

A version of this article appears in—

Foley, D. and A. Valenzuela. 2005. *Critical Ethnography: The Politics of Collaboration*. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 217-234.

Critical Ethnography: The Politics of Collaboration

by

Douglas Foley & Angela Valenzuela

University of Texas at Austin

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight differences between “critical ethnographers” who do academic cultural critiques, applied policy studies, and involve themselves directly in political movements. As we shall see, not all critical ethnographers are politically active. Nor do all produce knowledge that is both universalistic/theoretical and local/practical. Nor do all use reflexive, collaborative research methods. The rubric of critical ethnography glosses over many important differences between practitioners. After characterizing recent trends in contemporary critical ethnography, we portray our own ethnographic practice, which in some ways represents a continuum. On one end, Foley does academic “cultural critiques” and struggles to be more collaborative and politically involved. On the other end, Valenzuela does academic cultural critiques but is much more directly involved in public policy processes. Hopefully, our reflections will encourage others to explore and publish more about their collaborative methodological and political practices.

Some Recent Trends in Critical Ethnography.

In the 1960s, “critical ethnography” (Carspecken 1996) was often based on classic Marxism or neo-Marxist critical theory. As new race, gender, sexual identity, and post-colonial social movements emerged, the philosophical basis for critical ethnography expanded greatly (Levinson and Holland, 1996, Foley, Levinson and Hurtig 2001, Villenas and Foley 200). These literature reviews underscore the growing disenchantment with the positivist notion of an objective social science that produces value-free ethnographies. Post-1960s critical ethnographers began advocating “cultural critiques” of modern society and its institutions (Marcus and Fischer 1986). Critical ethnographers not only rejected positivism, but they also worked the divide between the powerful and the powerless. Most ethnographic cultural critiques studied ruling groups and ruling ideologies and/or the sentiments and struggles of various oppressed peoples. Most were deeply committed to research that promotes an egalitarian society. Most hoped to produce both universalistic theoretical knowledge and local practical knowledge.

As the editors of this handbook have pointed out, qualitative research has become THE site of philosophical and methodological revolt against positivism. This academic revolt is “political” in the sense that it seeks to transform the knowledge production of the academy. We have both participated in this revolt, which educational philosopher Thomas Schwantz (2000) aptly characterizes as having interpretive, hermeneutic, and constructivist alternatives. Were Schwantz to classify our ethnographic practice, he would note that we have greater affinities with hermeneutic and neo-Marxist critical theorists than with postmodern constructivists. In an earlier article, Foley (2002) advocated utilizing the following complimentary reflexive practices: confessional, theoretical, inter-textual, and deconstructive. Explicating these types of reflexivity

is beyond this chapter, but it is important to note that he situated reflexive practices in a feminist perspective of science.

Donna Haraway (1988) and Sandra Harding's (1998) concept of science allows politically progressive critical ethnographers to make strong knowledge claims. Harding's discussion of "standpoint theory" and Haraway's notion of "situated knowledge" are so well known that there is little need to elaborate here. Suffice to say that many critical ethnographers have replaced the grand positivist vision of speaking from a universalistic, objective standpoint with a more modest notion of speaking from a historically and culturally situated standpoint. Speaking from a historically specific standpoint acknowledges the impossibility of what Haraway aptly calls the "god trick" of speaking from an omnipotent standpoint. Critical ethnographers are mere culture-bound mortals speaking from very particular race, class, gender, and sexual identity locations. Since all standpoints represent particular interests and positions in a hierarchal society, they are "ideological" in the sense that they are partial.

Once an ethnographer abandons the positivist fallacy that research techniques can produce a detached, objective standpoint, it makes little sense to ignore more intuitive or subjective ways of knowing. Hence, contemporary critical ethnographers are beginning to use multiple epistemologies. They often value introspection, memory work, autobiography, and even dreams as important ways of knowing. The new, more reflexive critical ethnographer explores the intense self-other interaction that usually marks fieldwork and mediates the production of ethnographic narratives. In the current experimental moment (Denzin and Lincoln 2000), the road to greater objectivity goes through the ethnographer's critical reflections on her subjectivity and inter-subjective relationships. For most critical ethnographers, in a class society marked by class, racial, and sexual conflict, no producers of knowledge are innocent or politically neutral.

One of the early, forceful exponents of this perspective was existentialist sociologist Jack Douglas (1976). He urged social science researchers to abandon the ideal of grand theorizing and universalistic knowledge production. He preferred an “investigative” posture that aggressively studied social and political problems. Tapping into muckraking “new journalism” (Wolfe 1974), Douglas also advocated operating covertly to expose corrupt bureaucrats or hate group leaders. He argued that in a politically corrupt, conflict-filled society, any means used to “get the story” was justifiable if it exposed harmful public practices.

Meanwhile, other anthropologists in post-1960s era called for “reinventing” the field (Hymes 1999), “studying up” (Nader 1996), and studying “people without history” (Wolfe 1982). For the first time, anthropologists began studying seriously imperialism, class and racial oppression, and social movements. They began to occupy the same methodological and ideological terrain that the earlier community sociologists who studied social class inequality occupied. Vidich and Lyman (2000) note that urban sociologists like the Lynds (1956) and native Americanist anthropologists of the 1920s and 30s were writing positive portraits of marginalized, stigmatized social, cultural, and occupational groups. Through the post-World War II years, C. Wright Mills (1959) led the way with a series of incisive studies of the national power elites. These early sociological studies of class inequalities and elites were even more critical than the Chicago school of urban sociology. Most of these pre-World War II “critical ethnographers” broke decisively with the positivist idea of value-free ethnographies.

One anthropologist who is often forgotten in histories of critical ethnography is Sol Tax. After doing a classic ethnography of Guatemalan markets (Tax 1963), he became disenchanted with the academic, structural-functionalist ethnography of the 1940s and 1950s. In the late 1940s, he created a field school on the Mesquaki settlement in my hometown of Tama, Iowa

(Foley 1999). It was to be the testing grounds for a new kind of anthropology. Tax advocated that “action anthropologists” be much more collaborative and produce research that the research subjects felt would resolve community problems. Bennett (1996) characterized Tax’s orientation as rooted in American pragmatism’s liberal, practical notion of science. Consequently, Tax distinguished his approach from academic anthropology and “applied anthropology” in several important ways.

First, action anthropologists were to operate without the sponsorship of government bureaucracies or private NGO’s. They were to find independent funding and work more directly with and for the people they were studying. Second, Tax argued that because action anthropologists became accepted insiders, they were positioned to collect better data on social change and acculturation than detached scientific ethnographers. Consequently, action anthropologists would help the community while they wrote trustworthy ethnographies. In effect, Tax envisioned a social science that created knowledge that was as practical and useful as it was theoretical and universal. For him academic social scientists had produced a false notion of science and knowledge that privileged the theoretical over applied, practical knowledge.

