Anglo-Saxon Ideologies in the 1920s–1930s: Their Impact on the Segregation of Mexican Students in California

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This study contends that a great deal of the current school segregation of Chicanos in public elementary and secondary schools in California has its origins in racial ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority and their subsequent impact on government policies. Using an ethnohistory case study approach (Santa Paula, California), the study sheds light on the Anglo domination and control thesis. A historical review of the ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority is used to illustrate their ascendance and decline in academic, religious, and governmental spheres. It is followed by an analysis of the relations between such ideologies and the rise of widespread school segregation in California. In conclusion, an ethnographic case study is used to illustrate how ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority strongly influenced the formation of school segregation in Santa Paula, California, in the 1920s. Connections are drawn between ideology, segregative policies of the early 1900s, and their long-term effects on the contemporary segregation of Chicano students. SCHOOL SEGREGATION, CHICANOS, RACISM

The segregation of school-age Latinos, of which two-thirds are Chicanos, has increased to such an extent that they now have the dubious distinction of being the most highly segregated group of America's children (Orum 1986). Approximately two decades ago (1968), 45% of Latino students attended predominantly Anglo schools. In 1984, only 29% of Latino students were enrolled in high-density Anglo schools. Conversely—with respect to Latino ethnic isolation—in 1968 23% of Latinos attended 90 to 100% minority schools. By 1984, 31% of Latinos attended such ethnically isolated schools (Orfield 1988). In short, over the last 20 plus years, Chicano and other Latino students as a whole have become more and more isolated from their Anglo peers.

The linkage between school segregation and academic achievement of Chicano students has been amply documented (Espinosa and Ochoa 1986; Haro 1977; Valencia 1984). This observed relation is pervasive, negative, and strong: as the Chicano concentration of schools increases, achievement as measured by standardized tests decreases. For example, Espinosa and Ochoa (1986) in an analysis of California

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Assessment Program achievement scores, found a strong negative correlation between achievement scores and Latino school concentration for a state sample of third-grade students. Valencia (1984), in an analysis of the Phoenix Unified School District’s high schools, found a near perfect negative relation between Chicano (and black) school density and mean achievement scores on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills. As minority percentages of various high schools increased, test scores systematically declined. The data reported by Espinosa and Ochoa, as well as Haro and Valencia, show strong connections between school segregation of Chicanos and their lower achievement test scores. Although correlational data do not imply causality, it is safe to assume that segregation is a key institutional process in the denial of equal educational opportunity for Chicano students.

Educational historians who specialize in Chicano schooling issues have recently begun unfolding the history of Chicano education. In these studies, writings on the school segregation of Mexican students have been a prominent focus of attention (Alvarez 1986; Gonzalez 1985; San Miguel 1986, 1987). The major conclusion drawn by these scholars is that segregation of Mexican students has been a key administrative practice leading to negative consequences for their schooling (e.g., discouragement of cross-cultural understanding, encouragement of early school leaving of Mexicans). School segregation has also been linked to political issues, particularly to the unequal power relations between ethnic minority parents and school boards composed of dominant group members (cf. Alvarez 1986).

Although the examination of segregation of Mexican students by historians provides some keen policy insights into the discriminatory nature of school administrative practices (cf. San Miguel 1986), more work is certainly needed to understand “the political nature of segregation” (Gonzalez 1985:55). Here, we are in agreement with Gonzalez (p. 56) who notes that “the segregation of Mexican children can be studied as part of a continuing pattern of domination established after the Mexican-American War.” Given that Mexicans were a conquered people, Anglo-Saxon political dominance and governmental policies helped drive white oppression against Mexicans. Segregation of Mexican students was one such manifestation. Gonzalez also argues that segregation of Mexican students can be viewed as the outcome of government policy decisions that permitted an inferior and less expensive education, thus reproducing a flexible and cheap source of labor. A similar perspective is offered by San Miguel (1986) who contends that prejudicial attitudes of Anglo leaders played a major role in establishing and expanding school segregation during the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th century. Such segregationist attitudes and practices, San Miguel argues, assisted in the reproduction and solidification of the castelike makeup of Anglo-American and Chicano dominant-subordinate relationships throughout the Southwest.
The purpose of the present study is to shed further light on the Anglo domination and control thesis. We plan to explore the ideological foundations of school segregation of Mexican students in California in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Our study corroborates the writings of other scholars (e.g., Fass 1980; Giroux 1983) who have underscored the larger role of ideology in shaping aspects in education. The present task is to extend an interpretation of the historical and political nature of the Anglo control thesis. First, an attempt will be made to identify, more closely, the beliefs that strongly contributed to the foundation and maintenance of school segregation of Mexican students in California during the 1920s and 1930s. Our focus on the ideological currents will explore racial theories of Anglo-Saxon superiority in the late 1800s. Second, an analysis of how ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority contributed to the social segregation of Mexicans will be formulated. The goal here is to tie down, reasonably well, the elusive character of these ideologies and delineate their role in the institutionalization of school segregation in California. This section will focus on the 1920s because historical research indicates that segregation of Mexican students became widespread during this decade (Wollenberg 1978). Third, in order to clarify how theories of Anglo-Saxon superiority unfolded we will document, in depth, a case study of school segregation in Santa Paula, California, to illustrate how interactive processes of dominant group ideologies and unequal interethnic power relations at the community level created the rationalization and institutionalization of school segregation. This case study provides a microlevel account of how the larger process of segregation may have operated in other Anglo-Mexican biracial California communities. Several case studies of school segregation of Mexican students during the 1920s and 1930s will also serve as points of reference.

We will examine the unfolding of school segregation in Santa Paula by using an ethnohistory case study approach. Historical research outlines the process of school segregation of Mexican students in this community and data collected during an ethnographic field project indicate such school segregation is ongoing. Historical records include school district reports, property tax records, church records, newspaper accounts, Ku Klux Klan news reports, and five oral histories. The history of educational segregation of Santa Paula is also corroborated by the use of a master's thesis covering the educational history of the city and four school district reports describing the segregation process. Ethnographic field research consisted of collecting data on the Santa Paula school district during 1985 (e.g., collecting reports, conducting 94 interviews; see Menchaca [1987] for further detail of the methodology).

Theories of Anglo-Saxon Superiority in the 19th Century

Ideologies claiming the biological and social superiority of Anglo-Saxons dominated racial debates of the 19th century and promoted su-
Menchaca/Valencia  School Segregation of Mexican Students

periority and inferiority beliefs (Comas 1961; Jackson 1986). The rationale used to support the superiority of Anglo-Saxons encouraged unequal practices against racial minorities and justified the passage of segregationist legislation in the late 1800s. A brief review of the 19th-century ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority will be presented prior to describing their impact on the education of Mexican students in California. These ideologies originated in academic, religious, and governmental spheres.

