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Latinas Straddling the Prison Pipeline through Gender (Non) Conformity

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Latinas Straddling the Prison Pipeline

through Gender (Non) Conformity

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in Chicana and Chicano Studies

by

Jacqueline Caraves

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Latinas Straddling the Prison Pipeline

through Gender (Non) Conformity

by

Jacqueline Caraves

Master of Arts in Chicana and Chicano Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Leisy Janet Abrego, Chair

Using a Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) framework, this study centers the

experiences of four formerly incarcerated Latinas in the juvenile justice system. The project

takes a holistic look at the lives of the girls and their trajectory into the prison pipeline and their

transition out of the pipeline as young women making sense of themselves and their place in the

world. As women of color, they are overrepresented in the prison pipeline and face greater

vulnerabilities than other girls and their male of color counterparts (Nanda 2012). Using a case

study approach, this paper considers how gender performance and gender (non) conformity of

racialized Latinas shape their trajectory into and out of the pipeline. Findings suggest that the

transgression of prescribed female gender roles is what often funneled girls into the juvenile

justice system. Yet, their gender transgressions, in the form of aggressiveness and violence, were often their means of coping with physical and emotional violence upon them. The girls in this study often move between non-conformity to gender conformity as a means to navigate out of the prison system.

This thesis of Jacqueline Caraves is approved.

Robert C. Romero

Laura S Abrams

Leisy Janet Abrego, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

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Introduction

I started being bad because I missed my mom you know. Like, you know, this side of me

just started coming out… The judge told me, well told my grandma that me being locked

up and me being in a placement will make me better – you know I'll stop being rowdy

and stuff like that.

        -Gabriela, Age 19

Yeah, I tried to really straighten up my life…when I was in jail the main thing I seen was

I was repeating the same steps I seen as my mother taking – I see her… she was dealing

with substance abuse, with drugs, alcohol. She ended up running away…I see myself

trained, like I almost trained myself into running away like my mother and I couldn't do

it [anymore].

        -Sara, Age 18

As the epigraphs above note, both Gabriela and Sara were placed into the "prison

pipeline" for enacting behavior that was not typical under the hegemonic stereotype of women as

obedient and submissive. Gabriela was acting out, and labeled as "rowdy" for getting into fights

at school, which stemmed from her sense of loss due to her mother's deportation to Mexico for

drug use. Similarly, Sara continuously ran away from home and foster care placements,

following the coping mechanisms of her mother who also ran away when faced with physical

and verbal abuse. While jail time attempted to normalize or tame their behavior, both Gabriela

and Sara struggled to get their basic needs met inside and outside of the juvenile justice system.

In the United States, girls and women are among the fastest growing prison population.

This is happening simultaneously as Latina/os grow to become the largest ethnic population in

the U.S, followed by Asian Americans. The two groups' experiences in the country, however,

are very different. While Asian Americans are often labeled as the "model minority" and are pipelined into higher education (Ochoa, 2013), Latina/os are the fastest growing minority ethnic group within incarceration facilities, including: federal and state prisons, territorial prisons, local jails, immigration facilities, military facilities, and juvenile facilities (Morin, 2009, p. 18)[1]. In the incarceration of Latinas/os, criminality is often tied to immigrant status through both public policy and mainstream discourse (Abrego, 2006; Morin, 2008; Santa Ana, 2013). Thus, incarceration for undocumented individuals, which is often racialized as a Latina/o experience, could result in deportation from the U.S., which for many people leads to the permanent separation from families.

Like Latina/os in general, the young women in this study face unique challenges due to the context of the War on Drugs. Under the War on Drugs, policies targeted poor people of color, and especially women of color, who often sought out illegal narcotics as a means for coping with their realities as outliers in a hostile and patriarchal society (Richie 1996; Diaz-Cotto 2006). Those impacted by these larger structural forces of the "carceral state" are often the most stigmatized and marginalized individuals from urban, low-income communities (Roberts, 1998; Wacquant 2009; Meiners, 2011). The term "carceral state" moves beyond the more familiar concept of the "prison industrial complex," which emphasizes the building of prisons and detention centers for economic growth in a deindustrialized society, and further highlights the, "multiple and intersecting state agencies and institutions that have punishing functions and effectively regulate poor communities: child and family services, welfare/workfare agencies, public education, immigration, health and human services, and more" (Meiners, 2011, p. 549).

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[1] Black males and females are the most overrepresented in the overall prison population. Although the rate of overall incarceration for all genders has declined, males make up the largest prison population for all races and ethnicities while the incarceration rate for women in prison increased by 1.5 times the rate of men from 1980 to 2011 (Sentencing Project, 2011).

The carceral state is not limited to adults. For school age children and adolescents, scholars have coined the "prison pipeline," as the "system of local, state and federal education and public safety policies that pushes students out of school and into the criminal justice system" (NYCLU) that targets mostly youth of color. Further, low-income women or girls who act outside of the bounds of the hegemonic notion of "womanhood," which stereotypes women as warm, nurturing, compassionate, passive and receptive (Richie 1996; 2012), are often met with harsher and more serious punishments in the legal system, and now in the educational system (Simmons, 2009; Schaffner, 2006).

The War on Drugs and the carceral state have directly shaped the experiences of the participants in this study. Participants experienced separation of their families and loss due to drug usage, incarceration, and/or deportation of their mothers. The case studies show the racial, ethnic, and intergenerational condition of growing up in the era of mass incarceration. My purpose is to demonstrate that the structures in which the girls in this study grew up had a direct impact into their funneling and transition into and out of the prison pipeline as young women. Further, I argue that their mothers or families are not to blame for their entrance into the prison system; rather, the blame should be placed on the growth and expansion of the carceral state and the policing and criminalization of women's behavior (Richie, 1996; Diaz Cotto, 2006). In addition, the Latinas in this study are not just victims of the carceral state but are also survivors. Although they have been met with harsh conditions in their homes, in their communities, and through their familiarity with the prison system, they are resilient against these odds.

Using a case study approach, I take a holistic look at the lives of the girls and their trajectory into the prison pipeline and their transition out of the pipeline as young Latinas making sense of themselves and their place in the world. As women of color, they are overrepresented in

the prison pipeline and face greater vulnerabilities than other girls and their male of color counterparts (Nanda, 2012). Given this context, the primary question driving this work is: how does gender performance and gender (non) conformity of racialized Latinas shape their trajectory into and out of the prison pipeline?

Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) frameworks, this study centers on the experiences of Latinas, while acknowledging their individual intersectiontalities of race, class, gender, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender performance and conformity which inform and shape their experiences. CRT and LatCirt frameworks require a holistic approach in understanding how Latinas enter the prison pipeline through a focus on the macro-level structures that have greatly impacted their home lives, communities, and their interaction with the law.

Background to Mass Incarceration

The United States prison population has skyrocketed since the War on Drugs began in 1968 under President Richard Nixon (See Figure 1). Historically, criminal justice policy on drug use focused on prevention, intervention and rehabilitation, yet the drug war rhetoric shifted that focus to one that used law enforcement to punish the use of illicit drugs (Diaz-Cotto, 2006, p. 12). In the first decade of the War on Drugs, the number of women in prison for drug offenses alone grew by 888%, while that of non-drug offenses grew by 129% (Allard, 2012, p.48). Although men continue to be the largest sector of the prison population, incarceration for women has grown at twice the rate of men since the beginning of the War on Drugs three decades ago (Sentencing Project, 2011). Factors that contribute to the unequal incarceration of people of color include: "racism, excessive police patrolling of poor and working class neighborhoods, criminal laws that target the type of crimes committed by these social classes, inadequate legal

representation and the hardship imposed by unnecessary and sometimes excessive bail," and

especially for Latina/os language barriers prevent equal access to the law (Diaz Cotto, 2006,

p.17). While whites in the U.S. account for 80% of users of consumer drugs, they are more likely

to receive lower sentences in comparison to people of color for similar crimes (Diaz Cotto, 2006,

p. 20). Further, since the implementation of the War on Drugs more women of color, including

Latinas, are doing drugs and getting arrested for it (Diaz Cotto, 2006). The evidence reveals that

this is a racist drug war policy: Blacks and Latina/os are still disproportionately affected. While

making up 30% of the U.S. population in 2010, both groups together, accounted for 59% of the

prison population (Sakala, 2014).

As an extension of the War on Drugs, "tough on crime" legislation that began in the

1980's increased incarceration rates through longer and harsher sentencing laws, such as:

mandatory sentencing[2], three-strikes[3], truth-in-sentencing[4], and zero-tolerance[5] laws. Also,

rhetoric of the "super-predator" was quickly adopted during the era of tough on crime policies

during the War on Drugs. Punishment instead of rehabilitation became the norm for serious and

violent crime committed by adults; and for juveniles who committed similar crimes, it meant

being tried as adults, and doing longer sentences in adult prisons (Beale, 2003; See Figure 2).

Consequently, juvenile-justice was also impacted by similar punitive policies faced by adults at

the time. In 1995, Political Scientist John DiIulio's coined the term, "super-predator." In his

article "The Coming of the Super-Predator," he defined super-predator(s) as highly violent and

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[2] For certain crimes, especially drug offenses, offenders are required to serve a minimum time in prison, limiting judicial discretion.
[3] For persons who are "habitual" offenders and have more than two felonies on their record, the third requires that a life sentence be in place.
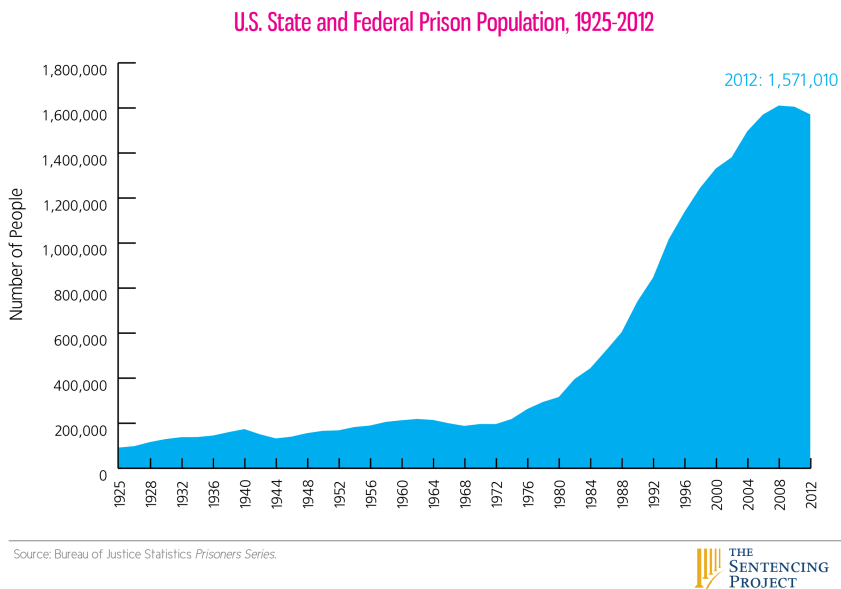[4] Requires offenders to be told the "truth" about their sentence and they must serve the whole sentence. If they are sentenced to 10 years, they cannot do less time for good behavior.
[5] Mandatory punishing for certain infractions precluding any possible discretion of the court.

dangerous youth from poor urban areas coming from bad families and who "have absolutely no respect for human life and no sense of the future . . .These are stone-cold predators!" (p. 23). Ultimately, these policies aimed to replace any type of prevention or rehabilitation with punishment, thus targeting and criminalizing mostly young men of color in poor urban areas.

During this time, the practice of punishment over rehabilitation and intervention began to take shape in the public educational system through the incorporation of Zero-Tolerance policies. Zero-tolerance policies in place to date, serve to discipline student behavior through more extreme and punitive measures such as suspension, expulsion or the involvement of law enforcement, which, in the past, would have been handled through internal school measures (Watson & Edelman, 2012, p. 3)**.** It is important to note that the overall juvenile incarceration rate is at an all time low since its peak in the 1980's. Yet punitive measures in schools currently exist, and given their intersections with poverty, racism, and criminalization, poor students of color are disproportionately targeted by such punishing policies (Meiners 2011; Simmons 2009).

