Moving from Complaints to Action.

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Resumen/ Abstract

This paper analyzes the process of youth political activism and development by drawing on ethnographic research of Asian and Pacific Islander youth activists in the United States. Young people reveal that collective action begins with a critical analysis of their lived experiences with inequalities. Their actions also involved oppositional consciousness that were nurtured in social-justice oriented community organizations. Following youth"s successful efforts for school reform, I show how oppositional consciousness is realized and what activism looks like in practice.

Palabras clave / Keywords: youth political activity, oppositional consciousness

Introduction

This paper analyzes the process of youth political activism and development by drawing on ethnographic research of a diverse group of immigrant and second-generation Asian and Pacific Islander youth activists in the United States. In contrast to dominant studies of immigrant assimilation in the United States, I examine how youth are transforming the nature of democratic participation in a multiracial society. Youth exhibit a strong sense of racial identities that are also tied to political pan-ethnic identities in different political moments. As active political participants, youth reveal that democracy is a social practice in which members of different positions and backgrounds engage in altering unequal power relations for the common interest of all its members.

The central questions of this project include: How do young people come to acquire a sense of political agency? What are the social conditions that allow youth to partake in collective action for social justice? What is the relationship between racial and ethnic identities and collective action? What are the implications of racial minority youth‟s activism for current and future direction of a multiracial democratic society?

The young people of this study are part a pan-ethnic community-based youth organizing collaborative called Asian and Pacific Islander Youth Advocacy and Leadership (AYPAL) that draws together second-generation and immigrant youth (ages 14 to 18) who are Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Laotian, Mien, Samoan, Tongan, and Vietnamese in an urban city in California. These young people embody the diverse immigrant population found in the post 1965 immigration era in the United States. They represent over nine Asian and Pacific Islander ethnic groups, have different family immigration histories, cultural traditions, and languages, yet they find common ground, common purpose, and a sense of belonging in a community of social change practices where they battle social inequalities that have real, material effects on them as urban, working-class, and minority youth.

On a weekly basis, AYPAL gathers approximately 200 youth to its community-based organizing activities that are spread throughout the city. AYPAL is based on a "youth organizing" model and stems from a tradition of community organizing by people of color from the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Edwards et al. 2003; Ginwright 2003; HoSang 2003, 2006; Omatsu 1994). Every year, AYPAL youth decide upon and lead a campaign to change unequal conditions in their lives. Past campaigns included pressuring city council members to increase programming and staff at neighborhood recreation centers; successfully stopping the expansion of juvenile hall in their neighborhood; and garnering congressional support to stop deportations of immigrants convicted of minor and/or nonviolent crimes. This paper concentrates on one such effort called the "unfair treatment campaign" in which young people pressured their superintendent to agree to institute district-wide school reform policies. Their yearlong effort culminated in a televised press conference where the superintendent addressed unfair grading policies, school police harassment, and locked bathrooms during passing periods.

My analysis stems from a three-and-a-half year ethnography I conducted of the young activists of AYPAL in the in early 2000s. My research evolved from my experience as a volunteer staff member. As a volunteer, I quickly became integrated into the everyday practices and functioning of the organization. Participant observation activities included preparing youth for their peer meetings and political workshops, attending and participating in political rallies

and protests, community forums, and meetings with elected officials, making school and home visits, and engaging in various social events. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with 18 youth and eight adult coordinators. These interviews were approximately one to one-and-a-half hours in length and were tape-recorded and transcribed. I also conducted nine youth focus group interviews, involving approximately 70 young people. In sum, over the three-and a-half years of my participation in the organization, I came into contact with more than 1,000 young people who participated in the organization's activities.

Considering that immigrant and second-generation Asian and Latino children under 18 years of age represent the fastest growing population in the United States today, it is imperative that we pay attention to how these young people are vital contributors to U.S. political and democratic life (Rumbaut & Portes 2001). Yet to date, most studies of immigrant and second-generation youth have focused on their educational success or failure, employment rate, socioeconomic status of their families, language retention, and marriage patterns and fail to examine youth political practices (Rumbaut & Portes 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001; Zhou 1997).

