Disciplining Urban Youth:
An ethnographic study of a Bronx high school

By Kathleen Nolan

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Urban Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2007

UMI Number: 3245059

Copyright 2007 by
Nolan, Kathleen

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 3245059
Copyright 2007 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

©2007

KATHLEEN NOLAN

All rights reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Urban Education in satisfaction of the
Dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Jean Anyon

1/16/2007
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Phil Anderson

1/16/2007
Date

Executive Officer

Michelle Fine

David Brotherton
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

DISCIPLINING URBAN YOUTH:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF A BRONX HIGH SCHOOL

By
Kathleen Nolan

Advisor: Professor Jean Anyon

In recent years, public school discipline policies have taken a punitive turn, disproportionately impacting students of color and creating a link between certain schools and the criminal justice system. This dissertation details a year-long ethnographic study of disciplinary practices—including zero tolerance, the use of a high-tech security apparatus, and order maintenance-style policing—in an urban high school. Through the use of participant observation and ethnographic interviewing, the researcher examined the lived experience of schooling and how students and school personnel made sense of and negotiated disciplinary practices. Drawing on critical educational theories, theories of crime and punishment, and related empirical data, the researcher also examined how school discipline policies are shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces. Findings suggest that current disciplinary practices help to create a culture of penal control inside the school. Within the new disciplinary paradigm, students' non-criminal behaviors were often subjected to criminal procedural level strategies, arrests, and summonses to criminal court. As penal management became the implicit mission, attention appeared to be deflected from students' educational needs, and the causes of disruption and violence were not sufficiently addressed. Findings also revealed that students found creative, albeit sometimes destructive, ways to preserve valued identities and contest policies. Finally, findings suggest that the school has assumed a key role in the management of an educationally and economically marginalized group—poor and working class urban youth of color.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible had it not been for the generous spirit of the students of Gilbert Blakely (pseudonym), many of whom spent a great deal of time with me patiently explaining the intricacies of their social worlds. There are so many students who made spending time at Blakely a pleasure and for whom I developed immense admiration and affection. I am most thankful for the warmth and sincerity I received from Duane, Wanda, Zack, Jamal, Ronald, and Gillian, and I'm especially grateful to Carlos and Jennifer for welcoming me into their lives. They will always hold a special place in my heart. (All individuals related to the school are referred to by their pseudonyms.)

I am also most grateful to Ms. Alvarez, Mr. Juarez, Officer Hoffmann, and all of the deans who graciously welcomed me into their difficult work environment and went out of their way to orient me to the disciplinary process. I have the utmost respect for these individuals and deeply admire the commitment, sense of humor, and love with which they do their jobs. Additionally, I am grateful to all the teachers who granted me interviews and welcomed me into their classrooms and other school personnel who helped me in numerous ways. Special thanks to Elaine (real name) who was always ready to help, and thanks to Mr. G. for facilitating my entrance into Gilbert Blakely.

I have the deepest gratitude for my superlative committee. I could not imagine a more perfect group of scholars to guide me through this project than Jean Anyon, Michelle Fine, and David Brotherton. From the first day I met her, Dr. Anyon has offered an incredible amount of support, compassion, and the freedom to grow as a scholar. She has always been ready to challenge me intellectually and stretch my thinking, particularly as I began considering the significance of political economy in my work and, more recently, as I attempted to use social theory to expand the explanatory power of my data. Dr. Fine also shaped my thinking from early on in my doctoral studies. She has offered her expertise, encouragement, and invaluable guidance at every stage of the process, and I could always count on her to locate the political and intellectual value in my work when I lost sight of it and redirect me when I became muddled. Dr. Brotherton's commitment to critical ethnography and the sensitivity with which he writes about the struggles of young men and women who have much in common with many of my own research participants have been a true inspiration. His enthusiasm and insights along the way have been much appreciated.

I have immense gratitude for my parents, Gerard and Shirley. They have given me constant and unconditional support and love without which I could not have succeeded. And I owe a great deal of thanks to my brothers, Jim, Tom, and Bob, and their amazing families for always affirming me and offering their unwavering love and support.

I am truly grateful for the friendships that have sustained me and provided much laughter and love. I especially thank Jose, Chris, and my intellectual Muse, Edgar Rivera Colon. I also thank my close friends from the Graduate Center, Michael Dumas, Takiema Bunch-Smith, Emily Schnee, and Eve Tuck and the many others in Urban Education and the writing fellows program who have offered companionship and a much needed sense of community through the often solitary process of dissertation writing. Finally, my deep appreciation goes to Greg Dimitriadis, who read early drafts of the dissertation and provided invaluable feedback and to Mary Soliday who continually offered helpful professional advice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION……. 1

The study (3)
An overview of the dissertation (6)
Structure of the dissertation (8)
Methods (14)
Research design 14
Multi-sited research 16
The social location of the researcher 18

PART I

ONE: The Penalization of the Urban Public School: The macro-structural and cultural foundations of urban school discipline……. 21

The punitive turn in crime control:
Mass imprisonment and order maintenance (24)
Discipline policies aimed at urban youth and the rise of juvenile incarceration (35)
Criminologies of control (40)
The segregated urban public school (43)
Educational policy and school restructuring 44
School discipline 48
The construction of the dirty dozen: New York City and Gilbert Blakely 49
Conclusion (54)

TWO: Welcome to Gilbert Blakely High School…… 55

Morning scanning (58)
The detention room (B-40) (61)
Base (64)
The deans' office (64)
The upper floors (66)
Conclusion (68)

THREE: Discipline and Pedagogy: Classroom practice and the production of student alienation…… 70

Ms. Klein's Global History class (73)
Ms. Jenkins' freshman English class (81)
Teacher talk (87)
Teaching toward the test 88
Views of the students 94
Conclusion (96)

FOUR: Disciplinary Practices and Order Maintenance: An ethnographic portrait of penalization……97

What does disorderly mean anyway?: The policing of non-compliance (99)
Low level violations of the law (112)
Physical altercations (114)
Summonses inside and out (116)
Conclusion (119)

FIVE: School Disciplinarians:
Educators negotiating the culture of penal control…….. 121
The educator-police relationship (123)
Overcoming anonymity: educational solutions to violence and disruption (125)
Putting the humanity in the policies (129)
The deans (131)
Softies and dictators 132
Tough love 136
The punishment fits the crime:
Normalizing criminal procedural level strategies (141)
Better five days now than five years later on:
The tensions between critique and the discourse of responsibility (143)
Seeking alternatives (148)
You've been arrested. I can't get involved. (151)
Conclusion (153)

PART II

SIX: Students Making Sense of the Classroom…… 156
Classroom misbehavior as a source of frustration (158)
Classes are boring! (162)
The handout 162
Technology 163
Explaining things, making it interesting, and a little joking (165)
Walking into a hostile environment (168)
Student alienation and cutting (171)
Conclusion (173)

SEVEN: The Underlife of the School: The preservation of self and everyday acts of resistance at Blakely…… … 175
Strategies for non-attendance (177)
Breaking the rules (189)
Everybody knows me here (On being the disruptive student) 189
The way you look is the way people treat you (On wearing hats) 191
It's all about the hustle (On making money in the cafeteria) 195
Conclusion (198)

EIGHT: Student Conflicts…….. 199
School violence and conflict in perspective (201)

Making sense of school violence and conflict at the street/prison nexus (202)
I wake up to the same damn thing everyday 205
I'm gonna get my respect 210
The school as a safe place to take your beef (214)
He said/she said and other stupid stuff (217)
Conclusion (220)

NINE: Making Sense of Law Enforcement in School and Rationales for Non-compliance …… 223
Making sense of school discipline: dysfunction, disrespect, and frustration (224)
Law enforcement inside Blakely (226)
The community and the school 227
They come out real ugly 231
Don't be pullin' on the kids 236
Grudges in the home 237
Analyzing non-compliance: Contests over respect, saving face, and resistance (239)
So where do our respect come in? 241
And I stand up 244
On being (or not being) a punk (247)
Agents and officers as members of the school community (249)
Conclusion (252)

CHAPTER TEN: Theories of Reproduction and Resistance…… 254
Re-thinking reproduction (254)
Theorizing resistance and resisting refusals (261)

CONCLUSION…… 270

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX…… 285

BIBLIOGRAPHY…… 317

INTRODUCTION

I was checking my mailbox in the main office at the end of the day enjoying the quiet that settles upon the school in the late afternoon. There was one other person in the office with me, a school aide, an older Latina woman, sitting at a desk calling parents of truant students. Suddenly, the tranquility was broken as three police officers came barreling into the office. A stocky, white male officer was pushing on the chest of a small African American boy who appeared to be no older than thirteen. The boy was letting out loud sobs, unable to speak. The cop pushed the child against the wall and placed his face within inches of the boy's. A female officer tried unsuccessfully to ease her colleague away from the student. I stood in shock watching. The motherly school aide slowly and calmly stood up from her desk and walked over to the commotion. As if she didn't even see the enraged officer, she slipped her arms around the boy and asked him what he needed to do. The boy uttered his first comprehensible words, "I want to call my mother."- Spring 2000, from my teacher's journal

This dissertation is a critical ethnographic examination of urban school discipline. My interest in this topic grew out of my experience as a public high school teacher in the South Bronx during the late 1990s and early 2000s. During those years, I witnessed what appeared to be the disinvestment in my students' education evidenced, in my view, by the lack of resources, the horrifying physical conditions of the building, and the growing obsession with standardized test preparation at the expense of more engaging and meaningful learning experiences.

I also began to see the first signs of a new, more punitive school disciplinary framework, as represented in the scene above taken from the journal I kept as a teacher. The new disciplinary practices appeared to mirror the punitive turn our nation's criminal justice system had taken over a decade earlier, which led to a dramatic increase in the number of people incarcerated in the United States (Maurer, 2003). The nation's increased reliance on the criminal justice system beginning in the 1980s and juvenile justice system, in the early 1990s, especially impacted impoverished urban neighborhoods such as the one that surrounded my school—where vast numbers of unemployed, under-educated, and because of new drug laws, often non-violent individuals were going to prison (Maurer, 1999, 2003).

By the mid-1990s, the same political slogans that served to justify criminal justice policy—"zero tolerance for even low-level offenders" and the need to be "tough on crime"—had seeped into the public discourse around urban school discipline. The federal government had set the guidelines for the implementation of zero tolerance school discipline, which calls for swift and harsh punishment for even minor offenses (Casella, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999). However, while zero tolerance was mandated nationally, it has not been implemented in the same ways, nor has it led to the same outcomes, in all schools. In many urban schools like the one where I worked, zero tolerance was augmented by the influx of armed police officers and high-tech security apparatuses, including metal detectors, computerized ID scanners, and cameras.

The move toward these kinds of criminal justice oriented discipline polices in some urban schools has an important racial dimension. Like no other group, Black youth and other youth of color living in urban areas have been demonized in the media and public discourse. They have been depicted as dangerous and indistinguishable as a group (Dorfman & Shiraldi, 2001). Indeed, in 1996, John DiIllio declared that a new breed of super-predator was causing havoc in our inner-cities—the young Black male. Such images helped to justify tougher, more punitive sentencing policies and aggressive policing practices and, more recently, criminal justice oriented disciplinary practices in some schools. While it is imperative that we find ways to mitigate youth violence, it seems unscholarly to accept such representations of urban youth of color without examining the evidence on both the larger social context of youth crime and the micro-worlds of the young people being depicted in pejorative, at times even inhuman, terms. Moreover, as punitive crime control practices become the common model for urban school discipline, it becomes necessary to ask how

these practices influence the educational experiences of some of our poorest and most marginalized students.

The Study

In September of 2004, I began a systematic and rigorous examination of daily life in a large public school located in the Bronx, which I call Gilbert Blakely High School.[1] Blakely is a racially segregated school with approximately 4000 students in the building.[2] It serves mainly poor and working class students from around the Bronx.[3] Blakely is considered a low-performing school with high rates of violence. It was thus chosen by Mayor Bloomberg and the New York City Police Department (NYPD) in 2003 to be part of a new program known as the Impact Schools Initiative. Impact schools, like most NYC public high schools, are equipped with high tech security apparatuses. Additionally, they receive increased numbers of police officers and security agents working under the auspices of the NYPD.[4]

As an urban educator working within the paradigm of critical ethnography, I was interested in issues of access to quality education and educational outcomes along race and class lines. The overall picture for NYC public school students—who are predominantly Black and Latino/a—is disheartening. The graduation rate is at 43% (Gootman, 2006,

[1] This name is a pseudonym taken from a prominent educator who worked around the time of the school's inception.

[2] This number includes several hundred students who attend one of the five small schools located on the second floor of the building. The small schools were not part of this study.

[3] The student population is 56% Black[3] (about 20% higher than the city average), 40% Latino/a, 1.5% white, and 2.5% "other." Sixteen percent of the students are recent immigrants (mainly from Jamaica and the Dominican Republic). About 10% of the students are English language learners, and the vast majority of students are from poor families. About eighty percent of the students are eligible for free lunch, a common indicator of low socio-economic status

[4] According to a report by the Drum Major Institute (2005), Impact schools are some of the most poorly resourced and segregated schools in the whole system. In addition, reading and math scores of students at these schools, including Blakely, are below the city average (internal school data, 2004; NYC DOE on-line School Report Card, 2004-2005).

November); gross funding disparities exist between city schools and their predominantly white suburban counter-parts; and thousands of school children are entering high school reading below grade level (NYC Dept. of Education website, http://schools.nyc.gov/daa/SchoolReports). Criminal justice oriented school discipline policies are then often presented as the common sense solution to the disruption and violence that occur in these schools, but the ways students, teachers, and administrators negotiate criminal justice oriented discipline policies are rarely considered within the public discourse. Policies are discussed by politicians, law enforcement officials, high-ranking school administrators, and the mass public with little understanding of how they play out in the daily lives of individuals in schools. Thus, upon entering Blakely, my primary questions were: *how do the new discipline policies, such as zero tolerance, the implementation of a high-tech security apparatus, and a heavy police presence impact educational aims and school culture, and how do students and personnel negotiate and make sense of their school experiences in the context of criminal justice oriented discipline.*

At the same time, in the tradition of critical school-based ethnography (for example: Fine, 1991; Foley, 1992; Willis, 1977; Valenzuela, 1999), my focus of inquiry was not limited to the micro-interactions found within the school. I was also interested in *how student perspectives and daily life inside the school was shaped by institutional, cultural, political, and economic forces*. Many critical educational researchers have previously documented how schools have historically functioned to sort and prepare students along racial and class lines for various segments of the labor force (Anderson, 1988; Anyon, 1980, 1981; Bowels and Gintis, 1977; Katz, 1967). They have also focused on how changes in the economy, such as a shift to a service economy, along with political and cultural

transformations, have impacted schools (Anyon, 1997, 2005; Apple, 2001; Burbules and Torres, 2000; Lipman, 2002, 2004). These studies emphasize how external forces shape such things as the distribution of resources, reform and restructuring efforts, and testing and curricula implementation.

For me, part of the critical ethnographic endeavor was an attempt to *understand the shifting functions of the segregated urban public school in the context of high unemployment, pervasive poverty, and mass imprisonment. I also sought to gain insight into the nature of the relationship between urban public schooling and the criminal justice system.*

In this respect, I build on recent studies of school discipline that have demonstrated how zero tolerance policies have created a flow of students into the criminal and juvenile justice systems and suggest a clear bias against Black students and other students of color (ABA, 2001; Advancement Project and the Civil Rights Project, 2001; Brown, 2003, 2005; Sandler, 2000; Skiba, Nardo & Peterson, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Zweifer & de Beers, 2002).

My study is also informed by previous school-based ethnographies that have examined school discipline. These illuminating studies focus on such phenomena as the construction of black masculinity and racial bias in school discipline (Ferguson, 2000), hidden forms of violence (Casella, 2001) that get overlooked in a zero tolerance framework, the impact of street culture in schools (Dance, 2002), the anti-educational outcomes of suppression (Brotherton, 1996), and the negative consequences of the use of high tech security apparatuses and "paramilitary style" discipline (Devine, 1996). These studies, to some extent, all demonstrate how current institutional forces and practices in the area of

discipline work to undermine the pedagogical aims of a school, foster exclusionary practices, reinforce damaging stereotypes of low-income students of color, and miss the actual causes of disruption and violence, at times even feeding their existence. But while these studies acknowledge the criminalizing potential and racial bias embedded in school discipline policies, none ethnographically examines the school's institutional relationship to the criminal and juvenile justice systems or what Brown (2003, 2005) calls the schoolhouse/jailhouse track. Through the use of systematic participant observation both inside and outside the school, this study offers original and important insights that contribute to our understanding of the lived experience of the "track" and how some urban public schools like Gilbert Blakely have, themselves, become fundamental to the penal control of urban youth.

An Overview of School Discipline Policies

The contemporary history of school discipline policy began in 1994 when the federal government passed the Gun Free Schools Act, which mandated a one year expulsion for any student who brought a weapon to school. In addition, new security guidelines for public schools were implemented. These guidelines included a call for zero tolerance for weapons, tough truancy laws, community-based curfews, and school uniforms (White House Press Release, 1998). The guidelines and the 1994 gun act strengthened and expanded the zero tolerance policies that schools had been adopting since 1993 to help rid schools of drugs and tobacco. Zero tolerance originally was associated with 1980s federal drug enforcement policies. Inside schools, the policy translated into increased use of suspensions and expulsions for drug and weapon-related violations and more frequent police interventions in

response to incidents that previously would have been handled by school personnel (Skiba and Peterson, 1999).

Federal funding for schools became contingent on the adoption of disciplinary plans based on zero tolerance, so that by the late 1990s, virtually every district in the United States had developed a school safety plan based on the concept of zero tolerance. Indeed, while its original goal had been to keep weapons and drugs out of schools, zero tolerance was later applied to a wide range of disciplinary infractions inside schools.

In New York State, the main piece of legislation to address the national call for safer schools was known as S.A.V.E. (Safe Schools Against Violence Education). The S.A.V.E. legislation is a lengthy document covering every aspect of school security including such mandates as employee fingerprinting. While the S.A.V.E. legislation is supportive of zero tolerance, in many ways, the document and the guidelines that were designed to help districts and individual schools devise safety plans advocate for positive approaches to countering violence, including meaningful and comprehensive community involvement and funding for violence prevention programs (Project SAVE, 2000). However, in New York City, it appears that many of the positive elements of S.A.V.E. got reinterpreted or overshadowed by another driving philosophy, one that came directly from the New York City Police Department.

In 2002, the mayor of NYC announced the creation of the Office of School Safety and Planning (OSSP), to be headed by Benjamin Tucker, a former police officer and academic. OSSP, which operates as a division of the police department, would use SchoolSafe, a computerized data-base, to identify patterns of crime in school. The mayor and the high-ranking officials of the NYC DOE and the NYPD proclaimed that a zero

tolerance approach would be implemented and low-level offenses, such as talking back to teachers and wearing hats, would be a primary focus. The changes in discipline were outlined in the new Discipline Code, which describes in detail many low-level school infractions and their respective consequences.

In 2004, the Impact Schools Initiative went into effect bolstering the mayor and the NYPD's goals. This program increased the size of law enforcement teams (police officers and security agents working under the auspices of the police department) in "high-crime" schools and established order maintenance-style policing—a widely-used policing model that involves heavy police presence and the cracking down on low-level violations of the law and general disorder. Within this model, criminal procedural level strategies, such as body searches, the use of hand cuffs, and the issuance of summonses to criminal court are commonly employed.

Structure of the Dissertation and Chapter Overview

The dissertation consists of two parts. The first part, made up of chapters one through five, constitutes the institutional study. I examine the political economy and cultural forces that shape schooling and disciplinary policies and work to create a link between the criminal and juvenile justice systems and urban public schools. I then examine institutional practices and discourses, inside and outside the classroom, and I show how disciplinary practices work to shift the school culture to one primarily focused on penal control. I refer to this as the process of penalization. In the second part of the dissertation, I shift the lens onto the students. These chapters (six through nine) illuminate how students make sense of educational and disciplinary practices. I also examine the emotive responses

and daily actions and interactions of students, that is, their cultural practices. Finally, I end Part II with a theoretical discussion centered on reproduction and resistance theories.

In the conclusion, I discuss policy and reform implications that grow out of my overall analysis. Finally, I include a detailed methodological appendix.

In chapter one, I examine the cultural, political, and economic forces that shape urban school discipline. I describe how these forces foster a link between certain schools and the burgeoning criminal justice system, including new, more aggressive neighborhood policing strategies. While previous studies have demonstrated that zero tolerance discipline policies create a flow of students, along race and class lines, into the criminal justice system (ABA, 2001; Brown, 2003, 2005), I emphasize in this chapter how many public urban schools, particularly those with high rates of segregation in poverty neighborhoods, like Gilbert Blakely, have undergone a process of penalization. Through this process, the school appropriates a criminal justice logic and assumes penal responsibilities. In New York City, particularly at Impact schools, the combination of zero tolerance and order maintenance policing, along with an eroded educational agenda, creates a prevailing school culture of control.

In chapter two, I introduce the reader to Gilbert Blakely High School. I provide a description of the spatial organization of the school and a portrait of everyday life inside the building. My description reflects the layered history of the institution—one that notes signs of a once-dignified interior and a proud scholastic tradition. Then, in sharp contrast, there are the more recent additions of the clunky metal detectors, police officers, hallway cameras, and scanners. With the new security apparatus, the school has taken on precinct-like, or even prison-like, qualities. In this chapter, we begin to see the impact that the

transformation of the physical spaces of the building has on the micro-interactions that take place within those spaces.

Chapter three takes the reader into the classrooms of Blakely by providing ethnographic portraits of the classroom experience. I also document teachers' perspectives of the classroom experience that guide their practice. My analysis centers on the institutional production of student alienation. I show how a combination of external factors, such as organizational practices and high stakes testing, along with teacher attitudes and behaviors, exacerbate students' already high levels of alienation from the classroom experience. Alienation, here, refers to a sense of powerlessness, self-estrangement, meaninglessness, and normlessness (Seeman, 1959), which causes students to feel disconnected from class content and the behavioral norms set by the school. The high levels of alienation I found at Blakely are central to my overall thesis because they serve to justify in public discourse the pervasive use of punitive disciplinary practices. But it is not normlessness, or misbehavior, in the classroom that is most often criminalized. Student alienation leads to selective cutting and fosters the development of an enticing social world outside the classroom, one in which students become entangled in confrontations with the police on a daily basis. Then, when the presence of heavy law enforcement is legitimized, the hallways are transformed, and all students, regardless of their academic orientation, are subject to entanglements with the police.

Chapter four develops the central point of my thesis. In this chapter, I show how the use of order maintenance policing and the pervasive issuance and threat of criminal court summonses inside the school are key elements in the process of penalization and work to create a link between the school, the streets, and the institutions of the criminal and juvenile

justice systems. I show, in this chapter, how students become subjected to criminal procedural level strategies, such as the use of hand cuffs, body searches, arrests, and the issuance of summonses to criminal court or juvenile court for minor offenses or non-criminal school infractions. I also show how the criminal justice orientated discipline practices overshadow educational-based solutions to disorder, violence, and other low-level crimes. Finally, building on the scholarly work of such theorists as Garland (1990, 2001), Foucault (1977), and Wacquant (2001), I theorize how, through the use of order maintenance policing inside the school, the school becomes imbricated in the streets, the courts, and other institutions of the criminal justice system and, in turn, the streets and justice systems become imbricated in the school. That is, as the school merges with an ideology of neighborhood policing and many students find themselves making frequent trips to criminal court to respond to school-based infractions, these once separate spaces become integrated. Thus, while many students at Blakely will likely never spend time in prison, *all* students are subjected to a form of penal and social control that permeates and fuses various domains of their lives.

Chapter five examines an essential element of the emergent culture of penal control found inside the school—the practices of the educator disciplinarians. These are the school personnel directly involved in the disciplinary process, the deans (teachers who are relieved of some of their classroom responsibilities to take on new responsibilities as disciplinarians) and administrators, especially the principal and the assistant principal of school safety. In this chapter, I show how these agents of the institution do not present a unified institutional voice in favor of the criminal justice framework. They work extremely hard to maintain their integrity as caring educators, and some deans and administrators are very critical of order

maintenance policing in the school and the over-use of the criminal justice system in general. They find ways to subvert law enforcement and assert positive disciplinary strategies, such as counseling, parent intervention, and mediation, and they work hard to re-engage alienated students in academic pursuits. But in the end, they come to rely upon the criminal justice framework, and to some extent, they internalize its logic. Thus, their efforts to emphasize educational solutions to disciplinary problems often serve merely to "put some humanity into the policies," and their contestation does not ultimately challenge existing structures. They may push at the edges of the framework and, at times, re-direct individual students away from the criminal justice system, but for the most part, they work within the dominant logic of penal management.

Chapter six begins Part II. In this chapter, I re-visit the classroom and the notion of student alienation. I develop an analysis based on interviews with a wide range of students of how students make sense of the classroom. Unlike other researchers that have contended that some students from subordinated groups who exhibit oppositional behavior wholly reject schooling and academic work (see for example: Ogbu, 1987; Willis, 1977), my data show that most students value education, at least on an abstract level, and desire an engaging classroom experience. Students I interviewed offered insightful critiques of classroom practice and provided reasoned explanations for their sometimes inappropriate participation or their non-attendance.

Chapter seven explores what I call the underlife (Goffman, 1961) of the school. In an institution of control that violates the individual's personal boundaries, Goffman contends that a non-conformist social world will emerge among its "inmates." In these social spaces, inmates, or students, make "movements of liberty," or what might be called

"power-moves" to re-assert a sense of self, seek pleasurable experiences, find economic rewards, and strategically position themselves in relation to other students and adults in the building. As students challenge prescribed institutional norms, they "win space" (Willis, 1977) and momentarily reconfigure, or disrupt, relations of power. In Scott's (1985) terms, they practice everyday acts of resistance.

In chapter eight, I examine conflict and violence in the school. I show how students' narrations of conflict and violence are strongly influenced by urban street culture and even, at times, prison culture. Indeed, some of the conflict in the school directly emanates from the surrounding neighborhoods. Some young people at Blakely perceive violence as inescapable, but school violence and conflict cannot be narrowly understood as an overflow from the streets. In the context of the school, my data show that the terrain of conflict (often not physical in nature) and violence (most commonly involving fist-fighting and much less commonly involving weapons) is used by students to generate excitement in an otherwise "boring" place, construct valued identities, and (re)position themselves within the social hierarchy. They can even benefit from strategic participation in conflicts and, at times, manage to limit its negative consequences. This is because, in an environment where violence is normalized[5], yet regularly suppressed, students, particularly those who view violence as an inescapable reality of urban life, can "take care of their beef" (and thus "save face") more safely than they can on the streets. Ultimately, I argue that student conflict and violence can be understood within a theory of resistance, not as a form of rebellion against prescribed norms, but because such "power-moves" between students are not unrelated to

[5] Violence is normalized in the sense that the policies created to address it are premised on the notion that violence will always be a part of the school environment. The goal is to suppress violence, not address its underlying causes. Order maintenance policing, as I discuss in chapter one, is similarly based on the neo-liberal assumption, that crime is a "normal" part of life.

relations of power between students and institutional and state agents (school personnel and law enforcement).

In chapter nine, I re-visit the impact order maintenance policing has on the school culture and examine how students make sense of their interactions with law enforcement agents. My data illustrate that students' contestation, or their unwillingness to accommodate to what they view as unfair police interventions, is commonly criminalized. Students end up getting arrested or being summoned to criminal court for what amounts to contests, or as one student put it, a tug of war, over respect. I theorize students' non-compliance with law enforcement as the most overt, direct, and conscious acts of resistance found in the school. For students who defy police authority, it is often about preserving dignity or gaining respect among peers, but it is also about standing up to what they view as an injustice or an abuse of power.

