A Prison of Education: The School-to-Prison Pipeline in Low-Income Schools

Adam Le
San Jose State University

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Keywords

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Barred Education

"Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law, for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivationof a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law,therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racial[ly] integrated school system."
—Chief Justice Earl Warren, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)

The school-to-prison pipeline is the relationship between poorer schools and prisons. In some cases, the prison or correctional facility is within eyesight of the schools; in others, students are not taught how to succeed. While students in well-funded schools are encouraged to live the "American Dream" by pursuing any career with limitless skies, inner-city school students are taught to live barred within an intoxicated and smoggy ceiling. Funding affects a major part of the educational system. Richer schools spend more per student and have more graduating students, whereas inner-city school students lack resources and are beelined towards a prison complex; however, funding is only one piece of the puzzle. What also matters is the content being taught to the students and the overall confidence of the teachers: Inner-city teachers have a high turnover rate compared to teachers in private schools. This subpar education is also segregated along racial lines. Students in these schools are being trained instead of taught.

To combat this issue, funding is absolutely a priority, but ethnic studies attempts to break down the barriers that post-

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Brown segregation built. Giving students the knowledge about their history and more career options in humanities builds bridges across racialized groups who have long been categorized, classified, and separated. Without this investment in ethnic studies and inner-city youth, the prison-industrial complex will continue to grow. Students will continue to be normalized to state surveillance and docility. This essay first discusses funding as an option and then discusses ethnic studies as a solution to destroy forms of classifying youth. Lastly, I will compare the carceral and educational institutions to examine the pipeline from school to prison.

Funding Flawed Learning

> *"...the Negro needs neither segregated schools nor mixed schools. What he needs is Education...A mixed school with poor and unsympathetic teachers, with hostile public opinion, and no teaching of truth concerning black folk, is bad. A segregated school with ignorant placeholders, inadequate equipment, poor salaries, and wretched housing, is equally bad."*
> —W.E.B. Du Bois, 1935

Improving funding in schools can be seen as a potential and partial answer to solving poverty in inner-cities. The problem itself is more complex: while funds can be increased in schools to allow for more programs, schools continue to be segregated. Many of the problems within schools may involve split classrooms, overpopulated class sizes, and lack of books. School districts often make students commute over multiple hours in order to get to classes in dangerous areas that most people otherwise would not spend time in. These school designs reinforce a lack of care put towards students in the inner-city. This portion of the essay is going to discuss funding as a partial

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solution in order to suggest that the curriculum is also a source of marginalization to students.

Funding can have many positive effects on schools in need. For example, the schools Kozol (1991) visited in New Jersey needed more funding than what they were receiving. He noticed that poorer schools have lower reading levels. In 1998, the city of Camden spent $3,538 per pupil, while other cities such as Princeton, Summit, and West Orange spent over $6,000 per pupil (Kozol, 1991). Funding education can mean providing a different world for students in the inner-city by allowing them to have more resources. Money is the main difference "in provision of school libraries" and somewhat in "attracting gifted and experienced teachers," but racism and neglect over cultural capital have a big influence on how teachers teach and what books the students read (Kozol, 1991, p. 77). The question of where the money would come from often seems as a donation to charity rather than an investment in children's youth, and one can imagine the returns on the job market with more qualitative skilled labor learned in schools rather than a curriculum that pushes students to the prison (Kozol, 1991).

Although funding is seen as an answer, it is important to note who funds which programs. While a common answer to inequality in schools seems to be adding to the overall funding of schools, this is not so. Kozol (1991) argues that even if a society provided equal funding for schools, "[e]qual funding for unequal needs is not equality" (p. 54). Moreover, Rios (2011) observed that "funding for case workers from foundations and non-criminal justice government agencies declined" while "funding from criminal justice entities became available" (p. 91). This redirection of funds is not an anomaly; for example, a common response on the "Budget Priorities Survey Analysis" (2014) for

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the East Side Union High School District, a public school district serving south and east San Jose, was the misallocation of funds. "Some schools are richer," one response says, while another response reveals the link with the prison-industrial complex and funding: "The better the area, the better the school," this comment begins, "[a]t Evergreen [Valley High School] money goes to music/art programs," while in contrast, at "Yerba Buena money goes to police" and security (Hanover, 2014). Perhaps an investment in ethnic studies would be a better allocation of funds. Students in these schools feel that funds are being misappropriated and misallocated in their schools due to the lack of resources and upgrades to poorer San Jose schools. When funding is provided, it often gets misallocated into policing and security instead of towards buildings and teachers.