Academic sphere. Within the academic sphere, widespread acceptance of The Origin of the Species by Charles Darwin in 1859 destroyed the basis for the polygenist academic perspective that claimed various evolutionary origins for humankind. Darwin’s findings, however, ironically ignited a new rationale for race superiority and inferiority debates. Using Darwinian research, Herbert Spencer and Darwin’s cousin, Sir Francis Galton, introduced new racist theories and spearheaded the era of “Social Darwinism.” The “Eugenics Movement” was founded by Sir Francis Galton, and Herbert Spencer presented the theory of the “survival of the fittest.” Galton established a movement that advocated the sterilization of racial minorities and poor immigrant whites, and Spencer provided the “scientific” base for Anglo-Saxon supremacist theories (Blum 1978). The superiority of the Anglo-Saxon was attributed to selective intragroup breeding and to the maintenance of a pure race and culture. To maintain the purity of Anglo-Saxons, the Social Darwinists promoted a philosophy of social segregation and the extremists, such as the eugenicists, advocated a sterilization campaign.3 Racial minorities and poor whites were the targeted groups of the Social Darwinists.

Early historians were also at the forefront in proselytizing the Anglo-Saxon superiority thesis. They presented various versions of the “Teutonic origins theory” in an attempt to historically explicate the biological superiority of Anglo-Saxons (Feagin 1989; Gossett 1953, 1977), which was attributed to selective intragroup breeding. Therefore, the pseudohistorians recommended social segregation of the inferior races as the only preventive measure to maintain the racial purity of Anglo-Saxons (Comas 1961). In the 1870s, the Teutonic origins theory was introduced to the United States from England by Sir Henry Maine, and within a short period it became widely accepted. The theory promoted nationalism and supplied a rationalization for Anglo-Saxon political dominance. Sir Henry Maine’s students adopted the theory and reworked parts of it to explain the history of race relations in the United States. Furthermore, depending on the northern European cultural background of his students, various arguments were presented explicating how the genetic pool of the American Teutonic race evolved. The theories ranged from only including Anglo-Saxons as part of the Teutonic race, to less exclusive theories that claimed a common historical origin for northern European cultures. In the late
1800s, the most popular version of the Teutonic origins theory claimed that only Germans and Anglo-Saxons shared the same genetic pool because other northern European cultures had mixed with southern and eastern Europeans, and therefore were impure races. Aryan and Nordic were common synonyms used to express the purity of the Teutonic race (Comas 1961; Gordon 1974; Gossett 1953, 1977).

**Religious sphere.** The religious sphere was not excluded from racist ideologies of the era. The popular belief that Anglo-Saxons were God's "Chosen People" provided a rationale for racist practices (Feagin 1989). Since the period of the pilgrims, this doctrine prescribed the Anglo-Saxons' moral code, serving as a smoke screen for discriminatory behavior toward ethnic/racial minorities. Within the Protestant Church, white supremacist pastors such as Josiah Strong interpreted the doctrine as God's plan to rid the world of the "lower" races and thus make room for the "superior" races. For example, the genocide of the American Indian and the expansionist practices of the United States government during the Mexican and Spanish Wars were figuratively interpreted to be the result of God's predestined will (Gossett 1953, 1977; Newcombe 1986). According to this belief, God had predestined Anglo-Saxon Protestantism to triumph over all other religions, and the conquest of inferior races was His Divine plan.

The less extremist pastors were more tolerant of the allegedly inferior races, nonetheless they used the doctrine to justify segregationist practices. They also contended that it was God's will to prevent the intermingling of the superior and inferior races. It was common for Protestant pastors to prohibit ethnic/racial minorities—including Mexicans—from attending services in the Anglo-Saxon churches (Cadena 1987; Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Menchaca 1987, 1989).

**Governmental sphere.** During the 19th century, theories of Anglo-Saxon superiority also surfaced in the governmental sphere and shared several of the premises found in the Teutonic origins theory. Racial beliefs of superiority and inferiority influenced international and domestic government policies and sanctioned the political dominance of Anglo-Saxons (Barrera 1979). Moreover, domestic government policies served to justify segregationist legislation. At the international level, 19th-century expansionist policies of the United States government reflected a philosophy of Anglo-Saxon superiority and were scientifically sanctioned by Social Darwinism. Natural selection and the survival of the fittest were common themes used to justify United States imperialism. In the case of the New World, the Latinos' defeat in the Mexican and Spanish Wars was viewed to be evidence of their half-breed inferiority and the United States' triumph was attributed to the racial superiority of Anglo-Saxons (Paredes 1978; Surace 1982). "Manifest Destiny" was also used to justify the United States' expansionist practices (Comas 1961; Martinez 1984). Allegedly, this doctrine posited that the renowned world power of the United States
was evidence that God had made Anglo-Saxons a superior race, and thus gave them the right to govern other races.

At the domestic level the passage of "separate, but equal legislation" was a reflection of the national popularity of superiority and inferiority racial beliefs and the government's reluctance to interfere in local communities where racial segregation was the norm (Feagin 1989; Hendrick 1977; Wollenberg 1978). For example, the federal-level passage of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 and the state-level action of the "separate, but equal education code of 1874" in California were blatant methods used by the government to sanction segregationist legislation. Though segregationist laws were passed with the specific intention of segregating blacks, city governments used the legislation to segregate other racial minority groups. The separate but equal legislation essentially encouraged the nonintermixture of whites and racial minorities and sanctioned superiority and inferiority beliefs.

**Critique of Racial Ideologies**

By the mid-1920s, supremacist ideologies came under overwhelming attack by antihereditarian research that underscored the influence of environment on behavior. Leading the attack, Franz Boas convincingly wrote that neither intelligence nor other social characteristics were genetically hereditary, arguing therefore that there was no scientific basis to the belief that Anglo-Saxons were superior (Caffrey 1989). Boas argued that the social characteristics of an individual are shaped by environmental events, and not by genetic forces. The influence of Social Darwinism as a scientific explanation for the structure of society was put to rest by Boas and his colleagues; yet, the belief that racial minorities were inferior to whites continued in American society. Although it was influential, Boas's research did not overturn the government's "separate, but equal" legislation. Social segregation of racial minorities continued to increase throughout the United States and new theories were introduced to justify social exclusion practices. Biological theories were gradually replaced by cultural hypotheses that claimed racial minorities were culturally inferior and therefore should be segregated from Anglo-Saxons in order to avoid degeneration of the latter culture. In particular, cultural deprivation theories were used to justify school segregation of minority students and IQ testing provided the scientific rationale (Hendrick 1977; Wollenberg 1974, 1978). Though Boas also argued against using IQ tests to compare the intelligence of whites and racial minorities, testing continued to be the major scientific instrument used to uphold the cultural and intellectual superiority of Anglo-Saxons (Blum 1978). In the case of the Mexican Americans, their alleged inferiority was used, in part, to institutionalize school segregation in California during the 1920s.
The Impact of Ideologies of Anglo-Saxon Superiority and Educational Policies on Mexicans