U.S. State and Federal Prison Population, 1925-2012

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics *Prisoners Series.*

THE SENTENCING PROJECT

Figure 1: Fact Sheet: Trends in U.S. Corrections (2014)

Number of Youth Held in Adult Prisons and Jails, 1985-2011

Legend: ■ Youth in Adult Prisons ■ Youth in Adult Jails

Sources: Austin, J., Johnson, K. D., & Gregoriou, M. (2000). *Juveniles in Adult Prisons and Jails: A National Assessment*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Assistance; Bureau of Justice Statistics *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear Series*; Bureau of Justice Statistics Prisoner Series. Strom, K. J. (2000). *Profile of State Prisoners under Age 18, 1985–1997*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

THE SENTENCING PROJECT
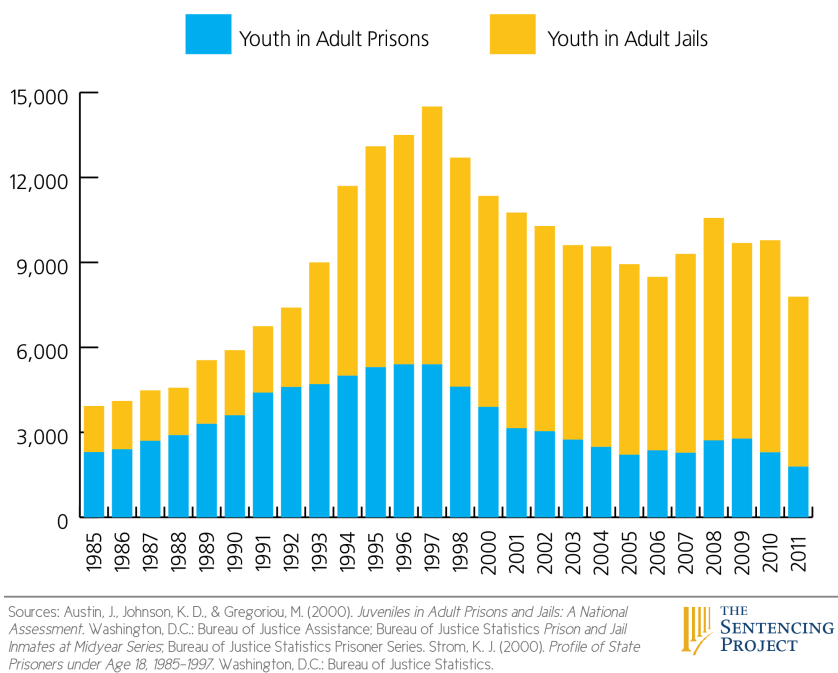
Figure 2: Fact Sheet: Trends in U.S. Corrections (2014)

Latinas/os in the U.S.

Latinas/os are the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States. According to the 2010 Census, between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic or Latina/o population grew by 43%, four times the growth of the total population, and now make up over 16 percent of the total U.S. population (Ennis, Rios-Vargas, Albert, 2011). According to the Center for American Progress, Latinas make up 16% of the total female population in the U.S. and are projected to become close to 27% of the female population in 2050, making them the largest minority population in the country (Jackson, 2013). Moreover, as of 2011, close to one fourth of the total Latina/o population is under the age of 18 (U.S. Census, 2011). As a significant block of our growing population, it is important to understand the experiences of Latinas because research centering incarcerated Latinas in juvenile justice is underdeveloped (Schaffner, 2008).

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Girls and Juvenile Incarceration: Transgressing Gender Roles

In the U.S., juvenile detention for both girls and boys is at an all time low since the 1980's. Similar to adult incarceration, boys make up the largest percentage of the juvenile justice system at about 85%, while girls account for the most rapidly growing population in the system (Watson & Edelman, 2012). For boys and girls, various pathways into the juvenile justice system exist, yet compared to boys who are mostly arrested for violent crime (murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault), girls are disproportionately placed into the juvenile justice system for status offenses. Status offenses are defined as crimes based only on status as a minor, such as running away, violating curfew, and truancy (Chesney-Lind & Shelden 2004; Schaffner 2008; Nanda 2012; Sherman 2012; Watson & Edelman 2012). These patterns suggest that girls entering the criminal justice system face structural gender bias and oppression in law enforcement and in the ways they are criminalization. Girls are often considered to be more vulnerable and in need of protection, as a result they are more harshly punished when they committ minor crimes such as running away from home or violating curfew (Caldwell 2010; Sherman 2012). Whereas boys are less likely to be places in juvenile hall or punished for running away from home. In this way, understanding the girls' context within greater patriarchal society is crucial to the study of their incarceration and criminalization.

While status offenses are the leading reason for girls' entry into the juvenile justice system, larceny (theft) and aggravated assault follow close behind (Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, 2004). Yet in all cases, whether status crimes or otherwise, girls who enter the juvenile justice system face harsher and longer sentences for lower-level crimes than their male peers (Watson & Edelman 2012; Sherman, 2012; Nanda, 2012). As marginalized "others" living within the legal system of patriarchy that centers males, girls' gender identity becomes suspect once they enact

behaviors that transgress their expected gender norms. Any behavior read as more aggressive than "ladylike" is especially targeted with harsher punishment—thus girls acting like boys, or performing "male behavior" or what are perceived to be masculine behaviors, are often treated more harshly than boys, which eventually creates disparate treatment of girls (Nanda 2012, 1529-1530; Sherman 2012). This behavior is not limited to criminal behavior, but also entails basic "male" traits such as being independent and assertive. In this way, incarceration is more punishing for girls acting outside of the hegemonic notions of womanhood—not being warm, passive, nurturing or receptive enough becomes a crime that is punishable for girls (Richie, 1996; 2013).

In our society, gender refers to the hegemonic notions of masculine men and feminine women (Butler, 1990, p.33). Females are expected to enact girly or womanly behavior as stated above, as being warm, passive and nurturing; men are expected to be more cold, aggressive and independent. Once those expectations are transgressed, meaning that a man or woman does not subscribe to those hegemonic notions of their biological gender, then they have transgressed, or broken the moral rule of law—which creates a space for punishment of one's gender performance. Further, a gender nonconformist is "someone who adopts gendered traits that are stereotypically associated with members of the opposite sex," where masculine or feminine traits can be performed by either sex (Lester, 2002, p.4). Additionally, in Lester's (2002) definition of gender nonconformity, individuals who do not subscribe to or perform heterosexuality as either female or male, meaning anyone who is gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered is also considered to be gender nonconforming (p. 4). It is important to understand how this (non) conformity plays out when intersectionality is addressed. For a person of color who is already marginalized, enacting this sort of gender non-conformity, or transgressing their gender, leads to

multiple layers of marginalization that affect that individual, especially in the context of criminalizing one's body, or behaviors as a racialized person. Therefore, the intersection of gender and sexuality is extremely imperative in this study of girls, as the U.S. legal system and society is inherently patriarchal, heteronormative, and institutionally racist (Harris 2011; Curtin 2002; Gonzalez & Portillos 2007).

By recognizing the significance of gender performance on the lives of marginalized young women, this case study moves beyond the existing work on Latinas to incorporate an intersectional perspective—one that also includes sexuality and gender nonconformity. Indeed, there is a well-documented history of criminalization of girls' sexuality within the juvenile justice system. The establishment of the juvenile court was centered on the concern over girls' "immoral sexuality" or promiscuity (Chesney-Lind & Okamoto 2001; Platt 1969; Odem 1995; Kunzel 1993). In addition to policing girls' sexuality in the development of juvenile incarceration, immigrant girls were the main target of these systems; they were often labeled as being highly sexual and thus extremely immoral and wayward in their behaviors (Abrams and Curran 2000; Schaffner 2008; 2009).

On the other hand, considering sexuality in terms of identifying as LGBT within the juvenile justice system is also limited in its scope. Work that focuses on LGBT incarcerated youth, does not address race, and or other intersectionalities within its framework. Work that incorporates the intersectionality of LGBT youth of color is necessary, especially because they may face more difficult circumstances based on racial and ethnic subordination (Sullivan 1991; Curtin 2002). While only one participant identified as lesbian, this intersectionality is greatly highlighted. Without an intersectional lens, the scope and understanding of the complexity of one's identity and background becomes limited.

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Centering Girls in Feminist Criminology

Much of the literature on criminalization of youth of color shares a gender bias that focuses disproportionately on males. As girls have become the fastest growing population within the juvenile justice system, it is important to understand the experiences of girls entering the pipeline. Historically, the study of delinquency and criminology centered male behavior (Schaffner 2006; Chesney-Lind and Sheldon 2004). Feminist criminologists argue that criminology theory has historically been very male centered, in that it has both omitted and misrepresented women (Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, 2004; p. 98). Further in the study of delinquency, women have often been overlooked, othered, and ignored, both in fully understanding their behavior and victimization (Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, 2004). Feminist criminology, which began to take off in the wake of the radical women's movement, has centered women in relation to crime and delinquency. Yet unlike the male-centered delinquency theory, feminist criminology does not look at women as others of men, but particularly focuses on how gender (both male and female) and gender difference impact the experiences of individuals in the legal system and further the prison pipeline (Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, 2004, p. 128). Further, feminist criminology, until recently has struggled to explore intersectional identities, especially as they relate to race (Bloom 1996, Chesney-Lind and Okamoto 2001, Chesney-Lind and Sheldon 2004). The omission of ethnicity as well as the multilayered intersectionalities of Latinas can then be said to also be underdeveloped from the current mainstream feminist theory.

 Stereotyping of Racialized Girls

In her article, "Blind Discretion: Girls of Color & Delinquency in the Juvenile Justice System" Jyoti Nanda traces the legal history of the current juvenile justice system. She finds that

the juvenile justice system has disserved girl of colors, because those with discretionary power, such as police and judges, make decisions that have lasting effects without considering girls' of color unique position (2012, p.1502). Nanda further finds that prescribed gendered expectations for all girls are not the same—for girls of color who go through the legal system, they exist marginal to the standard notion of womanhood, and thus have differential stereotypes. Nanda (2012) separated the stereotypical and gendered expectations of the three dominant girl groups in the juvenile justice system. As seen in the chart below, Black girls are seen as the most deviant and prone to breaking mainstream gender roles, and Hispanic, or Latinas are quieter and tamer but still to blame for their actions. However, white girls who have committed similar offenses to their black and Latina counterparts, are seen as being in need of protection and innocent.

Table 3 (Nanda, 2012, p. 1531)

White girls:	passive, in need of protection, nonthreatening, and amenable to rehabilitation;
Black girls:	independent, aggressive, loud, pushy, rude, sexual, unfeminine, violent, and crime prone;
Hispanic girls:	dependent, submissive, family oriented, domestic, and highly sexual.[145]

In this model, Black girls are seen as inherently disobedient and criminal, whereas Latinas and Whites are seen as being more paternalistic (Nanda, 2012). While it seems that Latinas pose no threat, this discretionary power matters, for example, if a Latina, who is assumed to be hypersexual is carrying a box cutter to protect herself from sexual assault and is caught by police, it is up to law enforcement to discern between her having a deadly weapon or seeing her as possible victim of sexual assault (Nanda, 2012). Thus, because of the nature of racialization, girls of color often experience bias in the way that they are served through the legal system. On the other hand, white girls' failures in society are attributed to some "fault in their

circumstances" whereas youth of color's individual personhood is faulted (Sherman, 2012, 1616). Further, Nanda (2012) reiterates that these decisions are not based on holistic and individual based approaches. Therefore based on Yosso's (2006) theorization of the wealth and capital that people of color posses, she assures that this ideology of seeing people of color through a deficit framework that pathologizes them, their families, and communities is prevalent in our society. Ultimately, racism prevails because white youth's behavior is understood as something externally inhibiting their success, whereas youth of color are blamed for their being where they are.

Racism is defined by Marable (1992) as "a system of ignorance, exploitation and power used to oppress African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians, and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color" (p.5). For Gilmore (2006) racism is "the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (p. 28). Thus placed together, we can understand racism as something that impacts those at the margins of society, people of color, and further girls of color, who experience oppression and subordination in addition to vulnerability that often limits the life options available to individuals in these groups.

Studying Incarcerated Latinas

For Latinas in general, little work has been done to focus on their individualized experiences. Various scholars agree that U.S. race relations exist as a Black/White binary, which often limits the understanding of race and racism to African-American and White experiences— where Latina/os, among other ethnic minorities, who do not fit within this binary are often silenced (Yosso 2005; Valdes, 1997,1998). Thus, more attention must be paid to the experiences of Latinas especially because their numbers are growing in prison pipeline due to overall trends

in the U.S. that focus on punishment rather than prevention, such as Zero-Tolerance policies in school, the War on Drugs, Tough on Crime policies and deportation policies (Diaz-Cotto 2009; Gonzalez & Portillos 2007; Schaffner 2009; Dreby, 2012).

There are only three studies that place the Latina experience at the center of their study of the prison pipeline. The first is Diaz-Cotto (2006) that focuses on adult Latinas, or what she refers to as *pintas*, which are formerly incarcerated Latinas for drug related crimes. Diaz-Cotto's (2006) work argues that the War on Drugs has led to the increasing rates of Latinas into U.S. prisons due to their use of drugs as a means of coping with their socio-economic marginality and distress. Additionally, Diaz Cotto (2006) finds that some *pintas* in her study often stole as a means of being able to pay their bills. *Pintas* who struggled with the realities of their social location, were often punished by government instead of addressing the causes behind their "crimes." While this study helps to understand the coping mechanisms of girls in this study, it is focused on an entirely different generational demographic.

Annamma (2013) and Schaffner (2008) focus on the experiences of juvenile Latinas. Schaffner (2008) pays particular attention to the strength-based assets that her Latina participants exhibit. While many Latinas are marginal because of their intersectional identities' as bilingual and transcultural individuals, Schaffner (2008) found that these "difficulties" or adversities were turned into advantages during their time in juvenile hall and ultimately aided in their positive navigation through incarceration (p. 6). On the other hand, Annamma (2013) offers a case study that centers one undocumented and disabled Latina student in the juvenile justice system. Annamma (2013) departs from Abrego (2006), who finds undocumented students in the educational system face the construction of a criminal identity and highlights that her participant's adversities of having an undocumented status is not met with any advantage as in

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the case of Schaffner's (2008) participants. Instead Annamma (2013) finds that for her participant, who is both undocumented and disabled, experiences greater criminalization and surveillance that further stigmatized her time in juvenile incarceration and ultimately led to her longer punishment.