Regrettably, Tax’s action anthropology project on the Mesquaki settlement promised more than it delivered (Foley 1999). It produced few lasting changes in the community and even less high-quality ethnography. Moreover, the field of academic anthropology never really embraced Tax’s action anthropology. Nevertheless, a former student (Rubinstein 1986) argues that Tax anticipated much of post-1960s anthropology. He contends that Tax’s notion of “action anthropology” has become widely practiced in contemporary anthropology. After reviewing many contemporary studies of American culture, we (Foley and Moss 2001) would beg to differ. The continental philosophies of PostMarxism, postmodernism, and feminism have had a much

greater impact on American anthropology than philosophical pragmatism has. Space does not permit a recapitulation of that review, but the work of Berkeley sociologist Michael Burawoy (1991, 2000) illustrates nicely the “new” critical ethnography, or what Marcus and Fischer (1986) call the “the anthropology of cultural critiques.” Burawoy and his students try to make the public aware of social inequalities and injustices, as they revise the conventional wisdom of reigning academic theories. Because Burawoy explicitly advocates revising and generating social theory, his cultural critiques retain the basic goal of producing universal, scientific knowledge. That makes his studies publishable in the journals of various academic disciplines. The same holds true for many other neo-Marxist and Marxist feminist critical ethnographers (e.g., Susser, 2001; Brodtkin, 2001, Weiss and Fine, 1998, Zavella, 1987).

Most of these cultural critics break decisively with the positivist notion of value-free, scientific studies. On the other hand, most retain a strong notion of the author as expert; thus still operate in the field much like earlier scientific ethnographers. Their ethnographic practices are not particularly representative of the new postmodern experimental moment in ethnography (Denzin 1997). The new critical ethnographer usually sets the research agenda, collects the data, and writes the account with relatively little input from their subjects. They are not always inclined to work the self-other hyphen reflexively and to invite their research subjects to co-construct their ethnographic accounts. Characterizing the methodological and political practices of contemporary critical ethnographers is, however, risky business. For whatever reason, many do not report extensively on the extent of their political and methodological collaborations. Fine and Weis’ (1998) study of the urban poor is, however, somewhat of an exception. Their formal ethnography and subsequent reflections on field methods (Fine and Weis 2000; Fine, Weis,

Weseen and Wang 2000) tries to give some idea how collaborative they were politically and methodologically.

The current crop of critical ethnographers seems to be focusing more on dramatic public issues, and they are finding ways to reach wider audiences. The work of Peggy Sanday (1990, 1996) on campus date rape, and her involvement and coverage of rape trials is a case in point. Nancy Shepers-Hughes (1992, 1998) study of child welfare issues and third-world organ harvesting is also exemplary. Finally, our colleague at Rice University, Linda McNeil's (2000) has forcefully critiqued many of the political right's educational accountability schemes in Texas. She has also worked tirelessly with local teachers and community educational leaders to reform these educational practices and has appeared on national TV shows such as *Sixty Minutes*. Increasingly, anthropologists interested in policy studies are advocating a more politicized type of policy studies (Levinson and Sutton 2002; Okongwa and Mencher 2000; Kane and Mason 2001). These survey's of the field and a recent School of American research conference on critical ethnography (Marcus 1999) describe a host of new politically relevant cultural critiques such as: corporate agriculture, environmental pollution, pharmaceutical dumping, transnational labor migration, the publishing industry, cyberspace hackers, the AIDS crises, media and legal system demonization and criminalization of urban street life and informal economies based on drugs, sex, and cultural rebellion.

Space does not permit an extensive review of the new more political policy-oriented ethnographies, but the old labels of "critical ethnography," and "cultural critiques" may no longer capture the new diversity. The number of social scientists who are critiquing questionable legal, medical, educational, media, and corporate practices seems to be exploding. More importantly, these new critical ethnographers are beginning to write more accessible, less jargon-

filled accounts. A few have also “crossed over” into the public sphere and have appeared as “experts” on talk and news shows. They have found new ways to bring their investigations to the public through opinion-makers like Oprah Winfrey, Larry King, and Ted Koppel. Meanwhile, they have quietly provided reporters with expert testimony for their journalistic exposes. Others have become policy advisors to politicians, and they directly influence legislation.

The final type of critical ethnographer is a distinct minority of activists who are deeply involved in progressive social movements and community-based reforms. In the field of educational research, Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) label such activities “participatory action research (PAR).” PAR researchers often base their approach on the philosophy of Latin American social activists Paulo Friere and Fals Borda. PAR researchers have strong affinities with the more activist-oriented applied anthropologists (Eddy and Partridge, 1987). They often play the role of democratic facilitator and consciousness-raiser, or “cultural broker” between powerful institutions and the disenfranchised citizens. Anthropology has produced a few activists who are even more collaborative methodologically and politically than most PAR action researchers are. For example, in the early 1970s anthropologist Carol Talbert, who joined the American Indian Movement (AIM) activists at Wounded Knee, gave an American Anthropological Association presentation about her role as a “pen for hire for AIM.” In this particular case, she sought to document the FBI’s dubious actions to prop up an anti-AIM faction and indict various AIM members for crimes they may have not committed. Talbert exemplifies a much more direct form of political collaboration. She joined the social movement and gave up much of her academic autonomy and authority to be an independent cultural critic. She researched and wrote what the movement needed.

Another anthropologist, Charles Valentine (1968), joined African American community action groups who conducted studies of landlords, police brutality, and who initiated rent strikes. At an American Anthropological Association meeting in the early 1970s, Valentine and several African American community members dramatized the difference between themselves and academic anthropologists. They flatly refused to present their findings to fellow anthropologists. Their intent was to convey contempt for the politically ineffectual nature of much academic, anthropological research. In response, the discussant, Margaret Mead, expressed her anger that a fellow anthropologist would distrust a field that had labored to help the downtrodden. Her rather patronizing commentary set off a lively debate about the political utility/futility of anthropological research.

Although Valentine (1968) produced a classic published critique of the culture of poverty construct, we suspect that many “activist anthropologists” who became deeply involved in local political struggles have stopped writing academic books and articles. Contrary to right wing propaganda that these “radicals” are taking over academia, our more politically active colleagues often either fail to get tenure or simply leave the academy altogether. For whatever reason, they have apparently been unable to find a way to combine their academic and political work. Unfortunately, we know precious little about where these “pushed out” activists go. To our knowledge, no one has bothered to tell their stories. Are they teaching in community colleges? Are they writing articles for local newspapers? Or have they succumbed to political disillusionment?

Despite such losses, as previously noted, the number of politically active anthropologists and sociologists appears to be growing. The Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas is an excellent case in point. The department now prides itself in ideological, cultural, and

gender diversity, and a strong “activist anthropology” orientation. Several of our colleagues seem to have found the formula for balancing academic and political activities. For example, Charlie Hale has worked extensively in the land rights struggles of Nicaraguan indigenous groups. He recruits and trains indigenous Mayan anthropologists who actively work for these social movements and write highly critical accounts of Mayan ethnology. He and his students have done very specific research that aids their clients in legal cases where he has been called upon to testify as an expert witness.

