

Editors' Introduction

Many are steadfast in their belief in the power of education. Citizens in the U.S. and abroad believe in education's ability to transform the lives of youth and communities by enabling greater opportunity and social mobility. Yet, in this neoliberal era of increased credentialism, competition, and managerialism, the practice of "getting ahead" through increased education has assumed a different character. Many view and experience this competitive context as an arms race—with a heavy emphasis on personal advancement at the expense of democratic values, group solidarity, notions of equity, or an understanding of education as a route to personal or societal liberation. Institutions at every level of education, in systems around the world, are complicit in furthering this utilitarian model of schooling. While policymakers employ rhetoric that emphasizes the need to prepare students for "college and career," students who want to get ahead are constantly reminded that the path to success winds through a hierarchical, higher education system—the more prestigious the better.

Framing college as the ticket to individual advancement ignores the many structural and political forces that both organize educational institutions and shape students' opportunities to benefit from them. Simply pushing students towards college neither ensures equitable outcomes for all students nor challenges the framing of education as a panacea for equity. Indeed, those who live and work in the field of education—students, teachers, researchers—quickly come to realize that there are significant gaps between their perceptions of, aspirations for, and struggles within these institutions and the policies and practices that define their reality. Furthermore, by advancing an individualist notion of education with little room for either individual identity or experience, those adhering to neoliberal ideology co-opt the language of self-expression as a means of limiting collective action and normalizing the idea that the onus for success or failure is on the individual, rather than larger systemic forces.

Scholars examining students' and academics' trajectories to and through these institutional spaces often struggle to reflexively make sense of these gaps between hope and reality and how the current political environment influences this disjuncture. In Volume 6, Issue 1 of the Berkeley Review of Education (BRE), the contributing authors attempt to bring visibility to these often invisible forces. They bring attention to these absences and name the racial and socioeconomic structures that shape our educational institutions and individuals' experiences within them.

From different global, political, and methodological perspectives, the authors consider how the structural intersects with the personal in educational settings and how schools can serve as backdrops for broader questions regarding the intersection of higher education, neoliberal schooling logics, and individual identity. One author examines several shifts in Chinese educational policy and its surrounding discourses to explore how they reflect the nation's engagement with capitalism and shifting cultural ideals about educational quality. Two other manuscripts in this issue examine the work of historically marginalized groups within U.S.-based institutions of higher education and, from the perspective of faculty and students, remind us of the heavy burdens borne by those on the front lines of diversifying the academy. The final piece considers adolescents' perception

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of time and attitudes about the past, present, and future, which suggest that identity and societal positionality play a significant role in how teens perceive themselves, their roles as students, and their place in the world.

In our opening piece, *Educating Competitive Students for a Competitive Nation: Why and How has the Chinese Discourse of Competition in Education Rapidly Changed Within Three Decades?*, Xu Zhao examines how the evolving discourse of free-market competition shaped education policy and school reform in China between 1986 and 2014. Zhao analyzes over 100 scholarly articles published during this period and finds that the Chinese discourse of competition shifted dramatically over the years. Throughout the 1980s, Chinese scholars and educators promoted competition as a mechanism for improving education; by the 1990s, however, they increasingly framed competition in terms of its negative effects on student well-being and educational equity. Zhao's findings suggest that, as China continues to prioritize global economic competitiveness over social equality, policymakers will be constrained in their efforts to reduce competition in education.

In our second article, *Vulnerable Manhood: Collaborative Testimonios of Latino Male Faculty*, Juan F. Carrillo and Jason Mendez offer a model for faculty and students of color to engage in a collaborative process of reflection and *testimonios* to embrace vulnerability, emotion, and the knowledge imprinted in their bodies. This collaborative *testimonio* approach was developed in Latin America to provide a way for oppressed groups to speak to and about their oppression. As Latino male faculty, the authors use their partner dialogues to combat the isolation, marginalization, and mental and emotional violence they face in academy. Building on years of friendship and understanding, as they share similar roots coming from Latino and working-class homes, the authors develop a concept of *homebodied intellectual manhood* that holds "emancipatory potential related to self-authorship, knowledge creation, negotiating power in academia, and pursuing social justice oriented practices" (p. 29). It is a strategy that empowers the authors to be present on their own terms. Through this work, the authors also hope to offer a more holistic set of narratives on achievement and success for males of color.

In our third article, *The Invisible Tax: Exploring Black Student Engagement at Historically White Institutions*, Jarvis Givens employs autoethnography and a review of secondary literature to explore the experience of Black students at Historically White Institutions (HWIs). Through the lens of student engagement theory, Givens argues that a traditional reading of this theory fails to account for the experience of Black student engagement which is characterized by the tension of being invested in the benefits of higher education while utilizing Black Nationalist organizing principles during political demonstrations that appear to conflict with this ideal. He asserts that these students pay an invisible tax when navigating HWIs, which takes a mental, physical, and emotional toll that should be recognized as we consider the role of higher education and how to best serve all students.

In our fourth and final article, entitled *Demographic Differences in Adolescent Time Attitude Profiles in an Urban High School: A Person-Oriented Analysis Using Model-Based Clustering*, Rachael Prow, Frank Worrell, James Andretta, and Zena Mello explore attitudes that adolescents hold towards the past, present, and future. The authors find

patterns of time attitudes grouping together into clusters, which they call *Conflicted*, *Ambivalent*, and *Positives*. Students' membership in these clusters appears to be affected by their background, including parents' education and racial/ethnic group membership. Additionally, membership in these clusters is related to grade point average, one of the gateways to college success. This suggests that one way that students' identity and background may affect their future life chances is through the attitudes they hold towards the future, as well as their own past and present.

The Berkeley Review of Education invites pieces that continue and extend the conversations started by the authors in this issue as well as work that starts new conversations on issues related to equity and diversity. We encourage senior and emerging scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to submit articles that address issues of educational diversity and equity from various intra/interdisciplinary perspectives. The editorial board especially welcomes submissions that provide new and diverse perspectives on pressing issues impacting schools, educational systems, and other learning environments. We also welcome a broad range of "critical" scholarship. We define as "critical" work that aims to analyze, evaluate, and examine power and dominant structures while helping us to imagine something new.

We thank the many people who have assisted in getting this issue to press: the authors, current and former board members, volunteers, reviewers, advisers, and the students and faculty members at the Graduate School of Education who have helped us in many other ways. We especially thank Dean Prudence Carter, Interim Dean Elliot Turiel, and our faculty adviser, P. David Pearson, for their ongoing support and guidance as we broaden the scope and readership of the journal. Finally, we thank the U.C. Berkeley Graduate School of Education, Graduate Assembly, and Associated Students of the University of California for their generous financial support.

The Editors