Incarceration and Family Context

In the study of girls in juvenile incarceration familial and home context is visited to understand the types of environments that young girls live in as a result of their trajectory into the juvenile justice system. Sherman (2012) notes, that girls' behavior must be looked at holistically in relation to their familial, community context, and within the given society girls live in. This is especially true for girls of color, who experience added layers of structural racism and oppression in their daily lives. A holistic approach, Sherman (2012) assures, will provide a more appropriate response to the nuanced experiences of each girl (p.1599).

In Schaffner's (2006) study of girls in trouble with the law, which she refers to as "court involved girls" and "system involved girls," she notes that most of the young women come from "empty families." Schaffner (2006) identifies "empty families" as unstable homes where parents or other family members had their own issues with illness, the criminal justice system, unemployment, substance abuse, and homelessness (p. 80). Thus, although the families are made up of people, members within empty families are, "worn down, fighting their own battles, with little access to social, cultural, and economic capital, and simply unable to provide protection and guidance they're daughters need" (p. 87).

While Schaffner (2006) attempts to de-stigmatize girls deviant status by referring to her participants as "court involved girls" and "system involved girls," she takes a deficit approach in understanding the familial and home context of the girls in her study. This approach of labeling

participant's families as "empty families" demonizes their families and connotes that families do not have any substance and lack any kind of moral or ethical character. This deficit model approach in how Schaffner (2006) contextualizes the family structure further pathologizes the young women, their families, and their communities. Therefore, for Schaffner (2006), the family is to blame for the deviance, or "court involved"-ness of each incarcerated young woman, and especially young women of color who are most represented in the study.

For children who have parents in prison, Patricia Allard's article "When the Cost is Too Great: The Emotional and Psychological Impact on Children of Incarcerating Their Parents for Drug Offences," notes that not enough work has been done to understand how significantly youth are impacted by the loss of a parent to prison (2012). Many scholars suggest that children's grieving process of acting out, or acting up and even getting trouble with the law, due to a parents divorce or death is legitimated by both society and institutions (Allard, 2012). Allard (2012) assures that little literature acknowledges the trauma that children experience as a result of a loss of a parent to the prison system (p. 50). Yet in the cases of loss, death, divorce, and incarceration of a parent, children experience a great deal of trauma, "children of the incarcerated too often grow up and grieve under a cloud of low expectations and amidst a swirling set of assumptions that they will fail—that they will themselves resort to a life of crime or that they too will succumb to a life of drug addiction" (Allard, 2012, p. 50). This sense of loss, which many of the girls in the study experience, is therefore not met with a holistic understanding of their trauma. On the other hand, children dealing with trauma from parental death and divorce are more positively addressed within society and institutions when acting out. Further, this drastic and immediate change in a child's life creates instability and a greater sense of insecurity, which can greatly affect the individual's day-to-day activities, including school among other activities.

Children instead may worry about their parents' whereabouts, the reintegration of their family, including siblings and living arrangements. In the absence of their incarcerated parent, children will feel the need to take responsibility for a parent's absence—this is especially the case when the mother, often the primary care-giver, goes absent (Allard, 2012, p. 51).

While Allard (2012) focuses on those parents incarcerated within U.S. prisons, another source of growing literature has tried to understand how children experience the trauma of forced separation through deportation based on a parent's undocumented status (Dreby, 2012). In 2010, the Urban Institute reported that children experienced a great deal of trauma after the deportation of a parent, including increased crying, loss of appetite, excessive sleeping, clingy behavior, increase in fear and anxiety, increased fears of law enforcements officials (Chaudry et al, 2010). In this sense, separation from relatives means that parental support is extremely limited, and parents cannot return to the U.S. (Dreby, 2012). Understanding the banishment of parents through the incarceration system, as well as through the deportation system is imperative to understand the girls in this study because parents of the participants are of mixed citizenship status, where in most cases at least one parent is undocumented.

While the lives of the girls in this study may seem to be filled with struggle, their familial contexts do assist them in navigating through the legal system. In theorizing the role of communities of color, Yosso (2005; 2006) pushes forward the Community Cultural Wealth model, which acknowledges the "array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). These mechanisms of survival, most often for communities and families of color, are, as in the case of Schaffner (2006) seen as being empty, and lacking any sort of positive value. Yet, as Allard (2012) and Dreby's (2012) work suggest, there is such value to

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these families who experience disintegration and loss. Within Yosso's (2005, 2006) model, there

exists six different types of capital that communities of color possess, including: aspirational

capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital, resistant capital.

Together, and or separately, these six different kinds of capital provide a means for

understanding how communities of color negotiate their holistic contents, and how they resist

hegemonic notions of capital and oppression. Thus, for families who have been disintegrated and

for the young women entering the juvenile justice system, they are not entering carceral system

as empty vessels, but as individuals with a variety of capital and knowledges.

Microaggressions

In 1970, Chester Pierce coined the term microaggression(s) to express the way in which

African Americans experienced racism on a daily basis. He defined microaggressions as "subtle,

stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs of blacks by

offenders" (Pierce, Care, Perice-Gonzales, and Willis, 1978, p. 66). Delgado and Stefancic

(1992) push forward Pierce's idea of microaggressions to address the ways in which other

racialized groups experience racial microaggressions, they state, "Racism victims become

sensitized to its subtle nuances and code-words—the body language, averted gazes, exasperated

looks, terms such as 'you people,' 'innocent whites,' 'highly qualified black,' 'articulate' and so

on—that, whether intended or not, convey racially charged meaning" (p 1283). In this original

definition of microaggressions, race and racism toward blacks is central. However, the

framework of racial microaggressions as Pierce has defined them, is applicable to other

marginalized racialized groups, such as people of color in general, in addition to other

marginalized groups in the form of gender, sexual-orientation and religious microaggressions

(Solorzano & Huber 2012; Sue & Capodilupo, et.al, 2007; Sue & Capodilupo 2008; Sue 2010).

For the purpose of this study, I will include both the definitions of gender and sexual orientation microaggressions. Gender microaggressions are similar to racial microaggressions, in that they are "brief and commonplace daily verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative gender slights and insults that potentially have a harmful impact on women" (Sue, 2010, p. 163). Different themes exist within the notion of gender microaggressions and include, sexual objectification, second-class citizenship, use of sexist language, assumptions of inferiority, denial of the reality of sexism, traditional gender role assumptions, invisibility, denial of individual sexism, and sexist jokes (Sue, 2010, p.169-175).

Similar to gender and racial microaggressions, sexual-orientation microaggressions, are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative LGBT slights and insults to the target group or person (Sue, 2010, p. 191). Themes that exist within the realm of sexual-orientation microaggressions include oversexualization, homophobia, heterosexist language/terminology, sinfulness, assumption of abnormality, denial of individual heterosexism, and endorsement of heteronormative culture/behavior (Sue, 2010, p. 191-196).

Solorzano (2010) notes that there are not only effects, but also responses or reactions, to such microaggressions, which most often become internalized by individuals. Sue (2010), notes that such continuous verbal and non-verbal assaults, "assail the self-esteem of recipients, produce anger and frustration, deplete psychic energy, lower feelings of subjective well-being and worthiness, produce physical health problems, shorten life expectancy, and deny minority populations equal access and opportunity in education, employment, and health care" (p. 6). Thus, people of color, or other marginalized groups who experience such microaggressions,

through time are impacted in ways that are subtle and may not show at the surface level as being a result of a microaggression. Further, microaggressions can lead to feelings of stress, anger and anxiety, that are known to lead to greater health impacts such as higher rates of cancer, and shorter life overall.

Framework

I will use a Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) framework to examine the lives of the young adult Latinas in this study. Critical Race Theory is rooted in social justice and questions the relationship between race, racism, and power while challenging dominant discourse regarding race and racism (Delgado and Stefancic 2001). CRT and LatCrit are related, however because in the U.S. context, society frames race and racism within a White/Black binary, CRT often leaves out the experiences of other individuals and groups who do not fit within the paradigm (Yosso, Smith, Ceja & Solorzano, 2009). On the other hand, LatCrit pushes beyond the CRT scholarship to address the layered racial subordination that make up the Chicana/o and Latina/o experiences that are often overlooked by CRT scholars, such as subordination and oppression based on language, accent, surname, immigration status, ethnicity, generation in the U.S., culture, identity, phenotype and sexuality (Yosso, 2005; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Arriola 1997, 1998; Stefancic, 1998; Montoya, 1994; Johnson, 1999).

LatCrit's five basic tenets stem from CRT's five tenets and include: 1. The centrality of race and racism and other forms of oppression, including class, gender, sexuality, language, immigration status, ethnicity, and phenotype are important in understanding the Latina/o experience.   2. Challenge dominant ideology of "meritocracy" "colorblind-ness" and "race-neutrality" which is ultimately disguised to privilege the dominant groups in the U.S. 3. A

commitment to social justice, 4. The centrality of experiential knowledge, 5.The

interdisciplinary perspective, which takes a more holistic approach and multi level analysis

through bridging both historical and contemporary contexts to analyze and understand race and

racism (Solorzano and Delgado Bernal 2001; Gonzalez and Portillos 2007). CRT and LatCrit

center racism while noting that other oppressions, such as gender and sexuality, impact the life

experiences of people of color. Further, this framework acknowledges the inherent and

institutional racism that exists in the criminal justice system (Gonzalez & Portillos 2007). Thus,

in understanding the lives of Latinas who are overrepresented in the prison pipeline, using a CRT

and LatCrit framework will allow for a critical look at how their experiences as racialized

Latinas are shaped by larger societal structures.

Methodology

Data

The data for this thesis was originally collected as part of a larger project focused on

criminal desistance of young adults, led by Professor Laura Abrams in the Social Welfare

Department at UCLA. I approached Professor Abrams, who is an expert in the field of juvenile

justice and criminal desistance among youth, early in my second year of graduate work to

discuss and inquire about policing and criminalization of young women. To gain greater

knowledge of how young women interact with the criminal justice system and how such

experiences impact their life trajectories, I focus on the interviews of four Latinas that were

conducted in Professor Abrams' research project. The interviews were conducted in 2010-2012

before I met Professor Abrams. The original project sought to understand how formerly

incarcerated youth reintegrate into society given their neighborhood contexts and social supports

upon release. Ultimately, the study sought to further understand criminal desistance among

young men and women and the differences between men and women. The interviews conducted in this project used a life course history approach to better understand the lives of formerly incarcerated youth. A life course history approach is commonly used in the field of social welfare. It allows the researcher to "understand the relationship between time and human behavior… [and] looks at how age, relationships, life transitions and social change shape people's life from birth to death" (Hutchison, 2010, 9). This method, furthermore, allows researchers to better understand structural contexts of participants' lives as they shape patterns of crime and desistance.

Abrams' study included 25 participants, all ages 19-24, with 17 males and 8 females. Of the eight females interviewed, five are Latina and three are African-American. For the purposes of this work, I focus on the life narratives of the Latinas who were interviewed, and provide case studies for the four Latinas who provided extensive information and multiple interviews. The fifth Latina only participated in one interview and there exists very minimal information to incorporate here. All female participants in the original study were recruited at community organizations that provide social services to formerly incarcerated youth in the greater Los Angeles area, including organizations that I refer to as Writers Breaking Free (WBF) and Student Advantage Charter School.

It is important to note that the young women in this study come from very marginalized experiences due to intersectional identities and social locations, which is not representative of all Latinas. The life course histories of the four Latinas I examine in this thesis were captured in a total of 13 interviews, with each participant being interviewed an average of 3 times. More specifically, one participant had four interviews, one participant had two interviews and two

participants had 3 interviews as shown below. There was a minimum of one month in between interviews.

Participant Interviews	
Carina	3
Irene	5
Gabriela	3
Sara	2
Total	**13**

Professor Abrams, along with her research team, conducted the interviews with participants. Interviews were conducted in locations that allowed for optimal privacy, including the participant's home. At each interview there were two people present, one person interviewing, and the other person taking notes. In addition to Professor Abrams, the research team consisted of graduate students from the communities represented in this project (African American/Latina/o) or who have had professional experience with this group (Abrams, 2011, p. 7). The real names of participants and organizations have been changed to protect their privacy.

Participants were acquainted with the overall research agenda and goals, and signed an informed consent form. Participants were also compensated with $25 gift cards for each interview they participated in. Each interview for the participants in this thesis averaged 90 minutes. Interviews were semi-structured and were recorded with the consent of the participant and transcribed verbatim. The first interview covered the life course history, focusing on any major life events from childhood to adolescence and leading up to incarceration. This first interview explores the different structures and institutions in participants' lives from the family, to schools, peers, neighborhood context and any welfare system attendance. The second interview asks questions pertaining to participants' life after being released from juvenile hall and includes information about where they find themselves currently (age 18-24), particularly

focused on the role of both formal and informal social supports in participant's lives, and their residential neighborhoods. Overall, both interviews sought to gain a sense of participant's trajectory or path as shaped by such structures, institutions, and transitions in their lives. The third and any additional interviews served as follow-up interviews on the participants' progress.

