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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the literature pertinent to the educational and occupational aspirations of Mexican American youth. Following a historical account of the Mexican American presence in the Southwest, this review focuses on social science literature, primarily of the 1950s-70s, that viewed Mexican Americans as having culture-based pathological attitudes and behaviors that interfered with educational attainment and upward social mobility. This cultural determinism model blamed the failures of Mexican American youth on "deficiencies" of Mexican American culture and suggested that the role of the school should include the socialization of Mexican American students to the values of the dominant American culture. This view overlooked the deficiencies of Mexican American education, particularly in the Southwest, which included segregated schools, underrepresentation of Mexican Americans among school personnel and on school boards, inequitable school funding, and devaluing of cultural differences. Since 1970, a number of studies indicate that school practices, teacher attitudes, and irrelevant curriculum inhibit learning and create a negative school experience that alienates Mexican American youth. Although the research pertinent to the status aspirations and expectations of Mexican Americans is limited, the findings suggest a trend of upward mobility projections and provide evidence that Mexican American youth, regardless of migrant background or sex, have high aspirations. Schools must respond to the needs of these youth with holistic intervention strategies that draw on the strengths of students, families, and communities. Contains 69 references. (SV)

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The Contrast Between the Pathological Attributes and the Status/Aspirations of Mexican American Youth

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the literature pertinent to the status/aspirations of Mexican American youth. To understand the past and current status of the Mexican American community the study examines the historical developments, the pathological analysis of social scientists and more recent studies that analyze the complexities of Mexican American youth and the role of institutions. Institutions and the community need to develop holistic intervention strategies that take into account the background of students, families and the community.

The Contrast Between the Pathological Attributes and the Status/Aspirations of Mexican American Youth

Institutions of education have long been acknowledged by society as mediums of social mobility, but within the Mexican American community, this has been more of a myth than a reality. The lack of educational attainment among Mexican Americans has been attributed to a lack of motivation and a deficient cultural environment (Johnson, 1970). These stereotypical orientations have in essence justified the traditional public educational system which has failed to meet the needs of Latino students. The aforementioned stereotypes are exaggerated beliefs associated with a category which serves to justify the conduct of society in relation to that category (Allport, 1954). These stereotypes have served to create educational neglect that has implicitly deprived Mexican American youth of equal opportunities as provided by the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution:

> No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States: nor shall any state deprive any person of life or prosperity without due process of law; nor deny to any person within the jurisdiction of the equal protection of the laws.

Perhaps influenced by these stereotypes educators have implemented programs and policies that have denied Mexican Americans equal protection under the law. As a result of these practices, the lower educational attainment of Mexican Americans

has been justified and reflected by lower participation of Mexican Americans in the endeavors of society at large.

To understand the past and current status of the Mexican American community, we must understand the historical developments, the analysis of social scientists, and more recent studies that examine the complexities of Mexican American youth. The first section of this study will give a historical account of the Mexican American presence in the Southwest. The second section will examine literature pertinent to the development of a socially pathological view of Mexican Americans. The third section will analyze recent studies of Mexican American youth and how public institutions need to change to enhance the opportunities for Mexican Americans. Thus, we will examine how the perceptions of Mexican American youth have evolved in terms of status and educational attainment and how institutional policies play a critical role in providing access and opportunities.

Historical Presence of Mexican Americans

An understanding of the social position of Mexican Americans in the Southwest requires a historical understanding of their existence. Currently, standard history texts present a very distorted view of the Spanish Speaking people who have been settled in the Southwest for more than 300 years. As George I. Sanchez writes

> The villages north of Santa Fe, New Mexico, founded in 1598 are second only to St. Augustine, Florida, settled in 1565, as the oldest settlement of Europeans on the Mainland of the United States. The New Mexico settlements followed a century later by those in Texas

> and later by those in California represent a Spanish colonial effort that left an indelible imprint upon the history and culture of the Southwest and the United States. More important, that colonial endeavor left people from California to Texas whose descendants constitute a part of the group we now refer to very loosely as Spanish Speaking. (Sanchez, 1966)

Thus, the historical setting from which Mexican Americans would evolve began to take its course of development prior to the settlement of Jamestown. The mestizo generation began creating a chain of settlements next to the Indians of the Southwest (Machado, 1978). Even though the Southwest was slow in developing because of its geographical isolation, the inhabitants of the Southwest did not suspect that within a few decades their lives would be changed. First, in 1821 Mexico succeeded in gaining its independence from Spain. In 1821 the Southwest thus became part of the Republic of Mexico. Due to a lack of communication with the central government in Mexico City, Mexico at that time inherited many problems from Spain. During this same period, Anglo Saxon settlers, under the leadership of Moses Austin, began to settle in Texas (Nava, 1969). By 1833, Mexico issued land titles to two thousand Anglo Saxon families. Gradually, the influx of the Anglo Saxon population began to increase. Though they were supposed to adhere to the clauses of their land titles, their autonomous ideology began to conflict with the Mexican government. This led to the 1836 War for Texas Independence in which Texas became an independent nation (Montejano, 1989). Later, Texas was annexed into the Union in 1845, and afterwards the Mexican War broke out (Martinez, 1988). Thus, in 1848 after