This research project fills this gap and offers an alternative to studies of immigrant assimilation and acculturation patterns. It examines how second-generation Asian and Pacific Islander youth are transforming the nature of democratic participation. In building and acting upon collective sense of political agency for social justice, young people are building a "new political bloc," a civil society that is counter-hegemonic to neoliberal discourses and paradigms of individualism and immigrant success.[1] As such, they offer new, as well as re-workings of old, strategies for community organizing and multiracial coalition building among communities of color in the United States.

From Resistance to Political Activism

In educational anthropology, the topic of youth resistance has generated rich ethnographic studies of young people in varied social locations. For instance, Willis' *lads*, MacLeod's *Hallway Hangers*, and Foley's *vatos* provide us with examples of everyday acts of young people's resistance, identity formations, and oppositional culture against their subordinate status as working-class youth (Foley 1990; MacLeod 1995; Willis 1977). Similarly, resistance takes on vibrant forms in studies of oppositional youth subculture (Amit-Talai and Wulff 1995; Clarke et al. 1997; Hebdige 1979; Skeleton and Valentine 1998). Other works have paid attention to the different ways that race and culture inform resistance (Bettie 2003; Brayboy 2005; Deyhle 1995; Gibson 1988; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Foster 2003; Valenzuela 1999). Although theses vast works have recognized young people's diverse resistance practices and myriad of factors that limited their opportunities, young people in these studies often lacked a structural analysis of their social conditions and their actions were not tied to organized collective forms of resistance or opposition. As MacLeod's said of the young men of his study: "Among them there is very little political or collective energy, or even a sense that change is possible" (1995: 256).

On a different note, recent studies of positive youth development (Ginwright and Cammarota 2002; Ginwright and James 2002; Watts and Guessous 2006) are recognizing the importance of young people's social and political development —their critical awareness of social inequalities and their potential for individual and social transformation. Or what Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota (2002) calls "social justice youth development." A central

thesis in these works is recognition of young people's *experiences with* and *understanding of* inequalities as a basis of action. In a similar vein, Constance Flanagan and Leslie Gallay (1995) propose a framework of youth political development as stemming from adolescents' social experiences of subordination and the possibilities of this experience to politicize thinking.

The scholars above invoke the teachings of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Freire (1996) refers to *conscientizacao*, a shift in awareness by an individual of the social, economic, and political conditions that structure his/her personal experiences of injustice. As Freire notes, with *conscientizacao*, people "perceive oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (1996: 31). Chela Sandoval (2000) builds on a theory of oppositional consciousness by drawing upon U.S. third world feminism and a "methodology of the oppressed" to understand resistance in the new global postmodern world. For Sandoval, oppositional consciousness or what she refers to as "differential opposition" is not fixed nor static, but rather a tactic that weaves and travels through different modes of power, ideology, and social and psychological aspects of citizen-subjects to disrupt inequities. Like Freire, Sandoval gives weight to oppressed people in recognizing their subordinate position and navigating the "modes of dominant consciousness, learning to interrupt the 'turnstile' that alternately reveals history, as against the dominant forms of masquerade that history can take" (2000: 104). Jane Mansbridge (2001) adds to Freire and Sandoval by pointing to how oppositional consciousness is also shared and realized in relationship with others. In sum, oppositional consciousness is an explanation of how people come to an individual and/or collective awareness of injustice and plays a role in spurring action.

The young people I came to know experienced oppositional consciousness in different ways—for some it was realized through direct action, for others it was learned in political workshops and planning community-organizing campaigns, and for some it was never realized. It is not my intention to argue that there is a distinct and direct progression from oppositional consciousness to collective action; rather it is a messy continuum in which these components are essential in challenging unequal relations of power. As Mansbridge reveals, oppositional consciousness does not necessarily lead to collective action, it can be a cause for action as well as a result of collective action: "Oppositional consciousness functions as an intermediate factor, or variable, that is caused by and also causes some of the important dynamics of social movements" (2001: 16).

Oppositional consciousness and collective action, albeit important are often insufficient for political mobilizations. As social movement scholars note (McAdams 1982; Tarrow 1998; McAdam et. al 2001), organizational resources (or indigenous organizations) and political opportunities are essential components. McAdam (1982) and Aldon Morris (1984) describe the pivotal role of African American churches and organizations in coordinating and mobilizing collective actions within the civil rights movement. In my participation in AYPAL, I have come to realize young people's oppositional consciousness and collective actions are nurtured in a political community where social change practices are taught and learned. Dan HoSang (2006) also underscores the role of activist-based youth organizations in supporting young people's activism in Los Angeles and New York City. These groups, "provide structured, strategic spaces and experiences through which young people and their allies can make sense of the vexing and

contradictory forces that shape their lives and allow them to test new avenues of struggle and resistance" (HoSang: 16).