While segregation laws have ended, many schools in inner-cities remain separated by race and not designed as areas of learning. As Kozol (1991) notes, many classrooms in the schools he visited were not only overpopulated, but also "95 to 99 percent nonwhite" (p. 3). These schools were also not designed as classrooms and were often repurposed from other buildings. The learning environment in the school Kozol (1991) attended in New York was previously a roller-rink and lacked air conditioning and windows, leaving Kozol to feel asphyxiated (p. 87-88). It is unclear whether or not funding would improve the school if it was not designed as a place of learning; moreover, given the little funding increases they would have, the schools would most likely need to choose which of the district's priorities was most important. Given a choice between many different educational barriers, such as lack of airflow in classrooms (not just air conditioning or heating), lack of books for students, and low-quality teachers, funding would not be

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enough. Without schools designed to as learning environments, increased funding as a single solution would not be suitable.

Closing these schools and sending students to other schools can also be detrimental. As Bell (1995) notices, "simply placing black children in 'white' schools will seldom suffice" (p. 18) and "all too little attention has been given to make black schools educationally effective" (pg. 8). Students often wake up early to "attend [a] segregated school" with commute times up to and over an hour (Kozol, 1991, p. 91). With a twofold problem of inadequate transportation solutions and unequal education in the schools, students are in an unsafe and completely unsupported position where he or she is actively denied the opportunity for success (Kozol, 1991, p. 92). If schools were closed, it is possible that these students would be sent to other schools across town with the same lack of guaranteed proper education, with the consequence of even bigger class sizes and even longer commute times. Funding is an incredibly important piece of having equality in education, but using it as the only solution neglects the curriculum that students are being taught and the other institutional areas that are affecting education.

Drawn Differences

"Chicanos and Chicanas were made to feel invisible—literally, ethically, and culturally unintelligible"
—Maylei Blackwell, 2011

The differences between schools even within walking distance are present. Not only do these schools look different, but the way students learn is different. In the inner-city, students are taught to remain in a lower socioeconomic status, while in private schools, students are encouraged to go to college. Race also plays a factor in the hierarchy of priority in learning, as

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many educational institutions do not understand or work with the language barrier for Latinx families. These educational areas—K-12 schools, school boards, and school districts—work for their own convenience and emphasize quantitative learning over qualitative learning. This section will look at the different ways schools are taught and argues that ethnic studies will provide a more qualitative learning experience for students in the inner-city and beyond.

Lower-income students are taught differently than students at other schools. These schools implement programs that teach students how to do "menial" work throughout their K-12 education. Some students, like Mireya from Fremont High School, are forced to take a "technical art" educational requirement. "This requirement," Kozol (2007) states, "was far more often met by courses that were basically vocational and also obviously keyed to low-paying levels of employment" (p. 654). In contrast, at Beverly Hills High School less than 20 miles away, "this requirement was likely to be met by…[courses with] some relevance to college preparation…like residential architecture, the designing of commercial structures, broadcast journalism, [and] advanced computer graphics" (Kozol, 2007, p. 654). The stark differences between two high schools that are close to each other with different curricula reflect a class and racial divide in terms of students' perceived potential; however, race and class are inadequate to determine potential. "My mother sews," Mireya says, and she "hoped" for a curriculum that academically challenged her, such as "an AP class" that she wanted to take (Kozol, 2007, p. 655). In contrast, some families refused to teach children how to sew because they did not want them "to spend [their] life sewing in factories" and instead to "have opportunities outside of factory work" (Blackwell, 2011,

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p. 55). The style in which inner-city schools focus their detail on jobs that restrict students from reaching their full capabilities reveals the deeper capitalistic interest towards students' education in lower-income jobs.

Not only do these methods of learning curb students' overall potential, but these programs also reflect a greater relationship between schools and corporations. Such models give a capitalistic education based on the notion of success from money. In urban schools, many principals refer to themselves as "building CEO [bosses]" and teachers as "classroom managers" (Kozol, 2007, p. 656). Students are therefore resorted to menial jobs in retail stores as cashiers in mock job fairs (Kozol, 2007, p. 658). This type of curriculum hinders the true potential of students. It gives students a small scope of success within their current environment instead of allowing them to think beyond their current economic situation. As Jaime Escalante tells his student, Pancho, while driving in east Los Angeles in the popular movie *Stand and Deliver,* Pancho "only see[s] the turn," and not "the road ahead" (*Stand, 1988)*. Many inner-city youth also have the same viewpoint that they can make things work in their current situation in order to provide more economic security for their family. They work in order to be able to give more resources to their families, doing anything to survive, including dealing drugs and labor in farms in agricultural cities. The current system of education reinforces the notion that youth in the *barrio* are either menial workers or criminals weaving in and out of correctional facilities because it suggests that students do not value their education. In reality, students value their education but may have more concern over their own survival and the survival of their families.