Mexico was defeated in the Mexican War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed. With the signing of this treaty, Mexicans in the Southwest were granted citizenship and equal protection under the law as stipulated in Article VIII:

> Those who shall prefer to remain in said territories may either retain the titles and rights of Mexican citizens, or require those of citizens of the United States. But they shall be under the obligation to make their election within one year from the date of the exchange of ratifications of this treaty; and those who shall remain in the said territories after the expiration of that year without having declared the intention to retain the character of Mexicans shall be considered to have elected to become citizens of the United States. In said territories property of every kind, now belonging to Mexicans not established there, shall be inviolably respected. The present owners, the heirs of these and all Mexicans who may hereafter acquire said property by contract, shall enjoy with respect to it, guarantee equally ample as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States (Nava, 1973).

In practice, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and its protocol would soon be violated a thousand times over, and all the promises of protection broken. Many land grants and contracts belonging to Mexican Americans were nullified and not recognized by the American government (Blawis, 1971). Thus, the clash of value orientations between the Anglo and the Mexican American community began to develop as their views and relations with each other began to conflict, since the treaty did not provide any explicit provisions to safeguard Mexican Americans' rights as a society. With its dominant philosophy of the "melting pot" from the 1900's that was perpetuated by cultural map makers the United States failed to recognize the needs of the people by developing institutions that would enhance the educational development of

Mexican Americans in the Southwest whose life styles and format of government was not congruent with the U.S. government (Horsman, 1981).

As a consequence of the inadequate conditions created by the American social institutions, the Spanish Speaking became an isolated cultural group that had limited positive interactions with the dominant society (Montejano, 1989)

The independence of Texas, the annexation of the Southwest, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo are very significant historical events that laid the initial foundation for the continuous conflict and inequality between Anglos and Mexicans as they attempted to integrate their institutions in the Southwest (Montejano, 1989). As a consequence of the limited accommodation by American Social institutions, Mexican Americans were isolated, and they thus continued a way of life around the same familiar social, economic, and political institutions of their community (DeLeon, 1982). Yet the conflict between Mexican Americans and public institutions continued, especially in public schools because Mexican Americans continued to be excluded and segregated in public schools in Texas (San Miguel, 1987). These historical violations have contributed to a sense of mistrust among Mexican Americans who have experienced many situations of discrimination (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991).

Economic and Immigration Patterns

The economy during the 1900's was primarily dependent on agricultural and mining activities; however, labor was sparsely

distributed throughout the Southwest. Much of the manufacturing activity in Colorado (as well as in Arizona and New Mexico) was tied to mining and was located in relatively isolated places near the resource base. Therefore, the apparent economic diversification in the Southwest may be deceptive in terms of its potential interaction (Perloff, 1969), as during the early 1900's, the Southwest remained relatively isolated from the east. Most of the labor manpower was made up of immigrants from Mexico. Furthermore, the Mexican Revolution in 1910 provided a cheap labor market that was vital to the economic development of the Southwest. The rapid increase of Mexican immigrants along the border states after 1900 can be seen in Table 1 (McWilliams, 1948).

The continuous and steady population influx demonstrated in Table 1 provides an adequate picture of the future heterogeneity of the population. However, the chart does not project other far reaching issues and problems such as health, education, economics, and political orientation, which ultimately began to create depressing socioeconomic conditions that would be very costly in the future (Sanchez, 1966).

During the early 1900's, the majority of the Mexican immigrants were engaged in farm labor, but by the 1920's, Mexicans were being lured into the United States by the expanding northern industrial manufacturing centers in Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee (Stoddard, 1973). There, as untrained factory employees, they had a chance at steady employment and income that

was generous in comparison with farm wages. But they nevertheless continued to occupy the bottom rungs of the economic ladder.

After the Depression, America's involvement in World War II brought an economic boom as the demands for industrial production were increased. Thus, some Mexican Americans began to migrate to the urban industrialized centers while others joined the military. Even though the war brought death and extreme suffering to many people, it had some beneficial results for Mexican Americans and other minorities, as more occupational and educational opportunities became available. Advocacy for veterans in essence began to provide minorities with some opportunities that were non-existent before the war (Montejano, 1989).

Thus, the parameters of the Mexican American population's social integration have slowly been changing, and by the mid 1960's, the bulk of the post World War II baby boom reached draftable age (Alvarez, 1970). However, the less transient and more stable Mexican American population was now demanding equal protection and opportunities, which were bestowed to them as citizens of the United States. This came about as a result of the Civil Rights movement of the sixties and the greater involvement of the Mexican American community.