Another UT colleague, Ted Gordon is a long-time activist among the African Creole populations of Nicaragua. Like Hale, Gordon works directly with ethnic political movements, and his highly successful African Diaspora program has trained many African American and Afro-Caribbean anthropologists. Yet other UT colleagues, Martha Menchaca, director of the borderlands program, and Richard Flores, director of the folklore program, have trained a number of activist Latina/o students. Menchaca has participated directly in legal research on racism and voter redistricting legislation as well. Flores (2002) has written a strong critique of Texas’ most sacred cultural icon, the Alamo. Our politically active UT colleagues have all published scholarly, academic cultural critiques (Hale 1994, Gordon 1997, Menchaca 2002). Nevertheless, Hale (ND) distances his own ethnographic practice from the Marcus and Fischer (1986) notion of cultural critiques. He contends that too many of the new cultural critics place greater emphasis on create a “safe academic space” and publishing than on community service and political activism. In contrast, a genuinely “activist anthropologist” is more involved in local political struggles, and like Sol Tax, Hale claims that such involvement produces better ethnographies.

It would seem that progressive social scientists have gained a foothold in the academy and have created a space for themselves. The browning, queering, and gendering of the academy and the social sciences is surely at work here. People of color, women, gays, and working class academics are slowly replacing upper middle class white male gentleman scholars. Further, the emergence of the interdisciplinary field of critical cultural studies has created many new journals and special series in university presses. A market for more critical, investigative ethnographies that expose relations of power and exploitation has clearly evolved. But these developments have their limits.

From a professional survival point of view, the idea of a safe space from which to publish makes considerable sense. It is no secret that Division I research institutions are “publish or perish” meat grinders. You either publish articles in the refereed journals of your field—and books if your department is a “book department”—or you get fired. The rub for many critical ethnographers is that their scholarship must be political in an academically acceptable manner. Consequently, many progressive academics spend most of their time writing and publishing cultural critiques that satisfy the demands of the academy and their peers. This observation is not intended to diminish the exceptional quality of many cultural critiques (Foley and Moss 2001). Rather it is meant to highlight the institutional pressures that many activist academics face. Unfortunately, there are few accounts of how the 21st century knowledge production industry is changing. Most critical ethnographers, our UT colleagues included, rarely chronicle the psychological and monetary price that they pay for their political activism. As we shall see in the following case studies, we have both experienced enough political correctness pressures to warn fledgling “critical ethnographers” what they too may face.

Case Study #1: A Cultural Critic in Search of Collaborative Methods

Being someone who has written several cultural critiques (Foley 1990, 1995), I generally agree with Hale's assessment that such studies are often not particularly collaborative or directly political. When I left the anti-war movement for academia, I found it a hostile environment for activist social scientists. I have written about my troubled adaptation to academia elsewhere (Foley 1999). Put simply, in 1970 the University of Texas was a pretty conservative place. George I. Sanchez, noted Chicano scholar, was the only colleague who encouraged me to do activist research. Like many young scholars with progressive political views, I had to make a number of agonizing compromises. It was the Viet Nam war years, which made publishing my dissertation on American neo-colonialism in the Philippines difficult. Consequently, I followed Sanchez's advice and began studying colonialism and racism in nearby South Texas. There I was, an ex-Student for Democratic Society (SDS) activist, wondering whether I was a sold-out academic. Political correctness pressures came from both sides of the American racial divide. Many white faculty saw little point to political activism, and many Chicana/o faculty distrusted *gringo* social scientists who wanted to join the *movimento*. Moreover, being the first ethnographer in a college of education filled with unrepentant positivists, it was difficult to garner high merit evaluations. It seemed as though I would have to produce twice as much as my a-political colleagues to survive professionally. I felt compelled to cut down on time-consuming political activities so I could produce more publications, and that pattern of adaptation has dogged me throughout my career.

But old political habits die hard, and being a critical ethnographer involves much more than simply writing good cultural critiques. It also involves fighting for institutional reforms,

e.g., recruiting faculty and mentoring students who have experienced class, race, and gender discrimination. And during that era, battling positivism was also a form of political struggle. More importantly, however, we found a few ways to be directly involved in the Chicano civil rights movement that we were studying (Foley et. al. 1989; Foley 1990). Our research team, which included Brazilian Clarice Mota and local Chicano Ignacio Lozano, lived in the barrio, and we voiced frequently our opinions to local Raza Unida Party leaders regarding their political strategies and tactics (Foley 1999). We also encouraged many local Chicano/a youth to go beyond their high school education. Finally, when the *partido*'s director of the health care study quit, I went to work for the party and wrote up their research findings.

Nevertheless, our research team also tried to maintain a degree of detachment and neutrality. We wanted to produce a balanced ethnography that spanned the racial divide and included Anglo perspectives, as well. We used all the classic methods of good ethnography, including participant observation, interviews, and informant work, in order to write a complex, rich portrait of race relations and the Chicano movement inside and outside schools. In the end, writing a critical ethnography that valorized the Chicano movement's efforts became more important than any direct local political work. As the project evolved, I rationalized my relative lack of political action with a cultural critique argument. We were giving voice to the voiceless Chicana and Chicano masses, thus raising the consciousness of the nation regarding inequality in South Texas. If what I wrote made a few Chicano/as be proud of their movement, or made a few Anglos question their racial attitudes, then my cultural critique was having—to use Patti Lather's (1991) apt phrase—a “catalytic (i.e. political) effect.” In addition, the historical ethnography I wrote would have the “professional effect” of gaining tenure and keeping bread on the family table.

Because we approached the research task in a rather traditional manner, there was very little effort to involve local people in the research process itself. We set the research agenda and wrote the ethnography that we deemed important. Being the lead author, I theorized the data and told the story I wanted to tell. Nevertheless, it is important to underscore some key ways that we tried to make our cultural critique more collaborative than are most “scientific” and/or critical ethnographies. First, like most good ethnographers, we developed a set of intimate, trusting relationships with several highly knowledgeable key community residents. These relationships helped us develop an “insider’s” perspective on local life. At times, these relationships evolved into friendships, and some local residents became our “anthropological confidants” or “collaborators.” They helped us focus and correct our understanding of local events and relationships. We often shared our interpretations with these locals, and as the relationships developed, we shared more of our mutual biographies. The point here is that good cultural critiques are usually based on a number of intimate, “collaborative” relations with research subjects.

Second, we used a conversational or dialogic style of interviewing, which encouraged the subjects to participate more. We interviewed in a very informal manner, and at times shared more personal information about ourselves than conventional interviewers do. When these free-flowing conversations were transcribed, they were often shared with the respondents. That provided key informants with the opportunity to see how their own speech objectified and represented them. If they did not like their self-representations, they were free to edit their comments. This, of course, led some informants to censor their negative remarks, but sharing the interviews clearly enhanced local confidence in our intentions to be fair. In short, a more open-ended, conversational interviewing style generated more engaged personal narratives and

more candid opinions. It also tended to humanize the interviewer and diminish her power and control of the interview process.

