranoia about "illegal" immigrants along with youth gangs. This type of hysteria only gives the politicians/police culprits freedom to use these instances for reelected and to tap into the fears of the public. Meanwhile, the deep-rooted issues remain unresolved, ignored and invisible. The real L.A. crooks win! They win elections and large grants from government agencies attempting to combat local petty criminals.

In this example of how state politics have an effect at children at the local level. Furthermore an example of how racial violence in South Los Angeles can turn the community into a divided space at the same time united by harsh political initiatives. At the same time out of desperation for a quick answer dealing with the violence in South Central Latin@s residents ask for what the civil rights movement/power movements were fighting against segregation.

Similarly, racial segregation is resorted to, as in the example above, out of desperation and fear. Meanwhile, delicate relations between both groups become more deadly. Moreover, as the violence is more and more visible to local residents relations between both groups become frustrated and worsens matters with the two groups in South Central Los Angeles.
SOLUTIONS: [BLAXICAN/BLACKTINO Encounters]

Potential remedies, solutions, and points of intersectionality where Latin@s and African Americans can and have rallied around recently and historically: L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley, civil rights movement, police brutality. In addition to these efforts I would suggest on how recent potential popular cultural movements have made new potential vehicles for change amongst urban youth. **Hip-Hop music.** Moreover, I will add that **religion/spirituality** has been another central interconnecting center piece that can have the potential to bring dialogue between both Chican@s/Latin@/African American groups. Similarly, Santeria and how it’s similar to Louisiana voodoo, and how it’s an African based tradition that has been very influential in Latin America.

In a recent article a young afro-cuban Babalao priest was interviewed and he explained "This religion isn't based on black magic," he added "[God] gave us, the black people, this religion as protection...against the Spanish, against mistreatment. This was the only defense blacks had for centuries. It [helped them] escape the problems they had." I would also add that this religion as other forms of syncretic religions in the South were used in similar ways. The young afro-cuban babalao who is aware of his African roots and struggle can be a bridge towards mending Latin@ African American tensions in Southern California. Many Latin@s go to spiritual advisors that are of the same skin tone a Yuanl who is also married to a Mexican female. These types of Latin@ practices need to be talked about and discussed more throughout Black and Latin@ communitites that have tention. I dont mean to force feed this religion to anyone in particular.

Centering the colonial struggles with present day practices such as Santeria and similar
practices in the South can open new dialogue in within both Latin@ and African American communities as to our common struggles and similar everyday practices.

Vice versa some of our Native roots can also be discussed on how Mexican/Native practices were tried to be silenced such as Dia De Los Muerto by Spanish [Conquistadores]. These parallels are important towards exposing and improving Latin@ and African American relations in Southern California. Some thing to be noted with this example is that many of the Santeria/Yoruba religion has figure and Saints that have Black appearances. This is also something very common in Latin American Catholic Patron Saints. Most notably La Virgen de Guadalupe who is derived from ancient indigenous beliefs. In the legend of La Virgen de Guadalupe she spoke nahuatl to the now beutified saint Juan Diego. Moreover in places such as Venezuela. The trio unrecognized saints of Las tres potencias have are made up by three historic figures that are believed to have supernatural power. The tres potencias are “El Guicapuro”, “Maria Lionza” and “Nergro Felipe”. This national symbol represents a nationalist ideology and defenders of the peoples rights. Las Tres Potencias also a racial trilogy representing the native americans is “El Guicapuro”, “Maria Lionza” a light skinned woman, “El Negro Felipe” a former African slave that fought for the abolition of slavery early in the 19th century. At the same time we can talk about how these histories have been silenced from the main stream history books and omitted. Furthermore these similarities can become important topics to mobilize towards a shaping of the educational system.