As previously stated by Bonilla and Morales in the last chapter, the demographic shift in the Southwest clearly delineates a growing young Mexican American population that continues to grow but is underrepresented in institutions of higher education. It is quite obvious that a population that represents a critical mass of the population of the Southwest can make great contributions to

our society and institutions. It is imperative that institutions respond to the attributes and strengths of this Mexican American community in order to successfully resolve educational issues (Hayes Bautista, D. & Chapa, J. 1988). The lack of response by institutions can be attributed to their lack of understanding, limited resources, and policies that take into account stereotypes that do not reflect the reality and strengths of the Mexican American community.

A Critical Analysis of the Pathological View of Mexican Americans

The social science literature is replete with references of Mexican American youth having a certain pathological behavior; this in essence serves to rationalize the poor social mobility of Mexican Americans and other disadvantaged ethnic minorities. This research was primarily promoted by mainstream researchers with a stereotypical frame of reference who were the only ones studying Mexicano communities at the time. Carter states that

> Social scientists and others who have investigated orientations, usually concur that children of Mexican American sociocultural backgrounds are prone to do the following...(1) Devalue formal education, especially for girls, (2) See success more in terms of material acquisition, (3) See time as a gift of life to be enjoyed to the fullest, it must not be postponed. The Anglo concept of wasting time is not understood., (4) Be fatalistic, feeling they have little control over their natural or social environment, (5) See change as unappealing and not motivating, (6) Be submissive to the status quo, patient, conformist, and perhaps apathetic, (7) See work only to satisfy present needs, (8) Attach little importance to time schedules and the Anglo concept of punctuality, (9) Attach much importance to non-scientific explanation of natural phenomena (sickness and so forth) (Carter, 1970).

The aforementioned configuration of orientations and values, when viewed as an integrated whole along with supporting social structures, is often labeled a subculture which is supposed to have been attributed but not accepted by the dominant society. The rationalization of blaming the victim is designed to legitimize what is called "The Pathological View" (Arciniega & Brishetto, 1973). This culturally deterministic view has often served as a basis for developing distorted generalizations that have explicitly attributed negative stereotypes to the Mexican American that serve to justify institutional actions.

In order to understand the negative connotations of the literature, it is imperative to examine the validity of the conclusions and inferences of past studies of Mexican Americans. One of the many to cultivate the theory of cultural determinism was Loaz Johnson who stated that the Mexican desire to be among their own people, his carefree attitude, and his desire for unusual dramatic, and even reckless action, sometimes at the expense of life, make the Spanish Americans' problems different from those of Anglo Saxons (Johnson, 1973). Linda Chavez further perpetuates this deterministic view when she argues that preserving the language and culture is not a responsibility of government and it sets Hispanics up for failure because they do not integrate (Chavez, 1991).

Later Florence R. Kluckhohn's theory of variations of value orientations was tested in a study which took place in 1961 in New Mexico. While investigating the intra- and inter-variations of value orientations of five cultures (the Spanish Americans,

Texans, Mormons, Navahos, and Zuni Indians), Kluckhohn concluded that Spanish Americans had strong family ties and kinship in contrast to the individualistic principle, dominant in Anglo American culture, where individual goals have primacy over the goals of lineal groups such as the family (Kluckhohn & Strodteck, 1961). The study of this desolate village in New Mexico embraces many generalizations that would be fostered by other investigators. Talcott Parsons theorized that Anglo society is characterized as being influenced predominately by ascriptive value orientation patterns. On the other end of the continuum, the Spanish Speaking are characterized by predominant deterministic value orientation patterns. Parsons states that:

> There tends to be a certain lack of concern with the remoter framework of the society, unless it is threatened. Similarly, there is no inherent objection to authority so long as it does not interfere too much with expressive freedom; indeed, it may be welcome as a factor of stability. But there is also not the positive incentive to recognize authority as inherent that exists in the cases of positive authoritarianism. The tendency to indifference to larger social issues creates a situation in which authority can become established with relatively little opposition. Hence, a susceptibility to dictatorship is not uncommon in such a society. The Spanish American seems to be a good example of this social type (Parsons, 1951).

This cultural deterministic theory, which portrays the Mexican American as very homogeneous, was further emphasized by Lyle Saunders, who stated that Mexican American's cultural values were in direct opposition to the values of the dominant society (Saunders, 1954). Knowlton wrote that the values contained in Mexican American culture would have to be exchanged for those

positive ones contained in the Anglo culture (Knowlton, 1962). Simmons also stated that Mexican American have characteristics that are not congruent with the achievement patterns of the dominant society (Simmons, 1969). Moreover, Madsen found that Latinos lack the future orientation of the Anglo and their passion for planning ahead (Madsen, 1964). Thus, social scientists were portraying cultural differences as determining an orientation that an individual, whether Anglo or Mexican American, might have toward life.