The biggest limitation in my study is that I was not involved in any of the preparation or facilitation of the interviews. I became acquainted with the study and participants once interviews for all participants were finished, and I never had any personal contact or follow up with any participants. Using a CRT and LatCrit framework, I listened to the recorded interviews and read the interview transcripts along with the notes that were completed by the original research team. In this way, I noted my impressions of the young women, and after going through each of the participants' multiple interviews, I wrote a short (1-2 page) memo that summarized their trajectory from childhood to where they are at the time of the interview. After going through all the of the 13 interviews for the participants, and writing memos for each participant, I came up with major themes which emerged from their life narratives, that I then went back and coded for in each of the interviews. Codes included: gender performance, transgressing gender roles, conforming to gender roles, microaggressions, interactions with police/legal personal/hall staff, breaking probation, unstable family homes, parental drug use & trouble with the law, family separation, incarceration/deportation of parents, abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), and custody of Department of Child and Family services. Although the participants have experienced a great deal of abuse and oppression throughout their lives, themes of resilience and empowerment, as well as various form of capital emerged from each of the participants—which I also coded for.

The participants have a great deal in common as far as their trajectories into and out of the juvenile justice system; they have experienced similar family/home contexts, schooling experiences, as well as growing, or aging out of the system. Yet each participant has a very unique narrative that gives a small glimpse of what it is like to be a Latina entering the juvenile justice system. In order to give voice to their distinct and unique narratives, I have highlighted parts of their larger stories, to stress how their intersectional identity has impacted the ways in which they have experienced the legal system thus far. The case studies aim to show that this is not an individualized problem based on the young women's behavior or gender performance. However, it is part of a larger socio-structural problem that places the most marginalized girls of color, in this case working poor Latinas, in peculiar and threatening situations where girls must enact behavior that runs counter to the hegemonic gendered norms in an attempt to meet their basic needs.

The Young Women

The participants in this study have common backgrounds. They are all second, third, or fourth-generation Latinas; in addition, all had at least one Mexican parent. The young women have all been incarcerated at least one time, and were released from incarceration anywhere from seven months to three years from the date of the first interview. All participants were born and raised in the Greater Los Angeles area and most have moved around because of either their family moving around, family disintegration, their different placements in group homes and foster care, or homelessness. In all cases, while in custody of their parents, they were raised in a single-parent household—yet for some of the girls parental custody did not exist beyond childhood/early adolescence. All except one participant indicated that they had one or more parent that had a history with law enforcement, and all participants had one or more parents who

had a history or currently used illicit drugs, such as crystal methamphetamine and heroine (Table 1).

Table 1

Family (Parental) History					
Pseudonym	Single-Parent Family	One or more Parent Deported	One or more parent previous history with law	Drug Use/ Addiction	Gang Affiliation/ Association
Carina	X	X	X	X	
Irene	X			X	X	
Gabriela	X	X	X	X	
Sara	X		x	X	
Maria	X			X	X

Table 2

Personal History				
Pseudonym	Experienced Physical or Sexual Abuse	Drug Use/ Addiction	In Foster Care or Family Care	Gang Affiliation/ Association
Carina			X	
Irene	X	X	X	X
Gabriela	X	X	X	X
Sara	X	X	X	X
Maria		X		X

Case Studies

Gabriela: Criminalizing Gender Non-Conformity

Like many girls who enter the juvenile justice system, Gabriela has experienced a great deal in a very short time. At the time of the first interview she was 19 years old and had been out of juvenile hall for 7 months. Gabriela is the middle child of 5 siblings and the only female. Both of her parents are immigrants from Mexico and during her childhood, both her father and mother, were in and out of the prison system due to domestic violence and drug usage. While briefly living with her father and brothers, while her mother was in jail, her father began sexually abusing her. This may have been one of the most traumatic experiences of Gabriela's, creating a

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great deal insecurity in an unsafe environment. This experience was quickly contrasted at age 6, when Gabriela began living with only her mother and her brothers. She recalls this time with her mother and siblings as the happiest years of her life. It was the first time she "felt like a kid," because she had her mother with her. Her mother provided that love, care, and sense of security and safety that most children seek in their maternal figure, which she could not expect from her father. Just when things seemed to be getting better for Gabriela, her mother who is undocumented and had been deported once before, decided to go to Mexico to attend a funeral of a close relative. Due to current immigration policy and her mother's undocumented status, the U.S.-Mexico border has separated Gabriela from her mother since the age of 6. This separation from the one person Gabriela trusted and felt safe with, in addition to the sexual abuse and unstable living situation, created a very traumatic childhood for Gabriela filled with a deep sense of loss and insecurity (Dreby 2012; Allard 2012).

By age nine, Gabriela's grandmother noticed that she was acting strange. Her grandmother soon discovered that her father was sexually abusing Gabriela. Immediately, her grandmother filed charges against Gabriela's father for sexual abuse. Since then, Gabriela's father has continued to go in and out of prison. Gabriela recently learned that her father is residing somewhere in Mexico, yet she has no desire to know anything of him or his whereabouts. As a direct result of her grandmother's action to protect Gabriela, her and her four brothers were picked up by DCFS and placed in a group home, further separating her from what was left of her family. Gabriela and her siblings spent some time living with their grandmother in the midst of living in placement; however, her grandmother also abandoned them because she was on the run from the police for an unknown reason. This displacement and loss of individuals

whom Gabriela trusted contributed to a greater sense of loss, which for her resulted in acting out in ways that were not considered acceptable for a young girl (Allard, 2012).

As Gabriela moved between home placements and attended school, Gabriela made her first visit to juvenile hall at the age of 13. A girl at school instigated a physical fight with Gabriela over a boy, and in the midst of defending herself; Gabriela broke the girls' nose. The girls' mother pressed charges on Gabriela for breaking her daughter's nose, and was placed in juvenile hall. Although Gabriela was supposed to spend only a few months in juvenile hall for her physical offense (defense) she continuously broke her probation by committing status offenses, particularly because of running away from her group homes or violating her drug tests. These continual offenses led to her to come in and out of the juvenile justice system for the majority of her adolescence. Gabriela mentions, "I started being bad because I missed my mom you know…if my mom would have never left I wouldn't be in this fucked up situation that I was in when I was younger. " Gabriela's separation from her mother, due to her mother's ineligibility to come back to the U.S., greatly impacted and shaped Gabriela's more aggressive and sometimes violent behaviors and coping mechanisms. The void, resentment, and sense of loss she felt from the separation from her mother translated into acting out in various ways as Allard predicts (2012), yet nowhere in her trajectory was this loss addressed or healed. Instead, her acting out became a source of her continual criminalization and placement into the prison pipeline.

During interviews, Gabriela mentioned on multiple occasions that different adults in her life labeled her as bad or being a bad influence. She internalized this notion, as mentioned above when she shared that she "started being bad" when her mom left. This labeling was not limited to the juvenile staff or law enforcement; she also experienced it at her aunt's home where she spent

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a few years of her adolescence trying to "get her life back together." In spite of experiencing a great deal of psychological, emotional and physical trauma as a child in a disintegrated and separated family because of law and immigration, Gabriela did not break any law. She was doing her best to defend and take care of herself, thus, she was not enacting "criminal" behavior. Although Gabriela did have a drug problem, it was never addressed during incarceration or placement, and instead in all realms of her life, her drug use was utilized to further criminalize her, instead of a means addressing the root cause of her trauma with rehabilitation (Allard, 2012).

Gabriela reiterated time and time again that staff in the group homes, in juvenile hall, and at her aunt's house, often referred to her as being "bad" or being a "bad influence" on others. This labeling was not solely determined by her "aggressive" behavior as someone who committed a violent assault at the age of 13, or her drug use, it was also based on her sexuality and gender performance. Gabriela identifies as a lesbian, and is what Lester (2011) and Butler (1990) call gender non-conforming—meaning that she performs her gender as a girl or woman outside of confines of mainstream womanhood—due to her sexual-orientation, her choice of typical male attire, and her behavior that transgresses mainstream notions of womanhood. Subsequently, as a racialized individual, her behavior moves outside gender norms expected of Latina women, which include being dependent, domestic, and submissive, as categorized by Nanda (2012). Gabriela's behavior, which is a direct response to her unmet needs from family separation at the carceral and immigration level, are delegitimized and her coping mechanisms are interpreted as bad, unruly, aggressive and independent (Allard, 2012).

In this sense, her behavior, in addition to her sexuality and gender performance are not only criminalized, but are what Victor Rios (2012) refers to as hyper-criminalization, where

marginalized young people are criminalized based on their behavior and style.[6] Further, the

hyper-criminalization of marginalized young people is composed of "exclusion, punishment,

racialization, gendered violence, harassment, surveillance, and detention by police, probation

officers, teachers, community programs workers, and even parents" which in turn shapes the way

in which young people develop worldviews about themselves" often leading them to feel shamed

and unaccepted (p. 45 &158). This can lead youth to internalize an image of himself or herself as

deviant or criminal. Whereas Rios (2012) focuses on heterosexual males of color, Gabriela's

actions, sexuality, and gender performance and non-conformity transgress a greater set of moral

codes within our heteropatriarchal society, where aggressive violent or even "criminal" behavior

is more aptly expected from a male and not from a female, and least not from a Latina.

  Further, because of the breaking of multiple layers of gender and sexual codes within our

society, Gabriela constantly experienced microaggressions that label and punish her as "bad" or

"being a bad influence." Gabriela recalls her arrival at the last juvenile placement she lived,

where she met her current girlfriend, "That same night I already had girls in my room so staff

already knew I was going to be a bad one…Yeah, so we [my current girlfriend] got together –

people didn't like it. Like, people were hating, staff was telling her to break up with me because

I was a bad influence, I had nothing going on for my life – I was nothing." Thus, based on

Gabriela acting upon her sexual desire for girls associated her with not only bad or deviant

behavior. Moreover, it drove staff to intervene in her personal relationship because her deviance

also became synonymous with her assumed potential and negative influence on others. She

acknowledges here, that staff knew she was bad because of the fact that she had girls in her

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[6] For Rios (2011) Style in his context refers to boys who are deemed as deviant by larger society
due to their public appearance on street corners, wearing particular clothing as racial and
gendered subjects in the low-income areas of Oakland, CA

room, which indicates that this is not the first time she has been seen as deviant based on her sexuality. Consequently, Gabriela's sexual identity marginalized her from the other juvenile girls because she was automatically sectioned off as bad. This microaggression or further labeling of Gabriela is something that she has sensed, and it has influenced the construction of her self-image through her identifying herself as being "nothing."

Interestingly enough, the people who had accepted and supported Gabriela for who she was, including her sexuality and performance was her mother and four brothers—the people she was separated from since an early age. She mentions that when she "came out" her family had a very positive response: "They [my brothers] actually enjoy having another brother, so like, I came out to them and they were cool about it, like 'I knew it.' My mom – I came out to her, too. She's like 'I love you the way you are.'" Thus, the separation through the institutionalization of her family, at the immigration and foster care level, created a rupture in Gabriela's own identity, one that placed her in an institution and with other family members that were hostile to her presence, leading to her further internalization, self-shaming, and identity as "nothing" and "bad."

Gabriela also experienced similar gender and sexual- microaggressions from her family members as she has from staff in her various placements. Gabriela shares how her aunt forced her to dress like a "girl" for fear that she would negatively influence her two female cousins living with her:

> "Actually, when I got released to them, I was dressing like a guy, you know? And I remember them telling me we're going to accept you either way, however you are. I'm like "alright". I get there like a month later and they're like "you need to change the way you dress". I'm like "what, I thought you would accept me" She's like "yeah, I know but I don't like daughters to get… going the same way you're going". I'm like "damn that's fucked up". So I'm like "alright". They put all my boys clothes on a yard sale. So I had

good clothes you know, nice clothes. So all that clothes went quick and they took me shopping and bought

me girl's clothes. I'm like "I don't know what to wear. I don't know what to fit". So I got like, I wore

skinny jeans and like a t-shirt or a little tight shirt, whatever. I was forced to dress like a girl for a full

minute. Like I didn't like it, like but I had no choice like "you either wear that or you go back inside.

"Alright, fucker", so I was forced to dress like a girl, you know. I still had girlfriends though. "

Gabriela was initially welcomed into her aunt's home under a promise that she would be

accepted for who she is. For her, this meant that she would be allowed to express herself fully as:

1. A lesbian, 2. As a gender non-conforming woman. However, her aunt immediately revealed

that she did not want her lesbianism nor her butch performativity to potentially influence her

young daughters. In understanding Gabriela's intersectional experience, I expand on the

definition of sexual-orientation microaggression (Sue, 2010), to include the notion of a "non

gender-conforming microaggression." Gabriela in this sense is greatly impacted by her

intersectionality as a lesbian Latina, however, sexual-orientation microaggressions do not fully

capture her experiences because this concept singularly addresses her sexuality. Because sexual

orientation does not dictate gender performance or behavior, addressing gender conformity is

key, especially in regards to Gabriela's experience, which is based not just on her lesbian sexual

identity, but also on her gender performance being associated with more butch or masculine

traits and styles of clothing. Similar to racial, gender, and sexual-orientation microaggressions, I

take from Solorzano (2010) and Sue (2010) to define "non-gender conforming

microaggressions," as a form of systematic everyday gender non-conforming phobia (also could

be known as genderqueer[7] phobia or transphobia) used to keep those who display gender

variance and non-conformity in their place. These are verbal or non-verbal assaults that are

directed toward non-gender conforming individuals, i.e. individuals who enact behavior or style

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[7] Gender identity that does not exist within the male, female gender binary.