In another article in CAFÉ magazine "Afro-Latino Culture Clash" Ricardo Millet explains that "the darker the skin color you have, the less you are appreciated, and there
are assumptions made about your intelligence". Millet points out that his roots stem from Jamica and Antigua who were taken to work in Panama early in the 1900's. Millet states

"Being Afro-Latino in the United States is tricky. Often times it means unacceptance on the part of the African American community, and condescension among other Hispanics. Afro-Latinos share few black cultural norms here. yet they don't look like what most think Hispanics should". As stated by Betita Martinez his would be a moment where our own people have been taught to reject our heritage that has also been rejected by Anglo mainstream. Millet's experience it one that does not fit easily into the Black/white paradigm and one does not get the proper attention from either communities as the accounts i have pointed too are left up to the individual to solve for themselves. It is up to them to take on the roles and often times punished even ousted from the communities they have affinity for. In another account Valentina [A Mexican Woman with Mestizo features] and Brence Turner her African-American husband [with darker features that his wife] discuss how one weekend they go to an African American event and a Latin@ event the following. Both Brence and Valetina talk encourage their four daughters to speak speak and learn Spanish. They both live in the South Side of Chicago and do not mind the "Salsa and sweet potatoes" on Christmas eve. Valentina then states "...education leads to increased self-esteem" when talking about her daughter's educational outings to African American and Latin@ events. Lastly, Brence supports the fact that the daughters learn Spanish and states "It [Spanish] will be an advantage for them".

Lastly Under ground rapper "KEMO the Blaxican" who is a Southern California based rapper. Is proud of being both "Mexican and African American decent. In one of
his songs KEMO raps "he mentions being "Quick like a Zulu tough like an Aztec" Kemo a multilingual rapper claims both of his roots. And has gained respect from the other Latino rappers. Kemo was also a member of the now broken up Hip Hop group "Delinquent Habits" which came center stage on the late 1990's in Southern California. Tres delinquentes great success was attributed from help from the mainstream Latino/Afro-Latino group Cypress Hill. Today KEMO the Blaxican has made strides on his own and still continues to represent for both his cultural heritage(s). In 2001 KEMO recorded a song with Grammy winning merengue queen Olga Ta~on and Egyptian singer Hakim.

What approaches need to be taken into account by schools, parents, and educators at large who need to deal with African American and Chican@/Latin@ animosity in a more productive and pedagogical manner? What are the responsibilities that lie ahead for scholars that have been calling the school race ‘riots’ conflicts between oppressed groups?

African influence in Latin America should not be the starting point or the final reference when talking about black brown relations in the United States. We must expand discussions on how these stereotypes are becoming complicitous in each other’s oppression is harmful. Additionally, misidentifying the ‘riots’ as gang fights maintains in the public image the urban experience as normal to places such as South Central Los Angeles. As a result of how the adults interpret the interracial violence between youth. Ultimately the conflicts are interpreted by the Police and Media.

How can these interesectionalities and urban experiences function as the building blocks for dialog to move political mobilization of African Americans and
Chican@s/Latin@s forward. These would be the baby steps or basics in understanding each other’s experiences within the United States. The possibilities are endless and will have effects on both communities.

Scholars invested in multiculturalism must take into account the racial tensions in southern California. They do not occur in a vacuum but rather at the ground level. The realities of racisms taking place to people like Jose in Watts needs to be understood by all scholars when dealing with groups at the margins with few resources. The notions and deportability that the African American muggers recognize in Jose did not stem from the African American community but from the legacy of discourses and subjugation that Mexican Americans/Chican@s/Latin@s have faced since the beginning of this country’s birth.

I would insist that Jose’s story be not just another victim of the circumstances in poor run down South Central neighborhood, but as a wakeup call to take notice of how race gets played out at the ground levels for groups sharing the bottom and being oppressed. Ultimately, racialization, profiling, and victimization of the oppressed are occurring everyday between minority groups. In most instances these incidents go unnoticed by non-Latin@ communities and the mainstream. The most disturbing consequences of these racial profiling moments targeting immigrants is not limited towards Chican@s/Latin@s that do have legal status in the United States—they affect the whole community. Even though both groups are at the bottom, the use the tools of white supremacy to fights each other like in the groups at Inglewood High School did. These power false dynamics make everyday life of Chican@s/Latin@s and African Americans fall into a subordinate position in relation to each other and to the Anglos. Moreover, the
tangible deportability is continuously occurring and the other groups are racializing or profiling Latin@ immigrants as easy targets for crime simultaneously both communities are at the brink of another racial unrest.