In the following, I analyze what leads young people into action by delineating the components of youth political development in a process of complaints to action. In this process, young people openly identify problems in their lives and organize to change these conditions through collective action. In such activities, young people also exhibit and develop oppositional consciousness. By oppositional consciousness, I mean young people's critical analysis of inequalities as they link their everyday experiences of injustice to a structural analysis of social inequality *and* their awareness of collective forms of action to organize for social justice. Their actions also reveal the critical role of community-based organizations in supporting their activism.

From Complaints to Action: Youth Political Activism
Complaints: Identifying problems

About 40 young people were gathered behind darkened glass windows in a neighborhood community center that opened onto the busy corner of a large street for a youth-led community meeting. The air was thick with excitement as scattered groups of Cambodian, Chinese, and Mien (Southeast Asian) teenage boys and girls gossiped about their peers, played video games on the internet, and ate burgers and fries from nearby fast food joints as they waited for the meeting to start. Meanwhile, four youth leaders were busily setting up for a workshop on the criminalization of hip-hop to warm up their peers on a discussion about the problems they encounter in their communities. Matt,[2] a senior at nearby high school, dressed in his usual attire of baggy jeans and white T-shirt that came down past his hips explained the purpose of the workshop: "The reason we are doing this workshop on hip-hop is because lots of people in our community like hip-hop and hip-hop culture is sometimes seen negatively and the people who participate in it get stereotyped." As a break-dancer and member of Floor Tactix, a crew that performs in hip-hop shows throughout the city, Matt was familiar with images associating participants of hip-hop culture to gangsters and violence. Then Sammy, also a member of Floor Tactix and one of co-facilitators of the workshop, went over some definitions. He asked: "Does anyone know what criminalization means?" When there was no response, he quickly answered his own question: "It is when a group of people or a culture is designated as criminals. It's like a stereotype, making a generalization about all people of a certain group."

To further investigate the notion of criminalization, the large group broke into six small circles and youth were asked to role-play situations where they themselves or others were unfairly stereotyped or treated. This began a lively discussion and enactment of young people's experiences of harassment by school and security staff on campus and by police officers outside of school hours. They spoke of racist teachers, unprepared teachers, or classes with no teachers, and of their unfair grading policies. They also pointed to a lack of textbooks, unclean bathrooms with "too much bacteria," and cracking classroom walls. As one student aptly claimed, "Our schools are cheap."

The issues young people identified during the meeting are representative of many poor urban youth's concerns today. And their concerns are too readily deemed as "complaints" or problems brought on by young people themselves as a condition of their poverty or misbehavior,

or both. Despite a steady decrease in youth crime and violence in the past three decades in the US, youth policing evidenced in curfew laws and "anti-gang" measures such as California's Proposition 21 continue to thrive (Collins and Kearns 2001; Jeffs and Smith 1996; Males 1996, 1998). Too often the victims of this crackdown are poor, urban, minority youth whose voices are rendered invisible. Yet contrary to dominant representations of marginalized youth as social problems, my study reveals how these very young people are active agents of social change. The issues young people identified in the meeting indicate how youth are critically aware of problems in their lives, schools, and communities. They spoke of their encounters with school and police officers and attending public schools, which often were marked by discrimination, poor teaching, scarce resources, and unfair school policies. At AYPAL meetings such this one, youth are encouraged to openly discuss problems in their lives. In my work with these young people over the years, I heard repeated complaints about the unequal conditions of their schools and schooling experience. Although complaints about educational experiences are not uncommon among young people, for AYPAL youth, it served as a foundation to translate into collective action. As Freire explains, social action to dismantle structures of inequality begins with one"s understanding of his or her subordinate position and the causes of one"s powerlessness.