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While many people think that Latinxs and other minorities do not care about their education, the concept of familism helps debunk this myth. Familism is based on the idea that the family "is one of the strongest areas of life, more importantly for Mexicans [and other people of color] than for Anglos" (Baca Zinn & Pok, 1998, p. 93). Moreover, due to students having to devote more time to aid their family with babysitting, working, etc., it leads to the notion that Mexican-Americans and others "are the makers of their own educational shortcomings" (Valencia & Black, 2002, p. 88). Valencia and Black (2002) debunk the myth claiming Mexican Americans' "goals and values have never focused on education"; as one mother said, "it's important to get further education to get a good job. That's the only way to break the cycle [of poverty] that our parents and grandparents went through" (p. 98). Latinx parents value education but the design of the current school system does not allow their students to succeed.

Many teachers think that parents lack involvement by not attending meetings such as open house; however, this is based on a model of deficit thinking that the blame lies on the individual rather than the institution (Valencia & Black, 2002, p. 81). For example, most open houses occur in the late afternoon when most people with standard jobs can attend after work. On the contrary, people in inner-city neighborhoods may not have the ability to attend due to different working hours; moreover, the language barrier can divide parent-teacher conversations if the school does not work with translators. With educational involvement, it is important to look past the discourse from the institution and consider different individual contributions to an overall education.

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Not only do the contributions made by students to their families affect the way they are seen to "not care" about their education, some inner-city schools are not ideal learning environments. Some schools Kozol (1991) visited had guarded doors, police patrols, steel grates over windows, and were in areas called

> 'death zones'—a specific reference to the rate of infant death in ghetto neighborhoods—but the feeling of the 'death zone' often seemed to permeate the schools themselves. Looking around some of these inner-city schools, where filth and disrepair were worse than anything I'd seen in 1964, I often wondered why we would agree to let our children go to school in places where no politician, school board president, or business CEO would dream of working. (p. 5)

These schools are furthermore described with low ceilings and no windows, and are often over capacity (Kozol, 1991, p. 85). Larger school sizes force students to have lunchtime "in three shifts, 450 children at a time" (Kozol, 1991, p. 86). This is an example of the panoptic time-table, using time to "extract from bodies the maximum time and force" instead of trying to improve the learning experience for students (Foucault, 1995, p. 220). It is important to note that these schools may be cramming and shipping students into windowless education boxes as a result of funding; however, if funding in schools is increased, schools would have the same amount of students to teach in smaller rooms that are not designed for learning (e.g., the roller-rink). Their education would be improved, but more institutional options are prevalent that restrict students from success than "improved education."

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Enhancing the curriculum can be a first step towards creating an ideal education, and students should be able to learn more about their history from different points of view. The textbooks that students read in current history classes focus on a linear Eurocentric point of view. The way Du Bois (1935a) explains the early fight for education also includes a critique of the way history is learned. He notes that "had it not been for the Negro school and college, the Negro would, to all intents and purposes, have been driven back to slavery" (Du Bois, 1935a, p. 667). It is important that students can learn the way racialized and marginalized people have carved out an education for themselves in order to have more of a presence not only in school and college numbers, but also in the curriculum. Students should be aware of and embraced for their differences, and these differences should be affirmed, valued, and legitimated (Sandoval, 2000, p. 55). The student movements for Chicano studies in the 1960s were a reaffirmation of difference and recognizing that Chicanos needed to have classes showing their history in the United States. These curricula restructured the way colleges are taught while also giving students of color a new political consciousness. Having similar types of education in secondary and inner-city schools where there are high rates of people of color will be beneficial in that it will build upon and recognize differences between people and bridge alliances towards more qualitative and valuable education.