The Development of Programs and Policies Embedded in the Deterministic Perspective

In the sixties, the cultural deterministic viewpoint which portrayed Mexican Americans in a certain pathological continuum was further perpetuated by Celia Heller's sociological studies. Her studies have clearly suggested that in order for children to succeed they have to exchange their set of cultural values for those of the dominant culture. Heller describes the inadequacies of the home socialization of Mexican American youth by stating, that the socialization process of Mexican American youth stresses values that are deficient and incongruent with the values of Anglo youth (Heller, 1966). Thus, only those youth that resemble their Anglo peers will be able to overcome the inhibiting environment of the Mexican American youth's upbringing.

Moreover, later in a more comprehensive study, Heller indicates that the development of the Chicano movement helped

enhance the aspirations of Mexican American youth to the traditional conception of the "American Dream" (Heller, 1971). However, her conclusions still appear to favor the cultural deterministic viewpoint for their lack of social mobility. This orientation was further perpetuated in more recent studies conducted by the Mexican American Study Project of the Graduate School of Business Administration and the Center for the Study of Evaluation of Instructional Program in the Graduate School of Education at UCLA. The findings of this report indicate that the highest achievers are those Mexican American pupils who have been most thoroughly socialized to the dominant American culture, both at home and in the school environment (Gordon, 1970). Thus, the circumscribed culturally deterministic model for the Mexican American youth continues to be used to explain the educational attainment of Mexican American youth.

The literature thus portrays the socialization process of Mexican American youth as displaying values that obviously prohibit upward social mobility. This deterministic analysis does not take into consideration the internal and external structures of our institutions and the discriminating practices of the dominant society, which inhibit economic and social development. George I. Sanchez was incredulous of the ostensible explanatory power of cultural determinism, and in his book, La Raza: Forgotten Americans, he pointed out the interrelationship between the Mexican American child and the failure of educational institutions in meeting their special needs. The explanation for these conditions is to be found in the nature and quality of the

educational facilities and the resources available to these children (Sanchez, 1966). Furthermore, it is imperative that educators are knowledgeable and understand the needs of the student population. As documented in the study of Matute-Bianchi, the Mexican American student population is a very heterogeneous and requires that educators begin to change the school climate, structure and practices to accommodate the diverse student clientele (Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi, 1991).

The most extensive research illustrating the unresponsiveness of educational institutions to Mexican Americans in the Southwest was first conducted by the United States Commission on Civil Rights Mexican American Educational Series. These comprehensive studies were conducted to assess the nature of the educational opportunities available to Mexican Americans in the Southwest. The findings of these studies were made public in six separate reports published between 1971 and 1974 by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

The findings substantiated that Mexican Americans enrolled in public schools in the Southwest were severely isolated by school district and by schools within individual districts. Furthermore, Mexican Americans are underrepresented on school district professional staffs and on boards of education (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1970). The findings also indicated that without exception, minority students achieve at a lower rate than Anglos; their school holding power is lower; their reading achievement is poorer; their repetition of grade level is more frequent; their overageness is more prevalent; and they participate in

extracurricular activities to a lesser degree than their Anglo counterparts (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972).

The findings further indicated that school systems of the Southwest have not recognized the culture and tradition of Mexican American students and have not adopted policies and programs which would enable those students to participate fully in the benefits of the educational process. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972) The findings also substantiated that the system of school financing, devised by the State of Texas based on property taxes, created fiscal inequities that are detrimental to school districts with high Mexican American concentration. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1972)

In terms of teachers and student patterns, the findings clearly stated that schools in the Southwest are failing to involve Mexican American children as active participants in the classroom to the same extent as Anglo children. On most of the measures of verbal interaction between teacher and student, there were gross disparities in favor of Anglos students. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1973)

This study attempted to identify specific conditions and practices that bear on the failure of schools in the Southwest to provide equal educational opportunity to Mexican American students. The last study clearly documented the systemic failure of schools to meet the educational needs of Chicano students by suppressing their culture and stifling their hopes and ambitions (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1974).

As the aforementioned studies indicate, there are many other factors besides cultural determinism that are detrimental to the opportunities available for Mexican American youth. Thus, the paradigm of cultural determinism that has been applied to numerous social problems to provide a casual explanation for the lack of achievement of Mexican Americans is in essence a distortion of reality. By viewing the causality of the social ills of Mexican Americans as stemming from within their culture, all institutions in American society are absolved of any complicity (Vaca, 1970).

Policy makers and educators, perhaps influenced by both the educational literature and popular stereotypes, may operate under the cultural deterministic model which depicts the Mexican American life style as deficient and sees the school as the inculcator of the dominant society's values. Thus, the villain remains the Mexican American family, which produces all the "wrong" value orientations not conducive to success in the dominant society.

