

# UC Santa Barbara

## Spaces for Difference: An Interdisciplinary Journal

### Title

Foreword

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## Foreword

New parents often wonder if their second child will be as wonderful and life changing as their first child. And, so it is with a new journal—will it be able to achieve the same level of quality as its inaugural issue? Can it maintain or even exceed the number of innovative ideas that appeared in the excitement of a new beginning? This second issue of *Spaces for Difference: An Interdisciplinary Journal* proves that the second child is indeed just as exciting and perhaps even more thought-provoking than the first. The conversation between disciplines around topics of the intersectionality of human experience will indeed grow and expand with the publication of these five articles. They push the exploration of critical issues across national boundaries and deeper into the historical roots of contemporary problems of racism and discrimination. They challenge the hegemonic nature of traditional academic publishing by defying disciplinary boundaries both within and across the works of these committed scholars.

In the journal's first piece, Kelly N. Graves, James M. Frabutt, Emily R. Cabaniss, Martha J. Gathings, Mary H. Kendrick, and Margaret B. Arbuckle apply a qualitative approach to understand the public health statistics that document the disparities in the incarceration rates of minority youth. Through focus group interviews with youth who are ensnared in the juvenile justice system, they reveal the depth of disengagement such youth feel from their communities and significant adults, and how the court system reinforced their feelings of disconnection and hopelessness. At the same time, these young people crave a connection with caring adult role models. The authors suggest how their participatory action research approach can help to design programs *with* youth rather than *for* youth.

In "Finding Space Beyond Variables: An Analytical Review of Urban Space and Social Inequalities", Lauren Joseph expands geographers' new emphasis on how spatial analysis helps to understand the social inequities by bringing in the work of other social scientists who may not see themselves as working from a spatial perspective. She provides an analytical framework that combines three theoretical perspectives with examples from each. Through this framework she shows how multiple perspectives better illuminate the ways in which "social inequalities are reproduced in the urban sphere."

The on-going tragedy of Hurricane Katrina provides Rachel D. Goodman and Cirecie A. West-Olatunji with a platform to argue why traditional psychological theories of trauma and stress must consider culturally relevant theories of resilience. Through an exploration of the African-American experience in New Orleans and a case study of one person, "Traumatic Stress, Systemic Oppression, and Resilience in Post-Katrina

New Orleans” concludes with a call for training models for clinicians who must learn to work across cultural boundaries with a systemic perspective on the human experience.

Richard R. Verdugo’s historical case study of Fabens, Texas argues that the educational system has served to perpetuate the social stratification in Fabens and by extension many other communities in the United States. Through analysis of structural and ideological mechanisms, he challenges the meritocratic view of schooling. A survey of parents, students and teachers shows how these ideologies and structural mechanisms were reflected in the social consciousness of the participants. Although the data were from a 1969 survey, they resonate with the current debate that rages around the implementation of No Child Left Behind, a program that has its roots in Texas but has become a dominant discourse in national educational policies.

Finally, in “Interdisciplinary Ways Of Knowing: A Collaborative Teacher Education Project For Culturally Responsive Pedagogy In Rural White America”, Peggy Laughlin and Lydia Nganga describe how they have been able to successfully prepare White rural teachers for a career in teaching that will inevitably take them into classrooms with diverse populations of students, given the demographic changes taking place in American society. They argue that culturally responsive and critical pedagogy, important perspectives for pre-service teachers, benefit from the interdisciplinary collaboration of teacher educators who themselves debate the nature of equitable instruction.

As in its first issue, this latest issue of *Spaces for Difference: An Interdisciplinary Journal* calls for social action that builds from the lived experiences of members of society as well as the multidisciplinary perspectives of researchers. The common themes but different case studies demonstrate why a journal such as this is needed to bring together the expertise of professionals who too often stay within the boundaries mandated by both universities and society.

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