Chapter ten theoretically ties together the chapters in each part of the dissertation. For Part I, I engage reproduction theory and consider its relevance in today's context. I argue that some urban public schools have assumed penal responsibilities that undermine their already tenuous educative aims and that the policing of misbehavior and the use of criminal procedural level strategies, which I observed at Blakely, can be theorized as intrinsically related to class and racial exclusions of low-income youth of color in a deeply stratified, post-industrial service economy.

Part II, then, is framed as a study of resistance. I discuss the implications of power relations and the various forms of resistance found in the school. I contend that, in attempting to provide an alternative analysis of the kinds of student behavior that reinforces negative stereotypes, it is tempting to practice a kind of ethnographic refusal (Ortner, 1995)

that obscures the complexities and contradictions embedded in students' actions and to depict them in romanticized ways. But student behaviors, I argue, need to be described and understood within the set of power relations in which they exist. In this way, we can better understand students' perspectives, the rationales for their actions, and, subsequently, their needs and the emacipatory potential in their cultural practices.

Finally, I present policy recommendations and discuss the implication of this study for political struggle and reform.

Methods

Research design

My primary means of data collection were participant observation and ethnographic interviewing inside Gilbert Blakely. During the 2004-2005 school year, I visited the school three or four times a week from morning to afternoon. I spent time in a variety of locations within the building and with a wide range of students and adults. I spent a significant amount of time with students who were frequently involved in disciplinary case and with deans who handled disciplinary incidents. I also observed a number of classes and spent time on my own observing in hallways, stairwells, and the lunch room.

In terms of interviews, my style was semi-structured. I was guided by a list of questions, but almost always, interviews went off on tangents and took a conversational tone. I found that students were eager to share their thoughts on discipline policies and practices as well as their experiences in the classroom. They rarely seemed to hide information from me. On the contrary, they were more likely to embellish their escapades. Besides addressing issues directly related to school discipline, some students spoke poignantly about parents in jail, their frustrations over not finding work, their social and

romantic relationships, and other such topics important to young people. Only once did I introduce myself to a group of students in the detention room and was met with hostility. That group of three male students was not interested in speaking to me so I left them alone.

I also found deans and administrators to be warm and helpful. They would take time to explain things, allow me to observe relevant interactions, include me in informal conversations, and generally made me feel welcome. Most of the teachers, likewise, were warm and willing to speak with me. Finally, the police officers initially appeared guarded. In September, the sergeant once instructed a dean to tell me to put my (field) notebook away. But after a few months, the officers always smiled and greeted me and, one who I call Hoffmann, graciously spent considerable time with me over the course of the year explaining the structure of gangs in the school, sharing his perspectives, and even introducing me to a student I who I could rely on to introduce me to parts of the social fabric of the school not always visible to outsiders. [6] In the following chapters, I use pseudonyms for all students, school personnel, and officers.

Finally, I used textual data found inside the school, such as school occurrence reports and data on test scores and reading levels to develop my analyses and data on employment and crime rates to contextualize the school in its larger social, economic, and geographic context.

Multi-sited research

Along with participant observation and interviewing inside the school, my research questions necessitated my leaving the school to observe and interact with students in related

[6] For more detailed information on the number of students, school personnel, and officers interviewed, see the methodological appendix.

sites. To this end, I employed a multi-sited research strategy (Marcus, 1998). That is, I "followed" several of my research subjects to locations outside the school, such as criminal court, transit court, and their homes and neighborhoods. This approach allowed me to examine students' experiences over time and space, which was particularly useful as I began to think of discipline in broader terms and how school discipline was related to other domains, such as the courts, the subways, and the streets. By employing this strategy, I was able to move through various levels of analysis—from micro-interaction to the macro-structural level—by ethnographic means, thus avoiding the use of a "contextualizing discourse of political economy" (Marcus, 1998) that is not reflected in empirical data. For example, by going to criminal court with a research subject and observing his or her day in court, I was able to document the lived experience of the relationship between school and court, or more precisely, between the micro-interactions I observed inside the school and the larger system of penal control to which many urban youth are subjected. Likewise, employing a multi-sited strategy allowed me to observe and document such things as neighborhood conditions, family circumstances, and means of negotiating the streets—all of which provided some insight into the social and economic forces shaping the lives of my research subjects and informed my analysis of life inside the school.

In a sense, by spending time with students across various spaces, I was able to examine ethnographically the relationship between everyday practices and the social and economic forces that are mediated through these various spaces. Extending beyond the confines of the field site, thus, builds on the recognition that the school was also located "in" the streets, the homes my subjects came from, the courtrooms they reported to in answering their summonses, and so on. The most efficient way for me to understand these connections

was to trace the linkages to all these different places. (See the Methodological Appendix for a detailed description of my methods.)

The social location of the researcher

I have been asked on a number of occasions why I chose to conduct this study. What I believe is often implied in this question is another question: What concern is this issue to you, a white middle class woman? As I mentioned earlier in the introduction, I began this project as a concerned urban educator. But this is not the whole story of my relationship to the Bronx or to my research subjects. I have a rather long and intimate connection to the neighborhoods where my research subjects live. Throughout most of the 1990s, I lived and worked in the area. Around the time some of my research subjects were born, I was working as a community organizer for a local non-profit organization doing mostly tenant organizing. Later, I worked for a local mental health organization as a case worker and an educational program facilitator, and finally, in the late 1990s, I became a high school teacher. So my interest in social justice and development and the material realities of inner-city residents was not abstract or overly-intellectualized. These interests were rooted in my experiences in the community in which I lived and worked. I was concerned by what I was witnessing in the lives of my friends, my neighbors, and my students.

My background, I believe, gave me a certain level of credibility with my research subjects. They often seemed glad to hear how well I knew the Bronx and that I was not scared to walk through their neighborhoods as they often surmised upon meeting me. In fact, I felt at home at Blakely and in my research subjects' neighborhoods. And the few research subjects who have visited my current home in a similar neighborhood in Harlem seemed comfortable and "at home" as well.

Looking back, however, I believe I was not fully cognizant of the harsh realities in which my research subjects often grew up, and I was perhaps a little dismissive of the actual amount of violence that occurs in the Bronx, an area historically known for having some of the country's poorest and most crime ridden neighborhoods. In fact, given its almost mythical reputation, I had often found myself defending the Bronx to middle class whites who lived elsewhere, claiming, it's not really dangerous. But what I had to confront was the fact that while I occupied the same physical world as my research subjects, I certainly did not occupy the same social world. I would become painfully aware of this fact at particular moments during my data collection, such as when two of my research subjects, Carlos and Jennifer, were "jumped" one night by a group of youngsters who knew Jennifer from school.

On another occasion early on in my field work, I argued with Carlos in front of the subway turnstile. He was refusing to let me pay his fare because he knew how to sneak past the turnstile. I explained that the fare was insignificant to me, and I also delicately tried to convey that I would rather he didn't break the law when he was with me. My anxiety was growing as I imagined a police officer approaching. Carlos finally managed to get past the turnstile without paying. Then, looking back at me, he said in a rather instructive and wonderfully self-reflective voice, "This is the way we live."

I had much to learn or to come to terms with concerning the social world and material conditions in which my research subjects lived. Carlos and I once discussed the term "research subject." He said he didn't like it so I suggested he come up with another term. He pondered for a while, then decided he preferred the term "living proof." He also liked to think of himself as my "guide." That he was.

PART I

The Institution

CHAPTER ONE
The Penalization of the Urban Public School: The macro-structural and cultural foundations of urban school discipline

In this chapter, I locate urban school discipline within its larger economic, political, and cultural context. In doing so, I provide insight into how current criminal justice oriented school discipline policies and the penalization process came to be seen as the common sense solution to violence and disruption in many urban schools throughout the United States. I also explain how the implementation of such policies has both shifted the function of some urban schools and the lived experience of schooling for millions of students around the country attending such schools in urban centers. While many studies have already examined school discipline in the context of mass incarceration and shown how the school might serve as a conduit into the criminal justice system (Brown, 2003, 2005), I focus more so on the actual penalization of the school and how the school comes to be implicated in a larger societal project of crime control.

My analysis begins with a brief theoretical explication of the social, political and economic shifts that occurred from the latter part of the last century to the present that, along with changes found within criminological thinking, gave rise to a major turn in criminal justice policy. In particular, I address how structural changes and thinking around crime led to two important and striking changes: the dramatic increase in the use of prisons beginning in the early 1980s and the rise in popularity of "quality of life," order maintenance policing. Then, I will shift my focus to urban public schools and the changes in educational and school discipline policies that emerged in the mid-1990s, a little more than a decade after the initial rise in incarceration rates. I argue that the national public discourse around school discipline has been imbued with a criminal justice logic. Yet, some public schools have

assumed penal responsibilities more explicitly than others. Indeed, in perhaps the vast majority of public schools around the country where educative aims remain primary and student civil rights are generally respected, the criminal justice roots of current school disciplinary policies, such as zero tolerance, go almost unnoticed. But a growing number of schools usually found in racially segregated neighborhoods in urban areas are being established with unwritten yet explicit disciplinary or control missions—in some cases subverting or overshadowing the educative aims of the school. Military schools, schools for formally incarcerated youth, and "second (or last) chance" schools have been established in urban areas around the country. Then there are the old comprehensive public high schools like Gilbert Blakely. In New York City, many of these schools have historically served the most marginalized and academically under-prepared students in the school system—those from the poorest neighborhoods and families in the city, those who have been tracked into the lowest performing schools, African American students, Latino and Latina students, new immigrant students, and special education students. And more recently, these schools have become repositories for those who have been excluded from the opportunities offered through such reform efforts as the small schools movement. Many of these schools, it appears, have undergone a process of penalization. Their educative aims have become secondary and their democratic potential suppressed as a culture of penal control takes over. Metal detectors, security cameras, and computerized ID scanners have been installed; armed police officers have been added to the existing security teams, and school disciplinary practices and discourses have been imbued with a criminal justice logic. This new culture of penal control was evident at Gilbert Blakely.

While the term "prisonization" has been used popularly to describe the new environment created by such policies, I opt for the term "penalization" for a few reasons. First, while schools like Gilbert Blakely assume prison-like qualities, criminal justice-oriented policies are highly contested by both students and educators in ways that would be unlikely in prison. A great number of teachers and administrators remain committed to the educative aims and, perhaps to a lesser extent, the democratic ideals of the institution. They work hard to create culturally relevant learning environments that encourage critical thinking, even when their efforts are thwarted by curricular mandates. Secondly, unlike youngsters who are involuntarily confined to custodial institutions, high school students drop out of school or are pushed out by a host of organizational practices in droves; students are also regularly suspended as a disciplinary measure. So although there is a containment objective embodied in truancy laws (forcing youth into school buildings), there is also an institutional practice of exclusion, which we would not find in the prison system. And finally, schools like Blakely do have the potential of becoming gateways into prison, or "training grounds" for prisons, but perhaps the more pervasive phenomenon is that, without becoming prisons, these schools assume penal responsibilities. That is, they employ criminal procedural level strategies, such as the use of handcuffs, and penal measures, such as the issuance of criminal court summonses, to manage youngsters who are *not* in custodial institutions, nor have they necessarily committed a crime. Thus, if schools were severed from the criminal justice system and their pedagogical missions strengthened (and perhaps transformed) through a variety of policy changes, it is possible that an urban school like Blakely could become a very different kind of place.

Without losing sight of the economic and political forces underpinning current criminal justice (and school-based disciplinary) policies, my analysis also examines the role of culture. I argue that culture is particularly important to an analysis of urban school discipline because school-based policies and practices are largely negotiated (and contested) in the terrain of culture. Current policies are a direct outcome of Right-wing and Neo-liberal populist politics, common sense rhetoric, prevailing attitudes and sentimentalities around crime and safety, and dominant representations of "out-of-control urban youth." My emphasis on culture also allows me to move between an analysis of macro-structural forces and an examination of human agency and the micro-interactions of the urban school experience. In this sense, the ethnographic portraits offered throughout this dissertation offer insight into the cultural logic that materializes in a dialectical relationship with political, economic, and institutional forces. Thus, it is through a cultural, as well as a political economic, analysis that we might come to understand why (urban) school discipline came to be imbued with a criminal justice logic, how this logic came to be rationalized within the dominant public and institutional discourses, and how these policies are negotiated and contested within schools.

The Punitive Turn in Crime Control: Mass imprisonment and order maintenance

For almost a century, until the late 1960s, criminological thinking and criminal justice policy could be summed up with the term penal-welfarism (Garland, 1985, 1990, 2001). While the penal-welfare model had its own set of contradictions and benevolence was not always discernible, this framework emphasized individual treatment, re-integration into civil society, and social welfare. The model was based on the premise that the individual criminal offender was economically and socially disadvantaged, and with the

proper supports could be re-integrated into society as a productive citizen. Penal-welfarism, Garland argues, was shaped by a historically specific set of economic conditions and cultural themes. It particularly resonated with the "new narrative of inclusion" that grew out of the social movements of the 1950s and 60s, and at the same time, was seen as a strategic solution to class conflict and economic disruption. That is, the middle classes recognized that social cohesion depended on generalized economic security through social welfare, education, job training, and rehabilitation. However, by the late 1960s, penal-welfarism and its correctionalist policies, with their emphases on indeterminate, discretionary sentencing and treatment, were attacked from both the right and the left, and the criminal justice field took a sharp punitive turn. In effect, there was a shift from the use of social solutions to social problems to penal solutions to social problems. Below, I describe how this shift occurred and the effects it rendered.

In 2000, the prison population of the United States exceeded 2 million for the first time—the highest reported rate of incarceration in the world. In 2004, about 6.9 million Americans were incarcerated, on probation, or parole—an increase of 275% since 1980. The ratio per 100,000 people incarcerated people today is 724; in 1972, only 97 per 100,000 people were incarcerated (Sentencing Project, 2004). This dramatic increase in imprisonment has had its greatest impact on poor Black men and other people of color. To place things in perspective, in 2001, 173 out of 100,000 White people were imprisoned, whereas 1638 out of 100,000 Black people were behind bars (Sentencing Project, 2004). For young Black men, imprisonment has become more commonplace than college or the military, and for high school dropouts, prison is more common than not. Some 60% of Black male high school dropouts born in the late 1960s served time in prison by the end of

the 1990s—a rate four times higher than their college educated counterparts (Western, 2006). David Garland (2001) and other scholars have used the term "mass imprisonment" to describe this phenomenon. The term is meant to denote incarceration rates that are markedly above the historical and comparative norm for societies like the United States as well as the demographic concentration and systemic imprisonment of whole groups of people.

Common sense points to an increase in crime as the cause of mass incarceration, but this is not a wholly accurate assumption. Although crime rates did rise during particular periods prior to and while incarceration rates rose, Western (2006) contends that high crimes rates should be understood as a context for increased incarceration rates, not the cause, as there is no consistent, positive relationship between crime and incarceration. So what, then, explains mass imprisonment?

The use of imprisonment is premised, in part, on incapacitation theory, which contends that if the most dangerous six percent of the youth and young adults is incapacitated (by means of incarceration), there will be a dramatic reduction in crime. Prison, then, is seen an efficient way of "incapacitating" the criminal (Harcourt, 2002). This rationale supported changes in drug laws and sentencing and parole policies. Such policies have led to longer and more fixed prison sentences, increased numbers of non-violent offenders incarcerated, and more people returning to prison after initial release due to more stringent parole regulations. In New York State, the Rockefeller Drug Laws were passed in 1973, which at the time were considered among the toughest in the country (Mauer, 1999). They called for mandatory prison terms and limits to plea-bargaining. The 1984 Sentencing Reform Act and The Anti-drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988 are federal pieces of

legislation that greatly expanded the use of mandatory minimum sentencing. The federal truth in sentencing laws also added to lengthier prison terms by requiring offenders to serve a substantial portion of their sentences. This is done by limiting or eliminating parole eligibility. Finally, in 1993, the first three-strikes laws appeared, which removed judicial discretion by calling for mandatory and harsh prison sentences for third time offenders of felony crimes.

These drug policies have largely targeted non-violent offenders involved in the sale of drugs on urban streets. Some have pointed out that the policies also have a strong racial dimension. For example, the possession of crack cocaine, the cheaper and more common form of the drug found on city streets, carries significantly tougher penalties than the possession of the more expensive pure cocaine, more commonly used by middle and upper class whites (Cole, 1999; Mauer, 1999; Parenti, 1999; Tonry, 1998). Finally, the policies have also been critiqued for criminalizing survival strategies of poor women of color and increasing the number of women behind bars (see Chesney-Lind, 1997, 2003; Ritchie, 2003).

While it is clear that this punitive turn in policy and enforcement led to increased imprisonment, why was there such a turn? Social theories of crime and punishment generally explain crime control methods and punishment at any historical moment (with varying emphases) as arising from a complex set of social, political, economic, and discursive forces, along with changes in criminological thinking (see for example: Christie, 1994; Foucault, 1974; Garland, 1985, 1990, 2001; Parenti, 1999; Tonry, 1999; Wacquant, 2001, 2004).

Economic analyses of punishment stem from the work of such theorists as Rushe and Kirchiemer (1968). They argued that crime was a product of economic necessity and that criminal law was written in a way to contain the perceived threat of the "dangerous classes" (see Garland, 1990; Western, 2006). In other words, prisons serve as a means of controlling an economically superfluous population. Today, it is argued that the economic changes that took place around the late 1960s (and a decade or two earlier in some parts of the country) set the conditions for the dramatic surge in incarceration rates in the early 1980s. Since then, cities have been depleted of vital economic resources and opportunities through deindustrialization, corporate and manufacturing relocations, and the growth of technology and service industries (Parenti, 1999; Smith, 1996; Wilson, 1996). Then, in the 1970s, the United States suffered a major fiscal crisis leaving cities like New York in dire economic circumstances.

These economic shifts translated into the loss of thousands of jobs in many U.S. cities and millions in total. Jobs in the service industries did increase; however, they did not make up for lost manufacturing jobs in either number or wages. Nationally, unemployment rose and real wages have decreased disproportionately affecting African Americans and Latinos.

Housing discrimination and housing policies, such as slum clearance programs, the construction of public housing towers in concentrated areas, and federally subsidized middle class white suburbanization, intensified racial segregation in inner-cities. Decades later, in the 1980s and 90s, these neighborhoods suffered sharp cuts in welfare and social services, exacerbating the already dire material conditions of African Americans and other people of

color in American inner cities (Anyon, 1997, 2005; Fine and Weis, 1998; Massey and Denton, 1993; Wilson, 1996).

In recent years, employment opportunities for young, often under-educated men and women living in urban areas have been dismal. In 1999, almost a third of employed Black men (29.5%), almost half of Black women (40.4%), almost half of Latino men (40.3%), and over half of Latina women (51.8%) earned poverty wages working full time, year-round. And while employment has been steady for the latter groups, young Black men have suffered the highest rates of unemployment. Only 52% of non-institutionalized, out-of-school Black men between the ages of 16 and 24 with a high school diploma or less were employed in 2002 (Anyon, 2005).

The Bronx—the local context for this study—has some of the highest rates of unemployment and poverty in New York City. In 2002, some Bronx neighborhoods, home to many Blakely students, ranked among the poorest in the nation. Although the immediate neighborhood surrounding the school has a relatively high rate of labor force participation (about 72%)[7], other near-by neighborhoods where many students live have rates of labor force participation ranging from about 56% to 68%. These neighborhoods have median annual household incomes ranging from $14,000 to about $30,000[8], while the median household income for the whole city is $39,000. Typical poverty rates for neighborhoods bordering the school's neighborhood range from about 34% to 46% (Previti & Schill, 2003).

Wacquant (2001) provides an historical-economic analysis of the growth of the prison system that centers on race. He argues that since the founding of the United States,

[7] This figure is deceiving because the area includes a section of private homes where employment rates are substantially higher than they are for most of the neighborhood.
[8] The median income for the entire Bronx, which includes several solidly middle class, white areas, such as Riverdale, is $26,000.

there have been four "peculiar institutions," or racialized economic structures, used for the management and exploitation of Black labor. These are Slavery, Jim Crow, the ghetto (pre-1970), and what he calls the hyper-ghetto—a kind of carceral continuum linking racially segregated urban neighborhoods to the prison system. With recidivism rates among young Black men as high as 80% (in New York City) (New York Correctional Association, 2002) and the apparent cultural influences one has on the other, this concept appears to hold some weight, despite its overly structuralist, impenetrable view of the ghetto.

Integrally linked to economic conditions are the myriad political forces that have helped to bring about our current state of mass imprisonment. For example, our "tough on crime" policies have been linked to Richard Nixon's "law and order" discourse of the late 1960s, which spoke to people's fears of growing racial tensions and social protest (Mauer, 1999; Parenti, 1999). Ronald Reagan's right-wing populist politics of the 1980s did perhaps even more to create a shift to a punitive and retributive criminal justice system. His rhetoric attacked liberal politicians who were "soft on crime" and "undeserving welfare recipients" for the "breakdown of law and order" (Garland, 2001). And just as social services for the poor were being dramatically reduced, there was an increase in the sale of drugs in urban neighborhoods in the form of crack cocaine. The political response was to declare a "war on drugs," which precipitated the punitive turn in drug laws and sentencing policies described above.

Growing social insecurity and the perceived need for more punitive punishment and tougher crime control policies have also been linked to the new urban social and geographic arrangements of the 1990s brought about through neo-liberal, global economics (See Parenti, 1999, Wacquant, 2004; Young, 2001) with its marketization and privatization

tendencies. These analyses complicate the notion of geographic isolation by focusing on the transformation of "global" cities (Sassen, 2001) through processes such as urban revitalization, gentrification and uneven local development, and the influx of new immigrants (see Sassen, 2001, Smith, 1996). Thus, they emphasize social and economic, if not spatial, polarization along racial lines. The hardening of social divisions and the growing sense of insecurity become the mediating factors linking structural changes to new attitudes toward crime and punishment. Garland (2001) sums up this political economic shift and its relation to the punitive turn in crime control policy when he writes:

> To elect neo-liberal governments was deliberately to reduce state provision and 'liberate' market forces. Low tax and low welfare regimes meant that every citizen has become more dependant upon his or her market position and less able to rely upon the state. By opting for the market, 'getting the state off their backs', and freeing up individuals and investments many voters had made themselves very wealthy. But in doing so they had also undone the delicate web of solidarity and community that are so important in providing individuals with a sense of security for themselves and their children. The decline in institutions through underfunding, the reduction of state benefits, the disinvestment in inner-cities, and the social and economic marginalization of the poor—these are the policies that engender insecurity, and not just for those most disadvantaged by them (156-157).

Bruce Western's study (2006) of punishment offers some empirical evidence for a political economic analysis. Through an extensive examination of employment and incarceration data across all 50 states, he was able to illustrate a strong positive relationship between economic inequality (high poverty neighborhoods) and increased rates of imprisonment,[9] and he provides strong evidence that individual state incarceration rates increase more quickly when a Republican governor is elected into office. Interestingly, he

[9] Western points out that the aggregate rate of unemployment, which does not show a strong relationship to incarceration, conceals the much stronger relationship between inequality and incarceration. This is because so many people caught up in the criminal justice system no longer appear in official counts of unemployment.

also points out that by 2000, increased incarceration rates were more closely linked to race and low levels of formal education than at any other time in the previous twenty years.[10]

Along with mass imprisonment, there has been another striking trend in crime control—in the area of policing—that was being developed around the same time incarceration rates began going up, but was popularized almost a decade later in the early 1990s. The new strategies came to be known as quality of life policing. Quality of life, or order maintenance, policing involves the heavy policing of targeted neighborhoods and cracking down on low level violations of the law. I narrow my scope here on New York City because while a description of mass imprisonment helps to provide context for my school-based observations, order maintenance is even more closely linked to my overall analysis, and New York City was the nation's leader in establishing it as the prevailing model.

Order maintenance works through increased misdemeanor arrests and the issuance of court summonses. A misdemeanor arrest entails a trip to the local precinct house and, at times, a night in jail until the case is brought before a judge. Offenders then may be given some combination of a fine, community service, or a short jail sentence. A court summons requires that the recipient appear before a judge in criminal court on a specific date. The individual is usually given a standard fine or, at the judge's discretion, the case can be dismissed. Persons receiving a summons who are not in possession of identification are brought to the local police precinct until their identity can be verified. If an individual fails

[10] A correlation between levels of educational attainment and juvenile incarceration rates in the Bronx, similarly, appears to exist. Several neighborhoods surrounding the immediate area around the school have some of the highest rates of juvenile incarceration in New York State (Dept. of Juvenile Justice). These same neighborhoods have percentages of individuals over the age of 25 without high school diploma ranging from 31 to 56. The percentage of non-high school graduates for all of New York City is 27% (Previti & Schill, 2003). Seventy percent of Blakely 1999 freshman cohort had not received a high school diploma by 2005 (School Report Card, 2004-2005).

to appear in court on the assigned day, a warrant is put out for the person's arrest. This person will later be identified and picked up by the police if he or she receives another summons or is asked to show ID for any number of reasons.

The use of order maintenance is supported by the broken windows theory, which was first introduced into public discourse by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling in 1982. This theory posits a causal relationship between low-level visual (such as broken windows) and social (such as public drunkenness) disorder and serious crime. It argues that tolerating such minor infractions leads to more serious types of crime. Empirical studies of order maintenance policing show that certain strategies associated with order maintenance may help to reduce crime; however, there is no evidence that disorder causes serious crime. Moreover, reductions in crime in the 1990s can be alternatively explained by such factors as favorable economic conditions, shifts in drug use patterns, and a dip in the number of young men between the ages of eighteen to twenty-four (Harcourt, 2002). Order maintenance policing has also been widely critiqued for its ambiguous and ever-expanding definition of what constitutes "disorder" (Mc Ardle and Erzen, 2001; Harcourt, 2002; Parenti, 1999). Definitions of disorder expand when politicians and city officials determine that particular acts, such walking through a public park after closing or sleeping on a bench, will no longer be tolerated, but definitions also expand as a result of the new discretionary powers of street cops implicit in order maintenance policing. New York City has led the way in order maintenance policing and has become a model for cities around the country and the world. In 1988, the strategy was first employed under William Bratton, then head of the New York City Transit Authority, to "take back" the subway. The plan called for zero tolerance for the kinds of "disorder" that plagued the subway trains and stations, including panhandling,

begging, fare evasion, sleeping on benches, and graffiti. Critics of the policing strategies pointed out that the criminalization of such behaviors amounted to the penal management of the city's homeless population that had grown steadily throughout the 1980s (Erzen, 2001).

The next wave of New York City's order maintenance policing initiatives came in the early 1990s under then Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Along with the new focus on low-level violations, Giuliani took a "zero tolerance" approach to crime and became well-known for his emphasis on law and order. He implemented CompStat, a computerized tracking system of crime that allows the department to target certain areas. So while order maintenance has been used to "clean up" the subway system and gentrified and commercial districts (see Duneier, 2000 or Parenti, 1999 for analyses), order maintenance policing also targets poor, high crime neighborhoods such as those found in the outer boroughs of New York City.

Order maintenance policing has continued to be reinforced through a series of initiatives, such as Operation Impact and Operation Clean Sweep in the first years of the 2000s. Since these initiatives were implemented, the numbers of misdemeanor arrests and summonses rose dramatically. According to the Mayor's Management Report, in 2002, 443,998 quality of life summonses were issued. In 2003, the number rose to 532,817, and in 2004, it climbed to 708,349. In January of 2004, the New York Daily News printed a story on the dramatic increase in the issuance of quality of life summonses. The article's examples—a summons for disorderly conduct went to an elderly man for playing dominoes in a park and one for loitering went to a woman who was eight-months pregnant for resting on the subway steps.