Within the various versions of the Anglo-Saxon superiority thesis, Mexicans were included as part of the lower races, displaying inferior biological and cultural characteristics. Allegedly, Mexicans were inferior because they were the blend of two inferior races, the Spanish and the New World Indians (Gossett 1953, 1977; Surace 1982; Weber 1975). The blend of two inferior racial stocks—the argument went—had produced a third inferior race that was more feebleminded than either parent race. The defeat of the Mexicans in the Mexican-American War of 1846-48 was used to validate the racial theories of the 19th century (Surace 1982). Unlike the Spanish—who had been able to sustain their northern boundaries for over two centuries—the allegedly more inferior mestizo (hybrid) race, the Mexicans, lost control of the boundaries within a decade of the Mexican War of Independence. The process began in 1822 when the Mexican government permitted Anglo-American settlers to establish towns in Texas and New Mexico. Subsequently, Anglo settlements commenced their movements for cession. Ethnocentric historians cited Anglo-American success in the Texas Revolt of 1836 and the Mexican-American War to be evidence of the inferiority of the Mexican race (Camarillo 1984a). Mexicans were often characterized as "simple-minded," "carefree," "indolent," and "halfway between savagism and civilization" (Weber 1982:xvi). They were described as being unable to protect their territory from the ingenious Anglo-Americans, who had inherited from their Teutonic ancestors the abilities of self-government and warfare.

The expansion of the United States into the Southwest and the philosophy of Manifest Destiny were also rationalized by the use of religion. Anglo-American settlers alleged that it was God's will that their race populate the Southwest and Christianize the savage Mexican heathens (Newcombe 1986; Vigil 1987). As such, the annexation of the Southwest was justified by the widespread belief that God had forsaken the Mexicans because they were unworthy of keeping the valuable land. It was also alleged that it was God's will that the Mexican race be regenerated by United States intervention (Sanchez n.d.). Following the Mexican-American War, the "Black Legend" was used to folklorize anti-Mexican feelings. Using the "Black Legend" as the historical source, 19th-century historians such as Francis Parkman, George Bancroft, John Lothrop Motley, and William H. Prescott widely published anti-Mexican propaganda by writing that Mexicans were an inherently evil and inferior half-breed race (Sanchez n.d.). They alleged that Mexicans inherited an evil and cruel nature from the Spanish and a lazy and indolent character from the Mexican Indians.

In the case of California, the "Black Legend" served to justify the ill treatment of Mexicans during the gold rush and to strongly influence their subsequent position in American society (Camarillo 1984a; We-
ber 1975). Mexicans were often characterized as lazy and inferior to Anglo-Saxons. A typical statement of the period is recorded in the travel journal of T. J. Farnham:

That part of the population which by courtesy are called white, are the descendants of the free settlers from Mexico. Their complexion is a light clear bronze; not white, as they themselves quite erroneously imagine, and withal, not a very seemly color; not remarkably pure in anyway; a lazy color. . . . In a word, the Californians are an imbecile, pusillanimous, race of men, and unfit to control the destinies of that beautiful country. . . . The Old Saxon blood must stride the continent, must command all its northern shores . . . and in their own unaided might, erect the altar of civil and religious freedom on the plains of the Californias. [1855:359, 363]

The California judicial system also discriminated against Mexicans. In 1857, they were often barred from testifying in court against whites. Though section 394 of the Civil Practice Act of 1850 only excluded Chinese and Indians from testifying against whites, the Act was often extended to Mexicans because they were part Indian (Heizer and Almquist 1971). In sum, by 1861 Mexicans were transformed into a landless class, their rancho-pastoral economy destroyed, and by 1878 all traces of their political institutions were dismantled. Moreover, by 1870 the residential segregation of Mexicans became firmly entrenched in California's multiethnic structure and was viewed by Anglo-Americans as the natural division between an inferior and superior race.

Historian Alberto Camarillo (1984a) reported that the residential segregation of Mexicans began as early as 1850 in northern California and in southern California the process was completed by 1870. Using archival records, Camarillo attributes the early stages (19th century) of residential segregation of Mexicans to Anglo-American racial prejudice. Camarillo (1984a:24) states, "The old Mexican pueblos were viewed by most Americans as 'foreign,' 'backward,' and undesirable locations in which to live." In San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Cruz, and Monterey, Anglo-American settlers restructured the old pueblos by constructing new subdivisions in the towns and prohibiting Mexicans from moving to their zones. Throughout California, residential segregation of Mexicans was enforced by the use of racial harassment and violence, and, in the case of Los Angeles, housing covenant restrictions were also used (Hendrick 1977). Although in the early 1900s the intensification and sources of residential segregation of the Mexican population became more complex as a result of industrial and urban growth in California, one cannot ignore its evolutionary process. Mexicans were initially involuntarily segregated in the 19th century and the structure evolved into a pattern of residential ethnic isolation.

As a result of a gradual increase of Mexican immigration to the United States from the early 1900s to 1920, the size of the Mexican pop-
ulation increased. Paradoxically, the growth of the Mexican commu-
nity coincided with the intensification of all forms of social segrega-
tion. Wollenberg reports (1978:109), “The United States Census re-
corded a tripling of California’s Mexican and Mexican-American pop-
ulation during the twenties, from 121,000 to 368,000, but these figures
probably understate the actual growth.” Wollenberg (1974) also states
that wherever there was a sizable Mexican community, Anglos re-
sponded by demanding all forms of segregation. By the 1920s it was
common to segregate Mexicans in most public facilities including
swimming pools, theaters, schools, and restaurants (Camarillo 1984a,
1984b). Wollenberg also suggests that as the size of the Mexican pop-
ulation increased in California the school segregation of Mexican stu-
dents heightened. He reports that in 1928 there were 64 schools in
eight counties in Southern California that had 90 to 100% Mexican en-
rollments. A survey three years later indicated that about 9 of 10 school
districts practiced segregation in some form or another (Leis 1931;
cited in Gonzalez 1985). Hendrick (1977) also reported that in 1931,
85% of California schools surveyed by the state government reported
segregating Mexican students in some form. Case studies of California
cities also indicate that school segregation was widespread in the
1920s–1930s—for example, Santa Ana (Gonzalez 1985), Los Angeles
County (Gonzalez 1974), and San Diego County (Alvarez 1986, 1988).

During the 1920s the “separate, but equal” legislation passed in Cal-
ifornia in 1874 was repeatedly used by local school boards to segregate
Mexican students (Wollenberg 1974). Though the law’s intention was
to ensure that minority students be provided schooling in communi-
ties where there was white opposition to educating minorities, the
government did not require school boards to send minorities to white
schools. The construction of separate facilities for racial minorities was
sanctioned by the government and it allowed school boards to inter-
pret the letter of the law based on local school norms. Although the
public segregationist statutes did not directly mention Mexicans, they
were nevertheless segregated.4 The combination of racial ideologies,
community pressure to segregate Mexican students, sanctions by ed-
ucators, and “scientific” support by educational psychologists all con-
tributed to the segregation of Mexican students. Often, language and
cultural factors were raised as rationales for segregation. Gonzalez
(1985) notes, however, that such “educational justifications” were
smoke screens for racial discrimination.