Third, we had a number of community members review our ethnographic manuscript before publication. Very few anthropologists were doing this sort of collaboration with their research subjects in 1976. I have elaborated elsewhere (Foley et al. 1989) just how valuable and ethical this methodological procedure is. It allows us to correct a number of interpretations and representations.

Later, I used the same community review technique in a study of my hometown (Foley 1995), and it added an important collaborative dimension to our cultural critique. Although this sort of collaboration does not relinquish authorial authority, it does add a great deal of reflexivity to the data collection and representational process. When local actors criticized our representations as slanted or partial, we made a serious effort to better corroborate our interpretations. We also changed the tone and tried to nuance the portrayals of several events and individuals. We took seriously what our local readers criticized, but we did not give them complete control over what we wrote. We created a dialogic, negotiated process that gave them some input into what we wrote, but in the end I wrote what I deemed important. In retrospect, we definitely amended the classic notion of the detached, all-knowing ethnographic scientist, but not entirely.

Finally, we sought to write our ethnography in a much more accessible, engaging ethnographic narrative style. Very early in my career, I came to see the cultural and linguistic gap between the anthropological observer and his subject as elitist and politically unprogressive. Over the years, it became clear that many of my undergraduates could not understand fully the ethnographies we assigned them to read. For political reasons, I came to embrace the ideal that

ordinary people must be able to read and understand my ethnography. How can academics possibly serve the people they write about if their subjects cannot understand what they write?

It now seems obvious that academics have to liberate themselves from the pedantic, technical discourse of their disciplines if they hope to write useful stories. Methodologically, writing better is absolutely crucial for creating a kind of linguistic reciprocity between the research subjects and the researcher. This is an important, often unacknowledged form of “collaboration” that leads to more politically useful critical ethnographies.

Unfortunately, no young scholar who has been thoroughly socialized in an academic Ph.D. program can easily accomplish this. At every turn, dissertation committee members, journal editors, and fellow students/colleagues will press a young scholar to retain a pedantic, technical, academic, story-telling style. One’s personal identity and professional success seems to depend upon mastering this peculiar form of self-expression. Recent experimentation with mixed genres like auto-ethnographies has opened up some space in the academy, but the technical, theory-driven academic ethnography remains the standard towards which young scholars must aspire. The senior scholars who control the machinery of academic production and promotion maintain a tight grip on the conventions of social scientific writing. This will surely be the last bastion to fall, if ever. In the meantime, the social sciences remain a rather elitist, “high culture” form of social commentary.

To sum up, we opened up the process of producing ethnographies through the following means: a dialogic style of interviewing; intimate, highly personal informant relations; a community review of the manuscript; and writing in ordinary language. These practices, and many more being invented as we speak, make fieldwork—and telling stories about one’s fieldwork—more open, collaborative, and less hierarchical in character. We tried to break

significantly with the attitudes and practices of positivistic scientific ethnography and scientific realism (Marcus and Cushman 1982). Nevertheless, we fell far short of the ethical and political standard that Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) advocates. She urges non-Maori scholars to collaborate with the tribal elders, who help scholars define what they research and review what they write. In the Mesquaki study (Foley 1995), I worked with tribal leaders (1995) and the tribal council, but the tribal elders neither set my research agenda nor monitored my fieldwork. I also acknowledged their way of knowing through dreams and vision quests, but I made no attempts to utilize those epistemologies. I retained more authorial authority than I would have under the Maori community review process. Ultimately, I wrote the story I wanted to write, with, however, a good deal of input from key informants and from the community review. As we shall see, I was not as directly involved in community political processes as my co-author has been.

The most politically active form of action anthropology emphasizes direct involvement in political movements, court cases, and aggressive organizing tactics like rent strikes. Other policy-oriented social scientists “work within the system” and do both prize-winning cultural critiques and actively shape the public policy process. Accordingly, what follows is Angela Valenzuela’s account of how she blends academic research and political commitment in a unique way.

Case Study #2: An “Activist Sociologist” and Her Legislative Involvement

I write to impart my craft—at least with respect to a certain kind of research in which I am currently involved. That is, I conduct “regular” ethnographic research—mostly in schools—

using standard qualitative techniques in an attempt to generate better theoretical frameworks through which to both understand social problems, and also to promote the development of just policies and practices in schools. The account that follows, however, reveals how my general interest in politics has evolved into a research approach that may be termed either “the ethnography of public policy” or the “public ethnography of policy.”¹

I am a third-generation Mexican American from West Texas reared in a community where the race and class lines between Anglos and Mexican Americans were sharply drawn for the greater part of the last century. I am also a product of the Texas public school system. I thus have a first-hand sense of its strengths and limitations with respect to the U.S.-Mexican community. I write primarily from my current vantage point as a member of the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin who is involved in the affairs of the Latino community at various levels. As an academic, I currently hold a tenured, joint appointment in two colleges, Education and Liberal Arts at the University of Texas. In the College of Education, my appointment is in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction (C & I) and in Liberal Arts, it is in the Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS). I see myself as situated within a tradition of activist-scholarship previously undertaken by Chicano faculty at the University of Texas at Austin that includes the work of Américo Paredes, George I. Sanchez, and Carlos Castañeda.

Like my colleague Doug Foley, I, too, have endured a prolonged and painful struggle to find my voice and write in a broadly accessible style. However, unlike my colleague, I have long felt a special sense of responsibility that comes precisely from my social and political location as a member of a community lacking in voice, status, and representation at all levels. Acquiring my voice has thus been inseparable from my community’s broader agenda to also be

heard, and in so doing, to acquire power and political representation. Moreover, my profound desire to write to, and for, my community is what has encouraged me to persist.

I sometimes contemplate how, unlike my Anglo academic colleagues, I have probably been “more liberated” to pursue other rhetorical avenues in both writing and speech. More pointedly, as a minority female scholar, I always suspected that no matter what or how I wrote, I would never quite reap the same privileges and status within the academic hierarchy. The experiences of other minority academics taught me that both tenure and the goal of institutional validation and legitimacy, generally, are risky pursuits that are frequently characterized by uncertainty and struggle regardless of one’s chosen research approach. Consequently, and despite the risks involved, soon after graduating from a positivistic, quantitative Sociology Department at Stanford University, I decided to follow my heart and develop a more humanistic, qualitative research approach. I did so within the context of my first job, a tenure-track position in the Department of Sociology at Rice University in Houston, Texas. It is relevant to note that to date, I am the first and only Mexican American female professor to have ever been hired for a tenure-track faculty position at Rice.

To best explain my craft, I must first situate myself within my academic/scholarly community and within the broader Latina/o activist community in Texas. What my personal account reveals is the importance of my insider status within the Latino community, coupled with my desire to use research to address the inequities of political and policymaking processes. While I am less reflexive than some experimental ethnographers (Denzin 1997), I am collaborative in the first sense that we outline. That is, I have always developed intimate, trusting relationships with collaborators. With respect to the second sense of collaboration, wherein community members review my manuscripts before publication, this has proven

somewhat problematic. The process of “studying up” and exposing how elites wield power in my community makes this kind of collaboration either impossible or limited (especially see Valenzuela 2004a, 2004b). While I do share my legislative work with select Latina/o leadership, legislators, and State Board of Education Members, I nevertheless preserve a great deal of authorial authority. To best explain my current status and position in the legislature, my research background in Houston, Texas, must first be taken into account.