In sum, there have been two major sets of policy changes in crime control—one that has led to mass imprisonment and one that has "revolutionized" policing through zero

tolerance, order maintenance, and technological innovations such as Compstat. These changes were triggered by a complex set of social, economic, political, and cultural forces, as well as a shift in criminological thinking. While the new policies were not always supported by the same ideological perspectives (I discuss this below), they do collectively represent a punitive turn away from the rehabilitative, welfarist model of earlier decades that viewed crime as an outcome of poverty and discrimination and emphasized social inclusion as an important goal.

Discipline Policies Aimed at Urban Youth and the Rise in Juvenile Incarceration

Discipline policies targeting urban youth did not immediately take a punitive turn. Throughout the 1970s and much of the 1980s, the concepts of rehabilitation, treatment, education, and the provision of social services remained prominent within the domain of juvenile justice. Children, it was thought, were too young to give up on. They could be rehabilitated, educated, and re-directed away from crime. But by the early 1990s, this began to change. The goals of rehabilitation and education, while still present, have come to be over-shadowed by the themes of punishment and control.

In a sense, young people have been placed in the spotlight. Gun violence among urban youth had been rising throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, and youth violence received increased media attention. New slogans aimed at youth, such as "adult time for adult crime" entered public discourse. Males (2000) remarks that despite research that shows otherwise, America's youth have been depicted as anti-social and apathetic, and increasingly violent (despite the fact that most forms of youth violence leveled off or began to decrease by 1993 [Zimring, 2001]). Young people, Males argues, have become scapegoats for social problems caused by adults, and this depiction of youth in crisis has a

particular racial dimension. Similarly, Noguera (2001) points out that young people in urban areas have no control over the availability of guns, the flow of drugs into their communities, or I would add, the dwindling resources supporting young people through social programs. During the 1990s, incarceration rates for children and adolescents began to rise and new forms of control were implemented nationally. As with adults, the punitive turn has disproportionately impacted youth of color, particularly those from low-income neighborhoods.

In terms of juvenile incarceration trends, there are some important contradictions to note, if indeed, incarceration is justified by incapacitation theory. For example, the rise in juvenile incarceration rates is linked to the sharp rise in gun possession and homicide rates among young people in urban areas throughout the 1980s, but youth homicide rates peeked in 1993 and then decreased and leveled off by the late 1990s (Zimring, 1998). Data from New York City reflect this trend, where in 2005, there were a total of 5,252 admissions into juvenile (those under the age of sixteen) detention, and the vast majority of admissions were for non-violent, low-level offenses. From 1997 to 1999, the number of youth detained on felony charges decreased by 4.3% while the number of youth incarcerated for misdemeanors during the same period increased 13.3% (Correctional Association of New York, 2005), suggesting that juvenile detention facilities were increasingly being used to contain young people who committed low-level, non-violent offenses. A related pattern is the growing number of young people incarcerated for probation violations, the most common being truancy. In 2001, 12.3% of new admissions into juvenile detention in New York City were for probation violations, up from 1.1% in 1993. But these are not the only New York City youth who are incarcerated. Additionally, there are over 1500 children under the age of

sixteen in State facilities run by the NYS Office of Child and Family Services,[11] and the majority of these youth were charged with non-violent or misdemeanor offenses.

And still there are more New York City youth incarcerated. In New York State, where individuals over the age of fifteen are considered adults, there are 1000s of high school aged individuals in jails and prisons. Thousands of people in New York City under the age of twenty-two are arrested and either detained or sentenced as adults each year. At Riker's Island alone, there is an average of 2,500 students each day who attend one of the four high schools within the jail. Annually, the number of students served at Riker's and the other custodial schools in New York City is about 16,000 (Lisante, 2002).

Nationally, Black and Latino youth, especially boys, have been disproportionately impacted by the growing reliance on incarceration due in part to racial and class bias. For example, Black boys are more likely to be detained and six times more likely to be incarcerated than their white counterparts for the same offenses. Black and Latino youth are also more likely than their white counterparts to be waived into adult court (tried and convicted as adults) for the same crimes (Drug Policy Institute, 2001; Males, 2003; Poe-Yamagata & Jones, 2000; Villaruel, 2003). In New York City, the same pattern of racial bias has been found in the juvenile justice system. For example, in 2005, Black and Latino youth accounted for 95% of the population of incarcerated youth in city facilities, while they make up only two thirds of the total city youth population. Additionally, 55% of these youngsters come from the fifteen poorest neighborhoods in the city, and several of these neighborhoods are within a few miles of Gilbert Blakely High School. In New York State OFCS facilities, 86% of those in custody are African American or Latino.

[11] In 2002, there were 2,182 boys in OFCS facilities and 422 girls. Sixty percent of these youngsters were from New York City (Correctional Association of NY, 2005).

Juvenile incarceration rates in New York City and elsewhere appeared to have peaked in the early 2000s. Since then, the number of imprisoned juveniles has leveled off or temporarily dipped slightly. There are several probable reasons for this including budgetary constraints for prison construction and maintenance, local anti youth-incarceration activism[12], and administrative reform efforts. But this leveling-off of incarceration rates raises the question of whether there has been a heightened reliance on other forms of control. A host of other new disciplinary policies and practices targeting urban youth were popularized nationally in the mid-1990s that appear to remain prominent forms of social and penal control. Some of these are related to order maintenance policing strategies. For example, gang loitering ordinances, which gives police the power to disperse any group in a public place if the police suspect that any member of the group is a gang member (Robert, 1999), curfews, and new emphases on truancy laws were part of this trend.

Simultaneously reformers sought to find ways to limit the growth of incarceration rates. One popular trend has been the establishment of diversion programs that were actually meant to decrease the number of young people entering custodial institutions. However, research shows that these programs tend to have a "net-widening" effect (Sheldon, 1999). That is, the new focus on prevention and early intervention actually brings young people who would not likely have entered the juvenile justice system (or re-entered) into the clutches of the system, thus increasing the number of court-involved youth rather than decreasing it.

Order maintenance, although not always explicitly linked to juvenile justice policy, appears to have become a key component in the management of youth. The implementation

[12] For example, in New York City, a mixture of local activism and budgetary constraints prevented the planned expansion of two juvenile detention centers in 2003.

of order maintenance policing relies on the notion of community-police partnership. This strategy has had some success. But order maintenance calls for an "us and them" mentality. Like the police, the community is expected to be intolerant of minor disorder and uphold a certain standard of behavior (Erzen, 2001; NYS Office of the Attorney General's Office, 1999). Teens, then, are in the precarious position of being defined as outsiders or "threats" to the very community to which they belong simply because they are young. Teens, as a group, are "disorderly," by necessity if not by nature (keeping in mind the discretionary powers of the police that come through order maintenance and the ever expanding definitions of disorderly). They will hang out in large groups on corners (partly because there are so few other options), be loud, get into fights, and cut school. Jobless, low-income youth, like several of my research subjects, will sometimes jump the subway turnstile out of necessity, and some will find satisfaction and adventure in "tagging"[13] their neighborhood or walking through parks after closing. Through order maintenance, these young people come to be regularly managed by the police. On a daily basis, Blakely students find themselves caught up in police sweeps in front of and near school buildings; they get picked up during school hours for truancy; they get shooed away from street corners, and they get stopped and even frisked by police, even at times when there is only a negligible amount of suspicion (See NYS Office of Attorney General's report of "stop and frisks"). As this occurs, some of these non-criminal behaviors, such as boisterousness or standing on the corner, get re-defined as violations of the law—disorderly conduct or loitering—and result in the issuance

[13] Tagging refers to the practice of writing one's name (usually a "street" name) or an identifying symbol on any outdoor or public surface, such as the side of a building, a park bench, a subway car, or a school wall. While tagging is usually thought of as a gang marker, my research suggests that tagging is a very common practice among young people living in the Bronx. In the course of my research, I witnessed some of my non-gang affiliated research subjects casually tag something without apparently giving it much thought.

of a summon. Consequently, trips to criminal court have become commonplace for many city youth.

Criminologies of Control

The changes in the field of crime control have come about through a complex and often contradictory set of goals and motivations. On the one hand, for example, I have described the shift toward mass imprisonment, which is driven by incapacitation theory and the desire to lock up dangerous individuals. But then new policies worked to increase incarceration rates in the criminal and juvenile systems not just for the most violent and chronic offenders but for non-violent offenders as well. Additionally, while there was a new emphasis on putting people behind bars, there was, at the same time, a move toward preventative strategies, such as order maintenance policing, and a focus on low-level forms of repression. In this section, I draw on the work of David Garland (2001) to explain how these contradictory strands of criminological thinking and practices grow out of distinct sets of political imperatives and divergent perspectives; however, they work in unison to form the current societal crime control project in the United States.

In his analysis, Garland shows how these distinct criminologies operate on the cultural level. He (1990) draws on a range of scholarly work in order to develop a complex theory of punishment—one that does not reduce punishment to "law and order" or narrowly view punishment as shaped only by economic forces. Garland's model views punishment as rooted in economic interests and strategies of power, but also in "the configurations of value, meaning, and emotion which we call 'culture'"(p. 249). He argues that the rationale for mass incarceration and tough on crime policies is not an economic one; it is instead, a 'value rationale'—one that is expressive and moralistic rather than calculating. In other

words, criminal justice policies are supported through the dominant cultural logic and become thought of as "common sense." Increased use of punitive, "tough on crime" policies is then justified on moral grounds as control becomes a prevailing "cultural theme" (Garland, 2001). In moving to the cultural level, Garland allows for an examination of prevailing and competing attitudes, ideologies, rhetoric, and the rationales of social agents involved in the myriad decisions made in the process of creating today's crime control project.

The first of these criminological strands is what Garland refers to as the new 'criminologies of everyday life.' In this framework, crime is viewed as normal; it is seen as an inevitable byproduct of economic arrangements. The policies emanate from the neo-liberal technocratic managerialism found among criminal justice administrators who view and approach crime in morally neutral terms and rely on a language of 'cost benefit' and 'fiscal responsibility.' Their goal becomes prevention and situational control. That is, control is inscribed into the fabric of social life, and thus the notion of "responsibilization" becomes a key component. Crime control tactics extend beyond the boundaries of the criminal justice system, and responsibility for crime prevention is shared with the private sector and the community. Block-watches, employers, business owners, property owners, transport managers, and school authorities are some of the social actors assuming new crime control responsibilities.

Like in the earlier model of penal-welfarism, criminologies of everyday life do not pathologize the individual criminal. Nevertheless, there is a shift away from a rehabilitative model to one focused on creating social order through the integration of systems, or institutions, rather than of individuals into civil society. Garland contends that, "such an

approach sits well with economic and social policies that exclude whole groups of people, so long as segregation makes the system work more smoothly. It also has obvious affinities with 'zero tolerance' policing policies that tend to be associated with low-level repression, discriminatory use of police powers, and the violation of the civil liberties of the poor and minorities" (183).

The other framework shaping criminal justice policy is what Garland calls 'criminologies of the dangerous other.' Garland writes that, unlike the criminologies of everyday life, these criminologies grow out of a neo-conservative ideology and gain support through populist political rhetoric and media representations that demonize "the other." The focus is on excessive control with little concern for social costs and penal consequence. It is a model that speaks to people's fears and is not necessarily supported by the views of crime control professionals.

Criminologies of the dangerous other are manifested in the conservative rhetoric summed up in John De Iullio's (1996) proclamation that we have a new breed of super-predators in urban neighborhoods— Black and Latino youth. This rhetoric and media representations of Black and Latino urban youth as criminals (see Dorfman and Shiraldi, 2001) have served as the ideological justification for locking up even low-level offenders.

Garland argues that however divergent these two criminologies are, they "fit remarkably well into the broader framework of contemporary social and economic policy" (138), and their simultaneous emergence is not accidental or arbitrary. He writes, "For these opposing ways of thinking and acting upon crime are precisely aligned with the two poles of the cultural ambivalence that has grown up around crime. One position says, 'crime is normal, get used to it'…The other sees crime [as] a plague that afflicts a degenerate society

and acts as a sign that we should return to a more traditional and perhaps more God-fearing way of life. These new ways of thinking about crime are, in that sense, grounded in our culture." (186)

Urban public schools like Gilbert Blakely appear, in a sense, to be located at the intersections of these two criminologies. Crime control responsibilities have moved beyond the boundaries of the criminal justice system and have seeped into everyday life interactions. So, according to the logic of these criminologies, what better place than the racially segregated urban public school, which contains large numbers of demonized youth of color, to put into practice new forms of penal control?

The Segregated Urban Public School

How did schools like Gilbert Blakely High School come to be implicated in a larger project of crime control? What are the educational and school-based disciplinary policies that have created a link between the school and the criminal justice system, and how did these policies come to be seen as the common sense solutions to violence and disruption in some schools? In this section, I describe the changes in educational and disciplinary policies that have occurred throughout the 1990s to the present, which have intensified the repressive nature of the institution. I show how the same cultural, political, and economic forces that triggered changes within the criminal and juvenile justice systems also shaped educational and school-based disciplinary reforms. And as educational policy-makers and politicians infused into their rhetoric the language and logic of the criminal justice system, some segregated urban public schools have assumed responsibilities in the penal management of urban youth.

Educational policy and school restructuring

Today's disciplinary policies do not represent the first time in the nation's history that urban public schools have taken on an overtly repressive function. Historians, for example, have described the urban public schools of the early industrial era as institutions of containment with the explicit function of disciplining the low-wage labor force (Katz, 1967). But some more nuanced historical analyses show how competing pedagogical orientations and understandings of the purpose of schooling, reform movements, and social activism played a large role in shaping educational policy throughout the middle decades of the last century (Anderson, 1983 Spring, 1994). By the 1960s, there was an explicit emphasis on policies that fostered inclusion. In New York City, there were experiments, albeit highly contested ones, in community control (Fantini, Gittell & Maget, 1970). Moves toward multicultural education, bilingual education, culturally relevant curriculum, and ethnic studies programs on college campuses also became prominent elements in the educational landscape.

But as in the criminal justice system, by the late 1970s, a new set of social and economic conditions (along with a plethora of persistently poor performing schools) gave rise to new attitudes toward public education and brought about a host of policy changes. The 1980s saw a renewed emphasis on the Western cannon and basic skills training. There was a vicious reaction to liberal teaching practices and programs that emphasize inclusion, such as bilingual education and student-centered pedagogy. Conservatives, such as Charles Murray (1984), overtly advocated coercive policies claiming that poor Black children in urban areas needed more structure, discipline, and basic skills training. The aim of inclusion and the democratic potential of urban public schools began to erode quickly. We find a

poignant example of these trends in Fine's (1991) *Framing Dropouts,* which shows how institutional practices in one New York City high school silence critique, undermine democratic processes, and push out, rather than work to include, working class students of color.

Since the 1990s, neo-conservative trends have worked in conjunction with neo-liberal ones, in much the same way they have in the field of crime control. Michael Apple (2001) describes how, while the neo-liberal and the neo-conservative agendas are distinct, recent policy and school restructuring initiatives have worked to satisfy both. The neo-liberal project can be summed up as a move toward privatization and a corporate logic dedicated to increasing productivity while minimizing spending. Notions of accountability, standards, and choice have been framed as common sense solutions to failing urban schools, and standardized high stakes testing has become the means by which success is measured. At the same time, conservatives have concerned themselves with issues of pedagogy and curriculum, calling for tighter controls on what is taught. For conservatives, standardized high stakes testing provides the means for establishing what constitutes official knowledge. In New York State high schools, high stakes testing takes the form of the NYS Regents exams. My research, like others' (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; McNeil, 2000; Lipman, 2002, 2004; Orfield & Kornhaber, 2001), suggest that these exams have worked to diminish critical thinking and undermine classroom innovation and levels of engagement.

Some researchers have demonstrated how school restructuring, through initiatives such as choice schemes, along with high stakes testing, have helped to reproduce and intensify inequality along race and class lines (Apple, 2001; McNeil, 2000; Lipman, 2002, 2004; Wells, 1994). Concurrently, racial re-segregation of urban schools has increased in

the last decade. Nationally, current rates of segregation are higher than at any time since 1968 (Orfield, 2004). While school segregation closely reflects housing segregation, in cities around the United States, re-segregation was also brought about by a host of policies, political maneuvers, and organizational practices. One factor in re-segregation is the emergence of (selective) schools of choice (Wells, 1994). White and middle class parents generally have the savvy, time, social and institutional connections, and entitlement within the school system to ensure that their children can take advantage of these better schools, leaving the most marginalized and poorest students, the vast majority of whom are students of color, in the "failing" schools (Lipman, 2002; Wells, 1994). District-wide tracking also intensifies racial and class segregation. In the Bronx, the official claim is that students are placed in their neighborhood schools based on their home address, but my ethnographic data paint a very different picture. Many students I met at Blakely lived in other zones and traveled long distances to attend school. Teachers and administrators often explained this by pointing out how certain parents living in the school's zone would refuse to send their children to Blakely while students from other zones would be sent to Blakely because they had some kind of problem[14] in their neighborhood school or they had recently been released from a custodial institution and not accepted by their neighborhood school. It also became evident to me that principals have some discretion as to which students they will accept. Certain schools develop reputations for accepting large numbers of formerly incarcerated youth, for example, while others have none or very few. Official data also suggest that district-wide tracking occurs. Like other similar schools, Blakely has an above average percentage of students in special education (School Report Card, 2004-2005) and a number

[14] Known gang members are often transferred to a new school to get these students away from their rivals. It is also common practice to transfer students who have been in a number of fights, students who have been victimized, and students who have grown deeply frustrated with their school.

of students who live in poverty (about 75%) that is disproportionately higher than the poverty rate of the *immediate* surrounding area, which is less than 20% (Previti & Schill, 2003), indicating that many students who attend Blakely come from other areas in the Bronx.

Tying together the issues of selection and funding (often in the form of discretionary funds and grants), Ms. Alvarez, the principal of Blakely, told me, "[S]ome schools historically have been given the opportunity to be more selective with their kids and have had the backing of several key members whether they're from the DOE [Department of Education] or the community, which has both financially [supported those schools] and provid[ed] resources that they need [while] other schools have just been totally abandoned and have not received that support and have been dumping grounds not just for students but for faculty and administrators who were incompetent. 'Just put them in that school and we'll deal with it later on.'" Later in our conversation, Ms. Alvarez explained that securing adequate resources is an on-going struggle for principals in schools like hers.

Trends in urban public education, such as the creation of small schools and high stakes testing, are shaped by market forces. The sorting and tracking of children into a variety of educational experiences reflects the larger social and class structure. Small, theme-based schools, for example, select students to be prepared for various segments of the labor market. Among the small schools housed in Gilbert Blakely's building, there are Health Careers Academy, Law Enforcement Academy, and Aerospace Academy. But what happens to the large number of young people excluded from these special schools—those who represent the economically superfluous? These are usually students of color from poor families, often academically under-prepared, and who have likely come to experience school

as a hostile, or nothing more than a social place. It appears that these are the students most at risk of being subjected to penal management.

School discipline

Along with a host of educational reforms, the 1990s also brought a renewed focus on school violence and changes in school discipline policy on the national, state, and local levels. Responding to the media's heightened focus on a series of isolated school shootings in predominantly white suburban schools and increased violence among urban youth, the federal government, in the mid-1990s established new security guidelines for public schools. These guidelines included a call for zero tolerance for weapons and drugs, tough truancy laws, community-based curfews and school uniforms (White House Press Release, 1998). Zero tolerance, which was a term appropriated from the criminal justice system, has been defined as the use of swift and harsh punishments for even minor offenses (Skiba and Peterson, 1999). Federal funding for schools became contingent on the adoption of zero tolerance, and thus it was implemented widely throughout the country. The "get tough" school related policies were supported by a similar logic found in the area of crime control. As with the new criminologies of control and their supporting discourses, school discipline has come to be explicitly driven by a narrative of exclusion. Anyone who is viewed as a potential trouble maker—students with disciplinary records or records of low academic achievement or gang members (see Brotherton, 1996)—is seen as the problem and targeted for discharge. Nationally, suspension rates rapidly increased as did the number of police interventions in matters that had previously been handled internally (Ayers, Dohrn, and Ayers, 2001; Brown, 2003; Advancement Project, 2001; American Bar Association, 2001; Skiba and Peterson, 2000).

The new disciplinary policies came to be seen as the common sense solution to violence and disruption in schools. They were touted as a means of gaining control over failing schools and keeping "our children" safe. But who was framed as "our" children and who was framed as "super-predator" determined how and to what extent such policies were implemented. Several studies (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Skiba, Nardo & Michaels, 2001; Zweifer & de Beers, 2002) have demonstrated racial, class, and gender bias in the implementation of zero tolerance. While there are some contradictory findings in terms of the role of class and gender in school discipline, all of these studies provide considerable evidence of how African American children, especially boys (see also Ferguson, 2000), and increasingly other students of color, are subjected to harsher punishments for the same offenses as their white counter-parts.

The construction of the dirty dozen: New York City and Gilbert Blakely

In the last couple of years in New York City, Mayor Bloomberg has put a spotlight on school violence and has made it one of his primary educational issues. In September 2002, the mayor announced the creation of the Office of School Safety and Planning, to be headed by former police officer and academic, Benjamin Tucker. The office was created to supplement the Division of School Safety, a unit of the DOE that began reporting to the police department in 1999 (Steinhauer, 2002, Sept.). One of the key components of Bloomberg's plan was the creation of a new discipline code that was meant to provide clear and detailed guidelines, increase the discretionary powers of the principal (to suspend a student, for example), and place increased emphasis on targeting low level infractions. Another, central component to the new plan was the creation of the Impact Schools program. A computerized database known as SchoolSafe, which was modeled after New

York City's CompStat, was used to identify the schools with the highest rates of criminal incidents. These schools have been labeled 'high impact' schools. A School Safety Taskforce of about 200 police officers was established, and these officers were distributed among the new impact schools. Additionally, these schools received extra security agents who since 1998 have worked directly under the auspices of the police department. It became the job of the new expanded law enforcement teams to focus on low level disciplinary offenses, such as classroom disruption or wearing hats. Showing support for this new approach, Joel Klein, the Commissioner of Education appointed by Bloomberg, declared, "zero tolerance for unruly teens and undisciplined schools," and he promised, "swift punishment for minor school offenses" (Gendar, 2002, November). Initially, twelve schools were chosen for the Impact program. In local newspapers, they were dubbed "the dirty dozen," and Gilbert Blakely High School was on the list.[15]

The dirty dozen were constructed as such in two ways. First, the long history of institutional practices and educational policies, described in the previous section, set the conditions for violence and disruption in certain schools. Selection processes, school restructuring, and funding schemes have created a multi-tiered system with disproportionately high numbers of the city's poorest and least academically prepared students concentrated in neighborhood schools with no serious academic commitment and often inadequate resources. A report prepared by the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy (2005) based on data from the Department of Education reveals that Impact schools serve a disproportionately high number of under-prepared students, Black and Latino/a students, and low-income students. Almost 40% of the students who attend Impact schools are over-

[15] Over the next couple of years, several schools were added to the Impact list, while others were taken off the list.

age upon entering the ninth grade signifying a difficult academic trajectory. System-wide, 27.5% of students are over-age when entering high school. In terms of the racial make-up, Black students represent 51.6% and Latino/a students almost 40% of the Impact school population, while these groups only make up only 35% and 35.7% respectively of the total population. White students make up less than 5% of the Impact school population while they represent over 15% of the total population. Additionally, just over 60% of the students attending Impact schools are from low-income families[16] whereas just below 54% of the overall student population is considered low-income. The report also notes that Impact schools receive less than the average amount of funding and are increasingly overcrowded even as system-wide overcrowding has declined.

Data on individual Impact schools, especially those located in (or drawing students from) the poorest neighborhoods in the Bronx and Brooklyn, are even more troubling. For example, according to school records, Gilbert Blakely High School is highly segregated (almost 99% non-White) and over 75% of its students qualify for free lunch. In 2004, over half of its in-coming freshmen were over-age for their grade, and about 75% of those students entered high school reading at or below a fourth grade reading level. Seventeen percent of its in-coming students were in special education (as compared to a 10% average system-wide), and only 40% of the 2000 cohort of students graduated four years later. Other Impact schools in similarly poor neighborhoods in the outer boroughs reported similar statistics. Another Bronx Impact School, Washington High School,[17] which is about two miles from Gilbert Blakely, reported that over 80% of its students qualified for free lunch, about 54% of the in-coming students are over-age, and about 18% of the students are in

[16] This percentage refers to the number of students who qualify for free lunch, a commonly used indicator for low SES.
[17] This is a pseudonym.

special education. Another neighborhood school about a half mile away from Washington, which is not designated as an Impact school, has similar percentages of students of color and students qualifying for free lunch; however, only 10% of its student body was enrolled in special education, and only 30% entered over-age. Yet another non-Impact Bronx High School, a highly selective school a few blocks from Washington, reports that only 22% of its students qualify for free lunch and about 67% are non-White (mainly of Asian descent). Not surprisingly for a selective school, zero percent of its students are in special education, and only 4.6% entered over-age in 2005.

While it seems of little use to compare data from a highly selective school and its non-selective neighbor, overall these data suggest the concentration of troubled students, poor students, and Black and Latino students in certain schools. As Ms. Alvarez claims, some schools become "dumping grounds" for the most needy and alienated students. In this way, organizational practices help to set the conditions for disruption and violence in some schools. The primary response, then, is to police these schools more heavily than others.

"The dirty dozen" was also constructed as such in the media. Since 2002, several articles in local newspapers have used provocative headlines, such as "Security Cams to Watch Horror Highs" (NY Daily News, November 23, 2002), "Crackdown at Mayhem High" (NY Daily News, November 22, 2002), "Thugs Run Wild in Troubled HS" (NY Post, December 16, 2003), and "Stop the Violence: Fearful Teachers Protest Students' Reign of Terror" (NY Post, November 23, 2002) Then, when Mayor Michael Bloomberg Gilbert Blakely, in particular, received much of the media's attention largely because of two school stabbings, which occurred in 2001 and in 2003, and an incident where a teacher was attacked in 2002.

Several times a day during my first few weeks at Blakely, administrators, teachers, and students would bring up the topic of the negative media attention the school had received. Many wanted to know if I chose Blakely because of its "bad reputation." Frequently, people asked if I had heard about the stabbings and told me stories about Blakely's more violent past. But most individuals with whom I spoke appeared somewhat defensive of their school; they wanted me to know that in their view the media had sensationalized the problem. Some people pointed to the reduction of violence; others mentioned "all the positive things that happen in the school that go unreported." Still others did not attempt to defend Blakely but appeared to resent the media's depiction of its students as "thugs" and "bad apples."

Ms. Alvarez told me during one of our first meetings that, on more than one occasion during the previous year, she found reporters from local papers and a Fox news correspondent perched on the curb in front of the building hungry for a horrifying story from inside "the blackboard jungle." She told me that she would go outside to meet the reporters and joke that the borough president must be doing a phenomenal job if camping in front of a school was the most productive use of the reporters' time. As she spoke, I imagined the sharply dressed principal, who is sensitive to the media's depiction of her school and her students, descending the front steps with much poise to shoo the vultures away.

Violence and disruption is, and even more so, has been, a reality at Blakely and other schools in New York City. Nevertheless, the most troubling aspect of the media's depiction of these schools is the lack of any critical analysis of the institution's role in setting the conditions for disruption and violence and the lack of context offered. The intentional concentration of the city's most marginalized students, the failure of educational policy to

address widespread academic alienation, along with the material conditions in which students grow up, are obfuscated by dramatic headlines of mayhem and horror.