Collective Action: The campaign for school reform

In the process of analyzing the medley of students' concerns about their educational experiences, the real problem, youth argued, was that students had no effective means of having people in power take their problems seriously. There was no institutionalized method through which they could express their dissatisfaction with unfair school or classroom policies or report incidences of discrimination or violation of student rights. While speaking with peers in student groups on different campuses and with teachers they identified as "cool," researching district policies, and contacting district personnel about creating a forum for student rights, youth discovered that students already had a right to file formal grievance complaint forms with the district. When these complaints are initiated, the school district is required by law to ensure that the district is complying with state and federal laws that govern educational programs.

During the spring of 2001, AYPAL youth started informing their fellow students at schools about the complaint process and urged them to fill out complaint forms to address their concerns. Although youth were excited and felt empowered to make the district accountable for various forms of discrimination they have personally experienced and/or have heard about from their fellow peers, they found at first that it was difficult to get other students actually to file complaints. They faced the obstacles of student apathy and reluctance to challenge power. Chenda, a high school junior relayed to her peers at an AYPAL meeting an incident reported to her by a friend of being stuck in study hall along with 20 other students for half the school day after they were caught in a tardy sweep. They sat at their desks and did nothing the whole time while a security officer kept watch, Chenda recalled. She encouraged her friend to file a complaint form questioning the fairness of the tardy policy and the loss of instruction time. Yet to Chenda"s frustration, her friend responded: "That"s not going to do any good." Although fellow students liked to talk about their problems at school, many dismissed the notion that they could produce any real changes in school policies. Students who had more serious complaints about sexual harassment and civil rights violations by teachers and staff feared retribution for

filing their forms. Some felt uncomfortable at the thought of even writing their names on the grievance forms.

Facing these difficulties, AYPAL youth strategized as a collective about how to get their fellow students to take a stand. It was imperative that students understand the seriousness of their own complaints, youth believed. And it was critical that they understand that there is strength in numbers. A large number of complaint forms will force the superintendent to take notice, they knew. The right to file a complaint could have no effect until students *exercised* that right. So youth worked extraordinarily hard to collect complaint forms. They teamed up during lunch hour and after school to approach fellow students together. They also made presentations to school clubs and classes and to other community youth organizations that attracted students from district.

In the process of urging their peers into action, youth spoke to the power of collective action. Matt said:

> Well, also like we are helping other students to speak out because…everyone have complaints about something. And they don't know how to complain about something besides to somebody like their parents or something like that. Like we [gave them]… the complaint form you know, and let them handle it you know, so we can make a difference in our school lives.

Others like Kat and Nick spoke to the value of working together as a team. Kat commented what she liked most was that "everyone is all working together, like teamwork and you know, that encouraged me to like stand up for myself and speak up for the youth and what they need help on."

Over the course of five months, at six high schools and eight junior high schools, AYPAL youth collected 487 complaints forms from their peers. Fellow students filed a large number of complaints about decrepit school facilities including dirty bathrooms, broken windows in classrooms, peeling paint, and missing ceiling tiles. The issue of locked bathrooms during passing period was a repeated complaint. Students also described teachers who "give A's to students who are quiet" and "grades based on your ethnicity," and classrooms where "only Blacks get bad grades." More serious complaints of harassment by specific teachers and school security personnel were also filed. Several employees attracted numerous complaints; one teacher received a total of 18. A male teacher was cited for making sexual comments to female students and for entering the girls' bathrooms on several occasions. A teacher who received six complaints was cited for "cussing at students" and for failing a student for being absent during an exam when he actually completed the test in class. A security officer was accused of rounding up students into tardy sweep before the bell rang, smoking marijuana on campus, and on one occasion, physically grabbing and dragging a student to class. Other complaints addressed school policies on suspension, tardiness, and student identification.

AYPAL youth presented their findings to members of the school board and set up a special meeting with the superintendent at the end of the school year. At a private meeting in June 2001, the superintendent agreed to institute most of the changes youth demanded before the beginning of the next school year. But young people were not satisfied with his verbal commitment; they believed it was important to keep the superintendent publicly accountable for his promises. In August 2001, during a televised press conference, the superintendent complied. "Our students are learning about democracy," he said. "We want them to be active members of society. We must meet the needs of our students. Students have rights, these rights are the basics

of what a youngster should receive. Students have to have a voice." The superintendent announced plans to require all teachers to pass out grading polices in the beginning of the school year, to inform students of their rights to make formal complaints, provide an anonymous complaint box at each school so that complaints can be collected, and unlock school bathrooms during passing periods.