Language was the most common rationale used to segregate Mexi-
can students. Allegedly, Mexican students were not permitted to at-
tend classes with Anglo students because they needed special instruc-
tion in English. The pedagogical rationale was that the limited—or
non-English-speaking—Mexican children would impede the aca-
demic progress of Anglo children. The racial overtones of these prac-
tices were blatantly seen when Mexican-American students who did
not speak Spanish were also forced to attend Mexican schools. The need to acculturate Mexican students in special Americanization classes was a second major excuse used to justify segregation. Mexican students were characterized as dirty, dull, un-Christian, and lacking any social etiquette. Therefore, the educational belief was that Mexicans needed special classes where they would learn to emulate their Anglo-American peers (Garcia 1979; Gonzalez 1990).

Paradoxically, the most pervasive method used to justify segregation of Mexican students was through the use of IQ tests (Hendrick 1977; Wollenberg 1978). Though Social Darwinism and the Teutonic origins theory had been discounted by the early 1920s, a number of scientists who were unconvinced that heredity had no influence on behavior continued to conduct research on mental capacity and racial differences. Lewis Terman, Professor of Education at Stanford University, presented many findings from racial studies of intelligence testing research supporting the view that blacks, Indians, and Mexican Americans were intellectually inferior to whites (Blum 1978). Other social scientists supporting Terman’s position provided further data, arguing that racial minorities were genetically inferior in intelligence, thus challenging the environmental explanations for low intellectual performance and academic achievement. William Sheldon of the University of Texas at Austin used the Cole-Vincent and Stanford-Binet tests to measure the mental ability of Mexican Americans in Texas (Wollenberg 1974). Sheldon concluded that Mexican students, as measured by IQ tests, only had “85% of the intelligence” of white students. Thomas Garth of the University of Denver administered the National Intelligence Test to over 1,000 Mexican-origin students in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado and discovered that the median IQ of those tested was 78.1 (the lowest of any study to that date). According to Garth, there was a connection between Mexican children’s heritage and their very low IQ, thus suggesting a racial interpretation.

Using the research of social scientists, school boards manipulated the data to support their racist beliefs. IQ testing became a common method to prove scientifically that Mexicans were intellectually inferior. Because it was common for Mexican students to score considerably lower than their white peers, school boards used test results, in part, to separate Mexican and Anglo students. It was rationalized that Anglo students must be instructed in separate schools in order to prevent them from getting behind. Mexican students were identified as slow learners needing special instruction in separate schools. Gonzalez (1974) also posits that IQ testing was the ideological foundation used to track minority students in schools and to provide them with an inferior education.5 Because the IQs of Mexican students allegedly indicated that they were “dull,” it was common for school boards to track Mexicans in the manual-skill training classes. In general, school boards saw educating Mexicans as a burden as well as a waste of time.
The Mexican community in California and elsewhere in the South- west did not stand idly by while its children were being segregated in inferior facilities (Alvarez 1986; Balderama 1982; San Miguel 1986; Wol- lenberg 1974). The highly touted Mendez v. Westminster case of 1947 officially ended the era of de jure segregation in California. Although the Mendez case helped to end de jure segregation over four decades ago, the contemporary segregation of Chicano students remains widespread and is on the rise. The reasons for current school segregation are complex (e.g., dramatic growth in the Chicano population; out-migration of Anglos from the inner city; white flight during desegre- gation implementation; economic difficulties many Chicanos have in buying homes in Anglo middle-class neighborhoods). Yet, one cannot ignore the historical and ideological “blueprint” of school segregation in helping shape present-day forms of segregation. We agree with Gonzalez (1985:62) who observes that the “creation of Mexican schools was the consequence of repressive segregation policies and not part of the regular process of forming community-based ‘neighborhood schools’.” In short, the current and widespread school segregation has a long taproot that goes back more than a half century. It would be remiss to try to understand present segregation without examining its historical foundation. We now turn to a case study of Santa Paula, Cal- ifornia, where the ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority will be shown to have structured the school segregation of Mexican students.

School Segregation of Mexican Students in Santa Paula, California

Santa Paula is a small, biracial, ethnically balanced Anglo and Chi- cano-Mexican community that is politically and economically domi- nated by Anglo-Saxon families who owe their wealth to citrus (Belk- nap 1968; Triem 1985). It is an agrarian nonmetropolitan city with a population of 26,000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983). By car, Santa Paula is located approximately one and a half hours northeast from downtown Los Angeles, and 15 minutes east of other major coastal cities with populations of over 100,000. The city serves as a bedroom community for many residents who live in Santa Paula but are em- ployed in the surrounding cities. Agriculture is the economic back- bone of this community, with lemons being the major crop. Citrus farms range from a few small 10-acre family plots to one large ranch corporation of over 4,000 acres. All of the growers are of European de- scent and the farm labor force is composed of Mexican immigrants.

In 1978 the State of California required the Santa Paula School Dis- trict to prepare a report on the ethnic composition of the elementary schools. A committee was formed and a report was completed, titled Desegregation Committee Report (Santa Paula School District Board of Trustees 1979). The committee concluded that the elementary schools reflected ethnic isolation and such school segregation resulted as part of a natural process reflecting income differentials between the white
and Mexican-origin groups. That is, the racial segregation of the Mexican students was attributed to de facto causes. Neither busing nor re-districting was recommended as a strategy to solve the city's school segregation problem. The committee stated:

We believe the alternative of busing and changing the district boundaries are not in the best interest of those involved. Although these alternatives may satisfy the “letter” of the law by shifting “numbers,” we feel the “spirit” of the law . . . will not be served. Nothing will improve if it’s just used to move children around.

It is our opinion that the problem we should be dealing with reached beyond racial/ethnic and cultural differences. We believe that it is to a great extent a socio-economic problem. [Santa Paula School District Board of Trustees 1979:4]

The committee did not make any attempts to desegregate the schools and the matter was left unattended (Menchaca 1987). Contrary to the findings of the committee, we conclude that Santa Paula’s current school segregation is—to a great part—the outcome of the conscious effort by the school board to segregate the Mexican students in the mid-1920s. School segregation in Santa Paula preceded other forms of social segregation and emanated from the belief that racial minorities should not mix with whites. Though in the 1980s any attempt to explain the causes of contemporary segregation has become more complex, the origins of school segregation in Santa Paula can be traced to racial ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority.