Conclusion

The situating of Gilbert Blakely in its larger economic, political, cultural and geographic context is meant to provide a backdrop for the chapters that follow. The context serves as a lens through which to examine the micro-interactions of the school. I also explored the relationship between the school and the forces and discourses driving criminal justice and policing policies, and I introduced the notion of the process of penalization of the school. Within this process, an emergent culture of control takes hold as the school assumes penal responsibilities. I argue that the prevailing culture of control is not separate from the diminished educational mission or the virtual obliteration of the democratic ideals of the school. In fact, they go hand-in-hand. In the chapters that follow, I develop analyses centered on the cultural themes and practices I found inside the school, which develop through a dialectical process with institutional and external structures and meanings. In the rest of part I, I focus on the spatial organization of the school, classroom practices, the disciplinary practices of law enforcement agents and school personnel, and institutional discourses around discipline. I examine such themes as the production of alienation, control, the internalization of a retributive and exclusionary discourse, and ambivalence and contestation among institutional agents.

CHAPTER TWO
Welcome to Gilbert Blakely High School

This chapter introduces the reader to Gilbert Blakely High School. It shows how the various "public" areas[18] in the school are transformed through the process of penalization. They take on precinct, or at times even prison-like, characteristics as criminal justice oriented disciplinary practices and the high tech security apparatus permeate the building. The chapter also describes the general atmosphere and the kinds of interactions one would encounter on a daily basis. In many ways, the interactions that I observed were typical of any school—joking, teasing, and paternal and maternal admonitions. But as the physical environment changes so does the nature and kinds of interactions observable on a daily basis. Handcuff, body searches, backpack searches, standing on lines to walk through metal detectors, confrontations with law enforcement, "hallway sweeps," and confinement in the detention room become common experiences for students. The school is still a school, but the prevailing culture has shifted. This phenomenon has previously been noted in the New York City-based research of McCormick (2002). Drawing on the work of Irving Goffman, McCormick (2002) observes that as school children are subjected to these new security technologies, there is a loss of "identity equipment" that makes previous conceptions of self impossible. "The loss is achieved, in part, when an 'inmate' is forced to assume [criminal] postures that conflict with societal notions of propriety" (181). At Blakely, the high tech security apparatus, police presence, and disciplinary practices, I similarly observed, shape the physical characteristics and culture of the school. Indeed, penal management becomes an overarching theme, and students grow accustomed to engaging in the kinds of

[18] These are areas such as hallways, the detention room, the cafeteria, and some administrative offices. Classrooms, some administrative offices, such as guidance counselors' offices or the principal's office would be considered private or closed spaces.

interactions that grow out of this framework (nevertheless, as I describe in later chapters, penal management is highly also contested.)

Gilbert Blakely High School is located on a part commercial, part residential street in the Bronx. A walk from the subway station to the school takes one past several Chinese and Jamaican food take-out restaurants, a few grocery stores or bodegas, a Subway sandwich shop, a Duncan Donuts, and some other store fronts—most with dingy exteriors. For me, a person who spends considerable time in the bustling commercial districts of Manhattan, the neighborhood surrounding the school seems quiet (except when school has just let out), almost remote. There are no sky scrapers in sight or famous cultural institutions, just an elevated subway line that cuts through the sky and some graffiti and murals on the sides of five and six-story apartment buildings. Despite the variety of shops near the school, there is little in terms of a thriving local business community—large chain stores or otherwise.[19]

The front of the school building extends about the length of two football fields, and its sides stretch back about the same distance forming an immense square. It was built in the early years of the 20th century—the era of rapid expansion of public secondary education—to serve about 5000 students. For decades after its opening, the school was known as a fine institution of learning. But, over the years, its reputation diminished.

It is about 9:30 on a mid-September morning in 2004. I arrive at the school for one of my first visits. It is a quiet time, which allows me to stand momentarily on the wide landing of the steps to take in the enormity of the building. I pull open one of the heavy

[19] The Bronx is home to only 8.4% of the total business establishments in the city, or about 16,300, less than half that found in the borough with the next lowest number of business establishments, Queens, which has about 36,000. This excludes Staten Island since it is largely a borough of "suburban" commuters. Most of the business in the Bronx is in retail and services. Only about 2% of the business in the Bronx is in manufacturing (Previti & Schill, 2003). There are a few vibrant shopping districts in the Bronx with large store, movie theaters, and eateries, but none in walking distance from the school.

exterior doors on the left side of the steps and enter the building. There is another set of doors in front of me. One has a sign that reads:

TAKE OFF YOUR BELTS, BRACLETS [SIC] AND WATCHES PUT IT IN YOUR BOOK BAG. YOU CANNOT BRING FOOD INTO THE BUILDING NO HOT ITEMS OR GLASS BOTTLES ALLOWED.

As I pass through the interior doors, I find myself in a cordoned-off section set up to direct bodies toward the large gray blue box with a conveyor belt running through it, just like those found at an airport. Two police officers stand beside it and two more security agents (who I cannot yet distinguish from the police officers). I feel uncomfortable, imagining my embarrassment if I were to set off the alarm. (I never get the chance to grow accustomed to the process as soon after my initial arrival, I am presented with a "staff" ID card, which allows me to by-pass the metal detector.)

I pick up my backpack on the other side of the conveyer. The clunky security apparatus belies the quiet dignity of the entrance area's dark woodwork and brass fixtures. The walls are painted a muted yellow, and a soft light bathes the area. Directly in front of me are the heavy doors to the auditorium. Above the doors, there hangs a multi-colored neon bubble-letter sign shouting "*Bienvenidos*" and another to the side, repeating the greeting in English: Welcome.

Beyond the doors, the backs of several hundred wooden seats are flanked by rows of stately marble columns leading to a large stage—a typical large school auditorium, worn and dusty, but dignified. There is a sprinkling of students occupying some of the seats.

At the very front, near the stage, four handsome brass chandeliers hang from the high ceiling. On the back wall of the auditorium, portraits of erudite men holding leather bound books and donning tiny metal-rimmed spectacles are mounted inside heavy gold frames. A

small gold plate under the first painting to the left reads: "Randolph Beasley, principal, 1913-1919."

The entrance area, like the auditorium, has a high ceiling. Cavernous hallways lined with endless rows of sturdy oak doors extend off each side, contributing to the expansive feel of the space. Two more police officers can be seen about midway down one of the hallways.

The walls to the side of the auditorium doors are lined with glass trophy cases filled with small monuments honoring victorious student athletes. One case is filled with wallet-sized photos of the graduating class of 2004- proud, smiling brown and black faces framed by shiny blue caps and gowns.

Across from the glass cases to the right side of the metal detector, bronze plaques are mounted on dark wood panels hanging on the wall. They are engraved with the names of hundreds of honor students dating back to 1916. The sea of names reflects the various waves of immigrants that made their way into this northeast corner of the Bronx, starting with the European immigration of the early part of the last century: "Silverman, Miller, Klein…" By the 1950s, there is a spattering of names not previously seen: "Rucci, McLeod, Camacho…" And by the 1970s, the names begin to speak of the northern migration of Southern blacks and others from the Caribbean: "Saunders, Richards, Melendez, Rodriguez…" The subdued plaques hang like ghosts, almost fading into the wall.

Morning Scanning

Starting at about 7:30 in the morning, for almost two hours, there are two lines of students waiting outside the building—often referred to as the morning lines. The boys' line starts at the eastside entrance to the school and extends down to the corner. At peak times, it

wraps around the corner to the front of the building. The girls line up at the main entrance. Their line extends down the steps and along the sidewalk in front of the west side of the building. There are deans, police officers, security agents, and school aides monitoring the lines.

Here at Blakely, I do not hear many complaints about the long wait to get into the building. The process seems to have become normalized. At another high school about two miles away, however, students protest when their school installs a metal detector. One morning during the spring, almost 1500 students protested outside the school, indignant that they would have to walk through a metal detector everyday and concerned that the long lines would cause them to be late for class—a common complaint heard at many of the schools with metal detectors. At Blakely, though, there is little dissent. Students become ornery sometimes, as do staff member, particularly on bitter cold winter mornings. And in the late spring, arguments erupt between the school aides and students who show up in tank tops and midriffs. But, for the most part, the lines are characterized by a mixture of sleepy students and lively, innocuous banter. The students eventually proceed to the front entrance, remove their belts, jewelry, hats, and do-rags, and plop their book bags on the conveyor.

The boys' line leads to a long narrow basement hallway on the east side of the building. The area is known as "boys scanning." It has beige walls and a gray floor. Just inside the exterior doors, there are posters listing school rules. "Students who are caught in the hallways after the late bell will be subject to after-school detention the same day. They will be taken to B-40 and a detention form will be given to them and their IDs confiscated" one reads. Another warns that students should have a book bag, notebook and writing utensil or they will be sent directly to the deans' office. Yet another explains the hat and

"head cover" policy (as of May 2nd all will be confiscated and not returned.) There is also a poster of Toni the Tiger telling kids to "Get out there. Eat a school breakfast, and stay active." Right before the interior doors, there are two computers for ID scanning and two walk-through body scanners—one set for the Blakely boys, one for the boys attending the small schools on the second floor, and just beyond the doors there is the metal detector where students from all the different schools drop their bags for inspection. The bulky security equipment and cadre of uniformed officers take over the narrow basement corridor, making Toni the Tiger's call for breakfast and activity seem somewhat absurd.

There are a few tables pushed against the walls, and then about twenty feet beyond the metal detector, there is the office of the police and security agents. Several more feet down the hallway, there is the entrance into the stairwell where the boys head up to their classes. If classes are in session, the boys (and the girls) are ushered into the auditorium to wait for the next bell.

When the boys enter the building, they are greeted by Dean Dempsey. Ms. Dempsey's style is a mixture of warmth and abruptness. She can joke with the boys, but she is tough and unbending when it comes to the rules. Practically all of the students I spoke with liked her and had great respect for her. Then there are about a dozen or so others in the area: school aides, security agents, and police officers. Some are working the security equipment; others are just standing around.

One morning in late May, I sit on a table with Ms. Dempsey during boys' scanning to see how the new hat policy is being implemented. (All "head gear" is now confiscated and not returned.) Each of the boys passes his ID card to the aide working the computer. As the student's card is swiped, his picture and some written information appear on the screen.

If the young man has been suspended, a low siren goes off, indicating a "hold" on the student's card, and a computerized voice announces that this student has been suspended. At other times, the voice says something like, "Report to Ms. Rosa's (a counselor) office." And below the student's picture, in bold red writing, there is a brief explanation for the "hold" on the student's card.

Under the computer stand on the floor, there is a box with about twenty do-rags inside. I do not immediately recognize its function until a young man steps through the outside doors with a do-rag on. As he places one foot in the building, he realizes his mistake. He smiles, grabs his head and takes a giant step backwards, but it is too late. Ms. Dempsey says, "Don't leave the building now. You were already in. Put it in the bin." And the young man reluctantly drops his do-rag in the box and proceeds past the metal detector, down the hall, and up the stairs.

The Detention Room (B-40)

On the west side of the main entrance on the first floor, there are several administrative offices, including Ms. Alvarez's, the principal. Around the corner, in the west corridor, one can find the counselors' offices, some other administrative offices, the history department, and several classrooms. Off of the south corridor, there are the gymnasiums and fitness rooms and the nurse's station. The special education wing takes up the rest of the first floor, including the east corridor and extending around to the east side of the main entrance.

The students who take classes in the special education wing are generally contained in that area of the school unless they are headed to lunch or the library. Many also navigate their way through the stairwells and hallways as they avoid going to classes. Others are

escorted down to the detention room—commonly known as B-40— a large, stark room in the basement on the west side of the building when they are removed from their classes because they have been disruptive. This practice creates a fairly steady flow of traffic between the special education wing and the detention room. But not all students who sit in B-40 are disruptive students removed from their classes.

Early in the school year, I spend the day with Dean Jackson, whose job it is to patrol the first floor. Jackson, an athletically built Black man in his late twenties, walks swiftly through the hallways responding to calls on his hand-held radio. At the moment, he is off to pick up a student who needs to be escorted to B-40. At any given moment, the detention room is filled with a wide variety of students, with myriad reasons for being there.

The first stop of the day is a classroom on the first floor where Jackson picks up Steven, one of the regulars in B-40. Steven, who is Puerto Rican, is tall and plump with a short buzz cut. He has small eyes and a wide smile. Jackson doesn't ask questions. He knows Steven causes a little disruption at the beginning of each class so that the teacher will likely dismiss him to the detention room. Instead he introduces Steven to the "lady" walking with him, but Steven looks down with his head tilted to the side, sheepishly smiling. Jackson chides him for not steppin' up his game. His smile grows even wider and his eyes turn into crescent moons. Steven giggles and his round cheek burn red. Next, Jackson picks up a student whose teacher evidently slammed the door on his hand. He is Black, with a light complexion. His hair is neatly braided into rows. He walks with his shoulders back and a stoic look on his face, cradling his bloody hand. When he is asked to explain what happened, the squeaky voice of a wounded child bubbles up, "I wasn't doing anything. Another student was just handing me the hall-pass and…"

As the day goes on, Jackson picks up a student who wasn't prepared for gym class and got angry when the teacher kicked him out of the room; then he nabs another regular, Evan, who prefers roaming the hallways to going to class. He then spends a few moments talking with a large awkward freshman who claims his teacher picks on him. Jackson orchestrates a pathetic apology from the boy, and defeated, he is let back into the classroom. The radio crackles again. Jackson is called to the front entrance where he finds a group of four young men. It is unclear what they have done wrong, but their ID cards have been "flagged" so they must immediately be escorted to B-40. It is the first encounter of the day where hostility is evident; Jackson does not introduce them to the white woman walking beside him.

B-40 has gotten crowded, about 30 students in all. It's the middle of the fifth period. The aide who works in the room sits behind his big table conversing with two female students. There are a lot of latecomers who were barred from their classes or picked up in the hallway sweep. There is one group engaged in a lively conversation. But most of the students sit quietly with bored looks on their faces. Some stare directly to the front; others rest their heads on their desks.

On Steven's third trip of the day down to B-40, he has two companions, Marcus and Calvin. Steven peers in the small window on the door and declares he isn't going in because he's "got beef in there." He looks at the others, widening his small eyes, "Those guys are Crips" (referring to the ones escorted from the main entrance). Jackson brings the three boys around the corner to B-42, Assistant Principal Juarez's office, and drops them off despite the protests of the women who work there.

Base

Juarez's office is known as "base" and functions as the brains of the security apparatus.[20] It's a large cluttered office with desks for Juarez, his secretary, and a school aide in charge of the computer system that holds all of the students' information. (It is here where notes are attached to students' profiles in the computer that appear on the screen during morning scanning when their cards are swiped.) Like a typical school office, there is a photo copy machine and several filing cabinets lining the walls behind the desks. Inside these cabinets are copies of students' discipline records and occurrence reports. Across from the desks next to the door, there is a large free-standing monitor with selected images captured by the numerous security cameras mounted in the corners of the hallways and the cafeteria. Behind the monitor on the wall there hangs a bulletin board with several signs and memos and a Navy recruitment calendar with a pocket full of business cards.

The Deans' Office

If "base" is the brains of the security apparatus, the deans' office is the heart. This is the room where police and security agents escort handcuffed students, whether in the aftermath of a fight or simply as a result of a confrontation between a non-compliant student and a security agent. During a quiet moment, it resembles any other typical school office. The walls are lined with filing cabinets and bulletin boards covered with administrative memos explaining new procedures and regulations. There is a secretary's desk, a photo copy machine, and a storage closet. There are two desks for the deans to use facing each other in the center of the room, another against the wall next to the entrance, and three more

[20] Later in the school year, Juarez moves to an office on the first floor and Dean Henry takes over his desk in B-42.

along the back wall separated by partitions. Behind that set of desks is the door to the detention room.

I spent considerable time over the course of the school year sitting in this office. Often there would be three or four deans in the room doing paper work, talking to a parent on the phone, or talking with a student who had come by in an attempt to retrieve his or her ID card that had been confiscated the day before. At times, as a couple of deans were immersed in their work, a cherished stillness would fall over the office. But, at least once a day, often several times, the stillness would be jarringly disrupted as several police officers and security agents poured into the room escorting handcuffed students. Shrill static peppered with police lingo emanating from the officers' hand-held radios would suffuse the room. Angry voices of students, cops, and agents would rise above the radio static. In each corner of the room, there would be a different interaction.

On one day, a young man stands over one of the desks in the center of the room with his legs spread and his hands placed on the desktop while an officer conducts a body search and another goes through the young man's bag. He finds red beads, which are considered gang paraphernalia. Next to the adjacent desk, another student flips through the binder of student photos in an attempt to find the one student who hit him. And at one of the desks in the back, yet another young man sits quietly with his hands cuffed behind his back. The deans seem to have sprung into a new mode of action. One is on the phone attempting to contact a parent. A few agents stand around, waiting. The boy with the red beads gets arrested and is brought to the precinct.

Days later I observe a student getting frisked as several officers stand around the room. The boy drops his bracelet of the floor and the police officer inadvertently steps on it.

But when the student brings it to the officer's attention, he is slow to move his foot. The boy asks in a low angry voice, "Why do you have to disrespect me?"

On another day, I walk into the room to find three officers standing over a student. One of them is writing up a court summons to give to the student. The buzz of the radios provides a constant backdrop to the activity. One officer says, "Pray today is not like yesterday." Just then, a "52" (code for a fight) is called over the radio. Two officers run out of the room and another one darts through the hallway to join them as they run past the drone of tuning tubas and trumpets coming from the music room.

The Upper Floors

On the third floor (Blakely students are barred from the second floor where the small schools are located), one will find the second language and art department office on the west side along with one of the small schools, which has encroached upon Blakely's space. The library with its somewhat famous mural depicting the evolution of "Western civilization,"[21] can be found off the south corridor, and the English and math departments are located on the east side of the third floor. On this floor, where so many classes are held, there are always several security agents and police officers standing around. Usually clusters of two or three can be found in the corners or strolling down the hallway. During the change of classes, the security team forms a blue wall and corrals students in one direction.

The fourth floor houses the science department, classrooms, and labs on the west side and the "freshman academy" on the east side. The cafeteria, or lunch room, extends along the whole north side. It is an extremely long room broken into three sections.

[21] The mural by James Michael Newell, which was commissioned in 1935 and presented in 1938 for the school's twenty-fifth anniversary, spans over 1,200 square feet. It is made up of eight panels and depicts the development of Western civilization In the 1960s, the mural became the subject of student unrest for its depiction of a group of African slaves in one of the panels. Part of the mural was defaced in protest. It has since been restored.

There are dozens of tables on both the east side and the west side and an open space in the middle where I was told students used to play dominoes and cards until games were banned in order to discourage gambling. Doors in this middle section lead to the food counter. There are entrances on both sides of the enormous room. At each entrance, there is a computer and scanning machine, and usually an aide and a couple of security agents are standing around. There is also a dean assigned to the lunch room. At the beginning of each period, students line up at both entrances. One by one, their cards are swiped to verify that they are assigned to the lunch room for that period.

The lunch room smells of grease and the fare of the day— typically burgers or pizza. I learned to step carefully while traversing the large room so as not to step on a knocked over juice carton or a streak of ketchup or some already stepped on French fries.

The students are not generally out of control. In fact, many sit quietly, chatting and eating their lunches. But there are so many of them in the room at once—clowning around, laughing, and yelling across the tables to their friends. I quickly come to understand why some students choose to go to the detention room during their lunch periods to avoid the assault on one's senses (and still others choose the detention room over the lunch room to avoid trouble. Indeed, I occasionally found myself heading to the detention room to "take a break" and strike up conversations with students who informed me it was a good place to sit unnoticed for a few periods.)

The lunch room is one of the most common areas in the school for a fight to break out. It is difficult to describe an actual fight, one student hitting another, as it is nearly impossible to get near such a conflict. The first sign of imminent fisticuffs is the soft rumbling of anticipation. Then, as the first punch is thrown, a wave of spectators rolls in the

direction of the dueling students. Sometimes someone will yell, "Fight!" The crowd forms quickly. The security team moves into action rounding up students. Many of the by-standers get swept up along with the fighters and hauled down to the deans' office in the basement, down a dark hallway, past the music room used by one of the small schools. But while fights are rather common, fighting does not define the lunch room. Generally, the cafeteria appears to be simply a lively social scene with lots of students eating their lunches off of Styrofoam trays.

Conclusion

This is Gilbert Blakely High School. By its appearance, it is undeniably a school—typical in many ways of a large, old, urban public high school. Artifacts of the past—graduation pictures, athletic awards, wooden doors chosen decades ago to give the hallways a learned feel— and newer displays of student projects, posters, and school rules offer visible signs of a long, evolving scholastic history. And now there are new signs of the changing times layered, blending with the old—the clunky metal detectors, the security cameras tucked into the corners, the large monitor projecting images from around the school, scanning machines and computers that contain all sorts of student information at the building and cafeteria entrances, and armed law enforcement patrolling the hallways. The new apparatus and the daily disciplinary rituals seem to shift the mood—sometimes subtly, sometimes more overtly. It is still very much a school, but now the atmosphere might best be described with words associated with the penal system—control, surveillance, and regimentation. These are some of the physical, spatial, and ritualistic aspects of the penalization of the school. Dozens of individuals in the school made comments to me about the atmosphere. Perhaps most common were comments about the front entrance and the

metal detector. For example, one teacher who worked for over thirty years at Blakely had this to say, "I think walking through that metal detector every morning completely brings hostility into the building before [the students] even start the day. It makes people feel like they're walking into a prison. It makes life very difficult for everyone." But despite the articulation of these kinds of comments, the security apparatus and related rituals, to a large extent, blend into the everyday life of the school. They shape daily interactions and give rise to new ways of thinking about school.

CHAPTER THREE
Discipline and Pedagogy:
Classroom practice and the production of student alienation

In this chapter, I examine the classroom as a site where institutional forces and the actions of institutional agents, namely the teachers, interact to help produce or exacerbate student alienation. During my classroom observations, I identified four distinct, but interrelated factors: organizational practices, such as borough-wide tracking that has resulted in large numbers of students who read well below grade level concentrated in classrooms; curricular mandates stemming from the implementation of high stakes exams (in the form of the NYS Regents Exams); teachers' assumptions about their students; and teachers' abilities (or inabilities) to engage students intellectually and affectively. The first two represent institutional forces beyond the control of the classroom teacher. The second two represent the beliefs and actions of these institutional agents.[22] I show how, together, these factors shape classroom pedagogy and disciplinary styles in ways that often make the classroom a difficult place to be. Instead of the classroom serving as a site where students' intellectual and affective needs are met, it becomes a place where student alienation is produced or exacerbated.

The notion of student alienation has been used by many educational researchers, and has been defined, as students exhibiting poor attendance, failure, feeling a lack of control over their own situation, being unable to keep class or school rules, not having a sense of belonging, or a combination of any of these [Carlson, 1995; Mau, 1992]. Alienation has also been linked to disruptive behavior [Zubric, et al., 1997], absenteeism [Reid, 1981], and dropping out [Whelage and Rutter, 1986] (Oerlemans and Jenkins, 1998).

[22] Ladson-Billings and King (1993) demonstrate that teacher attitudes toward their students plays an important role in students' academic success.

The term alienation in educational research has often been used to emphasize the *student's* failure at remaining engaged in academic work. Similarly, alienation as a concept appears in educational literature, at times, as a (Black) cultural phenomenon in which students reject academic work and assume an anti-intellectual attitude (see Ogbu). Other more critical studies have linked the term to institutional forces (see Fine, 1991, Fine, Burns, Payne, & Torre, 2004; LeCompte, 1991; Valenzuala, 1999) and have shown how some schools, particularly those serving poor and working class children of color produce student alienation. Fine et al (2004), for example, demonstrate how younger students have high expectations and positive feelings toward school, but older students' sense of alienation grows as they experience and gain insight into institutional racial and class inequity. Similarly, my use of the term emphasizes the institutional production of student alienation.

Within the discipline of sociology the notion of alienation stems from the work of Marx. As used in Marxist theory, it referred to the powerlessness of the worker in relation to the means of production. Later, Seeman (1959) describes alienation as a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness, self-estrangement, and normlessness. Powerless refers to the individual's feeling of a lack of control over her or his situation, and meaningless refers to the experience of a lack of relevance or a sense of incomprehensibility of one's situation. Self-estrangement describes one's lack of engagement with her or his surroundings, and includes a sense of isolation or feelings of exclusion or rejection. Normlessness refers to one's unwillingness to abide by societal norms, the loss of commonly held standards, and the use of any means to achieve what is desirable (Seeman, 1959).[23] These four

[23] Many researchers have previously analyzed similar student behavior within a theory of oppositional behavior (see for example, Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1983; Willis, 1777). I share the view of these theorists that working class student behavior is shaped by their implicit or explicit understanding that schooling is not structured to benefit them as a social and economic class. But theories of opposition, such as these,

characteristics help to describe the kinds of behaviors I observed in classes at Blakely. (However, it must be clarified that students' sense of powerlessness was apparent only at the level of transforming the classroom. They certainly found numerous ways to generate a sense of power through small acts of resistance. This idea will be discussed in depth in part II of the dissertation.) Thus, I use Seeman's four-part definition of alienation to inform my own definition of student alienation. In my analysis, I argue that these characteristics emerge, in large part, as by-products of institutional forces.

This chapter presents two narratives based on observations conducted in two different classrooms, Ms. Klein's Global History III (first semester sophomore) class and Ms. Jenkins' second semester freshman English class. The first class, Klein's, depicts a group of students that are particularly disengaged from the academic process. The second class, Jenkins', shows a group of students who are significantly more engaged in the educational process. The students in these two classes are comparable groups in many ways—first semester sophomores and second semester freshmen in mainstream education courses. However, my goal is not to provide a simple comparative analysis, "good class" versus "bad class," and then attempt to identify the variables that contribute to the differences. A comparison of only two classes—one History and one English—would not provide a means for determining the link between classroom practice and non-attendance. Instead, the narratives offer a sense of classroom life and insight into particular types of classroom experiences that were observed in these classes (as well as others).[24] Next, I

---

have often suggested that oppositional behavior reflects a student's categorical rejection of schooling. My data do not suggest this. Additionally, alienation is a more useful concept for my particular analysis because it highlights not only students' normlessness but feelings of meaningless and estrangement. Thus, I place oppositional behavior in a framework of resistance.

[24] I conducted observations in a total of twelve classrooms. Five classes I attended on a regular basis. The two narratives represent classroom experiences on opposite ends of a wide spectrum of classroom

present the complicated discourses of the teachers as they reflect on their own classroom experiences. I show how they are both agents of the institution hired to carry out (and to some extent invested in) educational policy, and at the same time they are individuals with their own subjective views, abilities, and styles.

The classroom analyses presented in this chapter becomes particularly important for understanding discipline in general at Blakely. To begin, the dropout rate at Blakely is about 70% and cutting classes and hanging out in the hallways was identified by virtually everyone I interviewed as the most pervasive discipline problem. Indeed, one dean who I interviewed believed that several hundred students cut at least some of their classes and dozens, whose cutting habits are more visible, spend more time outside of class than they do in class.[25] Additionally, most of the incidents that lead to student-law enforcement confrontations occur outside the classroom. Thus, in order to understand the disciplinary process, it is important to examine what takes place in the classroom

Ms. Klein's Global History Class

In September, Ms. Klein invites me to observe her tenth grade Global History III class. It is one of my first visits to the class. The seats have been arranged in two large U's, one inside the other. Ms. Klein is at the door handing each student entering the room a piece of paper with an excerpt from the Communist Manifesto and four questions on it.

The history of all… society is the history of class struggle. Free man and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman—in a word, oppressor and oppressed—stood in constant opposition to one another… Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class…The Communists openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chain. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, unite!

---

experiences I observed. The specific moments I describe in each classroom were typical in many ways with what I found in classrooms in general.

[25] In chapter five, I show how student make sense of the classroom and describe their rationales for cutting class.