The past movements for education and ethnic studies provide an area for students to learn more about themselves, their culture, and social movement in today's society. Some schools are attempting to work their way away from the capitalistic strategies and normalization of business-typed majors and interests to instead focus on a curriculum that focuses on the

majority of the students' culture. In Los Angeles, the L.A. Unified School District is making ethnic studies a requirement for graduation. Some proponents believe that it allows students to "develop a better sense of self-worth when they learn about themselves and their history," which can lead students into a better understanding of their career paths and college options (Ceasar, 2014). By 2017-18, "every L.A. Unified high school must offer at least one semester of ethnic studies," and the movement was "largely driven by students [who] demand[ed] more from their education" (Ceasar, 2014). Focusing on the courses also brings to light the "divide and conquer" method of the state and attempts to rearticulate minoritization within schools. "We're torn apart from each other" one student says, but ethnic studies allow students to realize that they have "been fighting the same struggle" throughout history (Ceasar, 2014).

Subsequently, in order to re-envision educational learning in classrooms, it is necessary to restructure the curriculum. A proper curriculum in schools would allow students to explore any field of study that they want. In addition, a way to improve learning in the classrooms would be to incorporate different educational paths in high school instead of having students work in certain classes to earn their degree. For example, for a student to graduate in the East Side Union High School District in San Jose, they need three years of "social science," which is fulfilled by one year of world history, one year of United States history, one semester of American government, and one semester of economics. The rigidity of this structure enforces power and acts as a form of counterrevolution because it does not allow students to take classes that explore their histories and interests. English classes, such as the four years of English that students have to take in order to graduate,

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focus on analysis of White mainstream novels: *To Kill a Mockingbird, Macbeth, Death of a Salesman,* etc. The way the curriculum is structured enforces a factory-line image of students' consciousness—they are taught, but do not necessarily learn.

Schools should be taught like colleges instead of like prisons. Classes like Mexican American History, which talk about Mexicans in the United States, in place of United States history courses would be sufficient in terms of student learning, but would allow students to learn from a different perspective. Students in California schools already learn United States history in eighth grade, and it would be very useful for students in high school to be able to choose a different narrative to analyze their previous learning. English classes should be offered in different varieties, such as having Chicano, Asian-American, or African-American literature in place of freshman or junior English. Ferguson (2012) observes that "American colleges and universities would become hotbeds of contention around the importance of the liberal arts versus the necessity of managerial training," and having more choices in ethnic studies for students both in high school and college improves the political consciousness of students (pp. 191-2). It would be beneficial for students of color to read books like *House on Mango Street* or *The Rain God* in order to connect with characters that may have more similar traditions and values of the reader, making the student feel less isolated in her or his learning environment. Giving students options to learn about their history will give the student subjectivity in the educational institution to critically analyze everything that they have learned in preparation for college.

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A popular response against this subjectivity is that nobody is qualified to teach these classes. This is untrue first because many people of color are qualified to teach classes that offer a different perspective on history. Secondly, Lorde (1984) argues that some people believe that they "can't possibly teach Black women's writing" or anyone whose "experience is so different" from theirs, "[y]et how many years have [these educators] spent teaching Plato and Shakespeare and Proust?" (pp. 43-4). For the curriculum to change in secondary education, it is important to have support from both students and teachers. If both groups are united in abolishing the rigidity of curriculums that support paths to menial work or prison, it could mean changing the way inner-cities are often ignored and pushed to the margin.

The School-to-Prison Pipeline and the Prison-Industrial Complex

"What societal interest is served by prisoners who remain illiterate…Who profits (other than the prison establishment itself) from stupid prisoners?"
—Mumia Abu-Jamal, 1995

The school-to-prison pipeline defines a relationship between students put "at-risk" in schools and people trapped in the cycle of prison sentences. While private schools are gearing their students towards endless heights, inner-city schools are preparing students for prison or menial jobs. Inner-city students felt as if their school "was like a little jailhouse" (Simmons, 2009, p. 223). The distinction between "gold star" students and "at-risk" inner-city youth is maintained through a discourse of success that relies on the juxtaposition of private high schools and public inner-city institutions. This different sentiment towards students often makes "at-risk" students feel categorized

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as troublemakers and, consequently, they behave as "deviants." This last section will discuss a solution to dissolve the school-to-prison pipeline.