Greta McMorris’s reminds us about micro-aggressionsxviii and how they can easily escalate into an all out race riot that would be reminiscent of April 1992. Only this time it would be Blacks versus Brown people. At the micro-level this was also the result of the micro-aggressions Korean American’s had towards African-Americans, which was also embedded in the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion. Asian American shop owners that seem to have had it together or seemed like they had some pool with white authorities backfired. After the rebellions many Asians also had a wake up call that they too were not part of the mainstream culture even if they conduct business with white capitalist in Los Angeles. At the macro-level businesses seemed to be colorblind but when it came to the racial politics of the city in 1992 Latin@s, African Americans, and Asian Americans lost more than they bargained for. The targets for looting were mostly Asian/American owned shops and many Latin@s also got attacked too. As part of the problems people were disgruntled about how they saw Asian Americans as leaches taking black/brown people’s money. Meanwhile most residents in South central where the looting began still live in poverty.

How Can There be Organizing Between Chican@s/Latin@s and African Americans groups in locations such as Inglewood or South L.A.’s neighborhood Watts aka the Jungle?

For some answers I look towards social justice projects such as the one that David Stovall advocates for in his article Forging Community in Race and Class: Critical
Race Theory and the Quest for Social Education (2006). Stovall calls for praxis of the academy to merge with the grassroots level of education and addressing issues of capitalism and white supremacy to shed some light on what is happening. This would also be key when discussing what happened to Jose as a target of other oppressed groups. And would also be a good start to understanding black and Brown tensions and how insecurities play out when students feel isolated by African Americans in power. I would suggest that this approach would also have to encompass language profiling of Latin@s, gender issues, and citizenship, and the deportability factor that are also part of the Chican@/s/Latin@/s everyday experiences. Nevertheless, scholars need to start talking about these issues in the open manner to get some nitty-gritty/complex dialogue going especially when dealing with the largest growing groups in the United States. The Latin@ groups that even though may have large numbers are often times still victims of the legal system, other Chican@/s/Latin@/s, African Americans and other minority groups in the everyday life matters that may not be talked about nor make the news. In places like South Central Los Angeles, which both mainstream public and residents have normalized crime, we must act for the sake of rescuing the delicate bonds between African Americans and Chican@/s/Latin@/s have faced together immediately so we will not see another 1992 Florence and Normandie or the continual off and on relationship that may be seen as a normal way of life. Finally, we must take into account the interracial stereotypes we have about one another and each other’s cultural group before attempting to create a multicultural program. How would a multicultural program work in South Central Los Angeles where both Chican@/s/Latin@/s have had deadly encounters with African-Americans. How would these experiences create a much more complex
understanding of each other? We must act upon the challenges that have often times been ignored silenced, and sometimes romanticized by progressive upper/middle-class community representatives that often do not live in places such as South Central Los Angeles, and often times don’t send their children to places like Inglewood High School.

Relating the local to the global policies is also key here. Since both groups share the ghetto/barrios many urban areas such as Los Angeles. Both groups are constantly competing for jobs along with the rest of the population, whether they are undocumented or citizens. Working towards solutions must consider the implications of the economy at large, NAFTA, and other U.S. foreign policies for racial tensions. There is also not talk about the urban policies that have changed the deteriorating Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). With no funding and schools that are falling apart, critical pedagogy that would help alleviate the tensions between both groups falls to the wayside. Since there is very little investment of changing the circumstances for youth at the school level most focus on harsher policing of the both groups instead of creating better solutions to build upon. White supremacy seems invisible meanwhile both groups at the bottom get blamed for the conditions while they both blame each other for the problems that affect the local residents and communities they share. Schools become battlegrounds with severe “no tolerance policies” and nothing is done about the overarching apparatuses that function to maintain a hegemony over the both groups that have been victims of white supremacist, capitalistic, dominant forces.

African Americans, an oppressed group, are perpetrating a form of racialization/profiling in places like South Central Los Angeles on another oppressed group, Latin@s. Latin@s are also persecuted by the law/state. In Jose’s case his
deportability status would also signal to the African Americans that his is an easy potential victim of extortion. In the Mexican American/Chican@/Latin@ community Jose would be commonly referred to as a *paisano*. Jose’s deportability status too would creates a perfect environment for legal Latin@s/Chican@s to take advantage of other *paisas* from like Jose who may not necessarily be form Mexico. This also creates an atmosphere of perpetual fear of the newly arrived Latin@s towards African Americans and other legal Latin@s in a place like South Central. Furthermore this would only add many of prior stereotypes the may have heard of suspected of African Americans before arriving to South Los Angeles.