In this youth organizing campaign, young people exercised their democratic rights to participate in and won a voice in the laws and rules that govern them, challenging the institution that affects them most—schools. It allowed youth to express to school board members, administrators, and teachers their everyday realities with schooling from their perspective. This underscores a key point—the roots of young people's political activism rested in their lived experiences with injustice. But injustice does not necessarily spur young people to collective direct action, as we have seen with AYPAL members' schoolmates, whose unwillingness to lodge complaints grew out of a sense of hopelessness. What differentiates the young people who participated in leading the campaign for school reform than those of their peers? In the following section, I elaborate on the elements that moved them from complaints to action including a development of young people's oppositional consciousness in a socially-justice oriented youth group.

Oppositional Consciousness in a Political Community

I remember the first time I met Johnny because I was immediately struck by his articulate comments during a workshop on identifying the components of a community organizing campaign. In the workshop, youth were divided into five teams and given a list of social problems such as the "sweatshop scenario"—in which they were presented with a "corporation that makes fancy dresses for weddings and proms and charge $200 a dress while they pay their workers in Cambodia about a dollar for one dress." In such scenarios, youth learned the components of a campaign as they defined what the issue was, what their demand would be, who to direct their demands (target), and what form of power their demand addressed. Johnny's group wrestled with the issue of dirty bathrooms in schools and he quickly connected the problem to the undervaluation of funding in public schools, "Just look at what they are spending on the military!" he shouted, drawing on the disparities of U.S. educational and military budget. Although seemingly confident and easy to quip with a sharp critical analysis, Johnny admitted that such consciousness was learned in his participation in AYPAL. Driving Alex and Johnny home one day, Johnny shared that when he first started coming to AYPAL meetings, he did not understand the political and social critique offered by his peers and adult mentors. "I didn't get it." Now he does. "What I'm really learning from AYPAL is that you can complain about a lot of stuff, but the important thing is that you have to do something about it. And you know, we can do something about it."

Johnny here speaks of his transformative experiences and the gradual development of his oppositional consciousness. Oppositional consciousness took on different forms for young people in AYPAL—for a few it came naturally, for most it was learned, and there was a handful that showed very little of it. But for the majority of AYPAL youth I worked with, oppositional consciousness was often tied to their participation in a political organization that fostered activism, opportunities for collective action, and belief in collective action to affect change. For

Carmelita, the seeds of her oppositional consciousness or what she refers to as her "political awakening" can be traced to seventh grade when she read Mumia Abul-Jamal's *Death Blossom: Reflections from a Prisoner of Conscience* and participated in an after-school community leadership program. She said:

> [In the program] they taught us about how there is hella poor folks and a little bit of rich folks but they have all this control…And that's when I really started to be independent, as far as educating myself. Because they ain't teaching this shit in school, so I started reading.

The development of Carmelita' oppositional consciousness was planted by an understanding of her subordinate class position as a structural inequality. But this first began when she identified her status. She said: "I was writing something one day for school and my sister told me that we were poor and for some reason I didn't know that, and I was like, wait you know, you're right. And so that's when I started getting involved." Carmelita described her awareness that "things ain't right" as sudden: "I don't know how it [or] what clicked in my mind, but I was like, ‚Fuck! Something's wrong!'" She credits AYPAL in further developing her oppositional consciousness and "activist lifestyle." It is not surprising that Carmelita' peers often identified her as "super political."

Sandy on the other hand, gives AYPAL full credit in informing their oppositional consciousness. Sandy, a Chinese American, described her personal transformation of developing a social critique of inequality:

> I feel so much different from other kids because I know more. I know about how the government is rigged. I never thought about how the government always gives money to the corporations and military and stuff. I mean who thinks about that stuff? But you join the program, and all the sudden; I'm like man, that really is true because if we are really low-income then why don't they try to help us out? I kind of thought about it, and now I know it is true.

Johnny, Carmelita, and Sandy point to an important link in activism—social change efforts do not occur in a vacuum. Rather, activism unfolds within what cultural historian George Lipsitz (1988) has described as "networks of opposition." In social-justice oriented community organizations such as AYPAL, young people learn that negative experiences in their lives are not isolated personal encounters; they unearth the structural conditions of inequalities that allow them to translate their individual experiences to a critical analysis of social inequality. In other words, they develop an oppositional consciousness. AYPAL adult leaders build young people's oppositional consciousness by engaging them in political workshops that address topics such as capitalism, sexism, racism, and colonization. They learn the principles of community organizing and mechanics of how to run an organizing campaign and translate these guidelines into practice, as in the unfair treatment campaign.