Santa Paula was founded by Spanish missionaries in the late 1700s, near an Indian rancheria called Sis’a. The mission fathers built a chapel and set up an outpost using the Chumash Indians as laborers to raise grain. Santa Paula was sparsely populated by Mexican vaqueros (cowboys), until a large number of Anglo-Saxon settlers arrived a few years after the Mexican-American War (Teague 1944). The newcomers were divided by economic differences into eastern capitalists and landless squatters. Two eastern capitalists arrived in Santa Paula to take advantage of the land act of 1851, which legally abolished the Mexican land grant system (Menchaca 1987). This facilitated the legal transfer of most of Santa Paula into their control. Unlike eastern capitalists, who by 1872 took legal possession of the conquered territory, landless squatters spread themselves throughout Santa Paula and took possession of the rest of the land. By 1890 Santa Paula became a lively Anglo-Saxon village and over 1,200 people were in residence (McFie 1944). Although 1893 marks Santa Paula’s growth as an important agricultural town in southern California, it is unclear how large the Mexican population was during this period. The Santa Paula Chronicle indicates, however, that there was a sizable population by 1913, as the Mexican tent settlements had grown into two neighborhoods derogatorily called “Mexican Town” and “Tiajuana” by the Anglo reporters (Santa Paula Chronicle 1913a, 1913b, 1913c, 1914a, 1914b).
Santa Paula's role as an important agricultural center and importer of Mexican labor increased as more citrus orchards were planted. In 1905 Mexican labor in Santa Paula picked 38% of California's lemons (Blanchard 1961). By 1925 this percentage had grown to 85% (Fraysier 1968). From the inception of Santa Paula's citrus industry, Mexicans were the preferred form of farm labor and were encouraged to settle permanently (Belknap 1968). In 1900, the president of the largest citrus ranch and nephew of the town's founder stated in a citrus report "Mexicans . . . proved to be fairly efficient workmen and it was considered advisable to retain this class of laborers to do certain kinds of work" (Fraysier 1968:10). Though Mexican settlers were viewed as a valuable commodity, the Anglo-Saxon community did not grant them equal status or plan to integrate them within their social activities. Mexicans were viewed as an inferior race harboring low moral ideals (Menchaca 1989).

Rigid ethnic occupational stratification became institutionalized by the early 1900s. Belknap (1968) describes this period as a castelike system in which Mexicans were only allowed to work as field pickers and Anglo-Saxons retained the better paying jobs or were self-employed as citrus ranchers. For example, besides farm labor, the oil industry was the only other source of employment in Santa Paula, but it was exclusively reserved for Anglos (Menchaca 1987). By 1902 there was also evidence of residential segregation based on ethnic differences (Santa Paula property tax records, 1902). The Anglo-Saxons lived around the downtown area, while the Mexicans resided in labor camps and in two Mexican neighborhoods. Ironically, religious segregation of the Mexican population was also common during this period and it provided the rationale for other forms of segregation. In retrospect, it appears that occupational, residential, and religious segregation predated school segregation of Mexican students and set forth the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon community.

An account of a meeting held in an Anglo-Presbyterian church documents the rationale of Anglo-Saxon superiority and delineates how the social segregation of Mexicans was formally institutionalized. This town meeting was reconstructed using the archives of the Santa Paula Chronicle. In 1913, as the citrus industry prospered, more Mexican labor was needed to harvest the orchards (Heil 1983; Triem 1985). The Anglo-Saxon community was unprepared, however, to deal with the newcomers. On one hand they needed Mexicans to harvest the fields and they welcomed their labor power, and on the other hand, they feared the impact Mexicans would have on their community. On the advent of the Mexican's arrival, Reverend Cliff reminded the 500 members in attendance that they were superior to all other cultures on earth. He also told the congregation that they were bestowed with the virtue of superiority because they were "God's Chosen People." Reverend Cliff proclaimed in his opening statement
God has had a great purpose in the establishment of every great nation that has ever existed upon the face of the earth. The Jewish People were established for the development of religion; the Greek nation for the development of art and philosophy; the Roman for the development of civil law; the Anglo-Saxon for the birth of a new civilization dominated by Christianity. To the American people God is entrusting the most stupendous task that he has ever given to any nation since the world began . . . the divisified [sic] temperate climate which is ours and the institutions which we have developed is a race of people unsurpassed in the world for general intelligence, shrewdness, and initiative. [Santa Paula Chronicle 1913d:1; emphasis added]

Continuing with the sermon, Reverend Cliff reminded the congregation that as part of God’s “divine destiny” Anglo-Saxons were made a superior race. God expects Anglo-Saxons to govern the “foreigners.” Thus Reverend Cliff justified the Anglo-Saxons’ dominance theologically. He states

God has not showered these blessings upon us for naught. He has a right to expect great things of a nation which he has so singally [sic] blessed and fitted to fulfill a large destiny. The task God has for us is to care for and Christianize the millions of foreigners who are crowding our shores . . . . The immigrant will soon be crowding us in California. We must be ready, not to proselyte [sic] among them, but to Christianize them in the fullest sense. [1913d:1]

Changing the tone of his sermon, Reverend Cliff shifted from ideology to practice. He told the congregation how they should behave toward the ignorant Mexicans, who, unlike the Anglo-Saxons, harbor low moral ideals.

Now as to the Mexican situation in our city. . . . Personally, I do not feel that my hands are clean. I am humiliated when I think that while these people with their low ideals and ignorance have been living by my side for the last year, I have done not one thing to uplift them. . . . We have talked about this matter a great deal but have utterly failed to make an adequate attempt to bring the power of the Gospel of the Son of God to bear upon the needs of this people. . . . The easiest thing to do with them is to send them back to Mexico. But we would be utterly failing in the mission for which God has built and prospered us as a people. We ought to call in the Home Missionary Superintendent of one of our churches and put the situation before him and offer to pay the expenses of a missionary whom he shall send to work with us in the uplift of these people. [1913d:1; emphasis added]

Overall, Reverend Cliff’s sermon did not reflect the racial hatred held by the eugenicists of the period, for he preached tolerance toward the “immoral” Mexicans. Rather than recommending that the Mexicans be sent back to their home country, Reverend Cliff appealed to the congregation’s Christian emotions and advised them instead to instill Christian morals upon Mexicans.
Immediately after the sermon, Reverend Cliff and the founding father of Santa Paula initiated a plan to uplift the low ideals of the Mexicans. The founding father—and largest employer of Mexican labor—arose and asked Reverend Cliff: "What can we do about it?" The Reverend replied, "We ought to establish religious services and leadership for them" (Zambrano 1982:5). At the end of the sermon a committee was formed, composed of the local pastors, the city father, businessmen, and the growers. An interdenominational committee was organized to finance the construction of a "Mexican Church." Ironically, the Christian tolerance of the Anglo-Saxon community only went so far. The intermingling of races was not permitted. Mexicans were to be Christianized on their own side of town and were not permitted to attend services in the Anglo-Saxon churches.