These types of situations only create an environment that is already hard enough to survive in more uncertain. Hence, making black and Brown bonds in South Central more difficult to achieve. Not hopeless but very challenging to bring discussions about coalition building between both groups. Optimism and opportunity can and has to be made for the groups sharing the bottom. The power movements, struggles and contributions need to be highlighted at the ground level for future generations. The divide and control apparatuses need to be deconstructed by the subordinated in South Central. The twisted notions of citizenship/noncitizen, us/them, civilized/noncivilized, 1st world/3rd world systems of hierarchical caste system are once again played out with the Undocumented immigrant/Latin@/Chican@s at the bottom of the that cast also needs to be brought to the surface and examined in more depth—we need to understand Black/Brown relations form the bottom up and how race and class may affect different Latin@s differently. The street politics/gang related racial crimes that both groups carry within the California prison system, also get played out in the street of L.A. and need to
be taken into account as a real factor connected to the relations in places like Southern California.

**What can be learned?**

This is a critical moment for multicultural educators to double check when dealing with overlapping issues or Latin@s in the United States especially when Latin@s are sharing the same marginalized, racially turbulent, economically depressed spaces such as South Central Los Angeles along with other *barrios* in the United States. What are the implications for the youth and what ideas are carried by the students in their everyday lives when entering schools in South Central Los Angeles? How can Critical Pedagogy be applied in a location that has such tangible racial incidents that places Latin@ immigrants at a triple and double risk of being abused by legal, English speaking residents along with the authorities. Jose’s incident in sections of predominantly Latin@ and Black neighborhood is an example of what one oppressed group has the capability of doing to another subordinate group. My notion here is that in order to pick on [profile] Latin@s means that there must be an understanding of that Latin@ is a subordinate group that have fear of the police, language barrier, and overall deportable status which African Americans understand. The African Americans that robbed Jose has some understanding that a new Latin@ immigrant group/ neighbors are seen as easier victims and will not turn to the police and report such crimes because (a) they don’t speak the language, (b) they risk far more than just being detained for questioning, that of being deported and, (c) the newly arrived immigrant group has no one to run too that is part of the law. Athena D. Mutua (1999) argues that it is clear that
in a black and white paradigm, Blacks and whites maybe at odds and have historical differences but at the same time at least both know the English language. In that same token, African-Americans have citizenship and don’t run the risk of getting deported no matter how treacherous the crime might be towards Latin@s immigrants. This concept would also encompass the Latin@s/Chican@s that take advantage of undocumented immigrants.

**What Made the African Americans Target the Mexican *Paisano***?

Was it Jose’s looks and lack of English that made him an easier target in South Central Los Angeles? In many instances stories like Jose’s are isolated but often times become a warning to other future immigrants of what to watch out once you made it to the United States. The lesson here would be for other *paisas* not just to be alert for the authorities, gang members, or immigration, but would also signal to look out for African-American’s that can prey on Latin@s immigrants when coming to black and brown spaces, such as South Central Los Angeles. These encounters with Latin@s and African American not only divide both communities more but add more fuel to the flames of the Black/Brown relations in places like South Central where racial violence between both groups have gotten out of control recently. This violence was very visible in the 1992 rebellions in Los Angeles. Where not only white motorist such as Reginald Denny were being taken out of their cars and beaten, but many Chican@s/Latin@s were also attacked as well.