While working at Rice University, I conducted a case study of a local high school that culminated in my book, Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring (1999). Spanning a three-year time period, I generated a ground-level ethnography that examined the assimilation experiences of high school youth and how these, in turn, related to achievement and school orientations. Since I wanted the study to appeal directly to the Latino community in Houston, I incorporated a historical perspective and wrote in a language that made it accessible to them. I should add, however, that my desire to be tenured led me to invest a great deal in becoming a “real scholar” within the academy. Combined with my Stanford-based “programming” to develop theory, my academic past had proven to be a constraint of sorts. For example, my deductive-nomological interest in assimilation kept me from seeing, for an extended amount of time, how caring theory could fit into an argument about assimilation (see Valenzuela 1999, Appendix). It also kept me from seeing—at least to the degree that I now see it—how the testing system itself subtracts resources from students (see Valenzuela 2000).

My fieldwork on Subtractive Schooling nevertheless provided me with an in-depth perspective on local and district policies and politics. I attended various churches, frequented parks, purchased goods and services, exercised, and attended numerous functions in the community surrounding the school that I studied. This experience further provided me with

first-hand experiences concerning the frequently challenging conditions of urban life for working class, Mexican-origin people living in Houston at that time. In short, through my research, I became a trusted member of Houston's inner-city Latino community.

While in Houston, I was also a founding member and chair of the Latino Education Policy Committee (LEPC). The LEPC was comprised of researchers, parents, clergy, and community activists. When the current U.S. Secretary of Education, Rodney Paige, was superintendent, the LEPC fought district battles pertaining to the representation of minorities in the district's magnet school programs, as well as another regarding certain HISD Board Members' decisions to curtail the bilingual education program in the district. These activities brought me into contact with a rather large array of individuals including League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) leadership and council members, city council members, school board members, and state senators and representatives, including State Representative Dora Olivo (D-Rosenberg), with whom I later worked.

Through my work as an associate with the Rice University Center for Education, my network also included large numbers of Houston-area researchers, teachers, administrators, and school personnel, and board members. I myself was a board member of the following organizations: Annenberg Foundation, Teach for America, and the Inter-Ethnic Forum. Because of my personal relationship with Lee Brown, I even participated on his transition team when he became Houston's first African American mayor. Despite my multiple political commitments in Houston—which were always part of my larger goal of getting to know the city from multiple perspectives—my professional life continued, primarily through my involvement in professional associations like the American Sociological Association, the American Educational Research Association, and the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies.

My family situation is also an important part of my current role as a “participatory action researcher” in the Texas state legislature. My husband, Emilio Zamora, is a Texas historian, award-winning author, and community activist. With my return to Texas from California, I inherited his Houston and Texas network, permitting a smooth and quick transition into the Houston Latino community. Marriage to an academic in a related field has also meant a continuous flow of intellectual and political ideas. We have two children, ages 8 and 11, and in 1998, our family won “Family of the Year” for Houston’s 16 of September celebration. City officials held a banquet in our honor and our story appeared as an insert in the city’s only major newspaper, the Houston Chronicle. Our picture was posted on all of the Metro buses throughout the week of festivities. It is not an overstatement to suggest that at least for a time, the Zamora-Valenzuela family became a virtual household name in the Houston Latino community.

From my standpoint as an activist sociologist, this kind of activity and notoriety had both an upside and a downside. Unfortunately, matters soured for me at Rice University, and I ended up filing a claim against my employer with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, alleging gender and national origins discrimination. After a protracted struggle with my employer, we finally arrived at a mutually agreed upon and amicable settlement.

Notwithstanding this moment of personal and familial strife, my research approach surely facilitated my deeper involvement in community political processes. And the payoff for me was the community’s generous support throughout my tenure review in the form of letters, meetings with university officials, and public recognition of our contributions to Houston’s Latino community. In the end, these relationships with key political players helped me to both produce my critical ethnography and expose the harmful aspects of current educational policies.

During my final year in Houston in 1999, Al Kauffman, lead counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense of Education Fund (MALDEF), called on me to testify in a federal suit against the Texas Education Agency and the State Board of Education. The plaintiff's case argued that the state's testing system discriminated against them. All were either Latino/a or African American. They had all obtained the necessary credits for graduation but were denied a diploma because of their inability to pass the high-stakes, standardized test. Indeed, 87 percent of all students who fail the state exam statewide are either Latina/o or African American. During the trial, I was able to bring my own data on immigrant achievement to bear on the questions at hand (see Valenzuela 1999, 2000).

Unfortunately, MALDEF won the argument that minorities are disproportionately affected by the state's testing system, but lost the case because the judge decided that the harm against the plaintiffs did not reach a "constitutional level" (GI Forum et al. v. Texas Educational Agency et al. 2000). That is, due process was allegedly followed in the development of the test and also by allowing students multiple opportunities to take it (see Valenzuela 2004a). The MALDEF case was transformative because it situated me in the center of crucial state- and national-level policy debates and political activities. I was handed the file for the state, which acquainted me with the policies, evidence, and justifications for the state's testing system. This information helped me to see new ways that the state reproduced educational inequalities while cleverly obscuring them (especially see McNeil and Valenzuela 2001). My earlier research presented a bottom-up perspective, but participation in the trial helped me develop a more comprehensive, policy-based, top-down analysis, as well (Valenzuela 2002, 2004a, 2004b).

After a year of commuting from Houston to Austin in 1999, during which Emilio secured employment in the School of Information at UT, my family eventually re-located to Austin in summer 2000. My work in the legislature began almost immediately upon my arrival when State Representative

Dora Olivo asked me to testify on the state's testing system. My Houston network thus followed me, providing me with relatively easy entrée into the Austin lawmaking community.

My interest in policy was further abetted by the CMAS position for which I was hired. That is, my duties included teaching lower- and upper-division courses in public policy, which many CMAS students must take in order to major in Mexican American Studies (the rest pursue a cultural studies concentration). This position forced me to re-tool and learn more about Texas government, statutes, history, and the policymaking process. Upon completing their policy studies courses, many of our CMAS students pursue internships at the state capitol for which they simultaneously earn college credit. My Mexican American Studies students, in turn, have taught me a great deal and provided me with information that I fold into my writings on educational policy.

At the graduate level, I also offer a course on policy that is titled, Latino Education Policy in Texas. The course is cross-listed with the Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) School of Public Affairs. I offer it during every other year when the legislature is in session, and my students, some of whom are former CMAS undergraduates, are typically policy studies majors from either the LBJ school or the College of Education.