On 30 July 1915, the Anglo-Saxon pastors gathered in Mexican Town, and, in an ambiance of Christianity, built a wooden structure and called it the "Union Spanish Mission." In unpublished church records, the current pastor of the Santa Paula Union Spanish Mission reconstructed this historic event:

Most of the work on the chapel was voluntary and amateur. The pastors of the different churches in the city laid the floor and did the shingling. The pews were donated by the first Methodist Church of Santa Paula. Attorney [M. L. Crawford] donated his services in preparing the Articles of Incorporation of the Union Spanish Mission, which was accomplished on July 30, 1915, making it the first Protestant Spanish mission incorporated in the State of California. [Zambrano 1982:6]

Segregating Mexicans in the Union Spanish Mission commenced an era in which socially distancing Mexicans in the churches was considered a natural process between "inferior and superior races." Between 1915 and 1929 all the churches that were constructed in Santa Paula were segregated (Santa Paula property tax records 1902 to 1963; Menchaca 1987). Mexicans were only allowed to attend churches located in the Mexican zone. Paradoxically, the religious segregation of the Mexicans only served to sanction other forms of racial segregation and promoted an era of un-Christian Anglo-Saxon domination.

Paralleling the population explosion of the Mexican community throughout the Southwest, Santa Paula's population increased from 913 in 1920 to 3,250 in 1930, a 256% increase (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1922, Table 11, p. 122; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1961, Table 5, pp. 6–22). In 1920, Mexicans numbered 19% of Santa Paula's total population, and by 1930, 40%. The dramatic increase had an adverse effect on the Mexican community and exacerbated interethnic racial tension in Santa Paula. Increased immigration to Santa Paula ignited fears in part of the Anglo-Saxon community and the white supremacists expressed their discontent through a campaign of Ku Klux Klan (KKK) intimidation. KKK meetings were held in public and were used as repressive means to subordinate the Mexican community. Advertise-
ments such as the following appeared in the local newspaper, announcing KKK meetings: "Come see and hear the Ku Klux Klan in action, at Santa Paula, next Saturday night 8:00 p.m., follow the White robes" (Santa Paula Chronicle 1929a). As a means to further intimidate the Mexican community, KKK meetings were often held at the top of a hill that overlooked the Mexican zone. Ventura County historian Judith Triem described one such event, a KKK initiation meeting held in Santa Paula. Four hundred new members were initiated and asked to endorse the Klan’s philosophy:

The Ventura Daily Press for July 31, 1923 reported... "the Klan is an organization for all native born White Americans. It believes in the tenets of the Christian religion, White supremacy, protection of our White womanhood, preventing unwarranted strikes by foreign agitators, limitation on immigration, and that much needed local reform, law and order"... the Klan organized a membership drive in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, where over 400 new members were initiated. Klan activity took place throughout Ventura County with membership ceremonies held in the Ojai hills in 1923 and in the Santa Paula hills in 1924... the Ku Klux Klan held an initiation meeting in the hills behind Santa Paula on the night of June 24, 1924...

The Klan gradually fell out of favor in Ventura County, but discrimination, especially against Mexicans, remained, particularly in those communities throughout Southern California with large concentrations of Hispanic farm workers. [Triem 1985:126–127; emphasis added]

Though not all of Santa Paula’s Anglo residents agreed with the Klan’s violent philosophy, it was accepted as natural that Mexicans should be segregated from the Anglo community. During this period of growing Mexican migration there is evidence that the social segregation of the Mexican community increased.

Corroborating Wollenberg’s (1974) research, the present case study indicates that in the 1920s, wherever there was a sizable Mexican community, its social segregation intensified. Examination of Santa Paula property tax records and oral histories conducted by the first author confirmed this condition (Menchaca 1987). When the Mexican population grew in size, the neighborhoods of “Mexican Town and Tijuana” expanded toward the southeast, remaining within the eastside racially segregated zone (Santa Paula property tax records 1902 to 1932). The segregated zone doubled in size and the two barrios became known as the Eastside barrio (Keefe and Padilla 1987; Menchaca 1987, 1989). Linda, age 76, a self-appointed town historian, recalls her childhood memories living in the segregated Eastside. Social intimidation and employment conditions confined Mexicans to living in the Eastside. Linda recalled:

They used to tell us you live in that side and we live in this side. La calle 12 was the main division... The rednecks used to tell us that... the people from Missouri and the Ku Klux Klan... The ranchers owned the homes in the northeast. [Tate-McDowell] owned all those houses and that was for
the people whose parents worked in agriculture—which would be the lemon or the orange. . . . If you worked for them in the packing house or picking lemons that's where you would live. [Menchaca 1987:44; emphasis added]

During the height of the era of residential segregation school segregation intensified. Segregating Mexicans in Santa Paula schools was the most blatant form of Anglo racial prejudice. When, for the first time in Santa Paula’s history, a Mexican school was constructed in the Eastside barrio, the era of separate schools began.

Prior to the mass influx of Mexicans to Santa Paula, Mexican and Anglo students were allowed to attend school together (Menchaca 1987). From 1876 to 1925, Mexican children were encouraged to attend the same schools as Anglo students (Webster 1967). Santa Paula’s small population in the early 1900s required that Mexican and Anglo children attend the same schools, because Mexicans helped to raise the average daily attendance counts required to receive state funds. Though Mexican students were encouraged to enroll in school they were subjected to racial discrimination. Prior to attending class they were required to bathe in showers constructed especially for them. Moreover, they were segregated in separate classrooms or forced to attend classes in a bungalow located adjacent to the main school. Language problems were used as the rationale for segregation. They were identified as needing separate instruction in Spanish language classrooms (Belknap 1968; Webster 1967; Santa Paula Chronicle 1914c:1, 1919:1; Santa Paula School District Board of Trustees 1963).

As a result of the overall growth of Santa Paula’s population in the mid to late 1920s, Mexican students were no longer needed to augment the attendance figures required to receive state funds. The Anglo and Mexican student populations became large enough to require two state-funded schools. The South Grammar School increased to over 1,600 students and it became necessary to build larger school facilities. Thus, the growth of the student population was used as a smoke screen to initiate the era of separate schools in Santa Paula. Triem corroborates this report:

Segregated elementary school classrooms began as early as 1910 when Mexican children in Santa Paula were placed in separate classrooms. . . . Civil War in Mexico and increased agricultural production brought a huge influx of Mexicans. . . . It became necessary to build more schools, and segregation was underway on a large scale. Entire schools in Ventura County’s agricultural communities were Hispanic, and classrooms sometimes held as many as sixty pupils of all ages. [Triem 1985:127]

In 1925–26, the Anglo community in Santa Paula fully implemented its policy of “separate, but equal education.” That year, Canyon and Isabel Schools were constructed to accommodate the growing student body. In the new schools, however, Mexican and Anglo students were
no longer allowed to attend classes together. Mexicans were to remain in the segregated Eastside zone ("Mexican Town") and attend Canyon School, and the Anglo students were to go to Isabel School located in the white zone. The Santa Paula School District Development Report (1963) explicitly describes that in 1925, Canyon School (later renamed Barbara Webster) was built to accommodate about 1,000 Mexican students who were said to need their own school because of language and health problems. It is unclear what was meant by health problems (e.g., infectious diseases, unclean hygiene), nor does it explain why English-speaking Mexican students were also sent to the Mexican school. Moreover, Canyon School was allegedly built because of an increase in the Mexican agricultural population; once again no explanation is offered as to how the changing ethnic demography necessitated segregated school facilities. The report states