(clothing, public appearance) that does not match up with their birth sex (Whitley and Kite 2009; Sue 2010).

Non-gender conforming microaggressions can explicitly be seen in the example in conjunction with a sexual-orientation microaggression. In this sense she experiences a sexual orientation through her aunt's fear that her daughters will contract Gabriela's lesbian sexuality, as if it were contagious (Sue, 2010). Through her aunt's forceful act of selling Gabriela's clothes, Gabriela experienced a gender non-conforming microaggression caused by her aunts association of Gabriela's sexuality and masculine gender performance as criminal. Thus, again, we see here how Gabriela experiences multiple oppressions and is under attack because she is a woman that is both transgressing and subverting heterosexual and gender normative behavior. Her sexuality, behavior, and style means that she is gender non-conforming on multiple levels. Further, her behavior becomes synonymous with masculinity; such as being aggressive, independent and unruly, and in this sense her transgression of gender and sexuality norms lead to her hyper-criminalization at every facet of her institutional and social world. For women in the criminal justice system, this is nothing new. Women's gender performance has historically tried to be tamed and controlled through criminalization and punishment for anything that stands outside the norms of womanhood (Richie, 1996; 2012)

As Gabriela continued to move in-between the prison-pipeline every time after originally living with her aunt, she knew through her cultural intuition (Perez Huber, 2009) that she would have to dress like a girl. Luibheid (2002) describes this process that Gabriela experienced in reference to lesbians who deal with authorities, as the process of "straightening up, " as Gabriela had to do at different points in her life. Straightening up includes " practices like growing one's hair and nails, buying a dress, accessorizing and donning makeup." (p. 83) Although, in this

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case, straightening up allows for one's gender performance to be "toned-down to by pass homophobic authorities" or in Gabriela's case to please her family members, yet "the fact that one has to straighten up so as to avoid penalty serves as a reminder that lesbianism is a difference" (Luibheid, 2002, p. 83). Therefore, we see that Gabriela experiences homophobia and criminalization because of her sexual identity and her gender performance, which both transgress hegemonic notions of heterosexual womanhood.

While Gabriela transgressed gender norms through her behavior, performance and sexuality, she has conformed to female gender roles in other ways. Throughout her life, she has both longed for her mother and worried about her brothers while ensuring their closeness. Since being out of juvenile incarceration she has been living with one brother and seeing the others on a weekly basis. She cares for and loves them deeply, and they are also the only family besides her mother, who have accepted and fully supported her for who she is. As the only female to four male siblings she has taken the role of the mother within their disintegrated family (Allard, 2012). She especially worries about her youngest brother who is 13 and is still in foster care, she shares:

> I've been trying to get custody of him since I was little. You know, I seen that I was going through this and I've been hearing that he's been in foster care and getting mistreated and stuff like that. Ever since I was young, I told…my girlfriend "I'm going to get custody of him once I get my trust fund". That was my two goals when I was younger: him and my trust fund. I got my trust fund out; just, like, got to get him now.

Knowing that her brother is going through what she went through as an adolescent, she is mostly concerned about him experiencing the same pains as she did. Now that she is out and she has collected a substantial amount of money from her trust fund, which she received shortly after exiting out the system from an accident when she was 5, she has been doing everything in her power to make sure that she gets custody of him. In this way, she is enacting her maternal

femininity, in caring and ensuring that her younger brother is with her, a maternal figure who will love and protect him and provide security, instead of in the hands of a cold institution where mistreatment has been the experience for both.

Further, in order for Gabriela to get custody of her brother, she has to have her life in order and clean up her record. Thus, she must conform to basic expectations of a capitalist society, which require individual's productivity by becoming wage earners. She shares, "first I want to finish school because, like my girlfriend says, "ain't no one going to hire me without a GED or high school diploma – so I have to finish school. I want to finish it. I want to [get] my record [clean] in order for my brother to come stay with me." Conforming to societal norms in this way is motivation for Gabriela to get her GED, and clean up her "criminal" record and will get her a step closer to reintegrating at least part of her family; something she has longed for since the age of 6.

While Gabriela is still struggling to make sense of life after incarceration, she is close to getting custody of her younger brother, lives with her girlfriend, and is out and dressing in male clothing. Through her life narrative we see how gender (non) conformity and gender performance shaped Gabriela's experience through the pipelines. It became clear through the various microaggressions that she experienced, that her multi-layered non-conformity to hegemonic notions of heterosexual womanhood, especially that of a racialized Latina, were met with punishing and isolating results. While the U.S.-Mexico border kept Gabriela separated from the one person she longed for the most, her mother, she sought out coping mechanisms, or behaviors that were identified as more masculine. These behaviors ultimately kept her in juvenile incarceration longer than should have been expected. Additionally, her sexuality and style of

dress added to her experience of non-gender conforming microaggressions, which again led her to being further criminalized while trying to get her basic needs met.

Irene: Using Gender Conformity as Capital through the Pipeline

During the initial interviews with Irene, she had been out of detention for 7 months. Throughout the next year, we learned more about Irene's journey into, and out of the prison pipeline as a young person with almost no family, or support system. Irene's parents were active in selling and using illicit drugs together, such as methamphetamine and they eventually divorced because Irene's mother wanted to keep her only daughter away from the drinking and drugs. Since the age of five Irene has had no knowledge of her father or his family.

Taking the sole responsibility as a single mother who struggled with drug abuse of her own, Irene's mother did what she could to care for herself and her daughter. With no reliable source of income, they moved often during Irene's childhood. Irene and her mother repeatedly experienced homelessness and often times slept in their car, in the streets, or in abandoned homes when they could not afford to rent a room. Irene recalls this time in her life as being very difficult. She states, "We would constantly move around a lot and it was just not good for me…we would be homeless sometimes. And I wouldn't even have clothes to wear, so she'd (her mother) put socks on my hands because I was cold." Irene acknowledges that the instability and insecurity produced by the constant moving and sometimes lack of housing marked her life on a much deeper level. Basic necessities such as shelter and clothes became scarce. Without any extended family in Los Angeles and too proud to ask for public assistance, her mother struggled to make ends meet by herself. Early on in her childhood Irene was told to do the same in regards to not seeking out help for any of her personal or home problems at school or with friends. She recalls her mothers words, "it's our problems, nobody else's problems, keep it in." Thus, from a young

age, Irene learned to internalize all of her problems and struggles, and not communicate anything to anyone, while suppressing her family and socioeconomic trauma.

Although Irene's mother sought to change her lifestyle she continued to transgress her own gender norms with her drug addiction. Even with her addiction she did seek to provide for herself and her daughter with basic necessities. When her mother was able to find work, she worked as a domestic worker, stereotypical of Latina immigrant women. This job required her mother to work long hours, which was difficult for Irene. Without any other family in her life, Irene spent countless hours alone at home, while her mother worked, which further created a sense of isolation and insecurity in Irene's life.

By the age of 7, Irene and her mother moved in with an older man who employed Irene's mother as his part time caretaker while she continued working as a domestic outside of their residence. Irene eventually came to know and love this older man as her grandfather. This seemed to be a promising set-up for Irene and her mother; however, this would begin a very traumatic part of Irene's life. From the age of 7-10, Irene was often left alone while her mother was out working and stayed out after work to get high. During this time, her "grandfather's" son, who had just been released from prison, moved into the front house and began sexually abusing Irene. As her mother taught her, Irene internalized her mother's previous guidance along with her abuser's threats and never said anything to anyone about the physical or sexual abuse.

Because their family only consisted of mother and daughter, Irene's mother expected her daughter to take domestic responsibility of the household, while being submissive and obedient—as a good daughter should (Nanda, 2012). Her mother on the other hand, who worked a stereotypical Latina job as a domestic, was now taking the role of head of household and breadwinner, a role most normally filled by the patriarch, or father. Yet, the sexual abuse

continued and Irene had no other way to communicate her pain and abuse. As a result, Irene began to act out, both verbally and physically toward her mother, while also disregarding her house duties. Irene's mother did not take this lightly. As a response to Irene's acting out of her expected gender role, her mother began to punish Irene more "harshly" and sometimes gave her a physical "beat down" for not following through on her house duties, as Irene explained. During this time, Irene mentioned feeling depressed and wanting to sleep a lot, yet her mother saw her sleep as a sign of laziness and again, this "acting out" was met with further punishment by her mother.

Irene mentioned that all she wanted during this traumatic time in her life was for her mother to love her and show her affection. She longed to be nurtured and protected by her mother, which is commonly expected from one's maternal figure (Allard, 2012). Yet, Irene's mother did not enact typical gender norms of a mother, one that is warm and nurturing. Her mother transgressed gender norms and struggled with her own demons, which affected the way she emotionally engaged with Irene as more distant and cold. This is evident, as Irene shares, "One time I accidentally tried to hug my mom and my mom got mad at me and so I never hugged her again." This ultimately led Irene to internalize this coldness that she received from her mother at a time when she needed her comfort the most. This turned Irene into a cold person, although she shares that that is not who she really is at all.

Another place of contention during Irene's early adolescence was at school. Irene shares, "I loved [school]…it was just the fact that when it came down to recess it was another [issue]." The "issue" at recess was that she began and continued to get into fights with other students, because they often teased her because of her baggy tomboy clothes, which is all her mother was able to afford. Her gender performance in this case, as a non-conforming young girl, was a result

of her mother's limited socioeconomic means. Further, the teasing about her gender non-conformity drove her to act out and enact more aggressive behavior as a means of self-defense. In addition to fighting, Irene began stealing, and by the age of 12, she began doing crystal methamphetamine like her mother and Gabriela, to cope with the psychosocial abuse she experienced (Diaz-Cotto, 2006). It was not long before Irene was getting kicked out of school, and labeled as a "bad kid." And because no one knew what was going at home or internally, for that matter, Irene's actions were taken at face value with no holistic or ecological introspection of what was happening to her on a personal or familial level (Nanda 2012; Sherman, 2012).

As Irene continued to transgress prescribed gender roles at home, her mother decided to call DFCS to pick up Irene, because she did not want to care for a disobedient daughter anymore. Irene was put in multiple group homes, from which she would often run away. Irene's pattern was to runaway, do drugs, and then run back to her mother's house, where her mother would then call DCFS and turn her in again. Irene went to about 13 group homes within the span of one year. While trying to live with her mother again, at the age of 13, an altercation between the two led to Irene being homeless for a whole year—this was the last time Irene and her mother were physically together. This loss of both her mother and a place to live further created a sense of insecurity, which for Irene caused her to seek out alterative means to coping with her situation. On her own with no source of income, Irene began squatting in an abandoned building, until a friend took her in. Upon finding a job at a swap meet, were she got paid under the table, Irene began renting her own room by the age of 15. At one point Irene fell $50 short of making the complete rental payment, and as a result her landlord demanded she move out immediately, with no prior warnings. In a moment of desperation to try to make her rent and keep her room, Irene, with the company of her boyfriend at the time, robbed a pirate taxi conductor of his money and

his car. Stealing, as a means of paying one's bill is typical of women of color who live at socioeconomic margins of society, yet rather than address the causes behind the behavior, the legal system punishes women, as in Irene's case (Richie 1996; Diaz-Cotto 2006). Because Irene was the "aggressor" and mastermind of the robbery, she was eventually arrested by police and sentenced to 15 years for Grand Theft Auto and kidnapping with a deadly weapon (a knife) in Youth Authority –where the most "dangerous" and "violent" juvenile offenders are housed, whereas her boyfriend received only 5 years. Although she did rob the taxi driver's car and money, she never followed through with the use of her deadly weapon and did not physical harm the driver. To be labeled as the most "dangerous" and "violent" does fully address Irene's experience or the motivation for what she did—it harshly punishes her inability to get her basic needs met, while trying to make it in the world without any family or support.

Based on her experiences, Irene may easily be labeled as a victim, or even as a criminal, yet in my analysis of her process of navigating the prison pipeline, I want to highlight her experiential knowledge and cultural capital. Irene's short-lived life with her mother prepared her for life during incarceration and after incarceration. As in the case of most of the girls in this project, Irene has demonstrated a great deal of resilience. Resilience in this sense is "set of inner resources, social competencies and cultural strategies that permit individuals to not only survive, recover, or even thrive after stressful events, but also to draw from the experience to enhance subsequent functioning' (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000, p. 229 in Yosso, 2005, p. 80). Thus, as a young person with no formal or even informal supports, Irene has used what she knew best in order to obtain the resources needed for day to day and earn her livelihood—even if that meant conforming to her prescribed gender roles as a Latina.