This is what is given for the "Do Now", a small task that should take approximately five minutes given to students as they enter the room with the purpose of getting them to settle down quickly and focus. Often the Do Now also serves as a spring board for the rest of the lesson for the day. The students trickle into the room and take their seats. Ms. Klein demands silence, but many of the students continue to talk. It is not overwhelming boisterousness, just conversations ranging from secret whispers to light banter with one or two guffaws rising above the steady flow of voices. "Shut up, shut up!" the round, middle-aged woman with teased blond hair shouts as she steps to the front of the room. The murmur continues. She threatens them with exclusion from the new Law Enforcement Academy, the small school that is to open up next year. I later learn that this particular group of students had been clustered together as the first cohort for the new small school but then its opening was postponed. The students did not seem to care. "You say that everyday, Miss," one young man responds.

The students in Ms. Klein's class haven't quieted down yet. "Do I need to read everyone's grade out loud to the class?"

Still some of the students continue to talk. Others have settled into their seats and have begun drawing intricate doodles. A few in the inner-U sit in frustration as they try to decipher the language of the passage written in 1847 that sits on their desktops.

The threats continue. Michael, an older looking student to my left, says in exasperation, "Chill, Miss, just chill." He looks at me, "You see who does all the talking?" Two seats over on my right, Henry is talking to himself in a low angry tone. He bangs his fists on the desk. "This is why I never learn anything in this class. I've learned nothing in this class, *nothing*!" he mutters. Ms. Klein doesn't hear him. She continues to admonish the

students, futilely demanding perfect silence. Even after the voices in the room have settled into a soft, sporadic whisper and an occasional giggle, it is as if she just cannot contain herself. "There's a test on Wednesday, ready or not," she blurts out…."Shhh!"… "You might see this exact passage on the Regents exam."

Ms. Klein circulates and makes comments to individual students. "Did you hear that, Kathy?" a girl calls from across the room. "Did you hear what she just said to me?" Another one chimes in, "Yeah, did you write what she said in your notebook?" I try not to smile. Michael suddenly erupts in open defiance, "*Who's* doing all the talking? *Whose* mouth is going all the time? I only hear *one* person." Ms. Klein ignores him.

About ten minutes after the second bell has rung, the lesson begins. There is no discussion of the difficult text. First, Ms. Klein lectures on some notes she has on the board on Robert Owens. After another ten minutes or so, she turns to the Do Now questions. "Who knows the answer to question one?" (*What groups of people might feel threatened by this manifesto? Why?*) Finally, there is silence as heavy as the smell of chalk dust. She rephrases the question, "So why would the business owners be threatened by Marxism?"

After a long twenty seconds or so, Terrell speaks robotically. "We *don't* know, Ms. Klein. Why don't you just tell us?"

Ms. Klein does not provide the answer to the question, but takes Terrell's cue and proceeds to explain her version of Marxism to the students. She works herself into a feverish display. "Revolution!" she shouts, "revolution!" with her fist in the air. Some students are amused by the high drama; others seem embarrassed for her; some continue to talk among themselves; still others are immersed in the elaborate designs they are creating in their notebooks.

Ms. Klein declares that the reality of Marxism is a totalitarian dictatorship. She says, "In a dictatorship, you're told by the government what you're going to be." In a mock stern voice she proclaims, "You [pointing a one young man], you're going to be a ballet dancer and you [pointing to another], you're going to be the chief pooper-scooper at the fertilizer factory. How do you like that?" The elected pooper scooper looks annoyed. She explains that this is how Fidel Castro runs Cuba.

"Oh man, did you see Fidel fall?" a student calls to his friend a few seats over (referring to a recent fall down some stairs Castro took that made the news).

"Yeah, and he's mad old too."

Ms. Klein skips question number two (*Are there social classes in the United States today? If so, what are they? Are they at war with each other, as Marx suggests classes normally are?*) Instead, she asks Michael to read question three but as soon as he finishes she turns to the board to write an announcement that there will be a test on Wednesday. The volume of conversations in the room has risen again to a distracting level. "We're still on number three," Ms. Klein warns. "If we don't finish, that's you're problem." As she turns from the board, she adds, "I assure you, the essays [on the exam] will be on the economic theories of Owens and Marx."

The period is almost over. The class has not answered any of the questions about the Communist Manifesto that had been presented to them at the beginning of the class. Suddenly, Ronald, a small boy in the back of the room throws his hand into the air as if something very important and very relevant has just dawned on him, "Oh, Ms. Klein, Ms. Klein." She looks his way.

"My cat died," he says in a serious tone. At this point, I can't help it. I laugh along with the students.

"It's true," he adds with a heart wrenching innocence.

Ms. Klein's Global History III class offers a particularly rich illustrative example of student alienation. Here we can see how pedagogical and disciplinary practices contributed to a disorderly ("normless") environment. For fifteen year old students, many whose reading skills are well below grade level, there were few, if any, access points to the course material that was presented to them in the form of difficult to read handouts. Meaninglessness, self-estrangement, and a sense of isolation from the material and from their teacher were certainly evident in the students' comments and behaviors. Powerlessness, especially over the teachers' rants, was perhaps most poignantly illustrated in Henry's fist banging lament. Given the students' disconnect from the content of the class, it is not surprising that normlessness—the lack of adherence to classroom norms—was also evident. Instead of continually attempting to engage what had become meaningless material, the students found a variety of ways to pass the forty-two minutes of class time, and the teacher, in an almost desperate attempt to get the students' attention, spent considerable time yelling and threatening the students. But the students' behavior was shaped by the conditions over which they have no control, at least in the immediate sense.

From the beginning of this particular class session, students were "turned off" by being confronted with a difficult passage from the Communist Manifesto without any pre-reading activity to prepare them to deal with the difficult language or concepts they would encounter if they even attempted to read it. These types of handouts were very common.

Students were bombarded with them in many of their classes. Alone, they seemed to be a very ineffective instructional tool.

Additionally, Ms. Klein missed an opportunity to relate the material to the students' own experience by skipping question number two, the one that asked students to think about class structures in the United States today. These missed opportunities were noted in many of the classes I observed, even some of the more engaging ones.

In the coming weeks in Ms. Klein's class, I continued to witness the same pedagogical and disciplinary approaches and similar levels of student alienation. However, it was not long before the ways in which curricular mandates shape the classroom dynamic became evident.

A week after the lesson on Marx, Ms. Klein's class is studying the reunification of Germany and Italy. As is typical, they receive handouts with long passages, photos of historical figures (this time it's Otto von Bismarck), and maps. Today the Do Now consists of questions on two excerpts, one from Count Cavour who was named the prime minister of Piedmont-Sardinia in 1885 (*We ardently wish to free Italy from foreign rule… We want to drive out the foreigners not because we want to see our country powerful and glorious, but because we want to elevate the Italian people in intelligence and moral development)* and the other by Giuseppe Garibaldi (*O noble thousand!... I love to remember you!...Where any of our brothers are fighting for liberty, there all Italians must hasten…)* As the students sit with their handouts and the Do Now questions, Ms. Klein fumbles with a large map of Europe circa 1871 that she's attempting to hang. She eventually gives up and pulls down a contemporary European map that is hanging like a window shade in the front of the room. Many of the students take interest in the map, but some don't know the European countries.

Ms. Klein points to Italy. Ronald, the small boy who lost his cat, calls out "Puerto Rico!" The others laugh. Ms. Klein rolls her eyes, "Puerto Rico?!" She shakes her head in disgust.

There are several students in the class who know the answers to Ms. Klein's map questions, but mostly they get drowned out or just not called on. Ms. Klein asks for the name of one of the countries in the former Yugoslavia. The students call out all sorts of answers: "Paris," "Germany…" From the back of the room, I hear, "Serbia," but Klein does not hear.

Ms. Klein turns from the map and resumes her lecture. The atmosphere is a familiar one to me by now— frustrated bodies with vacant or bored or (thanks to their own devices) amused looks on their faces, some engaged, some not, some calling out absurd answers that they sadly think might be right (or perhaps they just want to participate so they are willing to take a wild guess), and still others knowing the answers but not always being heard. Ms. Klein asks another question. Terrell mumbles the correct answer, and as Ms. Klein turns to the board only half-listening, he injects an almost inaudible "screw you" into his answer.

Again, we find high levels of student alienation, as I have defined it—a sense of powerlessness, meaninglessness, self-estrangement, and normlessness (perhaps most evident in Terrell's "screw you" comment). But what also seems apparent is the effort many students are making to remain connected. Terrell, for example, is displaying anger, yet he has come to class and frequently answers questions. From my informal conversations with him outside of class, I also find him to be quite intelligent and interested in academic pursuits. He tells me about books he has read and his success in many of his classes.

Days later, Ms. Klein's class has moved on to China as a target of imperialism. The teacher speeds through a passage about the Opium War with lightening speed. I am amazed

at the ability of some students to follow along. Other students appear to have given up. Ms. Klein then shows the students a picture of a famous Chinese noblewoman who was addicted to opium and explains how opium addiction was so pervasive at that time, even among the elite, that it interfered with the governance of the country. I find the lecture interesting, but as I have seen during other visits, several students remain almost completely disengaged, immersed in conversations with each other. With others, it is difficult to ascertain if they are listening or not. The only evidence that any of these students hear Ms. Klein at all is when a conversation between two boys is triggered by something she says. As the lecture continues, I hear part of the students' conversation. "Opium is heroin man; crack is cocaine," the young man explains to his apparently less-informed friend. "The Chinese weren't no crack heads."

As Ms. Klein transmitted the information on China that the students might have needed to know for the Regents exam, these two students picked up on the fact that there was a pervasive drug problem in China during that particular historical period—something that perhaps resonated with them. How can we best make sense of the students' exchange? Were they simply mocking the lesson and trying to have some fun, a way of "winning some space" (Willis, 1977)? Perhaps. Or might the ideas they expressed have been an appropriation of the class content—a way of relating it to something with which they are familiar?

In any case, the boys' conversation was tangential to the lesson and probably meant to be a joke, but the conversation does suggest two important points. First, there are ways to relate historical material to students' understanding of their own worlds. That is, perhaps a lesson on the impact of opium on Chinese economic and social life could have been studied

in the context of the economic and social implications of drug addiction in the United States today. But, there was either no time for this due to exam pressures, or Ms. Klein just did not think of it. Secondly, buried in students' joking, there may be evidence of their desperate searching for meaning in the classroom.

Ms. Jenkins' freshman English Class

During the spring semester, I visit Ms. Jenkins' freshman English class on a regular basis. It is a 90 minute (double period) class in the middle of the day. The room in which the class was held is more inviting than most, bright and clean, with colorful pictures and inspirational slogans neatly hung above the blackboards. One says, "The only way to get better at writing is by writing." And another says, "I am important. My thoughts and ideas are important." Under the windows, along the wall, there are several desks with milk crates stacked on top. The crates serve as book shelves for the class library and class sets of texts the students use. Hanging on the back wall are large student-made posters of "grading rubrics," which are used for students' self-evaluations of their writing. When I first entered the room and took a seat in the back, I had the sense that it was the kind of room in which learning takes place.

It is February—a new semester. Ms. Jenkins stands in the front of the room as the students enter. She is a tall, handsome Jamaican woman, sharply dressed with her long braids tied back with a colorful scarf. Her demeanor is no-nonsense, but she greets the students warmly as they enter the room. After the bell has rung and stragglers are still entering the room, she announces in a stern, but steady, voice, "I will not tolerate willful lateness." The students take their seats, and Ms. Jenkins explains that the class will begin with silent reading time. Students take books from the milk crates or pull one out of their

book bag. Ms. Jenkins circulates. As she makes her way around the room, she peers over the shoulders of the students and makes a note in her book. The silence is broken once when Juan wants to know what "luscious" means and Ms. Jenkins provides a definition. After about ten minutes, several students start to squirm in their seats. She tells a few of them individually as she passes their desks that they will be called on to share. One student has his head down on his desk. Ms. Jenkins explains, perhaps for my sake, that the boy is excused because he is not feeling well.

The students are then asked to write. Ms. Jenkins points to the question written on the board. "What descriptions from your book were you able to visualize?" Every student except for Rafael who is sick begins to write.

Today's lesson is on descriptive writing and several students are eager to share what they have written. About six students are called on to read what they have written. They are then asked to read the part of the text that helped them visualize the image they wrote about.

Ms. Jenkins then moves to the center of the room and gives a short lecture on descriptive writing. She speaks with passion. "What can you *learn* from these writers?"… "What do they do to make it come *alive*? I want to call your attention to their *techniques*…."

Then Ms. Jenkins hands each student a book that contains excerpts from various stories and activities to go along with the readings. She also hands out little yellow pieces of paper with adhesive on the back. She instructs the students to use these papers so as not to write in the books. They are to make comments on the yellow paper when they find descriptive language that they like or to mark a question or comment they have about the story.

The reading is an excerpt from *Angela's Ashes.* There is no discussion of the social and historical context of the story, but Ms. Jenkins reminds the students that the reading is an example of a memoir, the genre they are currently studying. The students and I open our books and Ms. Jenkins begins to read in her melodic Jamaican voice that is soft and animated at once. The story depicts a scene in which the author, as a boy, is in the hospital and meets a mischievous little friend. By their appropriately-timed laughter and page turning, I gather the students are following along. Robert, one of the boys near the window, seems to be searching for some context. He periodically asks for explanations for things he doesn't understand. Ms. Jenkins responds patiently, and at other times, she anticipates the children's confusion and stops to explain something. The activity lasts for about fifteen minutes.

The rest of the class is used mostly to discuss the images the author had presented in the text. And a final few moments are spent discussing the homework assignment. The students are to edit the first drafts of their own memoirs that they have written during a previous class.

Why was there so little disruptive behavior in Ms. Jenkins' class? Her ability to maintain order appeared to be influenced by the level of intellectual engagement she achieved. And this appeared to come through providing students with some context and insisting on active participation (recall students being asked to read what they had written about what they had read.) But perhaps Ms. Jenkins' ability to *affectively* engage students played an even bigger role in the overall classroom dynamic. Her abilities and sensibilities, it seemed, worked to mitigate students' sense of powerlessness and meaninglessness. They were given a clear sense of purpose and were given an implicit message that they were

capable of doing the work. It is not that her students never attempted to misbehave or diverted their attention away from the lesson. Ms. Jenkins, herself, says, "…students are constantly inattentive. They just talk out of turn… So, we have a problem trying to hold their attention so that they're not distracted by speaking with their friends and doing all those things while the class is going on… and also the squabbling between kids. This one doesn't like that one for nonsensical reasons. 'I don't like that one. She's going out with that one and she thinks she's all that,' and you know…"

I go on to ask Ms. Jenkins if she thinks the students use the classroom as a place to start these squabbles because there is less surveillance in the classrooms as opposed to the hallways that are patrolled by deans, security agents, and police officers.

She responds, "Well, they certainly take advantage of, if you're not on the ball as a teacher, all sorts of things [happen] as soon as you turn your back. Even a class that you think you pretty much have under wraps. As soon as you turn your back, someone is doing something behind you that they should not be doing. So they do take advantage."

For Ms. Jenkins, "being on the ball *as a teacher*" had as much to do with demanding adherence to classroom norms as it did good pedagogical practices. And Ms. Jenkins seemed to know that this was not achieved by yelling or shaming students into submission. She circulated around the classroom and subtly bent down to talk to students about their behavior or need to be prepared to participate. I have also observed Ms. Jenkins escort students into the hallway for a private conversation about their behavior or conflicts. Students appeared to respond well to this approach, which Ms. Jenkins explained was based on her belief that students get embarrassed by public rebukes.

It is now early March. Again, I am Ms. Jenkins' room. Today's "focus," as written on the black board, is "to analyze writers' use of characterization as a means of determining the plot"—a focus that explicitly addresses the mandated standards, which are aligned with the English Language Arts Regents Exam. The students have already done "character studies" and have written letters to a character of choice in one of the books they are in the process of reading, *Romeo and Juliet*. The letters are hanging neatly on the side wall across from the windows. In the front of the room, there is a sign hanging with the word "memories" written on it. Below the sign, the students' memoirs hang.

The class begins in a typical manner—ten minutes of independent silent reading. The students are asked to identify both good and bad qualities of the main character in their chosen books. After the silent reading time, several of the students are eager to share why they think their protagonist is a "good guy" or a "bad guy." Following this, Ms. Jenkins spends some time reading and discussing some of the background for the section of *Romeo and Juliet* she plans on reading to the students. She explains important vocabulary, situates the scene, and asks the students to pay attention to the rhythm of the text written in iambic pentameter. Then she begins to read.

In the second half of the double period class, they switch to a novel they have already started reading, *A Family Apart.* The book is set in the mid-1800s and is about a group of brothers and sisters from a poor Irish immigrant family who get separated from their parents. The scene they are reading today describes the children's journey on a train to their new foster family. On the train, there is a bounty hunter escorting an escaped slave back to the South.

As the books are being passed out, I ask the boy next to me if he likes the story. He lights up. "Yeah!" he says with surprising excitement, "I can't wait to see what happens next."

Ms. Jenkins asks two students to summarize what has happened in the story so far. Then the students take turns reading aloud. Ms. Jenkins periodically stops the students to give some explanation of the historical context concerning slavery and the varying circumstances in the North and South. Not long after we begin reading, Shawn and Tyreek—dark skinned young Black men slumped in their seats in the back of the room—start interjecting comments about racism. Shawn says, "I think racism still exists because you walk along 34th Street and white people look at you like what you doing here, nigger?" Several students laugh. Ms. Jenkins gets angry and says in a serious tone that there is nothing funny about racism and, indeed, it still exists today. We resume reading until Ms. Jenkins stops to ask the students to think about the issues of race in the book. She directs a question about slavery to a light skinned Puerto Rican boy in the front of the room.

"Why you asking him?" Shawn wants to know. "He's white."

Ms. Jenkins' voice grows stern. "Enough!" she says. Another student is called upon to read.

Three weeks later, the students are still reading *A Family Apart.* They are 110 pages into the story. As the students take turns reading, a quiet child who sits near me has come to a sudden realization. His eyes widen as he perks up and says "Oh, this book takes place in the time of slavery?!"

From examining the excerpts above, it becomes clear that Ms. Jenkins' teaching was constrained by similar kinds of mandated standards and the impending Regents exams that

impacted other teachers' approaches, including Ms. Klein's. For example, Ms. Jenkins initially tolerated Shawn and Tyreek's comments on race, and in some way, affirmed them as she hushed the students who laughed at Shawn's remark about experiencing racism on 34th Street. However, she did not tolerate their disruption of the flow of the reading for very long. When Shawn voiced objection to his teacher's directing a question about race toward a light-skinned Puerto Rican student, Ms. Jenkins had had enough. She chose to get through the lesson for the day instead of perhaps exploring the theme of racism in the book by connecting it to a broader discussion race and racism. This may have been the best way for Ms. Jenkins to handle the situation under the circumstances. Nevertheless, the exchange between Shawn, Tyreek, and Ms. Jenkins illustrates how curricular mandates shape classroom practice and can work to aggravate student alienation. It is quite possible that Shawn had been alienated from the classroom long before he entered Ms. Jenkins' class. This was evident in his choice to sit with his jacket on in the back of the room and his quick accusation of racial discrimination. But the incident only appeared to push Shawn (and Tyreek) further into isolation, and quite possibly, feelings of exclusion or rejection (Oerlemans and Jenkins, 1998).

Teacher Talk

Teachers are caught in the middle, and their views reflect the complicated positions in which they find themselves. In this section, I analyze the discourse of teachers, who were at once critical individuals and agents of the institution. On the one hand, the teachers with whom I spoke generally were critical of policies. They saw how curricular mandates and high stakes testing shape their practice—often to the detriment of learning. Some also expressed great empathy for their students and lamented the conditions under which students

were forced to live and to go to school. On the other hand, they also had much to say about student performance and misbehavior as factors shaping classroom dynamics. (Not surprisingly, they have virtually nothing to say about their individual abilities as teachers.) Some emphasized the students' low levels of academic achievement; others pointed to "their home lives" or the fact that "these kids" don't value education. These kinds of statements reflect the dominant public discourse on urban youth as well as the dominant institutional discourse, and as Ladson-Billings and King (1993) have demonstrated, are detrimental to students' academic success.

In sum, my data show that their discourses were complicated—at times supporting dominant representations of working class and poor youth of color and the related ideology that pathologizes them and their families, and at other times, speaking against these dominant discourses by emphasizing students' structural locations and the policy mandates that constrain, instead of support, teachers' abilities. Teachers' complex statements about their students and classroom dynamics reveal much about how student alienation is produced.

Teaching toward the test

During my interview with Ms. Klein, she lamented that she was not afforded the opportunity to teach history more rigorously. She was tired of teaching a "watered down" curriculum. Nevertheless, she suggested that the Regents exam was not a source of problems in terms of how it shaped instructional practices and classroom dynamics. She maintained that the exam, if anything, was too easy, like the old RCT.[26] Instead, she believed that the root of the problem was the students' reading abilities, their personal

[26] Passing grades on the RCT (Regents Competency Test) led to graduation with a "local" diploma, instead of a Regents diploma in NY State. These exams have been phased out so that now students must pass the Regents exams in order to graduate from high school.

problems,[27] and their inter-personal conflicts with other members of the class. She is quick to locate the problem within the students—a common perspective I found among teachers.

However, most teachers had a more balanced analysis in which they emphasized curricular constrains, along with under-prepared or poorly behaving students, as the source of classroom problems. Some teachers spoke in depth about the Regents exam and bemoaned the limitations they placed on their teaching. One day in the spring, I broached this subject with two of Ms. Klein's colleagues from the history department, Mr. Melendez and Mr. Garvey. I told them that I sat in on a Global History class and was struck by the immense amount of material the teacher must cover. "Do you think that's an issue?" I ask.

Mr. Melendez responds, "You know what, I don't even think there should be an exam because… if you have a curriculum to teach, at the end of the [year] they have to know all that stuff plus, for example, in Global, you've got to know two years, four semesters of material. That's a lot. So the kids don't really learn…"

Mr. Garvey interjects to offer his perspective on the impact of the exam. He says, "For example, the middle ages, they're going to have a question about the serfs, a question on the knights. Then they move onto the Renaissance, you know, artists during the Renaissance. Then they move on to the Enlightenment, scientific method. So they keep it general…."

As he explains, he begins to reveal how he grapples with the idea of teaching to the test and ends with a reflection, or perhaps a fantasy, on what he could do with his students if he had several weeks to spend on one decade. He says, "… take the 1920s, which the text

[27] It is important to note that Ms. Klein, like other teachers who emphasized students' personal problems as a source of classroom disruption, demonstrated considerable compassion for her students as she spoke about their lives. Moreover, her knowledge of students' personal problems indicated that she has good rapports with several of them on an individual level.

books describe as a very interesting period. You have jazz; you have a new way of dressing; this is the decade when people start to buy appliances that we continue to use to this day…. It was the decade that people begin to use the car. I mean how much time can I spend on all of this? It was also the era of prohibition. It was also the era of organized crime, when organized crime was on the rise. I could spend at least three weeks on this. Can I afford to spend three weeks on the 1920s? Maybe I can spend two days on the 1920s. So I'll just mention these things because then I have to move on to something else because [the Regents exam] will ask questions, a few questions, on the 1920s. They'll ask questions on the 1930s but I can't spend much time on it. I mean just jazz itself, right? I mean, I think that would be very interesting for the kids. We could spend a few days listening to some jazz recordings. But there's no way to do that because I'm expected to at least get up to the Reagan years."

I interject, "Yeah, there's a big jump between the 20s and the 80s. And gosh you skip right through the 60s…"

"The 60s themselves," Mr. Garvey continues. "I could spend at least one week on just the civil rights movement. There are so many interesting things, especially in that period because we're getting closer to modern times so a lot of these events are on film and you can actually see what happened. You know, you can actually see Martin Luther King marching. You can actually see how the police officers down South were attacking the demonstrators. You could spend weeks on this but there's [only] going to be maybe two or three questions on the Regents so you can't spend weeks on one topic."

Mr. Garvey's statements were similar to many of the teachers with whom I spoke about curricular mandates. There is just too much breadth and no depth, and in trying to

cover so much material in the course of a semester, many teachers became fearful of implementing more creative, inquiry-based activities into their classes. So the students missed out on potentially engaging activities such as studying and listening to jazz, learning about its social context, and perhaps comparing it to Hip Hop and the social context from which the latter form of music has emerged. Or while studying the 1960s, students could have interviewed a person they knew who had been involved in the civil rights movement in the United States or, if they were immigrant students, they might have done research and interviews with older family members in order to compare the U.S. civil rights movement to similar social and political movements in their home countries. However, the common belief was that, in the face of high stakes standardized testing, there was no time for this type of in-depth, inquiry-based learning. Instead, the handout appeared to be the preferred means of transmission of information.

In my interview with Ms. Jenkins, I ask her about the impact that the standards and the Regents exam have on her teaching. Her response is similar to Melendez and Garvey's, but she elaborates more on how curricular mandates pose an obstacle to the development of critical thinking and teaching students about themselves.

"[W]e're kind of forced do to teach to the test," Ms. Jenkins says.

"So would you say it has more of a negative or positive impact, or both?"

"Realistically, if the kids really do learn the skills that are necessary to pass the Regents, those are good skills. I mean I'm not against that, but I think that the emphasis [on exam preparation] is a kind of negative thing for them to get through. They actually don't get an education. They get prepared to take the Regents. So they don't leave high school being enlightened about the world and having an opinion about what goes on in the world

and about policy and about how I could make my neighborhood different. They get out of high school knowing how to write a critical lens question.[28]"

She continues, "They are not being taught to be critical thinkers. It's a very forced, kind of inorganic… way of teaching."

"So how do you negotiate that in your [teaching]?" I ask.

"Well, I try to be very honest with the kids. So we have some brutally honest discussions about related issues. And I also try to bring material to them that will take them out of the usual realm." (Ms. Jenkins starts searching for something as she continues to speak.)

"[The administration] is so afraid of giving these kids material that will make them think…and I find that even though they may be lacking in their writing skills, these kids *can think,* and we should challenge them to think. So when I teach, I always try to—I think it's a meaningless exercise if you can't take it back to yourself—so I always try to help them to see themselves in many of these books that we read in this class. To what is this writer alluding? What do we see going on in society around us now that is similar to… you know? …I want to teach these kids about themselves, about their history. I want to teach them about America in the international world. I want to teach them about their ambitions and why they should strive to become somebody because they're not living for themselves. They have a responsibility to their little brothers and sisters. And I tell them I have a son who's going to be four years old. 'You are going to be my son's leaders and therefore, I'm investing in you because I'm investing in him. And when he grows up I want him to walk

[28] Ms. Jenkins is referring to Question 4 on the ELA Regents exam for which the students must analyze a quote, usually by a famous writer and having something to do with literature. Then the student must agree or disagree with the quote and use two pieces of literature (of their choice) to support their reason for agreeing or disagreeing.

into your offices, his doctor. When I'm old and bent and walking on the street and I need a lawyer to do my living will, I want to go into one of you.' You know, and I don't think they're getting that. So when there's harping down on the standards, the standards, it's a wonderful thing the standards. I know their motivation for the standards is for the kids ultimately to pass the Regents because that is what validates the school in the eyes of the policy makers, those who make the decisions. But Gilbert Blakely is putting kids out there who don't understand a thing about themselves or who they are or where they want to be in life. They don't understand anything about politics. They don't understand anything about their neighborhood. They don't know anything about their history. You know, they don't know how to locate themselves in this world that they occupy."

Later in the interview, Ms. Jenkins elaborates on the standards and what she sees as the policy makers' and politicians' need to demonstrate school achievement through statistical data that indicate improvement. "Political notoriety," she says, "the school system is so full of politics and crap that I get really frustrated with them to the point where I wouldn't want to be an administrator in a system like this. You know, I have no desire. And what are they doing to these children? I really do feel that what they are doing is creating an under class, a servant class, those who will serve in Mc Donald's, those who will wash cars and sweep streets and be the janitors and the pick up people. I think that's the education that is being given by virtue of not teaching these kids the life skills that they need to achieve some true academic success."