Today, I hold the following community-based posts: Education Committee Chair, Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest Latino civil rights organization; member of an Austin LULAC council called Legislative LULAC; member of the Legislative Committee for the Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE); and member of the newly revived La Raza Unida working education group. All of these activities reflect my current position as an advocate for Latina/o youth in the legislature. My legislative activities include advising representatives and senators on different kinds of legislation in the areas of

assessment, limited English proficient youth, bilingual education, school vouchers, and school finance. My most intense work has been with State Representative Olivo with whom I have worked for two biennial legislative sessions to craft and promote legislation in the area of assessment (for a review of this work, see Valenzuela 2004a, 2000)

Prior to Austin, my research and policy work—particularly through the Latino Education Policy Committee—were somewhat separate tasks. That is, my role was one of bringing my expertise to bear on certain issues. In time, my professional role has evolved from being an ethnographer in the classic sense to being a direct advocate for change. This redefinition of my role as a researcher grew primarily out of a process that began with a deeply felt identification with the political associations—like LULAC, MALDEF, TABE, and the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)—that advocate on behalf of the U.S.-Mexican community.

Whenever I testified in committee hearings at the state capitol, I found myself generating field notes from all of my experiences. Then I discovered a virtual gold mine of audio archives of committee hearings or “data” that are used more by attorneys and legislative staff (www.capitol.state.tx.us) than researchers. These discoveries dovetailed neatly with my more general interest in informing my community of the politics and process of policy making.

My preference always was (and is) to be the person who merely chronicled and analyzed the unfolding of legislation. However, my experiences at the capitol have taught me that a number of policy areas, such as assessment and accountability, are woefully under-researched. Upon losing the federal MALDEF trial, the Chicano caucus members anticipated that an appeal would not likely fare well in the conservative Fifth Circuit Court. Consequently, the struggle for

a more just assessment system would clearly shift back to the state legislature, where most educational policies originate.

In Fall 2000, upon moving to Austin, I had hoped to chronicle just such an effort, but soon realized that both majority and minority advocates were operationally defining equity as *equal access to mandated testing*. That is, the legislative concerns that predominated centered around which students were getting which tests rather than whether a numbers-based, single-number accountability system is a flawed design (McNeil and Valenzuela 2001; Valenzuela 2004a). This impoverished definition of equity meant that no one was initiating progressive legislation on the uses of assessment.

In light of this vacuum in leadership, I downloaded the accountability law and revised it from a single-indicator system based on test scores to a multiple-indicator system based on test scores, grades, and teacher recommendations. In this revised version, multiple indicators were to figure into all retention, promotion, and graduation decisions. Much like the admissions processes in most Texas colleges and universities, multiple indicators help compensate for poor test scores. Moreover, their usage would minimize the teaching of the test, the narrowing of curricula, and the further marginalizing of students as Linda McNeil and I observed to be the case in Houston, inner-city schools (for a more elaborate discussion, see McNeil and Valenzuela 2001; Valenzuela 2002).

In November 2000, I shared the new language of my “multiple indicators” idea with MALDEF attorneys Al Kauffman and Joe Sanchez, who then converted it into legalese. They walked the halls of the capitol searching for a bill sponsor. None of the Anglo representatives on the Committee on Public Education in the House wanted to carry the legislation. Only

Representative Dora Olivo, a former teacher who was knowledgeable about the abuses of the testing system, was willing to sponsor it.

I still remember the sense of relief I felt on the day that we found our bill sponsor. Al Kauffman, lead MALDEF attorney and honorary Mexican, e-mailed me with these words: “On the real difficult issues, *solamente la gente trabaja con nosotros y para nosotros* (only our people work with and for us).”¹ His sincere expression of solidarity and struggle still touches me deeply today.

With his use of Spanish and his reference to “our people,” Al Kauffman gave voice to both our struggle for power and also how policy making is racialized independently of the merits of the legislation that we, as minorities, bring to the table. While our proposal for just assessment practices promised to benefit all children regardless of race, what seemed to matter more in the eyes of the reluctant legislators was *who* was bringing it to their attention rather than *what* the proposal contained. I suspect that if our team had been both Anglo and not associated with either civil rights or the MALDEF court case, that our proposal would have been received differently. However much they inform policy work, it is impossible to regret such circumstances. They refer to obstacles over which we have no control.

Our strategy has thus been to mobilize our constituents, continue working with our white allies—many of them scholars like Professors Linda McNeil at Rice University and Walt Haney at Boston University—and educating legislators, newspaper columnists, and the lay public to begin considering how the state’s approach to accountability either marginalizes students, the curriculum, or both. With the recent, high-profile exposés of fraudulent accounting of dropouts in the Houston Independent School District by the *New York Times*, coupled with arguments of

how such practices are encouraged by design (Schemo 2003a, Schemo 2003b; Winerip 2003), we have already achieved a modicum of success, indeed.

Looking back, it was my familiarity with discourse and rhetorical analysis that helped me decipher how state legislators used the slippery term, “accountability.” My understanding of their rhetoric and logic led me to craft arguments for new accountability practices that were incremental. The idea was to subtly alter, not dismantle the existing accountability structure. To this end, we contended that since accountability is a large and complex system, it requires a more complex form of assessment. For evaluating students for high-stakes decisions (promotion, retention, and graduation), the state needs an assessment system premised on multiple measures rather than a single, narrow measure based on students’ test scores. From a rhetorical standpoint, we framed our proposed legislation in language and justification that was both logical and less threatening to the larger political edifice of accountability (see Valenzuela 2004a).

Initially, I thought my authority before legislative caucus members to advocate such an approach came from prior research in schools, from my status as a university professor, from my state- and national-level connections, and from being a citizen and having children in the public school system. Yet, none of these factors would have been sufficient to convince them to rethink the concept of accountability and, in so doing, to consider our proposal seriously. In retrospect, it mattered that I am closely identified with the Mexican community *and* that I am directly involved in the recurrent struggles of Chicana/o legislators to either craft helpful legislation or to weigh in on those that are not. Moreover, I showed how deeply I was moved by the tragedy of unfairness in the assessment of children of color, as well as for all children, generally. Additionally, my demonstrated interest and involvement in issues extending beyond assessment (e.g., legislative issues pertaining to English language learners) manifested my

commitment to the Latina/o community, generally, while shielding me from the criticism often harped upon university academics that their involvement is typically limited and self-serving in nature.

Without these crucial ingredients of identification, direct action, and a principled commitment to the community, my plea for a more humane multiple assessment approach would have lacked moral and ethical force. At first, I resented the circumstances that placed me in this position. I simply wanted to study the reform and not be the person who was pivotal to it. In time, however, I came to see how my knowledge and expertise could be used for meaningful change and also to appreciate the value of first-hand experience and skills associated with the legislative process. This, by now, long-term collaboration with Chicana/o political leaders is what pushed me to conduct a deeper, critical analysis of the state's school system. Immersed in the legislative process, I came to see how the Texas Education Agency's official rhetoric and the sanitized test results provided to the media obscured both the material conditions of schooling, and the state's purported mission to educate all students equitably and thereby close the achievement gap.