The development of the aforementioned deficit philosophy which attributes the poor school performance of minority children on a deficiency brought about by growing up in a deficient environment does not take into account the differences in culture, language, mobility, economic level, and social perceptions (Cardenas, B. and Cardenas, J. 1972). If these variables are taken into consideration, institutions can develop a learning environment that will stimulate development in those areas that are critical to educational success in typical school situations. Moreover, James P. Cummins recommends that educators should strive

to develop collaborative relations of power so that micro-interactions between educators and teachers promote identity formation and knowledge generation that increases the success of minority students (DeVillar, Faltis, and Cummins, 1994). Furthermore, Antonia Darder in her study indicates that we need to recognize the need to develop a sensitivity to aspects of culture to be able to address the needs of bicultural students (Darder, 1991). A comprehensive analysis of the aforementioned variables could help ameliorate some of the generalizations that have deprived Mexican Americans and other minorities of opportunities available in our society. In addition, institutions that understand the needs of their students can provide opportunities to enhance their educational attainment.

Twenty years ago Merton proposed that the "success ethic" has been inculcated by most youth of all social classes, and as a consequence they maintain high level success goals (i.e., occupational and educational aspirations). Thus, having high aspirations is not unique to one group in society, but is a universal pattern that cuts across class and ethnic distinctions (Merton, 1957). The aforementioned aspirational reference is composed of personal goals for status attainment that will serve to guide anticipatory socialization into adult roles. Turner further acknowledges that there is a youth culture; however, he points out that youth culture has not obscured the differentiation of values and discrimination of social ties along the lines of either stratum of origin or stratum of aspiration (Turner, 1964). If the aforementioned would take place, it would force students to

accept disparagement and social isolation as the cost of pursuing high academic success. Though an individual can be an active participant in youth culture, this does not mean that he or she will not be formulating certain personal goals from his or her interactions with youth and other role models. However, the relative differences in the goals of youth will be dependent upon educational opportunities, positive role models, and adequate institutions that will compensate for socialization factors that impede the full human development of some youth.

The conceptual framework introduced by Merton conceived of only one frame of status projection, that involving aspirations (desires). However, Stephenson first noted that youth maintain a set of status expectations (anticipations) which often differ from their desires (Stephenson, 1957). This was also confirmed by De Hoyos (1961) who investigated the occupational and educational aspirations of Mexican American youth and found that the youth also had certain expectations. But some distinctions here, should be made between the two types of status projections. Desire is aspiration, and the other, expectation is an anticipation of attainment. (Kuvlesky & Bealer, 1966) Then expectation is:

> the individual's estimation of his probable attainment in reference to particular goal-area, i.e., what occupational position he expects to reach. Expectations should not be confused with aspirations, for the object involved with an expectation is an anticipated occurrence, and the individual's orientation toward the expected state may be favorable or unfavorable (Kuvlesky and Bealer, 1966).

The divergence, if any, between the desired and the anticipated status objects within a particular area of potential status attainment is labeled anticipatory goal deflection. This represents the degrees of modification that are anticipated by the individual (Kuvlesky & Ohlendorf, 1968). The goal deflections can be positive or negative and they can vary in degree. Yet Kuvlesky and Bealer call attention to another analytical dimension of status projections which they called the orientation element. This, in essence, represents the strength of the orientation that a person maintains toward the status object involved in either aspiration or expectation. In reference to aspiration, this would be the strength of desire associated with obtaining the status goal specified and is referred to as intensity of aspiration (Kuvlesky & Bealer, 1966). The comparable element involved in expectation is labeled as "certainty of expectation" (Merton, 1957). The scheme delineated above has been used in numerous studies by many authorities in the area of youth status projections. This process is useful in determining the status of youth.

Related Studies

Prior to 1967, there were very few significant studies describing the nature of educational and occupational status projections of Mexican American youth in the Southwest. A number of social scientists have begun to investigate the structural impediments of the dominant society which constrain the social mobility of Mexican Americans. Studies have indicated that issues

such as school practices, teacher attitudes, and irrelevant curriculum inhibit learning and promote a negative school experience that alienates the Mexican American youth (Carter, 1970). Many prevailing educational problems of Mexican American youth are thus caused by institutional practices and policies (Grebler, Moore, & Guzman, 1970). Other studies on Puerto Ricans continue to document how current educational practices fail to take into account the unique language and cultural needs of Latino students which results ir a negative affect on their achievement (Walsh, 1987). Since the impact of each of the numerous forces which contribute to deficient education for Mexican Americans can not be assessed or isolated, then it might be best to examine the ultimate results. Educational attainment can be viewed as one of the critical elements that exists between human beings' desires and their satisfactions in a society that is characterized by achievement and high standards (Kahl, 1957). In this regard, it seems that if you talk to the average Mexican American man on the street. at the tavern, in his home, at meetings, or in the migrant fields about the importance of an education, he will invariably speak regretfully of his lack of education and how it has kept him from getting a decent and steady job or how it has hindered any opportunity for advancement. He wants an education for his children, but in reality his lack of economic stability will determine the opportunities that he can provide for his children. The lack of effective institutional responses to the educational needs of Mexican Americans is reflected in the Department of Commerce census data which indicates that 50% of Hispanics that

are 18 years or older have less than a high school education as shown in Table 2.

