

Introduction

1. I have chosen to use the term “Latino” to describe the people interviewed in this research unless specific origin is known, in which case I use Mexican American, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and so forth. The interviewees identified themselves as Hispanic, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, and Mexicano. Acuña (2000:462) reports, “Throughout Chicano history the question of identity has consumed a lot of time and space, which is natural given the legacy of colonialism. Even before the Chicano student movement of the 1960s, activists argued as to what to call themselves.” The lack of political and educational access for the majority of the people interviewed prevented me from using the term “Chicano.” For more discussion on this topic, see Muñoz (1989). Although national data indicate that most Latinos consider themselves as racially white, none of the respondents in these inner-city neighborhoods identified with this racial group. Rather, they considered their ethnicity as a race. I use “white” to denote people of European descent who do not have a Hispanic ethnic background. Black and African American are used interchangeably.

2. My colleague Alex Alonso is finishing a doctoral degree in geography at University of Southern California, and Victor Rios, an associate professor at the University of California Santa Barbara, recently completed a book on the criminalization of youth (2011). I have also learned of Douglas Thompkins, an assistant professor at John Jay College. These three individuals are, to the best of my knowledge, the only ones besides me who have come from gangs and are now in academia.

3. From 2007 to the present I have conducted research on gangs along the United States–Mexico border, including the communities of Anthony and Las Cruces, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. It is my desire to turn this research into a future book.

1. Researching Gangs as an Insider

1. “Locote” are crazy homeboys or homegirls willing to defend the barrio—crazy in terms of bravery.

2. I never claimed an ex-gang membership role in any of my state occupations. I only emphasized that I knew the streets. I still believe such an ex-gang member role suffers a huge stigma, and I could include many stories on how the police fear gang members infiltrating their institutions.

3. The most tragic of such recordings included the aftermath of a shooting of an unarmed young male Latino by a police officer in front of my apartment complex. I helped gather witness statements for the man’s family and released my videotape to them. This officer shot another unarmed Latino six months later. The officer was commended as a hero by city’s chief of police and was not criminally charged in either case. I am currently writing several research reports regarding police shootings in Denver from 1983 to 2008.

4. None of Ogden’s neighborhoods was more than 50 percent black.

5. I hope to publish this work in the future, and I have given several research presentations on the topic.

2. The War on Gangs in the Post-Civil Rights Era

1. To date I have come across only one gang that matches this status in the cities I have studied.

2. On March 2, 1998, six pounds of cocaine were discovered missing from the property room of the Los Angeles Police Department. This led to the arrest of a CRASH officer, who later entered into a confidential plea agreement and received a reduced sentence on drug charges (*Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 21, 1999). The testimony of this officer would later lead to the overturning of one hundred convictions of alleged gang members and others arrested by the LAPD. Nine officers were prosecuted, and more than a dozen were fired or resigned, for behavior including beatings, killings, framing people, selling drugs, and engaging in various types of crimes while investigating and pursuing gang members (*Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 23, 2003). Many victims claimed their beatings were in retaliation for complaining about the officers’ behavior (*Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 14, 2003). This scandal cost city taxpayers more than \$40 million to settle claims by victims (*Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 27, 2003). A good overview of this scandal can be found in Kaplan (2009).

3. Racialized Oppression and the Emergence of Gangs

1. Of interest is how the South went from Democratic, anti-Republican, and anti-Lincoln to become Republican by the mid-1930s. Blacks also switched par-

ties; thus the early association of the Ku Klux Klan with the Republican Party in Denver was reflected the changes shortly to develop. See Franklin and Moss (2004) and Sitkoff (1978).

2. Two additional tracts contained people who were considered nonwhite but were in a different tract than the Spanish population. Thus, nonwhite races were more likely to be integrated with the Spanish-surnamed population.

3. For example, Cameron Smith (age 18) was shot and killed by Elliot Javay “Hollywood” Raiban, also known as Javay Richardson, an alleged Crip gang member; and Delontay Carolina Norris was killed in a drive-by shooting by an alleged Blood gang member named Darrell Wilson.

4. Demonizing Gangs Through Religious Righteousness and Suppressed Activism

1. Non-Mormonism seems to be typical of many of the minority gangs in Utah, with the exception of Tongans, who seem to have higher family involvement in the LDS Church.

2. The issue of illegal entry is ironic since residents of Utah enacted an immigration enforcement law that attempts to copy Arizona’s legislation. The American Civil Liberties Union of Utah sued to block Utah’s “Show Me Your Papers” law in 2011 and has been joined by the U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.acluutah.org/immigration.shtml>.

3. For example, the lynching of George Segal, a 27-year-old Japanese immigrant, on April 20, 1884.

4. Further research is needed to investigate this period of time and whether there were any groups similar to gangs operating during this time frame.

5. Much of this early history can be enhanced when the *Standard Examiner* and *Salt Lake Tribune* make their news archives available and searchable for the years of 1970–1990.

5. Negotiating Membership for an Adaptation to Colonization: The Gang

1. To some extent, it may be possible that the administrators and teachers of color fell into the school policies or internalization of white ideology by maintaining the ongoing racism against students of color. A similarity was also found with police of color. I think because both groups were a small proportion of the overall number of police officers or teachers, they felt obligated to fit in or be replaced with a more willing control subject. It is always a trade-off: tokens can reach more people and influence the dominant group, but at the same time they often encounter losses to their dignity in putting up with common sense racism.

2. Vigil (1988:177) defines cholo as “A Chicano street style of youth who are marginal to both Mexican and Anglo culture; also used historically for cultural

marginals and racial hybrids in Mexico and some part of Latin America.” This includes a distinctive style of dress, speech, gestures, tattoos, and graffiti that developed in a process of underclass and street exposure.

6. The Only Locotes Standing: The Persistence of Gang Ideals

1. Estimating the exact number of women sexed in to a gang is difficult. Several times I witnessed male gang members proudly proclaim the number of women that they had sexed into the gang, but much of it sounded like just talk. Most of the gangs I studied did not have this form of initiation.

2. For additional information on this topic, see my article in *Latino Studies* titled “Gang Organization” (2010), which provides a case study of Cola, an individual involved in drug distribution from his beginnings to his rise to his downfall.

3. Many gang intervention programs have begun providing tattoo removal to allow gang members to remove gang symbols and identity and begin anew.

4. For example, I have often provided a critique on academia because many academics act in similar ways to gangs in how they pursue power and attempt to dominate knowledge creation. Of interest with this topic could be the study of old-boy networks and how they continue to dominate university settings and professional conferences. In my view, academic gangsters are just as dangerous, if not more so, than street gangs because a lot of this jealousy is in the form of back-stabbing and using networks to keep certain people out, similar to a country club. They cite each other to rise in prestige, and it is presumed to correlate with their scientific merit regardless of the quality of work. Malcolm X made an interesting comparison of racism in the South and how it differed from the North. In the South racism was direct, known, and in your face, whereas in the North things may have been actually worse because the smile and handshake hid the knife that was about to enter your back. In my social world, gangs were direct about the issues, whereas academia attempted to utilize old-boy networks to make you learn your place. Derrick Bell (1985) offers an excellent critique of minority scholars presenting a challenge to the status quo. It is all good when the dominant group is perceived as helping you earn an opportunity in its social world, but quite another story when you are successful at it, because then you are a threat. “The more successful I appeared, the harsher became the collective judgment of my former friends. . . . The influx of qualified minority candidates threatened, at some deep level, the white faculty member’s sense of ideological hegemony” (53). I find it interesting how most the so-called gang experts would never be caught in the company of those they write about.