

Chapter 19

The Transborderization of Neoliberalism: In the Trenches of Cultural and Linguistic Equity for Social and Educational Transformation

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ABSTRACT

On the U.S.-Mexican border, neoliberalism and globalization enables corporations to discriminate against people of color and border crossers in general. However, the struggle for social equity continues to gain strength within spaces of resistance among marginalized and immigrant groups. This chapter presents experiences and narratives of three educators in the pursuit for social justice for Latin@s who live in the borderland region of El Paso, Texas and Cd. Juarez, Mexico. This chapter reflects theoretical structures that support critical analysis of pertinent data established by schooling policies, which maintain white privilege in detriment of people of color. Under a sociocultural and critical pedagogical praxis, new educational trends such as translanguaging, hybridity, and third space are exposed as ways to resist inequalities in the daily life of Latin@s. The analysis of these sociolinguistic tendencies provides opportunities for pedagogical affirmation of cultural identity, self-determination, and the development of the consciousness of racial politics.

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INTRODUCTION

The expansion of empires of the *Global North* (Europe and North America) take advantage of the *Global South* (Africa and Latin America) economically, politically, and culturally. The most recent exploitation systems are through neoliberalism and globalization with free trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); in which corporations and governmental structures position the rich on one side and the poor on the other, where the rich get richer at the expense of the poor getting poorer. Neoliberalism is a predatory system controlled by the competitive market, where the “big fish eats the little fish.” Under this system, values and human rights are corrupted, even more so love, affection, and human dignity are relegated to second terms. Some scholars refer to neoliberalism as the neocolonization of Latin America, while in the United States it is manifested by depriving people of color and immigrants of their essential human rights (Popke, 2011).

Humanitarian crises and collapsed governments that affect postcolonial nations include geographical, human, and environmental violence. The neocolonization of Latin America takes place militarily, academically, institutionally, socially, politically, legally, culturally, and through the media impacting dominant narratives and discourses that shape imaginary or geographical borderlands; consequently, the identity formation of people. In the United States within the linguistic sociopolitical context, minorities suffer an identity crisis due to the duality of consciousness created by white supremacy, in which people feel that they are “neither from here nor from there.” Culture and language are inseparable, as a result language theft is much more violent than war since language influences people’s thinking (Anzaldúa, 1987). The word minority is also a product of social manipulation. Once united, all the minorities including women are the majority. Who are in reality minority?

The lack of knowledge on ethnic politics produces another form of illiteracy (that goes beyond learning to read and write); not knowing the politics of white supremacy and the hegemony of English as a language of colonization, cause the unacquainted to act against his/her own interests. Within these contexts, people internalize the white colonizer’s dominant ideologies, adopting them without critical discernment and bringing upon themselves consequences that affect their own existence and those of their ethnic, gender, social class or collective experience. If a person does not think critically, this dominant ideology will make that person believe and be sympathetic towards internalization of oppression against him/herself. As Biko (1978) says, the mind of the oppressed is the most powerful weapon in the hand of the oppressors. Reading the word and the world within the context of ethnic-racial hegemonic domination is a necessity for survival in the trans/post-modern world (Freire & Macedo, 2005).

The expansion of the global north empires causes much of the violence in the global south. For the most part, the destruction of the environment and changes in weather patterns provoke disastrous effects. Despite everything, this environmental catastrophe is not the worst, as there are other forms of violence inciting corruption, organized crime, and vulnerability of marginalized persons and their communities. This damaging impact leaves the global south politically and socially vulnerable, resulting in a deadly combination with global and environmental repercussions (Parenti, 2011).

Predominantly in the United States, the violence of neoliberalism is reflected in the privatization of prisons. As of 2008, the United States had 5% of the total world population, however, it had “the highest rate (25%) of incarceration in the world” (Alexander, 2011, pg. 11). The percentage of imprisoned African-Americans and Latin@s is much higher compared to the white population. The total of Latin@s and Afro-Americans add up to 59% of the incarcerated population compared to 39% of whites (Wagner & Rabuy, 2017). This disparity reflects how white supremacy systematically creates policies

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