The prison-industrial complex is increasing at an alarming rate. Since 1988, the percent of state/local expenditures towards higher education has decreased every year until 2000 while the money invested in prisons has increased in percentage (Justice Policy Institute, 2002). Moreover, state spending in some states (e.g., California) has decreased overall while "state spending on corrections" has increased by over 100% (Justice Policy Institute, 2002). The motive of the prison-industrial complex is to fill "structures with human bodies…[in] the pursuit of profit" (Davis, 2003, p. 84). Gilmore (2007) also notes that in the time of a troubled economy, it was decided that "new recruits…should be minimally armed with an approved A.S. degree in correctional science before reporting for basic training" (p. 119). The expanding prison movement and the jobs it created was attractive to states with failing job markets. Also, it was an outlet for cheap labor with prisoners performing many tasks that produce products for corporations "that are primarily interested in the increased production and circulation of ever more profitable commodities" (Davis, 2003, p. 44). The prison-industrial complex is still increasing in the present day due to a globalized economy and high demand for products. Improving education in schools will reduce the amount of students being sent to prisons and, consequently, will reduce overall expenditures that individuals pay to prisons in taxes. This leftover money in the economy can be cycled back into schools, colleges, jobs, and the community.

While overall state funding steers the focus towards expanding prisons, school funding is being steered towards

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policing. Simmons (2009) notes that while police presence is increasing, "there [are] few teachers and at least 30 security guards" (pp. 228-32). The money going towards security and policing students also affects how schools are built, with some schools implemented in the same physical space as prisons. Putting students "in a prison to show them how to stay from prison" is an example of an ineffective approach taken to reduce students heading to prison; instead, this type of reasoning shows more clearly the way the pipeline actively appears "to collect school-aged youth and funnel them towards a future in prison" (Simmons, 2009, p. 229). The active involvement of schools trying to normalize "and mirror criminal justice enforcements" alongside funding being placed towards both policing in schools and the expansion of prisons reveals how the school-to-prison pipeline in the inner city is a part of the prison-industrial complex (Simmons, 2010, p. 51). Even though these schools were equipped with state-of-the-art equipment for surveillance and policing, the "strict disciplinary approach of the prison school was not matched by academic rigor" (Simmons, 2009, p. 223). While funding could have given students a better education, the school itself at the site of a prison proves to have more daunting and insidious effects towards funneling students into prison.

In order to work towards a strategy that combats the school-to-prison pipeline and the growing prison-industrial complex, it is necessary to acknowledge the residue left from law and racial gerrymandering. Although the United States is desegregated by law from the decision in *Brown v. Board* (1954), the residue of racially drawn lines affects the schools and students that receive the education. For example, why is it that when students misbehave in their classes, they are often

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suspended or expelled from school? This leads students to life in the margins, gangs, and poverty because many inner-city parents work throughout the day to support their children and, as a result, children are often left unsupervised at home. Rios (2012) noted that students were being "packed like sardines" in the juvenile justice system and, similarly, students were overcrowded in schools. The answer to "misbehaving," according to schools, results in taking away the rights of students to their education, creating a bad relationship with "at-risk" students from an early age. While many people know the term "school dropout," the term is misleading in that it suggests students have an active choice in their educational paths and the way they are seen as criminals in their education. Instead, students who leave school due to unsafe learning environments or having to contribute to their family economy for survival should be seen as "pushed out" instead of "dropping out." When inner-city schools become part of the prison-industrial complex, students become accustomed to punishment by the state—as Rios (2012) states: "hurt people hurt people." Power and surveillance are normalized to students in inner-city schools, and once they finish their education, they are accustomed to state intervention.

This normalization of punishment produces a settled expectation for students of where they belong due to where they come from. In the city of McFarland in California, students are surrounded by institutional barriers that limit their success. The school is located in the middle of the city right next to the McFarland correctional facility. In the popular film *McFarland, USA,* "at-risk students" (including one who avoided suspension to join the cross-country team) often ran past the correctional facility in order to show the close relationship between the

school and its path to prison. Students were aware of the "normalizing gaze" of the correctional facility as a "machine…to train or correct individuals" (Foucault, 1995, p. 184) and to "monitor their effects" (p. 203). Students in the film referred to their family members in prison or correctional facilities as "in" or "out," and everybody in the city knew what that meant aside from the outsider Jim White. The students were aware of the career choices they had and one student was stopped from studying and considering college by a family member because "*nadie necessita un libro en el campo* [Nobody needs a book in the fields]" (*McFarland*, 2015). For students in this small city in the Central Valley, career choices are limited to stints in correctional facilities or working in the fields—it is all they know and all they were taught to know.