While Irene was entering juvenile hall, her mother moved to Las Vegas, where she was incarcerated for stabbing two people to death during an episode of insanity, and is still waiting to be released. Irene did not have one visitor, or one phone call in the duration of her detention. There was no one she could reach out to, or even put money in her books. With no close family or friends, Irene used her navigational capital to make it through such experiences within the criminal justice institution. Navigational capital refers "to skills of maneuvering through social institutions…not created with communities of color in mind" (Yosso, 2005, p. 80). Although incarceration provides Irene with basic needs, she still lacked resources to buy herself clothes, or other material objects, because she had no family or friends on the outside to send her care packages or monies. Irene mentions how she always tried keeping to herself in hall, and hated the girls because they always tried starting fights with her. In order to steer clear of any potential altercations with her peers, and provide for herself in juvenile hall Irene used her navigational capital based on her Latina gender conformity as an obedient and domestically inclined young woman. In enacting her gender conformed identity, along with the domestic skills and training she received from her mother; Irene used much of her free time volunteering to clean in and around the juvenile hall. She mentions, "Yeah, and also I was always getting hooked up with stuff. People, like staff members – they would bring me food or bring me what I wanted in return because I would always be the one like "I'll clean this, I'll do this… And I needed to change it. I needed some money, somehow." Thus, cleaning which is something that was ingrained in Irene as a young child, served her twofold: 1. Cleaning kept from getting into fights with the other girls and further getting into more trouble, 2. Her voluntary cleaning gained her the trust and liking of staff that then provided her with materials and resources that she would otherwise not have access to. Furthermore, the trust and liking that she was able to attain from

staff was a direct result of Irene's enacting prescribed gender roles and norms, as a domestic, dependent, submissive or obedient young Latina, which was quickly rewarded with material objects she would have not been able to access otherwise. Irene's gender conformity was received well, so much so that her 15-year sentence was eventually reduced to five years. Although she did become an adult in YA, she took advantage of classes there, and received her GED along the way and was eventually released at the age of 20 from a women's prison.

In addition to knowing what actions to take, Irene took advantage of limited resources of the juvenile justice system in order to rise above her circumstance. Irene was also able to build on her social capital, and it is what has continued to help her throughout her journey out of the prison pipeline. Social capital refers to the "networks of people and community services" (Yosso, 2005, 79). Her mentor Rosa whom she met while inside of juvenile hall, through a non-profit that works with incarcerated youth, was one of the individuals that Irene got close to and eventually was able to help Irene once she got out of incarceration. Irene shares how her connection to Rosa has worked as a catalyst to other resources:

> "Rosa helped me [once I got] out and I got [to build a] network right there [at the organization]. So from there, [I got] all the information and then you got the internet and you can go on the internet. Then from there if you meet a person that's like 'oh, well this helped me out' – 'well, let me look into that if that helped you out. Let's see if I can get help". Not only... I'm not a stingy person, either. See, I'll be like 'look, this is what I found – you might...' I'm a people person and I like to help out other people for some reason. It's just like, I'm getting help 'we can do it together'".

Not only has Irene been able to use her social capital to gather information and resources for herself, she has shared this information with other folks that she's met who also need this kind of help and access to resources and information thus keeping open access to her own social capital for others in need. Accordingly, through this navigation and social capital Irene is now receiving

General Relief, has partaken in job training seminars through a city-wide training corps program, worked with Writers Breaking Free to develop her writing and her music, and enrolled in school and has found a place to live. Irene goes on to share how she has continued to expand her social capital through her participating in Rosa's organization, "We always have a reunion to help out and speak about what we're going to do to help out the people who are incarcerated." This reunion that Irene partakes in serves as a means for her to check in with her mentor, and allows to also being the process of contributing her experience to other who are going through what she has gone through.

Irene also mentions shares about her knowledge of resources available to her as former ward of the state and incarcerated young woman. She particularly mentions how she knew to access resources like general relief and a place to live and says, "Well, because all my life I was in the streets. You gotta prepare, you gotta know everything. Like, I'm always about 'let me look for this.' I'm going to hustle in a good way." Thus, although Irene is all on her own, upon being released, Irene explains that it is her experiential knowledge/cultural capital she carries with her that has allowed her to be successful in a circumstance where many flounder. Ultimately, conforming to prescribed female standards allowed Irene to successfully expand her network. Her performance, both as someone willing to volunteer, take initiative and be resourceful, was welcomed and not seen as a threat. When she began to enact those gender norms, many doors opened up for her. Yet it was only when she moved outside the scope of hegemonic womanhood that she was punished.

Sara: Stand-In Motherhood as a Means of Transgressing

Sara is a fourth generation Mexican-American on her father's side, and her mother is white. Sara's is one of two daughters that her parents had during their brief marriage, and also

has a stepbrother from her mother's side. As in the previous case studies, Sara's parents had a very tumultuous relationship while they were together. Sara mentions that she did not know much about their actual relationship except that they "both had drug and alcohol problems…that's something that came in their relationship together…I guess that was all they actually had." In addition to their combined substance abuse, which is what brought them together, Sara's father was emotionally and physically abusive toward the three women in his immediate family. Sara's mother had a history of violence and instability growing up in and out of child welfare services, where she was known for running away from foster homes and placements throughout her adolescence. As a result of this history, when the physical and verbal abuse from her husband got to be too much, and she wanted to sober up, Sara's mother reacted the only way she knew how, and left her husband and two daughters. Sara and her sister never lived with their mother, and their father became their primary guardian. As in the previous case studies, Sara's mother also transgresses gender hegemonic notions of womanhood evidenced by "running away" from her family and leaving her husband and two daughters behind.

Sara's father is an ex-gang member and was in trouble with the law before Sara was born. She learned later in her life that her father had two felony strikes and was one strike away from being incarcerated for life. In addition to his substance abuse, Sara's father has been on disability for both mental and physical reasons, including his bi-polar disorder. His disorder together with his addictions shaped his behavior and influenced his the way he treated his wife, and continued to treat his daughters. Since a young age, Sara and her father did not get along well. Sara notes, "because I guess my dad's seen a lot more resemblance of my mother in me, so he would take out issues and problems on me instead of dealing with them himself." Thus, because Sara reminded him of his ex-wife, she became the main target of the unresolved issues he carried

internally regarding his ex-wife's abandonment of the family. Sara shared that her father often had extreme mood swings and would constantly compare Sara to her mother and act more aggressively toward her, both physically and verbally. His mental instability in addition to his addictions may have also contributed to the ways in which he coped with his feelings when targeting Sara.

Her sister on the other hand, was treated very differently because she resembled their father and his family lineage more. Their father nurtured his relationship with Sara's younger sister, and they were generally much closer. For much of her childhood and into her adolescence, Sara and her father always had a volatile relationship. Being a single parent to two young daughters likely added stress to his role as a parent and caretaker to his children. Without the traditional heteronormative family dynamic, in which the mother takes care and nurtures the children, especially daughters, he was not only learning to be a father, but an untraditional father which required him to take on female gender roles as he acts as a stand in mother and father.

At the age of nine, while Sara's father battled his drug and alcohol addiction in rehab, she was in-between the care of her paternal grandmother and DCFS. During her time in DCFS Sara was placed in multiple homes, where she was able to reestablish phone contact with her mother and see her grandmother often—the two relationships that Sara both longed for and felt most secure in. After finishing his self-induced rehabilitation program, which took about 3 years, Sara and her sister went back to living with their father. In spite of having sought out professional help, Sara's father continued substance abuse, which also meant that Sara continued to be the target of her father's aggressive and often violent behavior. Ultimately, in her short childhood, Sara experienced an array of dissonant experiences that resulted from her parents' own unstable experiences. Her mother, who grew up institutionalized in child and welfare services, always felt

unsafe as a ward of the state, and she often ran away to escape the instability. Sara's father, a former gang member and current drug user, had other struggles as he became diagnosed with multiple mental and physical disabilities. He, too, was unprotected in his development into adulthood. Thus, both Sara's parents are still figuring out how to cope with their own childhood traumas and adult relationships.

During one particular instance, Sara attempted to stop her father's physical abuse by calling the police and turning him in for child abuse. When the police arrived on this occasion, her father denied the extremity of his actions, and notes that it was his daughter's misconduct that had driven him to try to "put order," or rather, put her in her place. Sara shares:

> My dad denied the whole incident. And as far as any bruise or marks as proof or evidence they couldn't find anything… As far as what [really] happened is he slid a chair from under me, he had slammed me to the floor, he had picked me up and threw me. It was pretty crazy – a 6'1" man doing that to a 13 year old… my dad was trying to say I was being disobedient, delinquent, I wasn't listening, or [doing] chores– he was trying to blame it on me, to seem that I was the one who wasn't behaving properly or being a good child, since I was 13. So he kinda switched it up and made me the focus and made me the problem child.

Ultimately, his word as a father, and the patriarch within the household, was not questioned. The police believe that he acted within the realm of his parental duties. Because the police could not see anything evident from the physical beating, no bruises, no broken bones, there was no way for Sara to make clear what had just happened to her. It was her father's words against her own, which at 13 did not count for much. Instead her father was able to make the case for himself, in stating that she was not fulfilling her duties as a child—especially that of being obedient, or more specifically, her gendered expectations as a both a minor and a daughter to her single father (Chesney Lind & Shelden, 2004; Schaffer, 2006; Sherman 2012; Nanda, 2012). Her disobedience toward her father and lack of fulfilling chores as he told police meant she was

transgressing her prescribed gender role and not performing in a way that was acceptable. In other words, she was transgressing her expected raced and gendered behavior as a young Latina. Sara was depicted as not being submissive nor dependent of her father, and most alarming, not fulfilling her domestic duties. Because she did not meet such expectations, the police used their discretion in siding with the father and confirming his right to put her in her place.

As the older sister and with no mother or other female role model around, Sara began to take a stand-in mother role for her sister as she entered adolescence, as many children do when their family is disintegrated (Allard, 2012). Sara shares about her self-imposed responsibility as a stand in mother, "So, I would try to suit in [as her mother] and try to take care of her when I could. I would go to the store and buy her snacks and little things I could." Thus even as a child, Sara did what she could for herself and her sister, taking the responsibility of a maternal figure in the absence of her mother. Without their mother, she provided both financial and emotional support to her young sister, as well as fulfilling the gendered expectations of a Latina as a domestic, family oriented, and nurturing mother. This also meant that she was fulfilling part of her gender role as family-oriented older sister. However, her father did not welcome this parental responsibility. Because of her father's very limited means and his new addiction to gambling, Sara especially sought to be more independent in order to provide both emotionally (which is expected of a female) and financially (not expected from a female) for her and her sister. Since the age of 13, Sara often found herself trying to pick up the financial slack of her father through working small jobs. Sara notes,

> "…around my 13th birthday things started to getting more complicated between me and my father. I would have school, I was trying to have a little job with my friend… she had a catering business so I would help and they would pay us. Like, help clean up and little chores and we got paid for it. So my father seen me trying to do things a little more independently and he didn't really like that."

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This transgression of Sara's gender as a dependent daughter clashed with her seeking to become a breadwinner, and further, it did not sit well with her father. Her need to grow up fast and take responsibility for her sister meant that she was depending less on her father for basic needs. Further, this experience of taking parental responsibility at such a young age did not provide her with any means of emotional support that a parent may have provided. Moreover, while she conformed to gender norms to provide for herself and her sister, she transgressed gender norms as a daughter to her patriarchal father.

As their father-daughter relationship continued to go sour, Sara found herself back in child welfare services, this time by herself. At age of 14, Sara went to juvenile hall for the first time, for running away from her foster care placement. Because she left without anyone's consent, there was a warrant out for her arrest. On one particular occasion, as would become common in her adolescence, she ran away to hang out with friends she met through her foster sister. While she was out, she would go to different friends' homes, moving between houses since she had no place of her own. Sara eventually stayed with a mutual friend, an older gang-related woman who took care of Sara. This woman provided food and shelter and basic necessities, while also ensuring that Sara was part of her gang—it seems that Sara found this woman to provide the security, protection, and love of a maternal figure she was so longing for. While Sara did not officially join the gang, she remained gang affiliated.

Things drastically changed for Sara at a party she attended with her gang member friends. The party was actually a birthday party for a young man who had had a conflict with one of the young men Sara was catching a ride with. This was an old conflict that the two young men never resolved, however, there was an attempt to address the conflict at the party. Sara shares:

> And as that argument got louder and louder I moved from the scene and things got quiet. I would say about 10, 15 minutes later you hear people screaming and then 2 shots were fired. And it happened that the

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birthday guy was actually shot and killed – several times he was shot in the middle of the front room. I was

so close to the scene – I was by the entrance of the door where there was a hallway – and he was in the

living room. So the shooter came by the door but never entered and shot him.

Although Sara did not see who had committed the shooting, Sara became an important person in

the case because of her closeness to the scene and whom she was there with. That night of the

party, she fled the scene but left her purse behind. Instead of going back to the woman's house

she was staying with, she sought refuge at her brother's house and hid there as long as she could.

Detectives quickly got involved in the case and found her at her brother's place where she was

subpoenaed to testify in court.

Although she was never convicted of an actual crime, because she continued to commit

status offenses as a runaway and became more "deviant" in that she was being truant, drinking

more, and then would often run away when officials needed her presence as a material witness in

court. As a result of her disobedience and rebelliousness, the judge punished her with

incarceration for 8 months in the Central Juvenile hall. The trauma is seeing someone die, in

addition to the physical and emotional trauma she had experienced prior was never addressed.

Her only importance to the court was admitting that she knew who killed the victim. Her

decision to transgress gender norms and formalities of the court had more to do with the multi-

layers of insecurity, confusion and loss that became a constant in her adolescence. She never

actually saw the shooter and continued to keep her truth in saying that she did not know who had

shot and killed the rival gang member.