The stigma of the lack of educational attainment can have a great effect on the related but peripheral characteristics of the population such as income, employment, unemployment, housing, and occupations. Jorge Chapa's analysis of the 1990 census materials shows that a high concentration (50%) of Spanish speaking fall under the indicator of "under four years" of education which in turn is described by some educators as being functionally illiterate (Chapa, 1992). However, the continued low educational performance of Mexican Americans can not be explained by a simple explanation that does not take into account the conflict between the incongruent expectations of school and youth.

Even though the empirical literature on educational aspirations is substantial, there is limited research indicating status projections for Mexican American youth. One of the first relevant studies was conducted by Irene Guerra in Laredo, Texas in 1959. Her primary objective was to compare the occupational and educational aspirations of the youth as compared to the aspirations of their fathers. In reference to educational aspirations, she found that regardless of socioeconomic class, a substantial proportion (94 percent upper class and 67 percent lower class) of fathers wanted a college education for their sons. A comparison of father's and son's educational aspirations indicated considerable agreement (Guerra, 1959).

In 1961, De Hoyos studied ninety-one Mexican Americans, ages fifteen to eighteen in grades eight through twelve from Lansing, Michigan. He defined aspirations as idealistic or realistic aspirations. His findings in reference to idealistic educational aspirations indicate that a high proportion (77%) of his sample aspired having a college education. When asked if they planned to continue their education beyond high school, about half of these same youth responded in the affirmative. The students were asked to report their parents wishes or desires concerning their educational aspirations. One-third of the sample responded that their parent's wished that they would finish high school, while over half indicated that they should continue their education beyond high school (De Hoyos, 1961).

The research conducted by Juarez in 1968 found that in comparison with the aspirations and expectations of Anglo youth, those of Mexican Americans differed very little. In 1967, a South Texas study of Mexican Americans, male and female high school sophomores, indicated that even when the adolescent's father's occupation was related to the student's level of occupational aspiration, (1) large proportions of Mexican American youth desired high level occupations, (2) little differences existed between the level of occupational aspirations and expectations of males and females, (3) occupations expectations of Mexican American youth were high, although lower than their aspirations, and (4) the majority were not very certain of their expectations (Kuvlesky & Monk, 1976).

Another study on Mexican Americans points out that ethnic differences vanished when the variable of class is taken into account (Heller, 1969). Miller and Kuvlesky investigated the status aspirations of migrants and non-migrant Mexican Americans, the findings suggested that there are no significant differences in terms of their levels of aspirations toward occupation and education. However, it can be speculated that the differences would have been of greater magnitude given a stronger and more extensive indicator for migrant status (Miller & Kuvlesky, 1976). The distinctions provided by closed-ended questions which evoke a simple yes or no answer are very gross. An indicator should include questions that are more descriptive of the migrant experience.

Horacio Ulibarri conducted a study from a sample of sixty-five migrant and ex-migrant dispersed in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. His findings indicated that the workers possessed present-time orientations, felt apathy toward the government, and were resigned to poverty. However, Ulibarri does not speculate as to why these attitudes were so pronounced, much less does he address the frequently debated question as to such orientations being due to environment, class, or culture (Ulibarri, 1971).

In 1973, Venegas conducted a study of El Paso High School students and analyzed his data in terms of ethnicity, sex, grade level, and type of school program in which they were enrolled. The findings indicated

> that students in all groups regardless of ethnicity, sex, grade, or school program had high aspirations and expectations for education and occupation. Males generally had higher aspiration and expectation levels in comparison to females. Anglo Americans had higher expectation levels than Mexican Americans. The academic group was generally higher than the general and vocational samples (Venegas, 1973).

The rural South Texas border historical study of 1967 (Kuvlesky & Monk, 1976) was compared with Venegas' metropolitan study, and in general it found that rural and metropolitan Mexican Americans are more alike than different. Furthermore, the majority of the Mexican Americans indicated a high level of aspirations and expectations (Kuvlesky & Venegas, 1974). In a similar comparative study that was conducted by Kuvlesky and Edington (1976), the status projections for four ethnic groups (Mexican American, Black, Navajos, and Anglo Youth) found that regardless of ethnicity, most youth aspire strongly to be upwardly mobile; however, many perceive their aspirations to be blocked. These youth do not suffer from a lack of motivation, but lack the resources to realistically accomplish their goals (Kuvlesky & Edington, 1976).