In 1925, the Canyon School, 345 North 11th Street, later renamed Barbara Webster was built... The agricultural interests of the area-citrus, walnuts, etc., required the services of many workers. In the early 20s many Mexican families moved to Santa Paula from Mexico to do this work. Since they spoke no English and had many health problems, the Canyon School was built with their specific needs in mind... At the time of the peak enrollment, there were 950 students in grades Kindergarten through eight. [Santa Paula School District Board of Trustees 1963:7]

Not only were Mexican children segregated but they were subjected to inferior schooling. For example, 950 Mexican students were enrolled in a schoolhouse of eight classrooms, two bathrooms, and an office (Santa Paula School District Board of Trustees 1963:7), while 667 Anglo students attended Isabel School which had 21 classrooms a cafeteria, a training shop, and administrative offices (Webster 1967:34). The school board moved the Mexican students to Canyon School, which was located next to the orchards in Mexican Town, and transferred the Anglo students to the spacious and modern Isabel School. Webster describes this event:

In 1925... Canyon School was built... in the Mexican section of the city, with their needs in mind. Classes were developed especially for the Spanish-speaking children... there were eight classrooms, two restrooms and an office, a few years later a bungalow was moved onto the grounds and used as a cafeteria... Isabel was constructed in the years of 1925 and 1926, at the corner of fourth and Harvard streets. It boasted of twenty-one classrooms, an auditorium, a cafeteria and administrative facilities. [Webster 1967:28–34]

The segregation of Santa Paula’s Mexican students followed a common pattern throughout California. As the size of the Mexican population increased in the late 1920s school segregation became widespread, sharply increasing by the early 1930s. In 1931, the California
state government reported that 85% of California schools segregated Mexican students in some form (Hendrick 1977). Those school boards not choosing to segregate Mexican students in separate schools generally relied on at least isolating them in separate classrooms. There is also evidence that in the towns near Santa Paula, school segregation was practiced. For example, Carpinteria, a coastal town, approximately 40 miles from Santa Paula, segregated Mexican students and other racial minorities. In 1929, during the Great Depression the Santa Paula Chronicle commented on the school segregation practices of Santa Paula and Carpinteria:

School authorities of Carpinteria have caused considerable interests in all parts of the state with their decision in declining to accept the ruling of Attorney General U. S. Webb that they cannot segregate Mexican, Chinese, Japanese and Indian children. . . . The Carpinteria school board takes the ground that children of Mexican born parents are Indians. . . . In Santa Paula the Mexican situation is handled in a tactful manner, school authorities believe. Many of the Mexicans are going to school in the Canyon and Ventura schools situated in their own sections of this city . . . the school situated in their own districts take care of the majority of the Mexican children, and special courses of study have been arranged for them. They are said to be happy in their own schools. [Santa Paula Chronicle 1929b:6]

This report suggests that, unlike the Carpinteria school board which segregated Mexicans because they classified them as Indians, the Santa Paula school board did not use race as their rationale and thus was able to circumvent the law. It appears that because the state of California had ruled that Mexicans were white, the Carpinteria school board used the "incorrect" rationale to legally segregate Mexicans.

In addition to forced segregation of Mexican students in nearby Carpinteria, segregation was also practiced in the coastal city of Oxnard, which was only 15 miles away. In a Los Angeles Times article (1975) it was reported how in the early 1930s the Oxnard school board pursued a deliberate policy of racial segregation in the elementary schools. The school board in Oxnard used the following tactics to implement systematic, forced segregation of Mexican students: (1) building of a "Mexican school" in the colonia, (2) manipulating attendance zones, and (3) staggering of playground periods and dismissal times so as not to allow the Mexican and Anglo students to mix (i.e., in the one school in which Mexican and Anglo attended together). The Los Angeles Times article reported that by 1970 (when a desegregation law suit was filed) three of Oxnard's elementary schools were 95% or more minority in enrollment and three were 75% or more Anglo. Judge Pregerson, who heard the court case, ruled that the 1970 conditions of segregation in Oxnard were inextricably tied to the historical source—that is, the well planned scheme of forced segregation pursued in the 1930s.

The deliberate segregation of Mexican students by Anglo-dominated school boards in the adjacent communities of Santa Paula, Car-
pinteria, and Oxnard was not an isolated administrative practice. González' (1985) case study of segregation of Mexican students in Santa Ana (Orange County) parallels the present case study of Santa Paula in several ways. First, in both cities the discussion of segregation first appeared in 1913, a time, as Gonzalez notes, that coincides with the incipient phase of Mexican migration to the Southwest. Second, in both Santa Ana and Santa Paula the school boards demonstrated a willingness to organize their schools and school programs to accommodate the labor needs of the growers. Third, both communities employed a common strategy to develop their dual school systems—the building of separate school facilities for the Anglo and Mexican children.

The Mendez v. Westminster case (Orange County) of 1947 officially ended the era of de jure segregation for Mexican students in California. In the case of Mendez, Judge McCormick ruled that the Mexican students were not being separated on valid educational grounds, but because of "the Latinized or Mexican name of the child" (Wollenberg 1978:128). On 10 December 1946 the Ninth Federal District Court of Appeals in San Francisco upheld McCormick's decision after the Westminster school board appealed the case. Once again the court ruled that California law did not specifically provide for segregation of Mexican children and therefore the Westminster school board violated the Mexican students' rights under the Fourteenth Amendment. Though the era of de jure segregation ended for Mexican students, they continued to be the most highly segregated ethnic group throughout California (Hendrick 1977).

In the case of Santa Paula, after the Mendez v. Westminster ruling the school segregation of Mexican students increased over time. In 1952, two new schools were constructed to accommodate the growing elementary school age population (see Table 1). Grace Thille School was located in the heart of the Eastside barrio and Glen City in the Anglo zone. The rationale for building the schools in those zones is unclear, but it appears to be associated with the town's population growth and persistent beliefs in residential segregation. Not until 1953 did the residential segregation of the Mexican community begin to break down gradually in Santa Paula. That year marked the first time in the town's history that a Mexican was allowed to buy property in the Anglo zone (Menchaca 1987; Santa Paula property tax records 1953). Furthermore, in 1957, 127 Mexicans bought homes along the Mexican and Anglo residential borders (Santa Paula property tax records 1957). The location of these homes inside the Anglo residential border indicated that ethnic mixing was slowly being accepted by the white residents. By the early 1960s, the majority of the Mexican community continued to reside in the Eastside barrio, but as Santa Paula's population increased, new neighborhoods were constructed along the Anglo-Mexican residential border, and this area attracted a large number of Mexicans.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Year established</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Ethnic makeup of school during founding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ventura Street School</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Grammar School</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>Ethnically mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKeveit</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Webster</td>
<td>1925/26</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabel</td>
<td>1925/26</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Thille</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen City</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanchard</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Ethnically mixed</td>
<td>Ethnically mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thelma B. Bedell</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Therefore, to accommodate the changing residential patterns, two new schools were constructed in the early 1960s. Blanchard School was constructed in 1960 and it was located on the Anglo-Mexican border zone, while Thelma B. Bedell School was constructed in 1963 and was located in the interior of the Anglo zone (see Table 1) (Santa Paula School District Board of Trustees 1963).