This should rise concern for the all the communities involved and needs to be addressed for the sake of strengthening black and brown relations in places like South
Central Los Angeles and elsewhere where growing numbers of Chican@/Latin@s are becoming the majority but their destinies are being determined by white laws that are often times being enforced by people of color in placed like Inglewood. These examples should also raise concern while attempting to establish a better understanding of multicultural curriculums, critical pedagogy and Latino Critical Theory/CRT. When dealing with inter-ethnic conflicts in places like Southern California. Sonia Nieto suggests creating an environment of grassroots social justice education for both oppressed groups.
References


Endnotes

i Drawn form the W.E.B. Du Bois Souls of Black Folk (1903)

ii E-40 San Francisco Bay area rapper lyric used to describe how he felt about the police and friends that could turn on you at any moment in the streets.

iii From Ice T’s rap song “Gotta Lotta Love” (1993) written as celebratory song dedicated to the gang truce between the Crips and the Bloods after the Los Angeles rebellions in 1992. Ice T in this verse references not only uniting the black gangs but as a way to also incorporate Chican@/Latin@s who has historically resided in East Los Angeles or the ‘East Side’ as Ice-T mentions as part of the unity that both African American gangs were engaging at the time.

iv Drawn from late rapper Tupac Shakur released on 2Pac Greatest Hits (1998) ’To live and die in L.A.’ Tupac Shakur's rap song dedicated to the city of Los Angeles released

v Source http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHo0gJ6DWPc

vi Interracial Justice: Conflict and Reconciliation in Post–Civil Rights America (1999) by Eric Yamamoto


viii Drawn from a Elizabeth 'Betita' Martinez of mine that used to state this as a metaphor for not falling into the trap [discussion(s)] of which ethnic group or minority has suffered more from oppressive forces or colonization.

ix M.E.Ch.A acronym for Movimiento Estudiantil Chican@ de Aztlan established in 1969 after in response to the Chican@ Movement. This organization was the out come of a Chican@ student movement with self-determination and to address issues that the chican@ community was going through at the time issues such as equal access to education, coalition building and self-pride. The organization today mostly functions in many higher learning institutions such as University of Illinois, where assisting community and being politically involved are some of the main concerns.

x The treaty established after the Mexican-American 1848 war that which granted citizenship to Mexicans in the new acquired lands by the United States. This gave the Mexicans citizenship but not equal protection under the law.

xi The term “LatCrit” was coined at a 1995 colloquium, held in Puerto Rico, on the relationship of critical race theory to “Latina/o” communities. From that colloquium, the annual conferences then flowed. And from the beginning, with a conference theme for LatCrit I focused on the limits and possibilities of Latina/o “pan-ethnicity,” LatCrit scholars have highlighted the importance of community-building on terms that amount to antiessentialist, antiresubordination praxis at a collective level. Information on LatCrit

Drawn from: http://biblioteca.uprrp.edu/LatCritCD/ConceptualOverview.htm

xii In this sentence I use the term 'state' in the same way Gramsci used it.

xiii In this sense I mean to describe how certain Latin@s have the capacity to speak English better than newly arrived Latin@ immigrants. Speaking English in this country can open a lot of doors for you in different sectors pertaining to the job market and promotions. Not all Latin@ speak English or can communicate in English. On the other hand most African Americans do have speak English and have U.S. citizenship.

xiv Source http://gov.ca.gov/press-release/index/6395

xv I use this term to illustrate how many immigrant workers may get additional money taken away from their salaries to compensate brokers that may have set up the workers with that particular job. It is like paying off a debt in return for hiring them without having a legal status. In other occasions the bosses might just not pay them correctly and keep some of the earnings that an immigrant makes because they too understand that the Undocumented worker has not rights and will not attempt to call the authorities. Moreover calling the police to complain about these injustices may also result in deportation or job firing.

xvi Term used for sell out Mexicans, similar to Uncle Tom in the African American community, literally a sellout.
xvii Drawn from http://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights/cas-anti-immigrant-proposition-187-voided-ending-states-five-year-battle-aclu-rih "provide for cooperation between [the] agencies of state and local government with the federal government, and to establish a system of required notification by and between such agencies to prevent illegal aliens in the United States from receiving benefits or public services in the State of California."

xviii Greta McMorris’s term to describe instances that may seem insignificant acts of aggression towards minority groups as significant indicators that they too play a part in perpetuating harm towards minorities that know racism all too well.

xix A term used to describe a newly arrived immigrant, or to describe a Latin@ compatriot that is getting to know the way things function in the United Stated. The term is also used in Italy as Paisan as term of affection for fellow country men/women. It is used similarly for many latin@ groups. Even though sometimes the term can be used to insult a Chican@/Latin@s skills or intelligence and can be used as a derogatory remark.