A comparative study of Mexican Americans migrant and non-migrant students at Eagle Pass High School was conducted by Chahin in 1977, the data was analyzed in terms of migrant status, sex, instructional program, and family procreation values. The findings clearly support Robert Merton's (1957) proposition that all kinds of youth in the United States have high success and achievement goals regardless of ethnicity or migrant status. Furthermore, the study substantiates that parents and teachers are

the most influential role models for this youth. The study clearly indicates that regardless of whether they enrolled in an academic preparatory curriculum or a vocational technical curriculum, Mexican American youth showed high aspirations. But, the study does not answer the question as to how these students will achieve their high aspirations. (Chahin, 1977)

The Holistic Model of Intervention discussed by Hayes Bautista and Harveston in their 1977 medical studies places the pathogenic location outside as well as inside the individual and defines the causal elements to be political, economic, social, and psychological. And this is perhaps a model that can be used for institutional interventions in the educational system. This model requires individual and institutional interventions with the maintenance and restructuring of systems that take into account the Holistic needs of students.

A related study on social class and Chicanos concludes that perhaps cultural and sociolinguistic variables determine forms of consciousness and how Chicanos function within our institutions (Garcia, 1980). Yet, the Santos study of Hispanics youth as emerging workers concludes, if the employment of Hispanics continues to be determined by economic conditions in manufacturing and other related industries, their job prospects are not very favorable unless they receive an education or technical training (Santos, 1985).

In 1987 Moll and Diaz reported on two case studies of elementary and junior high reading and writing classes that demonstrated how instructional conditions constrain what working

class Hispanic students and their teachers are able to accomplish. The study indicates that rearrangements of the instructional procedures that utilize students' skills and that take into account the social, linguistic and intellectual resources of the students will enhance the learning outcomes.

It is quite clear that the divergence in the perspective of recent researchers is reflective of some contemporary academicians growing up in minority communities. Furthermore the research has focused on socioeconomic issues, language and culture which are critical factors in the development of individuals. This has led to research that focuses on the needs and strengths of our students. These comprehensive research approaches have serve to dismantle long held stereotypes that had continued to perpetuate interventions that were ineffective in our communities.

We can not neglect the accessibility of education and resources because according to a United States youth study on "lost talent," social class and membership in a lower socio-economic group doubled the risk of youth achieving their aspirations (Hanson, 1994). Matute-Bianchi's study (as cited in Gibson & Ogbu, 1991) documented the various patterns of achievements among Mexican-descent students in California. Their study points to a relationship between academic achievement and students' perceptions of ethnic identity. Thus, ethnic identity becomes part of an interactive process which includes the students and the institutions within a social context. The study further points out that the intragroup variability that exists among Mexican-descent students needs to be critically examined to insure

we do not continue to use single cause explanations for investigating the underachievement of Mexican American students. Furthermore, positive self identity of "Mexicanos" has to be used as an asset in helping students succeed and achieve their aspirations (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991).

Hayes Bautista and Chapa (1988) in their study of young Latinos argues that demographic facts reflect an emerging Mexican majority that is largely uneducated, unskilled, and politically disenfranchised. Furthermore, resources need to be invested in the development of human capital or else the state of California will experience racial and generational conflict and a lower standard of living. It is quite apparent that as a result of the demographic shift the emerging Mexican American population in the Southwestern states will also require investment and development of human capital.

Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch (1995) conducted a study to attempt to explain the social attainment of Mexican American youth. They used the concept of social capital rather than classical explanations of social attainments that are based on the process of parental encouragement and assessment of merit by self and others. As used in this study, "social capital" refers to social relationships from which an individual is potentially able to derive institutional support, particularly knowledge-based resources. Even though the findings indicate that there is some evidence for the relation between grades and status expectations and measures of social capital, the strongest relations were among language measures, implying that bilinguals may have special

advantages in acquiring the institutional support necessary to succeed and achieve higher or upward social mobility.

Even though the research pertinent to the status aspirations and expectations of Mexican Americans is limited, the findings suggest a trend of upward mobility projections. These findings clearly question the culturally deterministic viewpoint which states that Mexican culture produces apathy toward status achievement, and that the values are contrary or antagonistic to achieving upward social mobility. The findings clearly convey that Mexican American youth want the same high levels of achieved status as do other groups of American young people. They are interested in college, technical training, prestige jobs with good employment, security, plus all the other opportunities that are available in our middle class American society. These achievement-oriented projections in essence illustrate that Mexican American youth can prolong gratification. Furthermore, it is also conceivable to state that Mexican American youth think of the future and/or not always in the present or in the past. Yet it can also be stated that within the Mexican American population there is considerable heterogeneity with respect to mobility values and orientations. Given the low socioeconomic status of this community, the role of institutional agents in the transmission of knowledge and information is critical to the future educational attainment of Mexican American children.