The other side of my collaboration with state legislators is an equally intense collaboration with my graduate students. To date, all of the doctoral students with whom I directly work are engaged in education policy research. Our collective efforts push me to theorize, explain, and represent our observations of the legislature and legislators in new ways.

The dual role that I now play as both researcher and advocate constitutes a major break with my original training as a social scientist. I have found a way of doing social science that goes beyond the insipid, a-political positivism that I learned in graduate school. At this point, it gives me enormous personal satisfaction to continue using my privileged status as a scholar to

support and promote a social justice agenda. Moreover, being a *Tejana* and Mexican American female scholar imbues this calling with a special sense of urgency and purpose.

Conclusion

We have tried to raise some issues and make some distinctions that will move self-proclaimed “critical ethnographers” to interrogate their current ethnographic practice. By contrasting our own ethnographic and political practices, we discovered an interesting difference that helps clarify the notion of collaboration. On the one hand, Foley has spent his career writing cultural critiques of American capitalism and its schools. But he has spent considerably less time in direct political involvement. In lieu of joining various progressive political struggles, he joined the ideological struggle against positivism and scientism. Like many progressive academics, this allowed him to survive professionally but left him longing for more direct political involvement as a “citizen anthropologist.”

In this regard, he admires the passionate and direct political involvement of his colleague, Angela Valenzuela. She feels a deep moral bond to her ethnic group, and she works tirelessly for their betterment as an expert witness, researcher, and advisor to various Chicana/o legislators. She also mentors many of her students along this path. When Angela responded somewhat apologetically about being less “reflexive” than I am, that mirrored for me how my notion of “collaboration” has shifted over the years. In some ways, I have become “the effect” of the powerful postmodern experimentalist discourse in anthropology. This made it harder for me to see that the following notions of collaboration—decentering the author, deconstructing theory, polyphonic texts, dialogic interviewing, and even community review of the texts—are no more fundamental than Angela’s notion of “collaboration.”

On the surface, she and her award-winning ethnography do not seem to meet the post-modern ideals of reflexivity and a co-produced narrative. She does not deploy the experimental ethnography discourse rhetorically to make her text more authoritative. Moreover, this chapter is her first attempt at portraying the ethical-political ground of her ethnographic practice. Earlier, she recounts how she is linked to the Chicano political movement and its efforts to change society. Privately, she talks about having a “spiritual” connection with her research subjects—many of whom are political allies. They share a common historical memory of being a racialized, stigmatized people. When she participates in the struggle, she feels affirmed, empowered, and has a shared sense of fate. These feelings compel her to write caring and thoughtful portraits of her people.

In effect, Angela identifies and collaborates with her subjects in a deep psychological and political way. There is a sense of being *carnales* (brothers/sisters) and *camaradas* (comrades). In return, they expect her to be what Antonio Gramsci (1971) would call their “organic intellectual.” She has made it through a racist economic and educational system. She now has the academic credentials and the writing skills to be among a select community of experts, authors, and persons who, to use Gaytri Spivak’s (1988) apt phrase, “strategically essentialize” their struggle. In the end, they may refuse many of the collaborative methodological practices advocated in experimental, postmodern ethnography. This is not to argue that one notion of collaboration is superior to the other, but it is clear that “native” or insider ethnographers may have to march to the beat of a different drummer. Ethical commitments to their subjects/political allies may compel them to be collaborative in more spiritual and less procedural, methodological ways. Our differences suggest that there are a number of ways of being collaborative. Each ethnographer ultimately develops her own notions of collaboration, positionality, and authorship.

Valenzuela's account of how her direct involvement in the legislative process led her to a greater understanding is a ringing endorsement for Hale's notion of activist anthropology. Researchers who are directly involved in the political process are in a better position to understand and theorize about social change. This being true, the academy must find many more ways to reward "citizen-scholars" who are both assisting local communities and producing more deeply grounded research studies. Unfortunately, the academy still mainly rewards scholars who produce universalistic, "theoretical knowledge." The ruling academic elite of most disciplines still de-value the production of local, politically useful, "applied knowledge." As a result, many progressive scholars may minimize or even hide their attempts to produce the kind of practical knowledge needed to transform local communities and institutional policies.

At different points in history, the academy has punished progressive scholars for being too active politically. There are signs that the country is presently moving towards a new era of McCarthyism under the banner of fighting terrorism. Notwithstanding the presence of Mexican American Studies Centers and other safe spaces that offer protection through a connection to community, the so-called safe space created by post-1960s cultural critics in the academy could disappear rather quickly if political lines harden. Consequently, it is with some urgency that we exhort our academic peers to valorize and share more openly the political dimensions of their fieldwork. There are undoubtedly political risks, but what other choice do so-called public intellectuals—who live in an empire with enough bombs to destroy the world—have?

Perhaps future scholars who live in a more humane society and world will look back on this little post-1960s opening of "critical ethnography" with a bit of wonder. What our generation is doing may seem a little like the medical science of leeches or chemotherapy—a modest beginning at best. On a substantive level, we see many promising new varieties of

critical ethnography. We have suggested many ways to question our notions of purpose, positionality, collaboration, and writing styles. Transforming the academic knowledge production industry obviously requires much more than challenging the ideology of positivism and scientism. We also need to change the way academic publishing is organized and controlled, and the way promotion and tenure for publication and public service is awarded. And we must continue to open up the academy to underrepresented groups so that they, too, may contribute to scholarship. Critical ethnography that embraces the public interest will truly flower when we can transform academia.

Notes

¹Angela Valenzuela wishes to thank her colleague, Bill Black, for his suggestion of the latter term.

References

- Bennett, J. W. (1996). Applied and Action Anthropology: Ideological and Conceptual Aspects. *Current Anthropology*. 36:23-53.
- Brodin, K. (2001). Diversity in Anthropological Theory. In Susser, I and T. Patterson, Eds. *Cultural Diversity in the United States*. Oxford: Blackwell Pubs, pp 368-387.
- Burawoy, M. (1991). *Ethnography Unbound*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- (2000). *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Carspecken, P. (1996). *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. London: Routledge.
- Denzin, N. (1997). *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practices for the 21st Century*. Newbury Park, Sage.
- Douglas, J. (1976). *Investigative Social Research*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