It is in these political communities, that young people find opportunities for collective action which may also inform oppositional consciousness. Such was the case for Lai in which critical consciousness was coupled with collective action. She said: "It [the unfair treatment

campaign] questions me, because you know how schools are crappy and stuff. I mean what do they do with all that money, you know? Yeah, so I question stuff about that." As Mansbridge notes: "when political opportunities open and sufficient resources, including *social networks*, are in place, oppositional consciousness then acts as a cause, helping to bring an effective social movement into being [emphasis mine]" (2001: 16).

What is important about young people's oppositional consciousness and organizing efforts is their belief that collective action *can* and *does* lead to change. To repeat Johnny's words earlier, "the important thing is that you have to do something about it. And you know, we can do something about it." Like Johnny, Sandy also spoke of this collective political agency.

> It makes me like look at things differently 'cause I never really thought about stuff like, oh, if I could change like recreation centers, or if I could actually change, you know, somebody getting deported, I'm like, whoa, it feels like that's not something I can do. And then being in the program with so many people that, you know, and we have like good site coordinators [adult mentors], yeah. You kind of realize that you could make a difference… [at] rallies or meetings with people in power, I mean, you could make a difference.

These young people display an open belief in the transformative possibilities of collective human action. This belief and hope in change is paramount as the lack of it denies even the possibilities of change. As Freire echoes: "Without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle…Hopelessness and despair are both the consequence and the cause of inaction or immobilism" (1997: 9). Young people also find they can produce concrete changes in collective action as in the unfair treatment campaign. As Julie, a veteran AYPAL participant said of the campaigns: "It makes a really big difference. It really has an effect on all the people in the community." In sum, young people's activism against educational inequalities was grounded in their personal lived experiences. Their actions also involved elements of oppositional consciousness that were informed by their opportunities for collective action and involvement in a political community to support their activism.

Conclusion

In brining forth a detailed analysis of political activism and development among the young people of AYPAL, my purpose was to contribute to a more rigorous understanding in educational anthropology of youth resistance in theory *and* in practice. Rather than presenting a formulaic answer to how social change happens among young people, my intention is to bring attention to the conditions that allowed for a particular group of youth to challenge the conditions of in³equality in their lives and how we can support their efforts. The story of AYPAL youth speaks to how their "complaints" are translated into collective empowerment and action. They reveal to us how individual experiences of injustice must be connected to a structural analysis of social inequality, and this oppositional consciousness nurtured and supported in political communities with opportunities for collective action.

Young people here expose that their activism is informed by their lived experiences of marginalization and oppression. Like countless other youth subordinated by race, class, gender,

and age, working-class Asian and Pacific Islander youth are confronted with the material day-to-day realities wrought on by shrinking educational spending, health care, and living wage employment. Youth of color are most adversely affected by increased policing policies and alarmingly represent the majority in juvenile halls. Many of these young people are painfully aware of their situation and they are fed up.

AYPAL youth point to community-based organizations in supporting their efforts in changing the conditions of inequalities in their lives. They underscore the importance of fostering critical institutional spaces for young people—in schools and in communities—that nurture oppositional consciousness and provide networks and opportunities for collective action. Importantly, young people‟s activism is working to bring about small and not so small changes in their schools and communities. As HoSang (2001) argues, issue-based youth organizing works to produce change at the political-ideological level as their actions disrupt dominant or hegemonic political discourses of marginalized youth as the "problem." Although youth organizing campaigns may seem piecemeal compared to large-scale social movements, their activism is part of a growing youth movement. A plethora of examples of youth-led efforts for educational and community change in California and across the country (see Author 2006; California Tomorrow 2001; Cervone 2002; Ginwright et al. 2006; HoSang 2003, 2006; Martinez 2000) attests to Elizabeth Martinez‟s (2000) claim that youth activism in the U.S. is the "new civil rights movement." The young people in this article are a small part of this burgeoning movement and they are actively partaking in creating a more just and equitable democratic society.

Notes

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[1] See Antonio Gramsci for discussion of political bloc.
[2] All names of young people described in this article are pseudonyms.

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