Quite explicitly, the De Hoyos, Juarez, Miller, Kuvlesky, and Chahin studies provide evidence that Mexican American youth, regardless of migrant background or sex, have high educational and

occupational aspirations and expectations. Furthermore, these youth are strongly committed to their goals. The realization of the orientations of these youth will require that institutions respond to the needs of these youth with intervention strategies that take into account the strengths of the students and the community.

Implications for Public Policy Makers

From the analysis the implications are: School districts should design career education programs pertinent to the needs of Mexican American students; even though these programs are recommended for grades K-12, at the secondary level a career education program should be designed so that students can participate on a continuous basis throughout their elementary and secondary education. This will provide the student with a better understanding of what is expected of workers, what occupations exist, and what educational and occupational paths lead to a particular career goal. This will allow individual students to discover their interests, attitudes, and values toward certain careers.

Counselors should be very careful in realizing that counseling is not solely based on interpretations of standardized tests, since respondents enrolled in the vocational technical program have high aspirations comparable to those respondents in the college preparatory curriculum. Thus, it is conceivable that students who are enrolled in the vocational technical programs might be playing the system, while at the same time jeopardizing

their opportunity to learn the basic cognitive skills that are needed to function in college and which a vocational and technical program might not provide. Therefore, counselors should explore all the possible alternatives before determining the program that most adequately serves the needs of the individual. Counselors should be sensitive and understand the needs of Mexican Americans students.

Furthermore, the schools need to engage Mexican American parents about the opportunities that their children might have and engaging them in these opportunities so that they in turn may work with their youth on development of career and life plans. Considering the low level of education of parents in the Mexican American community, we must see that a parental involvement program should be designed so that parents themselves can be better informed and empowered to have a greater input into the educational process. The parents should not only be involved in the programmed activities but also in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program. This programs should establish the basic framework for planned educational activities which will take into account the holistic needs of families that result in a close rapport between the parents, the community and the school system. In this manner, parents will have an opportunity to assume a more active role in the education of their children. In undertaking the aforementioned role, parents will support children and the goals of the school. Thus, parental involvement will not only improve communication between the school and parents, but also enhance the functional well-being

of the child at home. This program needs to be continuously evaluated to review the assumptions and insure maximum participation of parents.

Educational and governmental policy makers concerned with the educational plight of Mexican American children should carefully check their operating assumptions about what youth want or need. A continuous evaluation of present programs and assessment of forthcoming needs should be conducted at the local, state, and federal level. Surveys can be used to assess the attitudes of parents and students towards schools. Accountability and management audits can be used to assess school expenditures, learning, and institutional responses to students needs. This would provide legislators and policy makers with a more realistic appraisal of needs that will create a more effective procedure for the development of programs and the appropriation of funds. In this manner, existing resources can be used to develop more adequate programs that will better equalize the educational opportunities of these isolated communities in the Southwest. Furthermore, we need to continue to research and assess the educational needs of Mexican American students to meet their unique needs. In addition, we need to promote achievement and advocate for the needs of these students.

Mexican American children have the desire, despite the systemic, linguistic, educational barriers as well as discriminatory barriers and practices which they face. Hence, it is up to educators, community members, policy innovators, who make up the society, and have created these educational institutions,

to promote access, opportunities, networks and learning experiences that will fulfill those desires.

The cooperative efforts of school districts, parents, program planners, culturally competent staff, and legislators will be required to develop institutional policies that reflect the needs of the community and respond with resources and interventions that involve students and their parents as partners in the learning process. In addition to these collaborative efforts, accessibility to policy makers, as well as continuous evaluation of institutional programs will determine whether the playing field is leveled.

Table 1

Mexican Immigration (Number in Thousands)

State	1900	1910	1920	1930
Arizona	14,171	29,987	61,580	114,173
California	8,086	33,694	88,881	368,013
New Mexico	6,649	11,918	20,272	59,340
Texas	71,062	125,016	251,827	683,681

Note: McWilliams, C. (1948). North from Mexico: The Spanish-speaking people of the United States. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, Co.

Table 2

Educational Attainment for Persons 18 years old and over and of Hispanic Origin, March 1993.

Years of School Completed	Total Population in Millions	Percentages
Less than 4 years of high school	7,950	50.0%
High School Graduate	4,027	25.3%
Some college	2,147	13.5%
Associate Degree	629	4.0%
Bachelor's Degree	833	5.2%
Master's Degree	213	1.3%
Professional	66	0.4%
Doctorate Degree	35	0.2%
Total	15,900	100%

Note: U. S. Department of Commerce, 1990. Population Characteristics, P. 55

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