As previously discussed, in 1978 the state of California mandated that the Santa Paula School District undertake a study to determine the extent of racial and ethnic isolation of its schools and to provide a feasible plan to alleviate the segregation of its minority students.7 Based on the committee’s 1979 State of California Department of Education Desegregation Report (Santa Paula School District Board of Trustees 1979) (hereafter referred to as Desegregation Report), it was concluded that of the district’s six elementary schools, three were segregated (Glen City, Blanchard, and Grace S. Thille), two were “in danger of becoming racially and ethnically isolated” (Barbara Webster and McKeveit), and one school was within the acceptable percentage range of being racially and ethnically balanced (Thelma B. Bedell).8 The Desegregation Report also concluded that “according to general community attitude,” three schools were considered “minority schools” (Grace S. Thille, 90% minority enrollment; McKeveit, 82%; Barbara Webster, 81%). In short, by its own admission the Santa Paula School District in the 1978–79 school year was a highly segregated school district. Based on the most recent data available the vast majority of Chicano and Anglo students in the Santa Paula School District continue to attend racially and ethnically segregated schools. Data from the California Basic Educational Data System (California State Department of Education 1985) show that three of the six elementary schools are very high-density
Menchaca/Valencia  School Segregation of Mexican Students

Chicano, one is high-density Anglo, and two are borderline segregated. In fact, the three schools that were dubbed "minority schools" in the 1979 Desegregation Report have increased their minority (that is, Chicano) enrollment substantially. The 1979 percentages for Grace S. Thille, McKeveett, and Barbara Webster were 90%, 82%, and 81% respectively. In 1985, the minority enrollment percentages for these segregated schools had climbed to 96%, 88%, and 89%, respectively.

Conclusion

Drawing from anthropological perspectives and approaches, the preceding case study indicates that the origin of Santa Paula's school segregation was strongly structured by ideologies of Anglo-Saxon superiority, which in turn encouraged and justified discriminatory segregated racial practices. Our thesis of Anglo domination and control—which originated in academic, religious, and governmental spheres—contends that the late 19th-century racial theories of Anglo-Saxon superiority set the foundation for the broad social segregation of Mexicans. In turn, a major manifestation was the institutionalization of school segregation in California. What transpired in Santa Paula during the early 1900s with respect to specific social segregation experiences of its Mexican community members cannot, of course, be generalized to other towns and cities in California. Yet, the case study of Santa Paula can, in part, serve as a basis for understanding the broader ideological and institutional processes of how Anglo-Saxon domination and control helped shape and maintain school segregation of Mexican students.

A major conclusion we wish to draw is that although contemporary school segregation of Chicano students is complexly related to social, economic, and demographic factors over time, one should not ignore the historical blueprint of forced segregative practices of the early 1900s. Although the knot between past and present school segregation of Chicanos cannot be snuggly tied, there is ample evidence from California case studies that segregative policies of the early 1900s have had long-term effects. Despite the variability among the communities of California, segregation of Chicano students today can generally be said to have been strongly influenced by Anglo-Saxon ideologies of the past. To the present day, schools in the Chicano barrios continue to experience the deleterious impact of the "separate but equal" policies passed by previous generations.

There are at least two implications that result from this study—one theoretical, one applied. First, the present investigation advances our knowledge that the thesis of Anglo-Saxon control and dominance of Mexican-origin people has been manifested in different institutionalized social relationships of which school segregation is but one. Within a broad theoretical framework, the educational segregation of Chicano students represents one aspect of such social oppression. What we
have attempted to do is identify the hegemonic ideologies that helped drive the Anglo-Saxon control and dominance thesis.

The application of this study relates to the fact that Chicanos and other Latino students now have the unfortunate distinction of being the most segregated group in the nation. Given the current and future dramatic increase in the Chicano school-age population, segregation is predicted to intensify. It is likely that desegregation lawsuits will also increase. The present study provides some semblance of a model for plaintiffs to gain knowledge about the history of school segregation in their respective communities. The use of ethnographic methods such as interviews, archival research, analysis of property records, and the chronological reconstruction of the foundation of schools can provide some historical insights as to how school segregation unfolded over time in present-day Chicano barrios. The legacy of records from those who favored segregation depicts a fairly clear picture of how the process emerged and was maintained. The foundation of school segregation of Mexican students in California represents another example of long-standing racial discrimination in the United States.

Notes

1. When speaking of the history of school segregation, we prefer the term Mexican, as it was typically used at that time. Mexican refers to Mexican-origin students, either born in the United States or Mexico.

2. One point that can be made immediately about ideology is that there is no consensus among scholars as to what ideology is. Given the inexhaustible nature of ideology, it is useful to search for that common ground shared by scholars who have done extensive thinking about it. With this in mind, we find the work of Carlsnaes (1981) helpful. In the present study, Carlsnaes’s “mobilizing” notion of ideology is adopted as a central element of conceptualization. That is, ideology can best be understood if it is conceptualized within the context of how it influences actual social practice. Carlsnaes draws on Lenin’s “explanations of the politicizing nature and function of ‘ideology’ as a belief system involving mass action and organization” (p. 245; emphasis added).

3. Though the eugenicists did not recommend the sterilization of the southern and eastern Euro-Americans they speculated that these ethnic groups were inferior and nature would take its course by limiting their biological proliferation and entrance into Anglo-Saxon institutions.

4. The targeted groups of segregationist laws were black, American Indian, Chinese, and Japanese.

5. Rafferty (1988) argues in a provocative article that historians have greatly exaggerated the role that IQ testing had on ability grouping placements and segregation of Mexican and other minority students in Los Angeles in the 1920s and 1930s. Although Rafferty’s thesis is illuminating from a case study
perspective, we believe it is misleading in the sense that she criticizes other historians who she states argued that IQ tests were used exclusively for educational placement. Our reading of the same material indicates that such historians did speak to other exclusionary criteria than just IQ testing.

6. The U.S. Bureau of the Census (1983) indicates that the Mexican-origin population in Santa Paula constitutes 50% of the total population; whites constitute the other 50%.

7. In 1978–79, the Santa Paula School District used a common statistical formula to determine if a particular school was segregated. The district’s average of minority students in kindergarten through grade 6 (in this case, 67%) served as the anchor-point. A 15% plus or minus the district average identified the ceiling or floor range points to determine racial/ethnic balance or isolation (i.e., 67 ± 15%). Any school in the district that had a minority student body of 52% to 82% was considered racially/ethnically balanced. Any school with 52% or less or greater than 82% was considered segregated.

8. The Santa Paula School District (kindergarten through grade 6) in the 1978–79 school year had a combined ethnic minority enrollment of 67% and an Anglo enrollment of 33%. Of the total minority enrollment, approximately 97% were Chicano students.

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