- Eddy, E. and W. Partridge eds. (1987) *Applied Anthropology in America*. 2nd. Edition, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fine, M and L. Weis. (1998). *The Unknown City: Lives of Poor and Working Class Young Adults*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Fine, M and L. Weis. (2000). *Speed Bumps: A Student-Friendly Guide to Qualitative Research*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fine, M, L. Weis, S. Weseen, and L. Wong (2000). For Whom: Qualitative Research, Representations, and Social Responsibilities in N. Denzin and I. Lincoln eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 107-133.
- Flores, R. (2002). *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity and the Master Symbol*. Austin, University of Texas Press.
- Foley, D. (2002). *Critical Ethnography: The Reflexive Turn*. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. Vol. 15: 4: 469-491.
- Foley, D., Levinson, B. and J. Hurtig. (2001) *Anthropology Goes Inside: The New Educational Ethnography of Ethnicity and Gender*. In W. Secada (Ed.) *Review of Research In Education*. Washington D.C.: American Educational Research Association Publications, pp 37-87.
- Foley, D and Kirby Moss. (2001). *Studying American Cultural Diversity: Some Non-Essentializing Perspectives* in I. Susser & T. Patterson (Eds.). *Cultural Diversity in the United States*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp 130-152.
- Foley, D. (2000). "Studying the Politics of Raza Unida Politics: Reflections of a White Anthropologist." *Reflexiones: New Directions in Mexican American Studies*. Spring Issue, #3: 51-81.
- (1999). "The Fox Project: a Reappraisal." Vol. 40, No. 2, April, 171-191, *Current Anthropology*.
- (1955). *The Heartland Chronicles*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- (1990). *Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Foley, D, with Mota C., Post, D. and I. Lozano. (1989). *From Peones to Politicos: Class And Ethnicity in a South Texas Town, 1900-1989*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- GI Forum et al. v. Texas Educational Agency et al.*, 87 F. Supp. 667 (W.D. Tex. 2000).

- Gordon, E. T. (1998). *Disparate Diasporas: Identity and Politics in an African-Nicaraguan Community*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.
- Hale, Charles R. (1994). *Resistance and Contradiction: Miskitu Indians and the Nicaraguan State, 1894-1987*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- (ND) *Activist Research Versus Cultural Critiques: Contradictions at Every Turn*. Unpublished paper.
- Haraway, D. (1988). *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism as a Site of Discourse on the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. *Feminist Studies*, 14, 575-599.
- Harding, S. (1998). *Is Science Multicultural? Postcolonialisms, feminisms, and Epistemology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hymes, D. (Ed.). (1999). *Reinventing Anthropology*. 2nd ed. Ann Arbor: University Of Michigan Press.
- Kane, S and T. Mason. (2001). *AIDS and Criminal Justice*. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30:457-479.
- Lather, Pattie. (1991). *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy within the Post-Modern*. New York: Routledge.
- Levinson, B. and D. Hollands. (1995). *The Cultural Production of the Educated Person An Introduction*. In B. Levinson, D. Foley and D. Hollands (Eds.) *The Cultural Production of the Educated Person: Critical Ethnographies of Schooling And Local Practice*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp 1-54.
- Levinson, B and M Sutton. Eds.(2001). *Policy as Practice: Towards a Comparative Sociological Analysis of Educational Policy*. Westport, Conn: Ablex pubs.
- Lynd, R. (1956). *Middletown: A Study of American Culture*, 2nd ed. NY, Harcourt Brace.
- Marcus, G. ed. (1999). *Critical Anthropology Now: Unexpected Contexts, Shifting Constituencies, Changing Agendas*. Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press.
- (1998). *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Marcus, G. and M. Fischer (1986). *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental*

- Moment in the Human Sciences. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marcus, G and D. Cushman. (1982). Ethnographies as Texts. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 11: 25-69.
- McNeil, L. (2000). Contradictions of School Reform: Educational Costs of Standardized Testing. New York: Routledge.
- McNeil, L. and A. Valenzuela. (2001). The Harmful Impact of the TAAS System of Testing in Texas: Beneath the Accountability Rhetoric," pp. 127-150 in Mindy Kornhaber and Gary Orfield, eds., *Raising Standards or Raising Barriers? Inequality and High Stakes Testing in Public Education*. New York: Century Foundation, 2001.
- Menchaca, M. (2002). *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black and White Roots of Mexican Americans*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Mills, C.W. (1959). *The Sociological Imagination*. NY: Oxford.
- Nader, Laura. (1996). *Naked Science: Anthropological Inquiry into Boundaries, Power, And Knowledge*. New York: Routledge.
- Okongwu, F and J. P. Mencher (2000) *The Anthropology of Public Policy: Shifting Terrains*. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 29:107-124.
- Rubinstein, R. (1986). Reflections on Action Anthropology: Some Developmental Dynamics of an Anthropological Tradition. *Human Organization* 5:270-82.
- Sanday, Peggy R.(1976). *Anthropology and the Public Interest: Fieldwork and Theory*. New York: Academic Press.
- (1990) *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood and Privilege on Campus*. New York: New York University Press.
- (1996) *A Woman Scorned: Acquaintance Rape on Trial*. New York : Doubleday Publishers.
- Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992) *Death Without Weeping: the Violence of Everyday life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Scheper-Hughes, N and Carolyn Sargent. Eds. (1998). *Small Wars: The Cultural Politics Of Childhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schemo, D. J. (2003a, July 11). Questions on data cloud luster of Houston schools. *New York Times*. Retrieved [July 11, 2003] from <http://www.nytimes.com>

- Schemo, D. J. (2003b, August 28). For Houston schools, college claims exceed reality. *New York Times*. Retrieved [August 28, 2003] from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Spivak, G. (1988). *Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Methuen pubs.
- Susser I. (2001). Poverty and Homelessness in US Cities. In Susser, I and T. Patterson, Eds. *Cultural Diversity in the United States*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 229-249.
- Tax, Sol. (1963). *Penny Capitalism: A Guatemalan Indian History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tuhiwai Smith.L. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Valentine, C. (1968). *Culture and Poverty: A Critique and Counter-Proposals*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Valenzuela, A. 2004a. "The Accountability Debate in Texas: Continuing the Conversation," Ch. 1 in A. Valenzuela, ed., *Leaving Children Behind: How "Texas-style" Accountability Fails Latino Youth*. (pp. 1-32). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- _____. 2004b. "Accountability and the Privatization Agenda," Ch. 10 in A. Valenzuela, ed., *Leaving Children Behind: Why Texas-Style Accountability Fails Latino Youth*. (pp. 263-297). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- _____. 2000. The significance of the TAAS test for Mexican immigrant and Mexican American adolescents: A Case Study. *Hispanic Journal of the Behavioral Sciences* 22 (4): 524-539.
- _____. 2002. "High-Stakes Testing and U.S.-Mexican Youth in Texas: The Case for Multiple Compensatory Criteria in Assessment," *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy* 14: 97-116.
- _____. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S. Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Vidich, A.J and S. Lyman (2000). *Qualitative Methods: Their History in Sociology and Anthropology* in Denzin, N and Lincoln Y. eds. *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp 37-84.
- Villenas, S. and D. Foley (2002). *Chicano/Latino Critical Ethnography of Education: Borderlands Cultural Productions from La Frontera* in R.R. Valencia, (ed.) *Chicano School Failure and Success: Past, Present, and Future* (2nd ed.) London: Routledge Falmer.

Winerip, M. (August 13, 2003). The 'zero dropout' miracle: Alas! Alack! A Texas tall tale. *New York Times*. Retrieved [August 13, 2003] from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Wolfe, E. (1982). *Europe and People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wolfe, T. (1974). *The New Journalism*. New York: Harper and Row.

Zavella, P. (1987). *Women, Work, and Family in the Chicano Community*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.