Ms. Jenkins' analysis, of course, falls at the critical end of the spectrum of teachers' perspectives, but she is not completely alone in her views. About five or six teachers (including some deans) gave similar (although perhaps not quite as passionate) analyses.

These comments certainly reveal how some teachers view the classroom experience in its larger social and economic context. Nevertheless, critiques like these are considered somewhat subversive, and alone, do not foster any *systemic* change. Ms. Jenkins' critical perspectives, pedagogical approaches, and exceptional abilities do make for a more engaging classroom environment, but they can just barely begin to ameliorate the cumulative effects of perhaps years of alienation that so many students experience.

Views of the students

Teachers were quite revealing during interviews about their feelings toward and about their students. I did not have to ask teachers directly to speak about their students. Instead, their perceptions of their students came out when I asked about the process of teaching and learning and school discipline in general. The comments about students and their families were offered as explanations both for poor performance and classroom misbehavior. As documented in numerous previous studies (Anyon, 1997; Fine, 1991), my conversations with some teachers were full of disparaging characterizations of the students' communities and families. These characterizations took a variety of forms. Most teachers avoided characterizations based explicitly on race. They did not view *all* Latinos, or *all* Jamaicans, or *all* African Americans, for example, in pejorative terms. These individuals focused more on less explicitly racialized categories, such as, "the inner-city poor" or "you know, kids from neighborhoods like these." But I did often hear generalizations made along ethnic lines or immigrant status. "Jamaicans," I heard on several occasions, "don't respect authority." Or another common perception was that, "the immigrant children are more respectful than the African American children." Other common remarks were how "the problem is the home life," "they don't value education," "they don't respect authority,"

"many of their parents are drinking and drugging, and the apple doesn't fall far from the tree."[29]

Derogatory assumptions about the students also revealed themselves in some teachers' choice of pedagogical approaches and their indignation over the latest form of cooperative learning mandated by the DOE—the point of entry model.[30] Along with the perception that there simply was no time for more creative pedagogical approaches in the face of curricular mandates, my interviews with teachers revealed that many of them were resistant to such approaches as they felt it meant giving up control to unruly students. "You have to understand," one teacher told me, "these kids have such low skills, and they just don't care. And they come from homes where the parents don't care. I don't know. Maybe it's because they're just not around. They're working. But where I'm from, there's value placed on education. Kids have to sit down and do their homework and be prepared for class. The parents check the homework. So you can't really put these kids in groups. It just won't work. All they do is fool around."

Teachers' critiques of the point of entry model stemmed, in large part, from their resentments toward the policy-makers who pressure teachers into transforming the educational system by implementing a "new" method, which does not seem so different from the last one that was mandated. One year while I was teaching, the latest "key to classroom success," which was handed down by the DOE, was called "think-pair-share." Many teachers at Blakely and I had a good laugh reminiscing about all the different models. However, their unwillingness to attempt new approaches only served to reinforce or

[29] In these comments the "they" refers to the students. While most would point out that there are exceptions, these teachers' discourse defined students as a relatively homogeneous cultural group, but it was not always clear how they would define the group in terms of race, ethnicity, or social class.
[30] GET OFFICIAL DEFINITION

intensify difficult classroom conditions. While implementing these approaches in a system with so many problems may seem futile to some, accumulating evidence suggests that good (read: student-centered and culturally relevant) pedagogical practices *can* change the classroom dynamic for the better (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings,1994) especially when culturally relevant pedagogy is institutionalized (see Antrop-Gonzales, 2003; Fine and Powell, 2001). But this can only happen when teachers believe that their students are capable and desirous to learn.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have illustrated how the institution plays an important role in the production of student alienation. A complex set of forces, such as district-wide tracking, curricular mandates, and teachers' perspectives and related classroom practices work together to shape classroom dynamics and feed into students' feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness as well as their sense of exclusion. And while a shift in teachers' practices toward a more culturally relevant, critical, and humane pedagogy can help to decrease some student alienation, the substantial reduction of alienation will likely only come through structural changes.

The classroom is not generally the site of penal management, but it does play an important role in the process of penalization. The pervasiveness of student alienation that I observed at Blakely bolsters the perceived need for heavy policing, and as large numbers of students cut classes and roam the hallways, the number of student-law enforcement confrontations greatly increases.

CHAPTER FOUR
Disciplinary Practices and Order Maintenance: An ethnographic portrait of penalization

The confluence of Department of Education disciplinary policies and the NYPD Safe Schools initiative—meant to bring order and reduce violence in "problem schools"— has a number of unintended negative consequences. First, when the criminal justice model of school discipline, which is based on NYPD order maintenance policing [31], was institutionalized in conjunction with the DOE discipline code that emphasizes zero tolerance and the need to take action against minor school infractions, the result was the criminalization of non-criminal behavior. That is, there was an increased likelihood that the police and security agents working under the auspices of the NYPD would intervene in situations and subject students to criminal procedural level strategies[32] when students were breaking school rules, not the law.

Secondly, the criminal justice model, as the prevailing disciplinary model in the school, created a situation where minor incidents of violence, drug possession, and weapons possession are handled *primarily* through criminal procedural level strategies while other, more positive types of interventions get overshadowed.

Finally, with the implementation of the criminal justice model of school discipline, a link has been formed between the school and community policing and the courts. In essence, the school has become a central part of a larger system of penal control in the

[31] According to Bernard Harcourt (2002), order maintenance policing is an approach to policing that emphasizes creating and maintaining orderly public spaces through a focus on low level violations of the law and misdemeanors. The approach leads to increases in arrests and court summonses for these types of offenses. In New York, the approach is widely known as "quality of life" policing and is based on the "broken windows theory." (See chapter one for a more in-depth analysis.)

[32] This term was used by police officers to differentiate their own tactics from those of the educators in the building. Unlike educators, police officers and agents have the right to make physical contact with students and handcuff them. Officers can also issue summonses and arrest students.

management of urban youth. This process operates largely through the increased use of criminal court summonses, misdemeanor arrests, and the accompanying use of criminal procedural level strategies, such as the use of hand cuffs and body searches inside the school and outside. In the early morning and afternoon hours as police officers from the School Safety Task Force patrolled the area around the school and, at other times when students traversed their own neighborhoods, they continued to be subjected to order maintenance policing. This leads to the possibility of a dramatic increase in the number of court summonses they receive. The results range from frequent visits to criminal court, to warrants being put out for students' arrests when they fail to appear in court, to time spent in jail—not so much for committing of a serious crime but for accumulating a series of minor quality of life infractions both inside and outside school. This can occur when a young person is confronted by the police, perhaps for nothing more serious than loitering, and a check into the police department's database indicates that there is a warrant out for the person's arrest due to a missed court appearance.

As I illustrated in chapter one, social theories of crime and punishment have already implicated the school, particularly the segregated urban public school, in the punitive turn in criminal justice. It has been argued that segregated urban public schools have experienced disinvestment while taking on prison-like characteristics (Devine, 1996; Parenti, 1999; Wacquant, 2001. Additionally, the school has been identified as one of many institutions of civil society that has assumed crime control responsibilities (Garland, 2001). Building on these theories, I show in the chapter how Gilbert Blakely functions in the penal management of urban youth. I describe what happens when order maintenance policing moves inside the building, how it impacts students' lives, and how it creates a flow of students into criminal

court. I refer to this as a process of penalization. As the penal functions permeate the school, the school culture and mission shift. The educative aims of the institution become (further) compromised as a 'carceral consciousness' or a penal logic takes over.

"What Does 'Disorderly' Mean, Anyway?": The policing of non-compliance

A December 2003 press release from Mayor Michael Bloomberg and schools chancellor Joel Klein announced a new disciplinary plan for "problem schools." It said, "These 'Impact Schools' will receive targeted deployment of school safety agents and police officers to prevent criminal behavior. The Impact School strategy is based on the NYPD's successful 'Operation Impact,' which has been instrumental in bringing crime down by deploying large numbers of police officers each day to strategically targeted locations or impact zones that exhibit a great propensity for crime during certain hours of the day. These sites were selected based on analyses of crime trends identified through COMPSTAT." The release goes on to say, "The 'broken windows' approach to crime fighting will also be applied. Just as the NYPD has successfully preempted major crimes by paying close attention to areas with frequent minor quality of life offenses, the new school safety plan will focus on areas where there is frequent disorderly behavior, such as cursing or taunting other students…" During my field observations, I noted several other infractions that were routinely treated as "quality of life offenses," including cutting classes, disrupting a class, and wearing a hat.

In order to implement the plan, a School Safety Task Force of 200 police officers was created. These officers were divided among the schools with the impact designation to bolster the number of existing police officers assigned to those schools from neighborhood precincts. In addition, extra school safety agents, school security personnel who, since

1998, have worked under the auspices of the NYPD, would be assigned to impact schools. Gilbert Blakely, which in 2003 had been deemed the most dangerous high school in the Bronx, had 12 police officers assigned to the building for the 2004-2005 school year, and received an additional 4 police officers from the School Safety Task Force and 20 safety agents.

How does the new discipline plan work in actual practice? One way to find out is to look carefully at the kinds of acts that become defined in everyday practice as the appropriate domain for police action. With this question in my mind, I undertook a systematic examination of the school occurrence reports for the 2004-2005 school year, during which time approximately 113 summonses[33] and 58 YDs[34] were meted out and over 50 arrests were made (221 in total). I know this is not an exact number as I am aware of several students who received summonses for whom there was no paperwork in the files at the time I retrieved it. These numbers also do not include the numerous summonses issued and arrests that took place just outside the school or in the vicinity patrolled by "School Safety" at the beginning and end of each day. Nevertheless, my careful examination of the reports led to one striking finding: 52% of the offenses were for disorderly conduct. Given that so many students are charged with disorderly conduct, it is important to examine the actual behaviors that lead to this unclearly defined offense.

[33] A summons is a citation issued by a police officer that requires the recipient to appear in criminal court before a judge. At the judge's discretion, a standard fine is imposed or the charge is dismissed. NYPD data lists low level infractions, or violations, that lead to the issuance of summonses and YDs as "non-criminal offenses". However, while these incidents do not stay on students' permanent records, they do introduce young people into criminal court and when a student fails to show up in court, a warrant for his/her arrest is issued.

[34] A juvenile report issued to students under the age of sixteen.

The following excerpts from my field notes shed light on the process from the initial interaction between police and students that lead to the charge of disorderly conduct to the hours students spend in court.

It is late September. I am standing in the office of the assistant principal of school safety, AP Juarez, also known as "base". I am here to pick up an ID card that was made for me. Only the secretary, the aide, and I are present. The quiet morning lull of office work is broken suddenly when three police officers escort two handcuffed boys into the office. For me, the experience is new. My only frame of reference is the television cop shows. I have not yet grown accustomed to the scene and it seems jarringly out of place in a school. The boys are forcibly pushed down into two chairs. Two more police officers enter the room, which suddenly seems much smaller. Their anger is palpable. The secretary and the aide do not seem fazed. The aide begins to print out information on the two students. One is nineteen years old. "He needs to go to the precinct," one of the officers says. The five officers step to one side of the room near the door to confer. (It's that strange moment of waiting and conferring I will see again during other incidents. They appear disorganized to me.) The secretary continues to work. The aide quietly says, "You're card won't be ready until tomorrow," cuing me to leave.

"I'm watching this," I whisper.

"I don't think you have permission."

"I have the principal's," I assure her.

The two young men are talking to each other. The older one whispers, "They're beasts," referring to the officers. Their chairs are about three feet apart. They lean close to each other with their cuffed wrists behind their backs and continue to complain in low

voices about the treatment they have received. I later learn that they are brothers. The older one claimed he came to the defense of his younger sibling. The occurrence report described the incident like this:

Two male students were arrested by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct and Resisting Arrest. One student refused to provide identification. They were both disorderly and disrespectful when stopped. Parental contact unsuccessful. Suspensions are pending."

A young Latina woman walks in. Her voice is calming—a noticeable contrast to the tension in the room. But she exits as quickly as she came in. Another woman—perhaps in her mid-forties, black—enters. I assume these are the counselors. The second one makes a phone call before she leaves.

One of the officers glances at me; I feel very conspicuous. More angry words are exchanged between the boys and the officers as they wait for the police van. I pretend not to notice. Finally, my awkwardness gets the better of me and I leave the room. Just then AP Juarez comes rushing in. He is a smallish, well dressed Dominican man with a charming disposition and a mild manner. But, at the moment, he is not happy and, like the mood in his office, he has transformed. From just outside the doorway, I hear his stern voice shouting, "I know what I'm doing… If you don't like it leave! I can't have all these people in my office. Get out."

"Okay, okay," one of the officers says, "we'll step outside."

I walk toward the side entrance of the building where I assume the boys will be taken out. A few moments later the police escort them past me out to the police van. Juarez follows. He looks at me as he passes and says, "Sometimes we don't always see things the same way."

Although the tension between the school administrator and the police was evident, what struck me most about the incident was how it confused me. Why were the police so angry? What had the boys been caught doing? It was the beginning of the school year, and I had not quite figured out what was going on.

Two months later on a cold November morning, I arrive at the Bronx Criminal Court House at 8:30 to appear in court with Carlos who has received a summons for disorderly conduct. The court house is an immense stone building that extends the length of a block. A wide, shallow set of steps leads up to the main entrance on 161st St.- a busy commercial strip with several government buildings in the vicinity. I figure Carlos will be late as he finds it difficult to make it to school before 10:00am, so I wait on the corner of 161st and Sheridan, propped against some scaffolding and begin to read.

Periodically, I look up from my book to look for Carlos. The streets are alive with morning shoppers, vendors, and people starting out for the day. By 9am, the line into the courthouse extends along the front of the building and wraps around the corner where I'm standing. It is made up predominantly of young men, but there are women too, many alone, some with mothers and small children, a few with older men. Some have arrived in pairs, others by themselves, some in suits, others in baggy jeans and do-rags. Virtually all are people of color—Black or Latino—except for one recognizably white woman scantily clad with a haggard face and teased hair dyed platinum blond. The line has a calm energy and is sprinkled with small pink papers clutched in people's gloved hands.

At 9:45, I feel a light squeeze on the back of my arm. I turn to see Carlos's impish smile and large almond shaped eyes looking up at me. He says he gets them from his Peruvian father ("But don't tell anyone. My mom is Puerto Rican, so I just tell people I'm

Puerto Rican", he says half jokingly one day during one of our first interviews.) He is dressed in his typical style- extremely baggy clothes that make his small frame appear even smaller, a do-rag, and his Yankees baseball cap.

He apologizes for being late as we walk toward the entrance. There is no longer a line to join. Carlos assures me that the last time he wasn't called into the courtroom until after 10am. I realize then that he is unaware that names are called in the order the summonses are received. We are in for a long day!

As we enter the courthouse, we are directed toward different lines to pass through the metal detectors. I am still uncomfortable with the process. I feel somehow exposed standing with my arms stretched out, the officer guiding the hand-held scanner over the contours of my body. We can't figure out why I'm still beeping. Finally, I find Carlos slipping his belt back through its loops. We've stood like this before, but still I'm embarrassed and divert my eyes.

"I hate that process," I say.

"Imagine how the girls at school feel doing that everyday," he responds in a quiet voice.

Carlos hands in his summons at the window and we slide into one of the long rows of benches arranged like church pews facing the large double doors into the courtroom. We sit for hours intermittently in easy silence and casual conversation. We talk about our favorite movies and musicians, school, family, his urban childhood memories and my suburban ones. I show him the book I'm reading—an ethnography about homeless street vendors. "I don't understand how people become homeless," Carlos says. (Later in the year, his own mother will take in his uncle for a couple of months while he is in "transition.")

We chat briefly with Terrell, a Blakely student who is there with his brother James. Like Carlos, both have received summonses for disorderly conduct. Carlos knows Terrell from the neighborhood. I recognize him from that late September day in Juarez's office. He smiles warmly and says, "I know you. You're the lady writing a book or something."

At some point during our wait I ask Carlos, "So, how did you end up getting this summons again?"

He explains how a police officer found him in the hallway of the school after the bell had rung. It was going into fourth period and he had lunch. Carlos claims that the stairwell was too crowded so he decided to take another route, but the bell rang before he was able to work his way through the building to the cafeteria. Carlos believes that the police officer disrespected him by demanding to see his ID and refusing to listen to an explanation for why he was in the hallway when he wasn't supposed to be. As with so many students in similar situations, Carlos decided not to cooperate because he did not believe he did anything wrong, so the officer cuffed him, brought him to the detention room, and gave him a summons for disorderly conduct.

It's now after 1:30 in the afternoon. We have returned from a lunch break. The court officer shouts out another round of names. Finally, "Carlos Mendoza!"

We go through the double doors and quietly take seats in another set of benches. There are about twenty people inside the small court room waiting to see the judge, most of whom received summonses in public spaces evidently in their neighborhoods. Terrell and his brother are already inside. They smile at us. The officer bellows out the names of the offenders and their offenses.

"Jose Rodriguez, public urination."

"Fifty dollars. Can you pay it today?" The lawyer mumbles something. Jose does not have the money today.

"Hector Media, open bottle, twelve ounce Budweiser and public urination…"

"Thomas Jones, disorderly conduct." A young black man of about seventeen years of age presents himself before the judge.

"What high school do you go to?" the judge asks from behind his large wooden desk on his high perch.

On this particular day, the judge decides he wants to see the schoolboys on another day with a parent. Of the four in the room, none except Carlos is accompanied by an adult.

However, this is not always how a judge handles such cases. On another visit to court, with another of my research subjects, Duane, the judge took a different approach. Instead of requesting to meet with parents, he made a tired attempt to engage each offender.

"Riding a bicycle on the sidewalk," the judge said to one young man. "That's illegal; you're not allowed to do that." He added to the lawyer, "Does he understand that?"

The court-appointed lawyer, also speaking English, repeated what the judge had said to the Spanish speaking man. "Yes, he understands," the lawyer responded.

"Okay, good, so don't do it again, $10."

"Duane Gordon, disorderly conduct!" the officer called out. I scooted over to give Duane room to pass.

The judge seemed confused by the charge of disorderly conduct. "So what did you do?" he asked.

"Disorderly conduct," the lawyer replied as if that would clarify things.

The small mousey judge perhaps in his early 60s with thick round glasses was growing irritable "Whatever you did just don't do it again, dismissed," he said with a slight sigh. And as the courtroom doors closed behind Duane and me, we looked at each other and giggled at the cartoon-like judge who was befuddled by the term 'disorderly conduct'.

But today the judge's request to see a parent worries Carlos. He hasn't experienced this strategy. He asks me if I think he'll be locked up. I say, "No, I think he just wants to speak to your mother." And I hope that's really the case.

After checking out the movie listings at the Concourse Plaza across the street, we walk along 161st Street toward the subway. Carlos is not his playful self; he's still worried about having to return to court with his mother so we walk in silence. As we step off the curb at the Grand Concourse, he asks quizzically, "What does disorderly mean, anyway?"

Given the ambiguity surrounding the events that lead to these police interventions, Carlos's question is not easily answered. In the context of Gilbert Blakely High School, what *does* 'disorderly' mean? In his case, it referred to the acts of being in the hallway after the bell had rung, refusing to hand over his ID in an attempt to get a security agent to listen to his explanation, and perhaps arguing when the security agent refused to listen. Likewise, the arrest and summonses given to Terrell and James emanated from their being in the hallway when they were not supposed to be there. But how does the breaking of a school rule escalate so quickly into a police matter resulting in the issuance of a court summons?

When I first arrived at Blakely, I did not quite understand the behaviors that would lead to an arrest or summons for disorderly conduct. I remember asking one day in the deans' office, "What was that student arrested for?"

The answer I received was—resisting arrest. I persisted. "But why was he arrested in the first place? The dean I was talking with gave me a confused look and after a moment conceded, "Oh, I don't know. I wasn't there."

I began to explore the issue, and learned from the examination of the occurrence reports that generally there are two types of behaviors labeled disorderly conduct—altercations between students (total number: 45, including 22 separate incidents) and students' insubordination during an exchange with an adult—usually involving the refusal to show identification (total number: 65).[35] So the refusal to show ID was landing all of these kids in front of a judge? It was hard to believe, but several individuals I interviewed gave similar accounts of the process. One dean explained that students cut classes and hang out in the hallways, wearing hats and do-rags and fooling around. Then, when they're approached by security, they act in an inappropriate manner. They won't give up their ID's; they won't go to class; they just refuse to do what they're told. Then they're brought downstairs (to the deans' office) and given a summons. So, it is like Carlos told me except that the story is now told from the perspective of an adult who is tired of students not being where they are supposed to be and disrespecting police officers.

Below is a sample of statements from the occurrence reports submitted by deans. An examination of the reports helps to provide an understanding of what often transpires between a student and an agent or officer leading up to an arrest or summons for disorderly conduct.[36]

---

[35] There were three more summonses issued for disorderly conduct for unspecified reasons. In the case of physical altercations, there were other incidents in which there may have been charges of disorderly conduct that are not included in the total number because it was not clear whether students received summonses for disorderly conduct, assault, or harassment. In cases where students received summonses for "misbehaving" or "insubordination", I included these in the disorderly conduct category.

[36] Statements are quoted verbatim and in their entirety. Names of students have been changes and the names of police officers, safety agents, and their precinct affiliation have been omitted.

(September, 22, 2004) A female student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the XX pct for misbehaving.

(October 4, 2004) A male student Jonathan Walker was arrested by PO _____ of the XX pct for insubordination. Jonathan refused to show ID to Officer _____.

(October 15, 2004) A male student was issued a summons by School Safety Task Force for Insubordination. He refused to identify himself. When SSA's continued to ask him for identification he became irate. A suspension is pending.

(October 29, 2004) A male student was arrested by SSA _____ and transported to the XX for Disorderly Conduct and Resisting Arrest. He was observed with glazed eyes and an odor. It was suspected that he might be under the influence of a controlled substance. He was being escorted to the office when he became irate and resisted authority. A suspension is pending.

(November 5, 2004) A male student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct and insubordination. He refused to show ID and was cursing at staff members. PO _____ also arrested the student for a outstanding warrant.

(November 10, 2004) A male student was issued a summons by SSA _____ for Disorderly Conduct. He refused to show ID and became irate and disorderly. A suspension is pending.

(November 23, 2004) A male student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the Task Force for Disorderly Conduct. He was asked for his ID by an SSA, but he refused. A suspension is pending.

(December 17, 2004) A male student was issued a YD by PO _____ of the School Safety Task Force for Insubordination. He refused to ID himself and was found loitering in the hall more than once. A suspension is pending.

(December 17, 2004) A female student was issued a YD for Disorderly Conduct by PO _____ of the XX pct. She refused to present identification when asked to do so. A suspension is pending.

(December 23, 2004) A male student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. He refused to produce ID and became verbally abusive toward the officer. A suspension is pending.

(January 19, 2005) Two male students, Donald and Steven was issued a Summons by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. They refused to show ID when asked by the officers. A suspension is pending.

(February 11, 2005) A female student was issued a YD by PO _____ of the XX for Disorderly Conduct. She refused to show identification and cursed out a Dean. A suspension is pending.

(February, 14, 2005) A male student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the School Safety Task Force for Insubordination. He was being uncooperative towards a police officer and refused to show his identification. Student, Quinton Willis, was found on the 3rd floor stairwell with a female student. PO _____ approached Quinton and requested his ID card. Quinton claimed he didn't have one and became very defiant and insubordinate towards the police officer. Quinton was taken downstairs to the dean's office and was issued a summons.

(March 3, 2005) A male student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. He was asked to stop by PO _____ and became irate and uncontrollable. He had to be

restrained. A suspension is pending. At the time of occurrence, defendant was asked to stop and present ID, refused and became verbally abusive to PO _____ and did public alarm and disturbance on the 3rd floor.

(March 21, 2005) A male student was issued a YD by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. He was verbally abusive towards the PO's and he refused to comply with their instructions. A suspension is pending. Student was insubordinate and verbally abusive.

(March 30, 2005) A male student was issued a YD by PO _____ of the School Safety Task Force for Insubordination. He was insubordinate with SSAs and PD. A suspension is pending. Shane Tompkins attempted to enter the student cafeteria and was told to go to class. Shane became uncooperative to school safety agent _____ and SSA _____ requested for assistance. PO _____ approached Dean _____ and SSA _____. Shane was told to leave but became belligerent and insubordinate to PO _____.

(March 31, 2005) A female student was issued a YD by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. She was insubordinate towards a female SSA _____ and used profanity towards her. A suspension is pending. Student was insubordinate to SSA _____ and used abusive language when given a directive.

(April 6, 2005) A female student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. She refused to show identification and she verbally abused SSA _____. Suspension is pending.

(April 6, 2005) A female student was issued a YD by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. She was approached by PO _____ and was disrespectful and used inappropriate language towards him. A suspension is pending.

(May 25, 2005) A male student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. He refused to obey the directions of officers and became verbally abusive. A suspension is pending. Student Marcus Brown was issued a C-Summons for disorderly conduct by NYPD. He refused to follow directions and was verbally disrespectful.

(May 25, 2005) A male student was issued a YD by PO _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. During scanning he refused to follow directives and punched the glass in the door causing injury to his hand. EMS transported [student] to the hospital. A suspension is pending. Student Juan Garcia was defiant with Dean _____ and SSA agents _____ and _____ when asked to take off his "Doo-Rag" and step into the vestibule before entering school. After several minutes of insubordination and defiant behavior, Juan punched through the glass of the lobby door, injuring his hand. He was issued a YD and taken to _____ Hospital as a result.

It seems crucial to note that these incidents tended to begin with a student breaking a school rule defined by the Department of Education, rather than the law. Sarah Watkins was misbehaving; Juan Garcia refused to follow directions during scanning; Shane Tompkins attempted to enter the cafeteria when it was not his assigned lunch period, and in a number of incidents, although it was not explicitly stated in the report, students were probably in the hallways or stairwell when classes were in session, spotted in an unlikely part of the

building, or perhaps they were wearing a hat. In fact, none of these behaviors is a matter that warrants a police intervention, and in most cases the inciting behavior is listed in the DOE Discipline Code (2003) as a level one infraction—the least serious type of offense. The incidents usually escalated into a police matter when a student refused to hand over his or her ID card. Interestingly, even this, "failing to provide school officials with proper identification" (p. 10), is considered a level one infraction.

Sometimes the inciting moment was when a security agent grabbed a student or pulled the student's hat off his or her head and the student "became irate" or may have even reacted physically. These are scenarios that I observed and that were commonly reported to me by students but were not documented in occurrence reports. It became particularly palpable for me, though, one day while I was walking down the hallway at the tail end of the change of periods and a security agent, whose attention was diverted toward two students on the other side of him, suddenly swung his arm up in front of my chest and grabbed my shoulder thinking I was a student. When he turned and saw who I was, he apologized profusely. Nevertheless, I was left feeling a little unsettled.

From viewing the language in the occurrence reports, the issuance of a summons or an arrest for disorderly conduct appeared to be justified by the student's display of "irate", "insubordinate", "disrespectful", "uncooperative" or "uncontrollable" behavior. None of the occurrence reports provided any sort of explanation of the student's behavior. Thus, there is an implicit assumption that their irate behavior was completely unprovoked.

In short, students often received summonses and got arrested during situations that began with the breaking of a school rule. In these cases, the behaviors they displayed for which an officer issued a summons came only *after* the officer or agent confronted the

student. And in this framework, no one asked, at least in official terms, why a student became disorderly or what it actually means.