While inside of juvenile hall Sara had found a sense of stability and had time to think of

her actions and what that meant not only for her, but for her younger sister that she was once

playing the mother role to. This time to reflect was also significant, because although her family

had become disintegrated and chaotic, her father and sister visited her often while she was detained. Sara shares:

> I guess I started really to miss having family around and people you're used to like my sister – I think that really hurt the most, seeing her every now and then getting bigger and older and then I'm not there. I felt bad because she doesn't have no one in the house beside my dad.

Thus, at every point in Sara's trajectory, she continued to feel that bond and connection to her sister, and further the responsibility to provide for her like a mother. Juvenile incarceration provided Sara the time to reflect and reactivate that motherly responsibility toward her sister. In turn, that sense of purpose motivated her to enact more gender conforming roles within juvenile hall so that she could clean up her act and prepare herself for life outside of hall. Accordingly, because she was no longer able to runaway while detained in juvenile halls, she was forced to think about her own life and where she was headed. In addition to missing her family, she also realized that she was repeating the same patterns as her mother and was similarly neglected by child and welfare services. She ran away not only to escape the insecurity of the situation, but also as a means of escaping her challenging reality, Sara remembers her time in hall:

> "Yeah, I tried to really straighten up my life. I guess I seen my… when I was in jail the main thing I seen was I was repeating the same steps I seen as my mother taking – I see her… she was dealing with substance abuse, with drugs, alcohol. She ended up running away. I known her for running away from her problems and I seen I was just repeating the same thing, I was trying to hide and trying to keep myself away from."

Through this process she was able to see that just as her mother had done, she was trying to escape her reality. In addition to escaping her reality and running away, this again entailed that she was, as many of the other young women, transgressing her gender norms as a young Latina—her rebellious, subversive, and independent behavior that she continuously displayed is what continuously led to either being in trouble with her father or being in trouble with the law and/or court. Sara no longer wanted to transgress her gender role in the way her mother had,

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because she hoped to still provide for her sister, just as she had done before going into placement and incarceration.

With time to reflect and a lot of time in juvenile hall Sara began making the most of her educational opportunities offered in juvenile hall, she shares:

> So I started reading, I started picking up in school, like I guess that's where I made the most credits because I was actually forced to be in school and I was back on track again where getting all my grades – straight a's, I got mad at a b. I guess I just started to find my way back to myself. And that's when WBF would actually… I started reading a lot more, started doing like school… with writing, through WBF…So it came to the point where every time I'd come to class it seems like you become happier and more opening and you become more freely able to write, to talk and I like, I kinda like noticed in myself, too and that's when I started realizing that I wasn't being a sorta rebellious or trying to act up or be disrespectful to anybody I was just being myself and trying to work through it. So the classes I guess really helped me because through writing… I never actually wrote a poem a day in my life before."

Through her forced reflection, schooling, and voluntary participation in WBF and creative writing, Sara was able to break through her pattern of running away from herself and started reflecting on what she had done in order to heal from her past. As this reflection deepened, Sara felt motivated to better her situation within the context of juvenile hall life, but also toward her eventual removal from juvenile hall. This process, of course, meant that she was no longer being rebellious or acting outside the scope of mainstream womanhood, but was abiding to the rules and codes of a good Latina girl, one who did her work and participated in programs—thus showing her dependence on what the halls were able to provide her. Through this writing process, Sara was also able to find appreciation for her family, and she came to realize that they, including her father, loved her all along—yet love though was not displayed in overt physical or verbal affirmations. Sara shares, "…with my family I always felt it [love] but at the same time I kind of felt that – I didn't see or feel the affection my family was giving toward me so I would

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confuse that with hate or disapprovement – where they didn't like me…" Thus the disintegration of the family, along with the invisible displays of affection she received from them, drove Sara to perform more masculine behavior to get her needs met, in the best way she knew how, and that ultimately landed her in juvenile hall. Yet, through time she came to understand that her family did display love, care, and acceptance of her, just not in the hegemonic sense that we are used to seeing on mainstream media through the display of gender conforming parents who are happily married and provide for their family in a nurturing way.

While Sara was in juvenile hall, she was connected to external school sources. As she was released, she was sent back to her father's house, where she continued to live with him and her sister and started going to adult school. Sara mentions that as a far as a career is concerned she wanted a job in a male dominated field, she shares:

> So the first week I got released [from juvenile hall] I told my dad about this school [to become an automotive technician,] and he was like 'alright, we'll go check it out.' So when at first I got released I went to go see him, …and I got signed up and I got enrolled.

Right away Sara continued on the educational trajectory she was motivated to do; especially knowing that she could do so at this particular college, while earning both her GED and learning to become an automotive technician. Although automotive technology and anything within the greater automotive field is male dominated, and in this sense she would still be transgressing female gender norms, the fact that she is enacting productivity is more widely accepted than her enacting disobedience. In this sense, as a student and as a worker, regardless of the job she would be abiding by social norms within the classroom and within the work place. Her educational trajectory is just another example that conforming to basic gender norms of obedience and submissiveness is widely regarded and benefited, so much so that she was easily able to transition from juvenile hall into a vocational program, setting her up for a career. Accordingly,

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because the interviews stopped right as she was starting her program, I am unable to share how people, mostly males in her profession, responded to her female presence. I predict she will accepted at her school and in her field, but because of her gender, I fear that she will be addressed with suspicion as to her full capacity about automotive technology.

Carina: Finding Family through the Pipeline

Carina is a second-generation Latina from Los Angeles. Gabriela's mother is undocumented, while her father is a U.S. citizen. Carina's parents, who share a 40-year age difference, met in Los Angeles and soon got married and had one child, Carina. Her parents divorced early on in the marriage and Carina's father received full custody due to her mother's ongoing heroin addiction. Since Carina can remember, her mother had a strong addiction to heroin; she recalls, "I knew since I was young, [of my mother's addiction]. I don't really remember or recall but um there was times I guess I would shoot her up." Because of her addiction, Carina's mother was continuously in trouble with the law, and due to her undocumented status she was eventually deported to her country of origin—further solidifying their separation with the U.S. Mexico-Border. Like many Latinas who have been systematically incarcerated because of their drug addictions under War on Drug policy (Diaz-Cotto, 2006) here, and in Gabriela's case as well, we see how citizenship status further criminalizes Carina mother based on immigration status, race, class, gender, and eventually to her permanent banishment from this country and indefinite separation. Since the age of 9, Carina's mother has been virtually absent from her life.

Carina grew up as an only child with her elderly father. Carina's father did not work in Carina's lifetime, due to his old age; instead social security supplemented his income. Unlike many of the other participants in this study, while their family was disintegrated, Carina's father

did provide a sense of stability; his consistent income and access to other social services allowed for him to provide Carina with basic necessities and an unchanging living situation throughout her life.

On the other hand, like her counterparts in this study, Carina faced a great deal of tension when it came to her relationship with her father. Because her mother was gone, her father had to take on multiple roles as a single parent. As in Sara's case, this was not an easy situation for either father or daughter, because typical familial and gender roles did not exist. Carina was often left home alone, while her father went out drinking and gambling. Carina remembers her dad often coming home drunk very late at night, while she spent much of her time to herself, watching TV. She remembers, "I went through a lot at such a young age and no one was there to listen to me and I was always kinda, I wouldn't say I was held hostage but I always had to be home." Thus, as an only child Carina growing up without her mother and with a single father who did not provide the physical presence and affection that one often seeks out in a mother. Carina often felt neglected and she learned early on how to be independent a care for herself, a trait outside of her expected gender norm as a juvenile Latina. In this sense, as for all the girls in this study, her initial stages of transgressing gender came from her own sense of survival to get through each day.

As Carina began to grow into adolescence, her relationship with her father began to worsen. In addition to his drinking, Carina's father was extremely verbally abusive when he was around. Carina recalls that early on in her schooling, she was also often bullied for how quiet and shy she was, claiming that she was an easy target for her peers, "I, yeah, I wasn't, well I wasn't even talkative back then, so I was just scared most of the time. I guess because I was always emotionally put down by my dad. My dad would always call me crazy, stupid, um down… like

he always put me down for whatever reason or way." In addition to her lonely and isolated childhood, when Carina did interact with her father, it was so he could criticize her or put her down. Carina began to internalize her father's criticisms and began to believe them. This insecure home environment, translated into Carina becoming extremely insecure and timid to the point of not talking at school. While it may seem that Carina's father was only mean to her, he did care for and support her in ways that were not obviously warm and nurturing. Carina's father was always there to support and defend her when school staff did not do anything about the continual bullying that Carina experienced at school. Carina further acknowledges that she now knows that he has always loved and cared for her, although he struggled so much as a single father to raise her:

> …I know how hard it was for my dad to raise me on his own. I saw the pain, the sorrow… I still see it every day. I still see what kind of effect it makes on him… And his way of coping… I don't know. His way of coping is drinking, or smoking or talking or hurting and I just don't want to be that way.

While Carina knows in retrospect that her father's contradictory actions toward her were part of his coping strategies as a single father, she knows that he loved and cared for her. Yet, she also acknowledges that it was not easy for her to understand that as a child, and as a result she responded or coped in different ways that did not always benefit her.

As Carina grew into adolescence, the bullying continued into middle school. However, upon entering 8th grade, Carina began to stand up to her bullies, with both her words and fists. Carina was beginning to find her voice to defend herself from anyone who put her down—yet this newfound empowerment was quickly contested, and treated as aggressive behavior that broke social constructions expected of young girl.

While still in the 8th grade Carina got into a physical altercation with her father. The tension between them normalized days later, however police came knocking on their door. Not

knowing why the police were present, Carina soon found out that her father had called the police and reported Carina for elderly abuse. Due to her father's old age, and his place as the head of household, the police, without understanding the holistic nature of the situation arrested Carina and placed her in juvenile hall. As a result of her built up anger and frustration with her verbally abusive father, Carina's aggressive and violent reaction toward her father is what placed her in juvenile hall for almost two months before she was released. Carina's behaviors, which were outside the scope of her prescribed gender and ethnic role as a submissive, quiet, obedient young lady, were met with punishment in an attempt to tame her "non-normal" non-gender conforming behavior. However, there were no consequences placed on her father's constant dehumanizing and belittling attitude and his mutual physical violence toward Carina. His status as a single parent patriarch, in addition to his elderly age, meant that his actions were not questioned and his rights were fully protected.

Upon her release from juvenile hall, Carina was provided with multiple counselors who eventually become her mentors and influenced Carina in positive ways. For Carina, this was the first time in her life that she felt she was getting the care, support, and encouragement that she always longed for from her parents. This support came from multiple mentors. She shares:

> When I was younger I didn't have that support, so when I got it I was 12 or 13 it was something new to me, but I knew I wanted a mom or dad and someone to listen to me and tell me—guide me. Either way I'm going to make mistakes down the road, but if someone could help me figure things out a little more clearly-- I mean why not listen to others. Even people who've made mistakes, maybe they're telling you because they've made the same mistakes because their life went to pieces so I'd rather hear someone out than to neglect it all together.

It is clear that, while Carina did have a present father, she sought out others in her life to perform the role of a mother and father—ones that would protect her, love her, and make her feel secure.

She often time found those parental, and especially the maternal figures in her counselors. To her a parent was someone who loved her but was also someone who listened to her, encouraged her, and imparted wisdom about life. Because she went so long without that figure, Carina felt lost. Her father's discouraging and aggressive attitude instead contributed to her lack of self-esteem and security.

The tension with her father unfortunately continued after the first incident; especially because Carina felt extremely betrayed by her father for having called the police on her. Although Carina began to receive the external support that she needed, she was still struggling with her feelings toward her father. She mentioned, "… to be betrayed like that, of course that brought out the rebellious side, like I'm not going to care anymore. But little did I know back then that all my actions only affect me, myself and I. You know? And I guess, you know, I wasn't mentally or emotionally ready to deal with all that. I didn't even know how to deal with all that…" In addition to her history with verbal abuse from her father through the course of her childhood, what Carina understood as betrayal from her father, for calling the police on her, added to the anger that she felt and as a result she mentions consciously acting out. Carina's transgressive gender performance, or as she mentions, her "rebellious side" further emerged at a time when she really did not know how to process such feelings triggered by her father and those lingering notions of abandonment and neglect from her mother. Ultimately, the amalgamation of emotions from an unstable emotional life marked Carina as an aggressive "problem child" whose disobedience and defiance were met with suppression instead of intervention.

Carina continued to go in and out of juvenile hall as a result of altercations with her father, in addition to physical altercations with others at school. Accordingly, when she wasn't living at home with her father or in juvenile hall, she lived in group-home placements throughout

Los Angeles for children with "severe emotional and behavioral problems." By the end of her third year of placement, Carina was incarcerated again for assaulting two teachers for defending her friend, whose iPod was stolen by another student. Carina shares why she decided to go defend her friend, and get her iPod back:

> … one of her classmates stole her iPod. So, I was rebellious. She was the type of girl that was um timid. Very shy, very um, to herself and I was always the one like, yeah I was out there I didn't care who you are I still don't care who you are I'll talk to you if you're a stranger, I'm just out-going. She didn't want to say anything to the girl but she told me… I think I was already mad that day or I just didn't care. I don't know what came over me and I was all … 'I'm a meet you up at [your school] and we're gonna deal with this…' I get there and I tell her my plan, which is pretty much to beat up the girl get the iPod back and that's it. … I was always willing to do anything for my friends.