Along with the geographical location of schools affecting students and in relation to the prison-industrial complex, the school-to-prison pipeline is a product of corporate and capitalistic interest to funnel students into either "menial jobs" or prison. Inside and outside of prison, corporations capitalize on the marginalized as cheap manual labor. Multinational efforts in the globalized economy also enhance the notion of state control on the immigrant. Economic refugees in the Central Valley from Latin American countries face a myriad of state oppression in education and in the work force. Immigration policing for undocumented students is both in the classroom and patrolling the home. These institutional and racist forces confine Latinxs and other people of color to dangerous labor and the constant threat of deportation. Many families "sought the security and improvement of life chances for their families…in their search for the ever elusive American Dream" by sending their kids to college; but without the support from the

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educational system, many Latinx students found that even once in college, the curriculum did not embrace them (Blackwell, 2011, p. 45-46). For Latinxs in the globalized economy, the trip to the United States is necessary for survival of the family at home. Corporations are the main source of profit in this scenario: they benefit from the conditioning students receive to fill the jobs in their stores to sell the products and they benefit from the cheap labor that they use from emigrant or prison labor in order to make or harvest products.

Some progress has been made in protecting undocumented students from deportation in college with the Dream Act, which protects students and allows them to go to college. This act reinforces the individual power in Latinx youth to show that while they are undocumented, they still have a voice. Social movements aim to promote awareness and recognition of both the prison-industrial complex and the young people of color, men and women, being funneled into prison. As Cesar Chavez (1984) said, "once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore." Improving the education of youth improves the overall quality of their lives and gives them a career path with unlimited options: it gives them a choice.

Conclusion

The school-to-prison pipeline and the work being done to expose this system is vital to stray away from models of deficit thinking where one blames the victim rather than the institution. The lack of funding in schools often questions why "influential people…[show] little inclination to address the

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matter" of funding schools; moreover, these schools law are given an unequal opportunity as a result of biological and intellectual understandings of race (Kozol, 1991, p. 3). People of influence neglect to acknowledge race and allow these understandings to "sidle around the veranda and climb back in through the window" in a "post-*Brown*" nation (Hall, 1997). In contrast to Blanchard's idea (presented by Kozol; 1991) that increased funding does "not 'necessarily' improve a public school," funding is a step towards a clearer solution in stopping the path from school to prison (p. 199). Thus, it is necessary to also look at the way students are being taught.

The current curricula being taught to different groups of students in virtually same geographical area are completely different. On one hand, students are being taught in a variety of AP classes and learn strong interpersonal skills to be successful, while students in the inner-city are being taught they are "'raw material' being steered towards 'realistic' goals…of limited career objectives that seem logical or fitting for low-income children" (Kozol, 1991, p. 74-75). Giving these students more choices in their education with ethnic studies gives the student more political agency and sociopolitical awareness. This awareness and background of past social movement allows students to fight for their rights knowing it has been done before. Learning history from different viewpoints also allows students to have more career paths in different disciplines: students can decide which college to attend (whether it is the college of business, art, etc.) rather than being forced into a cellblock.

The cost of prison has been and is continuing to increase. Prison liberation, then, does not begin behind bars; instead, prison abolition begins in steering away from a youth control complex towards a "youth support complex" (Rios, 2011,

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p. 157). Investing in education of youth and in their facilities as well as rejecting the categorization and essentialism of "troubled" youth can reduce the dependency of the prison as an area for control and discipline over manufactured "at-risk" youth. The path towards prison from lower-income schools can be reduced, creating a financial return by less taxes contributed to prison and more career options being filled by properly educated students. Recognizing and accepting differences in students and allowing students to communicate and contribute to the overall curriculum based on their differences eliminates *el vendido* [the "sell-out"] insofar as other students can learn, accept, and build alliances upon these differences in cultural capital. This acceptance of difference can build a grassroots movement at any age to advocate for and maintain a reconceptualization of the educational system.

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Adam Le is currently an undergraduate student majoring in Political Science at San Jose State University. He expects to graduate in spring 2017 with a minor in Mexican-American Studies and a concentration in Political Thought alongside his BA. His research interests include critical race theory, social justice, education, citizenship, erasure of history, and the prison-industrial complex. After finishing his bachelor's degree, Adam plans to pursue a doctoral degree in American Studies, with the intention of doing research, teaching, and social activism. When not at San Jose State, Adam enjoys spending time in San Jose by playing ice hockey, riding bicycles, and being outdoors.

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