Low Level Violations of the Law

Not all summonses and arrests stemmed from non-criminal, school-related infractions. Indeed, 56% of the actions of students that resulted in a summons, YD, or arrest might be subject to criminal procedural level strategies in other contexts. In most cases, they would have been considered "violations" (lesser offenses than misdemeanors) or actual misdemeanors, and in a very small number of cases, the behaviors might have been considered felony offenses. The vast majority or these incidents involved fighting, weapon possession, or drug possession and are punishable by law. Nevertheless, questions arose for me over the efficacy and fairness of the use of arrests and summonses in these cases. My questions stemmed, first, from the disproportionately high levels of surveillance to which students at Blakely were subjected. Secondly, I observed that that criminal procedural level strategies tended to overshadow the use of educationally-based, positive strategies to reduce drug sales/use and violence. In fact, even when such positive strategies were used, they were used more so as auxiliary strategies. The criminal justice oriented strategies were the ones that came to define the incident. Finally, particularly in the case of fighting, there was considerable subjectivity in determining if a behavior was actually a violation of the law. This subjectivity might be explained, in part, by how school personnel contested criminal justice oriented discipline policies and prefer to use their own strategies whenever possible. But, at the same time, minor physical altercations were often getting defined as criminal acts. And a penal logic tended to eclipse both the efforts toward and use of more positive strategies for the reduction of violence and crime.

Inside a school like Gilbert Blakely where students have become the subjects of high surveillance and heavy policing, the actions that often result in arrest or the issuance of a summons were often not ones that would be detected in any other circumstance. Drug possession violations, for example, were almost always discovered during the morning scanning ritual, and in a few instances, controlled substances were found on students during a body search conducted after a student was approached by an officer and "disrespected" him or her. In other circumstances, say, on the street or in a park or a typical suburban high school, the police would not have the authority to search a child who does not elicit any suspicion.

Like summonses for drug possession, virtually all summonses for weapons possession were given out at scanning as students enter the building. Thus, the fairness of subjecting only a particular group of students to such searches must be questioned when the consequences lead children into the juvenile or criminal justice system. Clearly, no one wants weapons in school. So increased surveillance in schools with high rates of violence may be justified; however, the students who intend to use weapons in schools are often not the ones getting caught with weapons during scanning. The principal explains, "…if a child goes through scanning with a box cutter, it's because they really had no intention of doing anything with it. And I would say 99% of the time because otherwise the child would try to hide the blade. There's many ways of hiding a blade very easily to come through scanning…"

Many reports in recent years have presented long lists of absurd arrests made for weapon possession under the national policy of zero tolerance. (Advancement Project, 2000; American Bar Association, 2001) At Blakely, none was quite so absurd; in most cases the

instrument in question clearly qualified as a weapon. Twenty four summonses for weapon possession were given out during the school year for the following: 5 knives, 6 box cutters, 7 razor blades, 2 cans of mace, 1 can of pepper spray, 1 metal pick, 1 weapon (unspecified). Some may have been carried with the intent to harm someone. However, it was commonly accepted among administrators, deans and officers that these weapons were carried most often because they were instruments students used at work or for other non-violent tasks (for example, one of the seven razors was found in a girl's book bag; she claimed that she uses it to do her hair) or because they offer students a sense of protection as they walk through their neighborhoods (for example, the mace and pepper spray— common defensive measures against rape—were found on girls.

None of the incidents involving drugs led to a student referral into a drug treatment or education program. Students carrying weapons into school were not invited into an anti-violence program and certainly not a self-defense class; nor were the reasons for their having a weapon explored by counselors or administrators in any systematic way. There was also no systemic effort to provide tutoring, career counseling, or job training for these students. There were some services provided at the school through the SPARK[37] program, the guidance counselors' office, and the deans' office, but such interventions reached a relatively small percentage of the population and occur more through the tenacious work of individuals than through any systemic efforts.

Physical Altercations

Data on physical altercations revealed an ironic twist. I found that not all physical acts of violence were criminalized, despite the fact that there would have likely been more

[37] SPARK is a program that provides services related to the social aspects of schooling. SPARK staff counsel students and engage them in discussions on the consequences of risky behavior.

justification than, say, in the case of a student refusing to show ID for doing so. According to the occurrence reports, there were 41 incidents of physical altercations during the school year for which 82 students were either arrested or given a summons or YD.[38] Of these, 56 students received summonses or YDs for disorderly conduct. In the remaining cases, students were either charged with assault or the charge was unspecified. Additionally, the reports revealed that there were at least 27 incidents of fighting or other forms of violence for which the police were not involved. These incidents varied widely and included such behaviors as: several examples of fights between two students, a student throwing scissors at a teacher, a male student spitting in the food of a female student and then throwing a garbage can at her, two female students "assaulting" another student at the bus stop, and one male student repeatedly punching and kicking another male student. In one particularly disturbing incident that was not reported to the police, a "male and female student fell down the stairs, where female bit male student on the chest, meanwhile female student got scratched on the lip and a bump on the eye, during the struggle."

Another noticeable pattern was that, among the incidents that led to the use of criminal procedural level strategies, there was significant variation in terms of level of severity. Several reports simply indicated that "students were involved in physical altercation." Some were a little more specific, stating something like, "two girls were fighting in the hallway" or "the verbal argument led to a physical altercation." Others seemed to indicate a more serious situation. For example, one report described an altercation between six boys that "led to riotous conditions."

[38] In some cases only one student received a summons. In other incidents, as many as six students received summonses.

There are numerous explanations for why different situations that seemed to be similar were handled in different ways, including whether or not the incident was gang-related, the dissimilarity in students' discipline records, even the varying mental states of students at the time of an incident. Some subjective decision-making leads students into the criminal justice system, and some prevents their entrance into the criminal justice system. The latter represents the persistent efforts on the part of some administrators and deans to contest the use of criminal procedural level strategies and emphasize the use of positive strategies such as peer mediation and counselor. Nevertheless, minor incidents sometimes resulted in the use of criminal procedural level strategies, and almost always serious incidents of fighting (where several students are involved or someone gets hurt or where a student fails to calm down immediately after the incident) were managed through criminal procedural level strategies.

Summonses Inside and Out

One morning during spring break my phone rings. It is Officer Bowen from transit. "Do you know Carlos Mendoza?" he asks.

"Yes." I say and wait for his reason for calling me, although I already realize that Carlos must have been picked up on his way to meet me. The officer proceeds to tell me that Carlos was using his school issued Metro-card to ride the subway on a non-school day. The officer needs me to verify Carlos's identity because he did not have identification on him. (In such circumstances, individuals are brought to a precinct house until their identities are verified. Youth, in particular, are subjected to this process as they are less likely than adults to have ID with them.)

I feebly and not quite honestly try to explain that Carlos was on a school related excursion. But, of course, it is too late and completely irrelevant to the officer. Carlos was issued a summons for fare evasion, which means a $65 fine and yet another one-hour trip to Brooklyn transit court and a day of missing school. I had just been there with him a few months earlier. (Unlike criminal court, there was no hand held scanners or bellowing proclamations of people's offenses—just a large room with a long set of cashier windows full of young people of color.)

This was the lived experience of many of the students at Blakely that I observed. Student were not just receiving summonses in school, they are accumulating them around school, in their neighborhoods, and in the subway stations. One day in early October sitting in the detention room with Duane and a group of his friends, I asked them about this. They all agreed that they had received a number of summonses both inside and outside school. One of the boys, Eric, in response to my question, pulled a crumpled wad of slips out of his pocket. He smiled sheepishly and explained, "I have to hide them from my father." I counted six.

But it was not just boys frequenting the detention room who were accumulating summonses. About 60% of the students I interviewed had received a summons at some point within the previous year, often more than one. Kalif, an articulate junior who I met in the school leadership office, received a summons for fare evasion one night when he used his school Metro-card to return to school after official hours to pick up something he had forgotten. Another student, David, got one for walking through a park after closing hours and another one for loitering in front of the school; one student claimed to have gotten a summons for smoking; many others reported getting summonses outdoors for loitering,

jumping the subway turnstile or bending their Metro-card to get a free, disorderly conduct, or littering.

"What kinds of summonses are kids getting outside?" I ask Wanda, eighteen.

"Okay, if like say I'm on 149th and Grand Concourse; I'm waiting for the number 2 train to come. This happened to me. I spit my gum out on the platform. The cop was like excuse me, did you just spit your gum out on the platform. And you know I'm not going to lie because obviously he seen me. I was like, yes. He gave me a $60 ticket."

"For littering?"

"For littering," Wanda confirms. "I was like—*a piece of gum!* For a 30 cent gum I'm gonna get a $60 fine?!" She continues, "You know the usual, kids hopping. What else…"

Later in our discussion Wanda points out that, like many of the students I interviewed, she avoids going outside at the end of the month because she believes that the police have a quota of summonses to fill. I ask her to explain. She says, "The quota is when the police officers have to give a certain amount of people tickets at the end of the month and if they don't meet that, they get in trouble."

"So, they're looking for students to…"

"Basically," Wanda explains, "and that's when kids don't mouth off to the cops at the end of the month because they know better."

"Interesting, you think that's a pretty standard thing? Kids know…" In fact, I have already been informed by an officer that it is not an actual NYPD policy, but officers conceded to me that some cops do need to bolster their numbers and tend look for kids to give summonses to at times.

Wanda replies, “Yeah, kids know. Like right now from last week till this week, I haven’t been outside.”

“Why is outside…”

“It’s not that I’m scared to go outside, I just don’t want to get a ticket because them tickets add up and plus if you don’t pay the tickets they come looking for you.” And indeed they do. Young people who do not appear in court are eventually found and hauled down to the precinct in handcuffs. I even noted a few instances where students with unanswered summonses were tracked down and pulled out of classes. Sometimes they catch up with youngsters when they receive another summons and their name is put into the police database. Carlos spent almost 24 hours in a jail cell when he was picked up for sneaking into a movie theater, and unbeknownst to him, there was a warrant out for his arrest for a summons he had received and forgotten about. Upon leaving jail he was sentenced to one day of community service and fined ninety-five dollars.

Conclusion

Current trends in policy initiatives for school discipline, such as an explicit focus on low-level disorder and zero tolerance, demonstrate how the dominant common sense discourse around school discipline is already imbued with the logic of the criminal justice system. Added to this, a heavy police presence and the use of high tech security apparatuses almost ensure that any infraction, no matter how minor, could be handled through criminal procedural level strategies instead of educational-based discipline measures. However, school discipline policies are not simply criminalizing non-criminal behavior. When certain officers, agents, and school personnel refuse to listen to students, physically remove hats from their heads, and incite students in other ways, they actually contribute to the production

of the student behavior that is then criminalized. This process can contribute greatly to the number of summonses a student receives.

In addition, the students in my study were subjected to the same policing strategies around the schools and in their neighborhoods. The use of order maintenance policing in so many of the public domains that urban youth traverse creates a situation where they are routinely being confronted by police officers and accumulating court summonses. These findings highlight that while the notion of the school-prison track (Brown, 2003, 2005) is helpful (and real), the lived experience of many students at Gilbert Blakely High School can be better understood by expanding the metaphor. Despite a valuable scholarly literature on the subject (Advancement Project, 2001; American Bar Association, 2001; Brown, 2003, 2005; Ziedenberg, Brooks & Shiraldi, 2000), not all students in these schools are going to prison. In fact, the majority are not likely to spend significant time behind bars. To gain sufficient leverage over the everyday life experience of students at the school, it is useful to highlight a more mundane but pervasive phenomenon: how the lives of impoverished urban students are managed by a complex inter-penetration of systems. As the school merges with an ideology of neighborhood policing, the courts, and even the prison, these data show that urban youth get subjected to levels of surveillance and repression that are not the same as long term incarceration. Nonetheless, a particular culture of penal control becomes an aspect of everyday life at school and beyond. These findings, thus, provide insight into how both the penal management of urban youth works and how the function of schools like Gilbert Blakely shifts as they assume penal responsibilities, and the mission becomes more explicitly about control.

CHAPTER FIVE
School Disciplinarians:
Educators negotiating the culture of penal control

School discipline policies emanating from the federal and local levels have appropriated the language and logic of the criminal justice system. This, in combination with the use of high-tech security apparatuses, the influx of police officers and agents, and the emphasis on order maintenance that we find in a growing number of segregated urban public schools, has led to the establishment of a new disciplinary paradigm—one that emphasizes penal management. This model has gained credibility through the dominant common sense notions of law and order that justify our current criminal and juvenile justice policies and policing practices. In schools like Gilbert Blakely, the penalization process appears to further weaken the already tenuous educative aims of the school and shift the school culture. A carceral consciousness comes to permeate the lived experience of all who work and attend the school. Nevertheless, what struck me at Gilbert Blakely was the level of critique I heard from educators who were part of the disciplinary team (deans and administrators). These individuals worked hard to find ways to maintain their integrity as educators and, in some cases, offered detailed critiques of the educational, criminal justice, and social policies that they believed led to the over-use of the criminal justice system. So how then does penal control remain so prevalent and routinized? Why do many school personnel resist the use of criminal procedural level strategies and, at the same time, come to be view penal management as "normal" and unchangeable?

This chapter examines how educator-disciplinarians (deans and administrators) at Gilbert Blakely made sense of and negotiated the prevailing disciplinary model and the cultural of penal control it fosters. I show how the penalization of the school was contested

through the everyday practices of deans and administrators. These individuals worked extremely hard to utilize positive, educational-based strategies such as counseling, mediation, and parent conferencing. At times, they also attempted to minimize the use and impact of criminal procedural level strategies by choosing not to involve law enforcement in an incident or by working hard to coach students through interactions with the police. These practices are generally accepted by law enforcement and by the Department of Education, even encouraged, so long as they do not undermine the prevailing disciplinary model or interfere in a "police matter."

I observed that deans and administrators thought of themselves as teachers, not law enforcement, and tended to work within a cognitive framework that emphasized the difficult day to day work of "reaching the students," instructing them in ways to communicate with adults, mediating conflicts, counseling, and attempting to engage students in the educational process. And sometimes, their critique of the criminal justice framework became evident in their everyday practices as they spoke out against or acted contrary to its logic. Nevertheless, I found that their critiques were often obscured or serve as little more than a cathartic and symbolic jab at the conditions in which they worked. Additionally, their efforts to use educational-based discipline strategies became mere auxiliary strategies as the criminal justice model became normalized, in the sense that it came to be seen as a normal and natural part of the school experience. Many educators, it appeared, came to believe that the best they could do was to provide students with the tools they needed to minimize conflict with police officers and security agents and re-direct students' attention toward the classroom. In the final analysis, the educative message could often be summarized as "respect authority" and "take responsibility."

The Educator-Police Relationship

According to a report issued by the Bronx Borough President's office (2005), at some of the Impact schools, there has been considerable tension between educators and police and security agents and disagreement over which group—the educators led by the principal or the police—have ultimate authority in the building. At one Bronx high school a principal and a school aide were arrested for obstructing justice when they intervened on behalf of a student in what had been deemed a "police matter." Several teachers in other Impact schools have also been arrested, and a couple of schools received media attention for the heated tension between educators and law enforcement that developed over the course of the year (see Gootman, February 9, 2005).

The relationship between the police and educators at Gilbert Blakely that I observed was not so strained, however. Some even claimed that in terms of police-educator relationships, this school provided an example of relative success. While my data do not speak to this issue (as I did not conduct a comparative study), I did witness a growing cordiality between at least some school personnel and law enforcement officials. Likewise, interviews conducted at different times of the school year suggest that relationships improved over the course of my inquiry.

In September, when I first met Ms. Alvarez, the principal, and asked about the administration's relationship with the police she replied, "We co-exist," and reminded me that it was her building, that this was still a school. Many of the deans expressed frustration with the heavy police presence. "Students are getting summonses for the smallest things!" several complained. In turn, one of the police officers expressed considerable distain for Juarez, the Assistant Principal of School Safety and reminded me that, according to his

understanding of NYPD regulations, the hierarchy in the school went like this: The police are in charge, then the SSAs (security agents), and *then* the school administrators.

In addition, several of the deans I spoke with expressed deep concern over the astoundingly high numbers of Black and Latino men, and increasingly women, who are incarcerated or, in some way, caught up in the criminal justice system, and so the heavy police presence in the school made them uncomfortable. In the case of two deans, they mentioned this almost immediately when they learned that I was studying school discipline. A few others spoke more explicitly about their critique of the school policies but quickly made the connection when I asked what they thought about the current state of incarceration. For some, as people of color from the surrounding or similar communities, they alluded to the fact that it affected them personally.

Nevertheless, as the year went on, the two groups forged a seemingly good working relationship. By the end of the school year, the principal pointed out that some educators in other schools could not get along with the police and insisted on interfering in police matters, and one of the police officers made a similarly critical remark about officers at other schools who did not respect the educators' authority enough. As for the assistant principal, who in September I heard yell at a group of officers to get out of his office, he evidently found a way to work cooperatively with them. By mid-spring, he informed me in his quintessentially smooth style that he and the sergeant had been sitting down together for months each morning for coffee to discuss the day ahead.

Deans and law enforcement officials (police and SSAs) did not often fraternize with each other with the exception of two or three officers who maintained a more regular and informal presence in the deans' office; however, at least in public, they showed a

professional respect for one another. The principal, the assistant principal, and several of the deans also acknowledged that they believed the police and agents' presence could play an important role in reducing violence. One dean explained to me that it would be counter-productive not to cooperate with them. They were all working toward the same goal—a safer, more orderly school environment.

In sum, the lead administrators and deans at Gilbert Blakely generally accepted the conditions of their workplace (or at resigned themselves to them) and have learned to work within the criminal justice model of school discipline, but that does not mean they, themselves, have transformed into law enforcement officials. To the contrary, they maintained their identities as educators in myriad ways, and the tensions between their varying levels of critique and their acceptance of the new framework remained a prominent theme throughout the school year.

Overcoming Anonymity: Educational solutions to violence and disruption

Despite the cordiality I observed, there remained a clear distinction throughout my field work between the driving philosophies of law enforcement and school administrators, but it is beyond the scope of my study to determine which specific interventions and which driving philosophies have led to the reduction of violence at Blakely within the last couple of years. It is clear from my investigation, however, that the school administrators and their staff had a significant positive impact on the environment. The principal approached violence and disruption not just as a "crime" problem; instead she tended to view discipline matters in the broader context of the students' experiences of schooling. With this perspective of discipline, Ms. Alvarez, along with her staff, strove to use positive,

educationally-based strategies whenever she can to address violence and disruption. She calls the work she does 'problem solving.'

By official measures, the disciplinary plan at Gilbert Blakely has been a success. According to DOE data, crime dropped 31% during the 2004-2005 school year[39], and virtually every person I interviewed who had been at the school for at least two years corroborated this statistic by emphatically stating that the school felt and was safer than it had been. When asked what they believed made the school safer, the first response I heard from many students and deans, and some of the other teachers was that the new principal and her team were responsible for the positive changes. Jackson put it this way, "I honestly think [the positive change] was due to the fact that maybe the principal before this one didn't establish himself or his presence or the deans' presence in the school. The new principal we have now and the AP that we have now, they've established themselves in the building, let themselves be known in the building, and they back their deans so whatever result that they feel fit to give, the principal will back the deans."

Dean Castellano articulated a similar perspective. One day in early June, sitting in the detention room, just after she explained to me how the environment in the building has changed for the better in the last few years, I ask her what she thinks are the reasons for the change. She pauses to think and then says, "Well, one answer would be the administration, you know, a different tone. This particular principal does walk around the building…she's much more visible than the other one was, less students…there was a big problem of overcrowding… um, let's see… you have a trained staff of deans. Out of thirteen of us, I

[39] In the first semester of Operation Impact, Spring 2004, crime actually rose slightly, and Gilbert Blakely had the highest number of violent incidents in all of the Bronx High Schools. However, during the following year Gilbert Blakely made significant strides in decreasing levels of violence and crime.

think at least eight or nine of us have been here four years or more. You have strong leadership; the leadership I think is very good, and I think that's the changes."

"It's interesting that you didn't mention the influx of the police officers," I point out. "How do you think they impact the environment?"

Castellano takes a long pause and then instead of adding them to the list of things that have transformed the environment, she points to the negative consequences of their presence. "Hmm," she finally says. "Well, you know what it is. I've seen security agents over-react with kids…" Ultimately she concedes that the police are generally needed in the school; she is more critical of the *strategies* they use, particularly the security agents. Nonetheless, the important insight here is that she, like many of her colleagues, maintains the positive changes have come largely through the work of the educators in the building.

During an interview with the principal, she spoke about her approach for addressing matters of school discipline. She emphasizes the inter-relatedness of discipline, organizational practices, academics, and the importance of building relationships with students. When I asked her about her daily life as a principal, she wrapped up a long list of responsibilities by saying, "… and staying in touch with the kids is really very important to me. So I try to spend as much time as I can whether it's in the cafeteria or in B-40 or in the guidance or in the hallway, I think that's very much a part of the discipline for them to see that you're there to help them address whatever problems they may have." Ms. Alvarez builds on this theme when I ask her to identify the biggest discipline problem in the school. Her response transforms our interview into an old-fashioned call down to the principal's office, with me as the student. She says:

> The biggest problem in this building was anonymity. Nobody knew who you were, Kathy (placing emphasis on my name). And since I don't know who you are, you can do what you want. But now I know who are, Kathy (more emphasis), so when I walk the hallway and say,

> 'Kathy, why are you here?' See Kathy can't hide no more. Kathy can't run away because Kathy knows that Monica (the principal) knows that she's there. [N]ow you can't have groups of 50 or 60 kids running around not knowing who they are. The second thing is why is Kathy standing in that corner? This is the second time I see her walking this hallway when I come out so I need to call Kathy. 'Kathy what's going on? Why aren't you in class?' Now we start dealing with Kathy on an individual basis. Let's look at Kathy's transcript. You know sometimes I'm in the hallway and I see something. I pull a kid and I'm like why don't we have a seat and I go into my computer and I pull up Kathy's transcript. 'Kathy, you failed. Is there a problem?' 'Oh, I took that course again.' 'Let's go call the counselor.' Kathy says she's been in this class three times. Well, Kathy's failed this class three times with the same teacher. Why was she been put in that same class with that same teacher? You know, so you start addressing those individual issues…

Ms. Alvarez's presence in the public spaces of the school was not constant; she had far too many responsibilities for that. But after only one full year in the school, most of the students I spoke with knew her and many claimed that she knew them quite well. (It is indeed a powerful message when the principal in a large school calls you by name.)

The quote above also illustrates the principal's belief in addressing what she calls (problematic) organizational practices (such as poor programming of students' classes) that undermine students' efforts to remain engaged in the educational process. She demonstrated an understanding that if a student is in the wrong class, the student is more likely to be found wandering the hallways.

Ms. Alvarez explicitly connected the issue of discipline to the classroom experience. She continues, "And at the same time you start looking at global issues such as what's happening in the cafeteria. What's happening in the classroom? Do I want to be in the classroom? If I walk into the classroom and *I* don't want to be there, there's a problem. That classroom has to call me in. It has to welcome me in."

Juarez, the principal's right-hand man when it comes to security, summed up his perspective on effective discipline in terms of listening to students. During a tour of the building one afternoon in September, I observed his style.

As we walk together through the hallways and the cafeteria on day, he attracts students like a magnet. Students appear happy to see him; there are lots of handshakes and hugs. He turns to me at one point and explains that it's about listening to kids, showing them that you care, and getting to know them. If they know you and respect you, they will listen to you. I might think it is all a show for my sake except that his words are substantiated in the way the students react to him. They greet him excitedly and have stories for him. He smiles and calls the girls 'sweetie' and pats the boys on their shoulders. Juarez explicitly contrasts his own style with that of law enforcement as he points out, with what I take as indignation in his voice, a few students who were arrested during the previous spring semester for "no reason" and suggests I interview them. Although ultimately Juarez cooperated with law enforcement, his driving philosophy and his identity as an educator, like the principal's, does not change.

Putting the Humanity in the Policies

Administrators and deans cannot prevent the police from arresting students or writing summonses, and they cannot openly defy DOE mandates, but they have chosen their professional paths and must contend with and, to some degree, become invested in, the institutional structures and policy mandates that shape their work environment. I asked Ms. Alvarez how she managed to navigate the mandates imposed from outside the school. Do they mesh with the reality inside the building? Ms. Alvarez responds, "I believe that the policy makers are the furthest away from the school building school-wide and many times [the policies do] not reflect the reality of the situation. Navigating the system is very interesting and can be done. I think that the people at the building level have to put the humanity into those policies and if you're able to do that then it'll be okay but it is difficult

at times but—you know what," she smiles and adds a bit cheekily, "they're not here. They're not here."

Putting the humanity into the policies sometimes, in this sense, could mean using discretion in how a situation is dealt with. This may involve not reporting an incident that could be viewed as a matter that falls into the domain of the police, and instead relying on educational-based strategies, such as counseling, mediation, and parent involvement. "Putting the humanity in the policies" might also refer to the extraordinary effort the principal and some of her staff made to work with certain students. This was a common practice where the principal and Juarez "took students under their wing." These were often the students who were chronically involved in disciplinary cases and have become very alienated from the classroom. In short, the strategy involved showing kindness, helping the student with his or her problems, and working to re-engage students in the educational process.

On a more passive level, however, putting the humanity in the policies often referred to nothing more than sympathetically placing ones hand on the shoulder of a boy who sat with his hands cuffed behind his back—as I have seen Juarez do—or somehow showing empathy for a child under arrest. This occurred because despite the administration's efforts, in the end, their actions were constrained by the dominant criminal justice framework. The principal demonstrated this point as she reflected on how the zero tolerance for weapons mandate played out on the ground and negatively impacted the lives of working youth.

She says, "[T]here's that zero tolerance in terms of bringing weapons into the building, which I agree with you know, honestly; however, those policies do not see the young lady or the young man who works for a living to help support the family who has to

go into the stock room and open boxes and put them on the shelves, goes home late everyday, puts the box cutter in his pocket, forgot about it, comes the next day into school and the child has to be arrested, suspended, and because you have to follow the policy. You can't make the exception because it will come back to haunt you. So then the challenge is: what do you do afterwards? How do you make the process easier—if you can call it that—or more humane for this one person who didn't mean to bring the box cutter, who had no malicious intent?"

The principal understood the complexity of these situations and saw the dilemma, but ultimately, some rules could not be broken and educational strategies for dealing with discipline problems, although not totally disregarded, became secondary to criminal procedural level strategies.

The Deans

The deans are the fifteen or so teachers who are relieved from three periods of teaching each day to assume various responsibilities as part of the discipline team (office work, hallway monitoring, mediation, managing the scanning lines, etc.). These disciplinarian-educators worked closely with the principal and Juarez. They also had regular contact with security agents and police officers. Some were chosen by the new administration because of their abilities to connect with students; others sought the change; and still others were told that they could save a teaching position in their department if they would take the job. The individuals in this group varied widely in their political perspectives and their levels of acceptance of the criminal justice framework. On the whole, however, deans tended to be more critical than other teachers of the criminal justice framework, perhaps partly due to the fact that, as deans, they were more aware of the prevalence of

police interventions. In addition, teachers were often unable to distinguish between the work of the deans and the work of law enforcement, so that teachers often described feeling more supported and believed the general atmosphere of the school had gotten better, but they could not be clear as to why things had changed.

Who were these deans? There was Dean Henry who graduated from Blakely about twelve years ago. He was a history teacher, the varsity football coach, and in a leadership position among the deans as he worked on his assistant principal's license. He was tall with a dark complexion and a warm and polite manner. Then there was Jackson. He was a twenty eight year old physical education teacher who was stationed mainly in the special education wing on the first floor. His energetic style and youthful dress led me to mistake him for a student a few times as I passed him in a crowded hallway. Some of the boys from the special education wing have said things like—we like Jackson. He's from where we're from. And there was Ms. Orozco, a sturdy woman with a pleasant face who ran the peer mediation class; she consistently showed deep compassion for the students. And there were others— Castellano, Demsey, Mathews, Maldonado…. The following sections introduce the reader to the strategies and perceptions of these individuals, which both defy criminal justice logic and reinforce it.