Thus, because she felt such a strong bond to her friend, Carina felt the need to take care of and protect her friend, as if she were a younger sibling (Allard, 2012). Further, this was the one friend she really related to because they both dealt with having really abusive parents. That sense of connection and loyalty is something she always longed for from someone else, especially a paternal figure. Having internalized the notion that she was bad, and "rebellious" (Rios, 2011), Carina saw it as her duty to "help" the only person that was like family to her. While she transgressed gender norms through her aggressive behavior, her intent was driven by her gender conforming ideals of being family orientated and protecting her own, even it she was not blood related.

This plan to protect her friend did not end well for Carina. A teacher came to separate Carina and the girl who stole the iPod from fighting. However, the teacher pulled Carina's hair, and Carina reacted by fighting back the teacher. The principal came to stop the fight, and Carina again hit both the principal and security guard who approached her, and the fight escalated from hitting one person, to physically fighting five people that day. For this altercation, Carina was

placed in juvenile hall for four months and was then placed on house arrest at her father's apartment for four additional months. As she got close to finishing her probation, Carina got into another altercation with her father, and that was her final time in juvenile hall. As Carina continued to transgress her gender role and enact aggressive physical behavior, she continued to be placed in juvenile hall as a means of taming her actions and reactions to various people in her environment. Carina's constant transgressions could be interpreted as a means of searching for someone to care for her and protect her. For six consecutive years, Carina was in and out of detention and home placements.

Surprisingly, Carina was not upset or angry about her time away from home and her father. On the contrary, she has come to be very grateful of her time in juvenile hall and home placements. She mentioned how grateful she is to her friend who she defended in the iPod incident:

> …I feel like I owe my life to her. Because if it wasn't for me going to juvie that one time, I wouldn't have been to WBF. I wouldn't be introduced to wonderful people. I wouldn't be introduced to Poetry Lounge. I feel like every struggle came something awesome with it. Because I made it that way. Because other people surrounded me. Because I don't know. Doors just opened, and then I just took it.

It was this time in juvenile hall that Carina met Writers Breaking Free (WBF), an organization that emphasizes the power of writing and poetry with youth; both inside juvenile hall and once they are released. Ultimately, WBF seeks to empower youth through their own healing process that occurs as they write. Carina, who was encouraged to write by her fifth grade teacher, always used words and writing as one of her ways of coping. Thus when she encountered WBF, she was extremely drawn to the mission of the organization and began to further tap into and develop her writing, especially her poetry as a means healing from what she had been through.

Carina no longer felt the need to enact aggressive or violent behavior, because she found a group of people and a hobby that allowed her to feel and understand everything she had experienced. Most importantly, she found a space that provided that parental security she always longed for. Carina reaffirms that writing and the many mentors have really transformed her trajectory and facilitated her growth and development:

> Like, I know the power of words. Like, if it wasn't for anybody telling me or communicating to me that I could do it, I don't know where the fuck I'd be…I took a lot of things with me. Also, the passion of writing. Throughout that whole time I would write….No one else listens to me as much as my beautiful pen and paper do. No one like, I don't know it was just always had a moment for it. I mean, every single time I can't say something to a certain someone or you know? That paper and that pen will help me relieve it and help me let it out and then once it's out it's just letting it be, like the Beatles said.

Her passion for writing has allowed Carina to continue to pursue her poetry in many avenues throughout the city of Los Angles. She has used her poetry to talk about her experience and to speak not as a victim but as someone who went through many struggles and is continuing to overcome them. Accordingly, it is through her new found family of mentors and peers at WBF that Carina has found a sense of security and meaning in her life.

In coming to terms and learning ways of coping through writing, Carina has come to understand her father and their relationship. Although they still do not fully get along, she mentions that she has done her best, to not "get into it with him" because she knows that he will not be around much longer, and she wants to enjoy him as much as she can, for as long as she can. Carina shares:

> My dad's always going to have a place in my heart and that's like one person there I will always, like… no matter how much he puts me down… Because my dad calls me all these things and says all these things and does all these things. No matter how much pain he wants to cause, how much misery I see in his eyes, how much hurt I can feel through all those angry words… I'll always love him, regardless. It's like that

> unbreakable bond – you will not fuck it over because… I know throughout all that hate, he really just loves
>
> me. He just doesn't know how to advocate it or say it any other way.

Ultimately, she's learned that her father has showed her love, in his own limited way and as she has grown, she has come to understand his own struggle and pain as a single elderly parent and the circumstances that make him the way that he is.

Discussion

To understand the ways in which juvenile Latinas experience incarceration, I explore how gender conformity and gender non-conformity shape their experiences as racialized Latinas, into and out of the prison pipeline. I analyzed four case studies of young adult Latinas who were incarcerated at least one time and are now transitioning into adulthood outside of the prison pipeline. In all cases, the young Latinas were deeply marked by their lives prior to and during their incarceration. The gender (non) conformity each participant performed was based on Nanda's (2012) stereotypes for racialized Latinas in the juvenile justice system that categorizes Latina juveniles as "dependent, submissive, family oriented, domestic, and highly sexual" (p. 1531). The case studies clearly show how participant's gender non-conformity placed them into the prison pipeline through their enactment of behavior that transgressed hegemonic womanhood (Richie 1996; 2012). Using a CRT and LatCrit framework this study demonstrates that the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, and gender performance left each of participants in this study vulnerable to the "state-operated systems of domination" under the War on Drugs and expansion of the carceral state (Richie 2012; Meiners 2011). On the other hand, performing gender conformity granted participants various kinds of benefits, including better treatment from juvenile hall and placement staff, shorter sentences, and access to educational and job opportunities.

In all cases gender non-conformity became either a coping mechanism or a survival strategy for each participant where gender non-conformity took the shape of aggressive, independent, or rebellious behaviors. Such behaviors came about as responses to their vulnerable circumstances wherein families were disintegrated, and parents were either struggling with their own troubles with the law, addiction, or where incarceration or deportation solidified separation. In all cases participants highlighted the void and loss they experienced from the separation from their mothers and as a result, they acted out accordingly (Allard, 2012). Furthermore, as we see in Irene's case, acting out and stealing a car were mostly inspired by her efforts to pay her bills and keep a roof over her head (Diaz-Cotto 2006; Richie 1996).

As a significant block of our growing population, it is important to understand the experiences of Latinas, since research that solely focuses on incarcerated Latinas in juvenile justice is underdeveloped (Schaffner, 2008). This study is an attempt to provide a small glimpse into the holistic experiences of Latinas entering the prison pipeline. This study echoes current research on girls in juvenile justice that notes that girls are entering the prison pipeline due to status offenses (Chesney-Lind and Sheldon, 2004), that girls face harsher punishment in relations to their male peers (Simmons, 2009; Schaffner, 2006), and that girls are punished for acting outside of the moral standard of hegemonic womanhood (Richie 1996; 2012). Yet, because very little work exists specifically on Latinas, my case studies provide a holistic understanding of what each participant experienced on their journey into the prison pipeline and how they got through it. As, Sherman (2012) assures, a holistic approach provides a more appropriate response to the nuanced experiences of each girl (p.1599).

Using a CRT and LatCrit framework allowed for a holistic and intersectional understanding of each girl's experience based on their intersectional identity, as well as the

structural forces that shaped their experience, such as their families, community, and institutions they came in contact with daily. Without focusing on the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, immigration status, and gender performance, we may be missing key aspects of what each girl went through on a personal, psychological, and emotional level. Such an approach allowed for understanding not the end result of each participant's "deviant" behaviors, but the forces that led to their acting out and transgressing their prescribed gender roles. Accordingly, such an approach highlighted that all Latinas in this study were shaped by the War on Drugs rhetoric and policies that demonized and punished their mothers who sought out drugs as a means of coping with their vulnerable circumstances (Diaz-Cotto 2006; Richie 1996, 2012). The girls in this study are arguably the by-products of the War on Drugs, which continues to target and punish vulnerable women of color from low-income communities.

To capture the way in which girls were often demonized and criminalized based on their gender nonconformity, I defined "non-gender conforming microaggressions." Similar to racial, gender, and sexual-orientation microaggressions, I take from Solorzano (2010) and Sue (2010) to define "non-gender conforming microaggressions," as a form of systematic everyday gender non-conforming phobia used to keep those who display gender variance and non-conformity in their place. These are verbal or non-verbal assaults that are directed toward non-gender conforming individuals, i.e. individuals who enact behavior or style (clothing, public appearance) that does not match with their birth sex or racialized gendered identity (Whitley and Kite 2009; Sue 2010). As seen in the case studies, most specifically that of Gabriela, non-gender conforming microaggressions were followed by a sense of hyper-criminalization, in that such phobia of acting outside of hegemonic notions of womanhood for girls in this study was not only judged but was followed by direct punishment that affected them in the long term. While

microaggressions are mostly used to understand the experiences of people of color in the educational, legal and psychological fields, here we can see how microaggressions are also present and can help us understand punishment and rewards within the juvenile justice system. Juvenile justice studies can draw on this concept to better understand women performing behaviors and style outside of their gender roles.

Furthermore, this study also displays that while families of incarcerated youth may be seen as being "empty" (Schaffner, 2008), disintegrated families in these cases still provided sources of wealth and capital that the Latinas in this study benefited from to get through and out of the pipeline (Yosso, 2006). Girls in this study used their capital to navigate the isolating prison pipeline and were not only victims of hyper-criminalization of the gender non-conformity, but used their wealth to make it through the pipeline.

Ultimately, this study is a small glimpse into a much larger field of study. Unfortunately, because there were only four young women highlighted in this study, the findings here suggest that more research is necessary to fully understand the holistic experiences of Latinas in the prison pipeline. Particularly, understanding intergenerational familial context is especially important to understanding how Latina youth enter the criminal justice system. Accordingly, sexuality and immigration status (of family members, and individuals) are also important factors that must be further explored to fully capture the structures that shape the further criminalization and demonization of Latinas an in the pipeline.

Conclusion

The case studies presented above show the lives, in detail, of four young Latina women who were formerly incarcerated at the juvenile justice level. While they have very similar lives, they all have a unique story of how they were placed into the pipeline, how they navigated their

time there, and where they have been as their time ended in juvenile hall. Although they all have great struggles with multiple layers of oppression where their intersectionalities meet, they are not victims but survivors of these larger structures. These are young women who have continued to resist the racist, sexist, and for some homophobic institutions that attempted to tame their behavior and re-establish their femininity as timid, docile, and submissive young Latinas.

They all ended up in the prison pipeline because they transgressed the intersectional racial and gender stereotypes placed onto them as a means of trying to survive their unstable beginnings. Each of the young girls sought out security, protection, and longed for a loving and nurturing mother (Allard, 2012) yet, this was not always possible. In all cases their mothers had also transgressed their own gender boundaries and for their own reasons were not able to meet those motherly expectations due to their own drug issues and troubles with the law. As Diaz-Cotto (2006) argues, the War on Drugs that began in the 1980's has significantly discriminated against people of color from low-socioeconomic communities, and it has especially contributed to the increasing rates of Latinas into the prison pipeline at all levels for seeking drugs as a means of coping with social, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. The mothers of these girls are no different. While all families were disintegrated and mostly participant's mothers were in direct trouble with the law, in Gabriela and Carina's case such coping mechanisms extended beyond incarceration to deportation of their mothers and banishment from this country.

While Gabriela, Irene, Sara and Carina all suffered physical, emotional and 3 of the 4 suffered sexual abuse, it was also their coping outside the bounds of hegemonic womanhood that placed them within the prison pipelines. We see in all the cases that their lack of obedience and submission to adult figures often granted the label of being "bad" and further led to their own internalization of feeling of being "nothing" or worth nothing. Yet their behavior was never

interrogated holistically as a cry for help (Sherman, 2012). However, through the rough years of adolescence, the girls found the sense of family and grounding that they were always searching for. Whether it was through finding the right girlfriend who provided that care and encouragement as in Gabriela's case or mentors who provided the parental norms that the girls sought.

Ultimately, the girls in this study moved between gender non-conformity and conformity as a means of strategy and coping. In most cases, their non-conformity and gender transgressions was due to their sense of insecurity. Yet their gender conformity is what granted many of them they key out of juvenile hall. While it has not has been easy for all four participants, they all mentioned that they were looking forward to the future and staying as far away as possible from the prison pipeline. This is not to say that they are all conforming to all of their gender roles because as seen is Gabriela's case, her sexuality and style of dress, along with Sara's decision to become an automotive technician keep them within the realm of gender non conformity. Thus, we see in all of the case studies that gender performativity is fluid, yet in our heteronormative and patriarchal society, any blurring or transgressing of gender is often met with punishment or discipline. This is clearly evidenced by the experiences of girls going through the juvenile justice system. Gender is a social construct where males are expected to be masculine men, and females are expected to be feminine females (Butler, 1990). Additionally, the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, performance, and citizenship status also play a particular role in the way femininity and disciplining of ones gender and body enacted.

Further as both breakers of juvenile law and victims of this system, my ultimate goal in this study was to show that the structures in which the girls in this study grew up had a direct impact into their funneling into the prison pipeline. Further, their mothers or families are not to

blame for their entrance into the prison system; rather, the growth and expansion of the carceral state and the policing and criminalization of women's behavior is, especially poor racialized women of color. While many of the participants struggled to get their basic emotional needs met through this taming process, the women in this study have used their resistance and capital to continue forward in trying to find their way.

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