Softies and (Dic)tators

Like the administrators, the deans understood their dual roles as educators and disciplinarians as integrated. They believed that the more students were engaged in the educational process, the less likely they would be cutting classes or getting into fights. And even when they did become involved in a disciplinary matter, students who were doing well in their classes were subjected to less punitive measures.

Knowing this, deans developed different approaches, or styles, that appeared to be informed by their political perspectives (although sometimes seeming contradictory), fit their personality, and play on their strengths. Many of the deans created categories for me as I asked about different strategies. Generally, the categories reflected levels of toughness. Several of the deans talked about "softies"; a few referred to the "tough love" approach, and Jackson added to the list the colorful term "(dic)tators"—teachers and deans who might be called by the first syllable of the word. The following section describes these categories and explicates the deans' reflections on their meanings.

When I ask Jackson about the different strategies, he provides his critique. He says, "Dictatorship does not work. Authoritarian dictatorship for children does not work at all!"

"And you think that some of your colleagues take an authoritarian approach?" I ask.

Referring to both teachers and deans he explains, "Yeah. It's like a dictatorship. 'This is how it's going to be!' You are not going to get anybody to bow and go the way you want them to. It's not going to work," he says with much conviction. "The best way to get somebody to work with you is to compromise and get them to think that what they're doing is not for you but it's in the best interest for themselves. So, being a dictator, because I've seen it, that, I honestly believe, doesn't work."

I ask, "So, would you call that the dictator approach?"

"Yeah, or being a dick." Jackson then provides examples of both teachers and deans who take the dictator approach. He describes how there are several teachers whose classrooms continually must visit to pick up students who are being kicked out. He says the teachers take the "it's my way of the highway" approach, and this, he believes, clearly does not work. As for the deans, he recounts an incident when he and a colleague had a

disagreement over whether or not a student who had been in a fight should be suspended. He explains that the student was, "not right in the head. She was a special ed. student… and she began to act erratic." In this instance, he believed, it was counter-productive to take punitive actions against the girl; it would have been better to try to calm the girl down and talk to her. But his colleague was angry and disagreed. He believed it was better to follow the discipline code to the letter of the law.

He continues with his analysis of the categories, "And being a softie does not work either. You can't be a little soft ass, because then [the students] don't respect you when you tell them to do something. They don't follow instructions. They don't respect you. So being a softie doesn't work. Neither does being too nice, because they think that's a weakness. Like I have trade offs because I'm not a dick. And I try to find the common ground with the kid. So they tend to feel that oh you know 'Jackson will look out for us.' So I might get a lot of kids coming to me thinking I might get their cell phone back or out of detention. And in all honesty, I only do what I feel is right or what I feel is the correct thing to do."

Jackson then describes in more depth his own strategy, which he never actually labels, but I believe could be called "reaching the kids". He says, "'I want to help you before it's too late. I'd rather get you now,' and I tell the kids all the time and they tell me I'm racist. I'm mean, I'm nasty. And I tell them all the time, 'I'm telling you the truth and I'm being honest with you now so when you get my age you will never come back and say nobody didn't tell you ahead of time.'"

"Why do they say you're racist?" I ask.

"Oh, because of my… I have a, it's a racist joke. And it goes like this, what's the difference between an eighteen year old white kid and an eighteen year old black kid?"

"What?"

"One's a freshman in college and one's a freshman in high school."

"Oh."

"And they get mad but the proof is in the pudding. And just two days ago, Wednesday, no Tuesday, a teacher gave me an article out of the newspaper that said that whites are graduating double the rate of the minorities in this state. And the kid that called me racist, I showed him the article and I said, 'You remember the joke I always tell you right?' I said, 'here's the proof in the pudding that maybe it's not a joke but that it's reality.' And they read it and they were totally shocked… They didn't know that. But they just thought that I was racist and I go back to that boy who played basketball, that one who wanted to go to the NBA with no, he was 19 and he also called me a racist and said I couldn't say that. Why am I saying that to kids? He says I'm putting him down. I said, 'You know why you're mad, right, because you're the one in that box. You're the 18 or 19 year old freshman in high school and understand how far you've screwed up your life.' Those kids, when I tell that joke to them, they don't even believe that you're supposed to be 18 in college. They're so shortchanged that they don't get it. But I have to keep it blunt and in layman terms for them because that's their wakeup call. I can't sugar coat it for them." He continues with a heightened level of passion, "You must understand, *I'm them. They are me. I look like them. They look like me.* We share the same community. And so I have to get them to at least a level of understanding or at least a level of viability, at least, because it benefits me. And maybe I do come out a little venomous at times but I feel as though that

maybe if it hits them now and it hurts them now, that they'll change it so that when they get my age or even older that the situation won't look bad."

Tough Love

It is a quiet morning a few weeks before Christmas break. Duane (who was introduced in chapter four) is sitting all alone in the detention room. He is slumped over a student desk, staring down at his hands resting on the desktop. He wears his large black winter jacket, a do-rag, and a baseball cap. I am struck at how child-like he appears sitting alone in the big room. One of the deans comes in to tease him, but Duane sits silently just staring. When the dean exits, I ask Duane if I can sit with him. Without looking up, he nods. As I take my seat, I ask if he wants to talk. He shakes his head. I sit and wait. The stark basement room so often filled with students now seems peaceful in its emptiness. Suddenly, Duane releases a soft, wounded voice entirely incongruent with his image as one of the highest ranking and notorious gang members in the school. "He wouldn't let me in school…." He continues to tell me in a whiny proclamation of unfair treatment how Dean Henry would not let him in the building because he didn't have his binder with him—the one Dean Demsey bought for him so that he might remain committed to his recent resolution to "get back on track" academically. Duane claims that he mistakenly left the binder on the bus. He insists he has been making an effort, and he shows me the few pieces of loose leaf paper he brought to school in lieu the binder. He was given the option of sitting in the detention room for the day, but he is angry that he is wasting his time. "They can't just kick me out. I know my rights," he says. And he has a few choice words to describe Mr. Henry.

I was disheartened to hear of Mr. Henry's role in excluding a student who was making an effort—albeit a feeble one—from school. So later that day, I approached

Mr. Henry to ask him what happened. His version of the story was not significantly different. "I need to be strict with Duane to teach him responsibility, otherwise he'll never learn," he says. He adds, "He hates me now, but he'll love me next week."

But it didn't take a week. Later in the afternoon, I see that Duane has transformed back into his gregarious self and is no longer sitting in the detention room. Mr. Henry explains with a smile that Duane decided to forgive him when he asked Dean Henry for $5 to buy some lunch—a practice I learned was common among a few of the deans and certain students. Mr. Henry performed the delicate balancing act each day of being stern and appearing uncompromising (the students do not respect a "softie" I was reminded again and again) on the one hand, and creating an almost familial relationship with students that often may have been the only tenuous thread attaching the student to the school.

Mr. Henry described his approach as "tough love" although I did hear Demsey once refer to this solidly built football coach as Buttercup, alluding to his soft side. He explained that the approach he took depends on the student. He said that he always tried to take into account the student's background and how the student was most comfortable communicating. He was tougher when he needed to be and soft when it was appropriate.

As we sit together in his office one afternoon, he says, "My whole thing is dealing with the situation because some kids need a tougher approach. Some kids need a more loving approach. It all depends on the kid and that all comes through experience I feel…." He goes on talking about getting to know kids from different groups. "I mean if you can't communicate with the kids who come from Jamaica you're going to have problems with that group. You know, if you can only communicate with the African American kids you're

going to have problems because they're going to say, oh, he's favoring this group. He's favoring that group. So you got find a way to communicate with everyone."

"So when you're talking about gauging and determining which strategy to use is it based sort of more on the child's temperament, an individual child or is the cultural component more significant?" I ask.

"I think it's a combination because you treat everybody as an individual but then there's certain groups and they're, you know, not used to being treated one way because they're from somewhere else. You know, one of the school safety agents had a conflict with an African girl one time. And she's from Africa. She's not used to someone in a school maybe a police officer in a school telling her exactly what to do, you know, you can't do this, you can't use the bathroom at this time. So you have to hold back a little bit and the agent was getting angry at her because she had an attitude but sometimes you got to hold back a little bit and say well listen, this is, you got to talk to them at that point. I know you're new… and this is where you have to understand the kids…. She's not from here. She hasn't been here that long so let's figure out how we can reach her in another way and that'll keep you out of conflict. So it's a combination of different things. Everyone is an individual but like I said, each group comes with its own cultural agenda or identity. You gotta be able to relate to that, you know. It's hard for a lot of people. I mean I try by best."

I go on to ask Mr. Henry about softies and tough love. He replies, "[T]here are kids that the quote unquote softie approach is good for them. You know it'll work for them. And those are the type of kids that don't get in trouble. I mean when I was a student I was one of those kids, you know, I was a good student. If I got into trouble for whatever reason, you know, let's say I didn't do my homework. Getting yelled at would turn me off. It

wouldn't be something that would make me want to do my homework." He then provides examples of how teachers would engage him about staying on track, planning for college. They would remind him how important it was to his homework every night, and this influences his own approach today. "[T]he way I approach some of the students that go late to class I don't get on their case. I say, listen, you're a senior; you've been here for four years. You know what to do…. Or sometimes if you look at them funny, like, you know, you raise your eye like I can't believe *you* got in trouble. They feel kind of funny because it's like, wow, he's disappointed in me. And that makes them feel bad. So that's they way you reach those types of students because a kid who's a good student, rarely gets in trouble, you know, they more or less need that coddling. The tough love comes in with those kids that are truly like the tough kids. They're always getting yelled at, all the time maybe at home, and they need that kind of thing to bring you back in line or they come from the tough streets and they need somebody to bring them back in line. Or the tough kid who really doesn't have that type of manners or whatever and you really got to be able to reach that kid and being nice doesn't work for them."

Although I was initially dismayed that day I came across Duane in the detention room, I came to realize that Mr. Henry's logic is not based on a lack of concern over whether or not students chronically involved in discipline cases attended classes. On the contrary, he believed that his approach was the most effective way to engage these students. Students' lack of respect for "softies" became evident in most of the interviews I conducted with the students who were chronically involved in discipline cases, and on a number of occasions, during observations, I heard Duane and other students like him criticize deans

and teachers who were too soft. These students would laugh at teachers and deans who they perceived as weak, not in control, and easy to manipulate.

Moreover, as I got to know Duane, I realized that Mr. Henry was probably right to assume that without his binder, Duane was not at school to attend classes (a theme that is examined in chapter seven).

Duane and Dean Henry had a good relationship. I felt certain that Duane knew that Henry cared about him. But months later sitting across from Duane in the visiting room at Rikers Island, it was Dean Dempsey that he wanted me to talk to about raising bail money. From observation, I would describe Dempsey as quite tough, and she also described her approach as tougher than Henry's. But ultimately, these deans walked the same line falling somewhere between toughness and love.

Within the categories of softies, tough love, and dictators, we find deans who have developed a sense of what they believe to be the most effective ways to work with students, *as teachers*. They tried to counsel students, encourage them to go to class, and set strict standards in terms of behavior. And except possibly for the cathartic actions of the frustrated dictator, they saw themselves acting in the best interest of the students. However, as I show in the next sections, the options deans had at their disposal as they "worked with the kids" were constrained by the prevailing disciplinary paradigm and their own investment in the strategies upon which the criminal justice model relies. The deans appeared very empathetic. They acknowledged the kids had been "shortchanged," for example. They discussed the effects of poverty and racism, and they worked extremely hard. But, with very few exceptions, they stayed within that prevailing model and relied almost solely on teaching

"personal responsibility" to help students negotiate the disciplinary framework, and more specifically, interactions with the police.

"The Punishment Fits the Crime": Normalizing criminal procedural level strategies

Although the identity of school personnel involved in discipline remained distinct from that of law enforcement, day after day, as police and security agents wrote summonses and made arrests, a penal logic was infused into the everyday school culture so much so that it eclipsed the educative aims of the school and its democratic potential. And the practices associated with the penal logic were normalized so that many teachers, deans, and administrators come to see criminal procedural level strategies in the management of behavior as a natural and (often) appropriate response. Even individuals who complained about the police and the use of summonses and worked to establish alternatives appeared to understand the criminal justice oriented practices as a "normal" part of everyday life. In short, everyone, it appeared, became accustomed to the criminal procedural level strategies, the heavy police presence, and use of criminal justice oriented language that had seeped into the everyday discourse of educators.

The idea that the criminal justice framework becomes normalized in this way came to me one day when I realized that *I* had grown accustomed to seeing teens in handcuffs. I had grown used to kids with a pocketful of summonses. I was used to the tidal waves of blue in the hallways—security agents corralling students during sweeps, and the image of youngsters with their arms stretched out in front of them as an agent moves a scanner over the contours of their bodies. And I was used to the security lingo that buzzes constantly over hand-held radios and the mention of such practices as a "phase two" (body search) or hallway sweeps, for example. I was also used to seeing and eventually interacting with large

numbers of law enforcement agents on a daily basis. As a researcher, though, I was mindful of continually "making things strange", even when I became used to them. Thus, I never got to the point where I would uncritically accept the processes I observed.

But unlike me, the educator-disciplinarians were not just exposed to these things; they were required to participate in them, and they were invested in having them work. They wrote up occurrence reports over and over about students receiving summonses and getting arrested for becoming disorderly. They appeared at suspension hearings, where they presented their cases before a "judge" (lawyers hired by the DOE) as representatives of the school. At times, they called upon the police, or at least threatened to do so, when a child was too unruly. And they were continually interacting and collaborating with the police. As a result of these experiences, such practices became "normal" or "the way things were." They were part of the job.

Part of this normalizing process is the creation of the criminal justice framework's own discourse—a blend of educational and criminal justice oriented language, and like any discourse, it shaped the perspectives of individuals working within it. Even when they were appalled by some of the specific events that took place, it became difficult to see beyond the overall penal logic. For some, the predominant perspective became what I call "the punishment-fit-the-crime" attitude. I often observed this attitude after a student failed to suppress his or her anger during an intervention with a security agent or police officer or when a student brought a weapon or drugs through scanning and got caught. The rationale is this: the rules have been set and the students know the rules; they know how the system works. So if they choose to break a rule or act in a manner deemed inappropriate, than they deserve what they get. In short, wide-spread awareness of the rules and their consequences

justifies the disciplinary action, irregardless of the fact that school rules and criminal procedural level strategies have become entwined to criminalize non-criminal acts.

At one such moment, a dean stood in the office after a young man who was on probation had been non-compliant with officers and SSAs when he was stopped. The incident escalated to the point where the officers conducted a phase two and the young man was found with a bag of marijuana—a violation of his probation. He would be doing some time in jail. The dean shrugged his shoulders after explaining the situation and said, "He got what he deserved." The student got what he deserved because the student's actions, according to the dean, were simply illogical, even stupid.

"Better Five Days Now than Five Years Later on": The tensions between critique and the discourse of responsibility

The punishment-fits-the-crime attitude was not the only or even the most prominent attitude found among the deans. I observed that as the deans grew accustomed to working within the criminal justice framework, the less punitive criminal procedural level strategies, such as summonses and misdemeanor arrests, often came to be seen as a way to teach young people the hard truth about prison. The larger context for this is the mass incarceration of people of color in the United States. The deans often did not see the possibilities of changing "the system," or as my data suggest, they were driven by a sense of urgency, knowing that structural change would not come tomorrow. Thus, they believed, or at least hoped, that students would learn from their experience in court or jail and "choose another path."

The dominant discourse in our society is one of personal responsibility, which is based on the logic that individuals have the autonomy to choose whatever life course they wish. We tend not to look at how external forces shape peoples' lives and constrain the choices they make. So, of course, many individuals in the building, like those in the rest of

society, appeared to adopt this logic. Continually throughout my research, I heard deans and other adults in the building say: It was his (or her) choice. Or, he (or she) has to learn to take responsibility for his actions. Nevertheless, sometimes the discourse of personal responsibility that I found at Blakely emerged more from a mixture of an internalization of the dominant discourse *and* the looming presence of the criminal justice system and individuals' sense of urgency.

It's early October. I am sitting in the deans' office. A few deans and several police officers are taking care of paper work or relaxing after a tense moment when two handcuffed students were escorted into the room and questioned. One of them is sitting directly in front of me, still cuffed and slumped in his seat. He appears angry and doesn't say anything. The other is to my left. He sits calmly, smiling yet complaining that the cuffs are digging into his wrists. Sitting next to me is Jackson. "See that kid," he says to me. "This is all a big joke to him. It doesn't mean a thing to him." He turns to the young man, "This isn't a joke. You better wipe that smile off your face."

A burly, rosy cheeked officer leaning against the copy machine holding a cup of coffee asks if we've heard that the Jamaican kid who was arrested the other day—the one whose mother stood in the office yelling the day before about how her son was treated unfairly—got five days in jail. "Yeah, and I heard the tough guy started crying right there in front of the judge," another cop adds. Several people laugh. There is a lull, and in the momentary silence that has fallen over the room, a quiet, reflective voice repeats, "five days." Jackson adds hardily, "It's about time."

Now I'm confused. Based on our previous conversations I know he is critical of the over-use of the criminal justice system. Out of earshot of the others in the room, I say, "I

thought you didn't like to see kids locked up." Without turning to look at me, he says in a matter-of-fact tone, "Better five days now than five years later on."

Jackson, along with some of the other deans in the building, had come to believe that (relatively minor) punitive measures now *may* help avert students from a life, or at least years, of incarceration. Thus, despite their critique of the over-use of the criminal justice system, some educators became dependent on its strategies in much the same way neo-liberal criminal justice administrators have come to rely on low level forms of repression, such as zero tolerance community policing, as a form of "prevention." For these educators, the criminal procedural level strategies became part of a desperate attempt to "scare kids straight," and thus, became acceptable. The acceptance of such practices, then, became couched in a discourse of personal responsibility and choice. In this framework, the educator must convince the student to take the right path, to go to class, and to behave. In this sense, the "better five days now…" perspective shares elements with the "punishment-fits-the-crime" attitude in that the onus to change is put solely on the student, but it is a distinct position in that it acknowledges the larger social forces, the policies, and institutional practices that constrain individuals' choices. And it assumes as an ultimate goal the reduction of the use of long term incarceration.

For some deans, the voicing of critique and their practices seemed contradictory to me at first. I would hear them talk about the over-use of the criminal justice system, which they often linked to economic conditions and racism. Then, I would hear them use the logic of the criminal justice system—threatening students with arrest or a summons or even adopting the punishment-fits-the-crime attitude in a way that seemed contrary to their social

critique. Some of the deans, I believe, were more entrenched in the logic than they would have liked to admit. For others, though, they consciously grappled with the contradictions.

Dean Jackson exemplified the tension between critique and the discourse of responsibility. The complexity of the viewpoint was demonstrated by his view of the use of summonses. Several months after that day in October when he looked over at the smiling young man with disgust and said "You better wipe that smile off your face," Jackson spoke to me about the issue. His thoughts revealed his conflicted feelings over their use in the school. When I asked him about the changes that had occurred in terms of discipline policy in the last couple of years he emphasized the use of summonses. At first he implies that they serve as a deterrent.

He says, "I honestly believe that last year [the police] didn't [give out a lot of summonses] and if they did, the summonses that they gave had to be for severe reasons. But now, this year, the PD [police department] can give you a summons for like disorderly conduct or something like that. So now the kids realize, 'oh I don't want a summons or I don't want to be given a ticket to go to court for a situation in school because I'm pretty sure that's not the norm.' I know it wasn't when I was in high school. So now you're sitting here saying, 'if I get into a fight or if I get disorderly and there's PD in the building, they could give me a summons and now I can be forced to go to court…. [and] if not, there's going to be a warrant out for my arrest. There's just too much unnecessary nonsense that I have to deal with if I don't deal with PD.'"

"So, you think the summons is an effective disciplinary strategy?" I ask

But, with time for some reflection, Jackson reveals, at once, his critique of the criminalization of non-criminal behavior *and* his perspective that the students have

something to "figure out." "I don't know. Honestly, I think it's a double edged sword. I mean it sounds like a good idea but if it doesn't work than you just have a whole bunch of kids ending up in the judicial system." He continues, "…Maybe they're not going to figure it out now, maybe not tomorrow. Maybe it's going to take them a year or two, but by that time they'll already be screwed in the system. I mean, that's why it sucks because for instance, I just went into a [class] room to get a student. The PD wanted her because she didn't go to court for a summons…. You know, [the students] take forever to figure it out and get their act together. But meanwhile she has to go to court for something she did here in the building, and now she's going to end up in the legal system dealing with all that and it had nothing to do with anything illegal. See what I'm saying? It wasn't a criminal activity that got her into the judicial system. It was a behavioral issue. I don't know. Maybe she was truant. Maybe she cursed out an officer in the hallway or something…"

He ends by saying that the police are "cracking the whip …and whether or not [the use of summonses] has a positive or negative effect, I don't think for the most part that they're reaching the kids here. Maybe in another area where the kids have an understanding of the point behind the summonses it would probably be an effective tool, but here all you're doing is putting kids in the judicial system and giving them a criminal record.[40] So I don't think it serves its justice."

In his statement, Jackson seemed to take a 180 degree turn on his position, which seems to be a contradiction. But if there was a contradiction, it was not a cognitive one; it did not connote a lack of understanding. From my conversations with and observations of Jackson, I knew he was often motivated by his critical perspective as he negotiated within a

[40] It is important to note that a summons does not actually stay on a student's permanent record. However, an individual's name is placed in the police database when he or she receives a summons and if the individual does not appear in court, a warrant is put out for his/her arrest.

context that had been created by decades, even centuries, of racially and economically discriminatory policy-making and organizational practices. He did not see his job as challenging existing structures; in fact, he did not generally discuss the possibility. Yet, at the same time, he did not simply uncritically accept those structures.

As for Jackson's approach, the notion that the use of summonses is "[not] reaching the kids" is particularly revealing. Jackson was tireless in his effort to help students "figure it out," that is, how to interact with the police in a way that will help them avoid further trouble. He urged them to act appropriately, even submissively, although he would not have used that word. He did not do this because he believed that it was necessarily the right or moral thing for the students to do; instead, he knew that it may help to keep them out of prison.

Toward the end of the year, I sit in the deans' office listening to Mr. Henry admonish a student who earlier that day was asked for his ID and claimed to have lost it. The young man sits calmly as Henry intermittently talks to him and fills in some paperwork. "You shouldn't have behaved that way."

"My bad," the young man replies.

"Sorry doesn't help you now; it's too late for sorry," Mr. Henry laments.

Jackson shoots a quick look at the young man and interjects from across the room, "You should have used those lines when I told you to!"

Seeking Alternatives

During the course of my field work, I observed that many of the deans found subtle ways to subvert, or at least slow down, the flow of students into the criminal or juvenile justice systems. At times, they neglected to report incidents that could have been considered

criminal to the police. These situations were handled through a combination of positive interventions, such as, mediation, parental contact, counseling, and other educationally based strategies. These represent cases in which educators used their discretion—at most, a subtle, everyday act of resistance,[41] not an organized effort at institutional change.

There was, however, one example of a dean who worked to institutionalize practices that countered the prevailing framework; she was the director of the peer mediation program, Ms. Orozco. The peer mediation program offered a course each semester to train students to become peer mediators.[42] Students were supposed to be allowed to choose the class as an elective but, as organizational practices would have it, programming difficulties created a situation where students were selected, not based on interest or aptitude but on need of a credit. Subsequently, several students who had taken a special summer training program were denied access into the course and other students, with tenuous relationships to academic work or who were in special education, took their places. This did not deter Ms. Orozco, however. The content of the course was so rich and beneficial for just about any teenager that it was worthwhile. In addition, while some of the students never became comfortable with the responsibility of actually conducting a mediation session, others became competent mediators. Overall, it was one of the most humane and empowering spaces I found in the school.

When I first met Ms. Orozco in the beginning of the school year, she spoke passionately about how the school system and the criminal justice system were creating the conditions for students' alienation from school. "They keep taking away more and more resources from the students. We don't have adequate classroom resources, the proper books

[41] See chapter ten for a more detailed discussion of this term.
[42] I observed this class on a regular basis during both the Fall and Spring semesters.

and so forth…." She adds, "And we've taken away everything that makes this a pleasant environment. We used to have games in the cafeteria, so at least the students had something fun to look forward to, but they were concerned that kids would be gambling so they took the games away…. They've made this place like a prison and the kids are really stressed out." She went on to talk about how the "quality of life" rules, such as not wearing hats really stressed the students out.

I then ask Ms. Orozco, "Do you see the peer mediation program as a more positive way of addressing violence and conflict; do you see it as an alternative to suspensions and summonses?"

"Oh, yes," she emphatically replies.

The peer mediation class was not an organizing effort aimed at challenging the police presence and the criminal procedural level strategies used in the school. It was, instead, a space where students learn conflict resolution skills; they reflected on their own and other students' prejudices and attempt to gain insight into why young people resort to violence. They discussed issues of respect and learned how to choose language that would calm the disputants. It was a space where young people could speak openly about the issues that impacted their lives. In addition, Ms. Orozco was explicit with the students about how the program could serve as a model for dealing with conflict and violence in a more positive way, hopefully reducing the number of suspensions and summonses given out. This message seemed to strongly resonate with the students who almost always had some level of critique of the current practices.

"You've Been Arrested. I Can't Get Involved."

Late morning in mid-April, I walk down the dim basement hallway toward B-40 on my way back from Duncan Donuts. I hear the commotion several seconds before I reach the room and take a long deep breath to prepare myself. It is one of those moments when the deans' office has been transformed into a police precinct. As I walk into the room I see the backs of three officers surrounding a chair where a student sits stiffly on the edge leaning back with his chin down. . His legs are spread wide and planted firmly on the floor. His long thin arms disappear behind his back. He is black and lanky and is wearing an oversized navy blue "hoodie" sweatshirt and jeans. His hair is pulled back from his thin face in simple, straight cornrows. I take a seat next to the door.

"I didn't do nothing," he says half demanding, half pleading. "Take them off me!" He twists his body in his seat and raises his cuffed wrists. He repeats his plea of innocence several times. The adults in the room—AP Juarez, a couple of deans, and several security agents and officers—appear to be growing uncomfortable. It's an ugly moment. Juarez bends down and whispers something in the young man's ear.

"What do you mean calm down?" the student retorts. He looks up towards Mr. Henry who stands a few feet away in the outer ring of adults surrounding his chair and appeals to the dean to intervene. "You've been arrested. I can't get involved. You know those teachers who got arrested. This is the same kind of situation," Mr. Henry says with a mixture of sympathy and resolution in his voice.

The young man persists. "The whole thing's on tape," he repeats this several times. In the course of the situation, I realize he has been accused of taking a swing at a security

agent. He claims that the agent grabbed him and he was only trying to release his arm. Later, the occurrence report will read:

A male student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the XX School Safety Task Force for Disorderly Conduct. He refused to show his ID card and swung at SSA _____. He received a principal's suspension.

One of the agents keeps making threatening remarks that seem only to exacerbate the situation by further frustrating the young man. The officers demand that the young man calm down before the cuffs come off. "I'll leave the cuffs on till 3:00," one of them threatens.

At one point, the officers stand the young man up, turn him toward a desk and conduct a body search. One of the deans glances at me. I wonder if the young man's humiliation is intensified by the presence of the lone spectator seated by the door watching all of this. Or perhaps in his anxious state he hasn't even noticed me.

The student is seated again. He is still finding it difficult to calm down while the cuffs are on and the imposing blue figures stand over him. He breathes deeply. "I'm not an angry person," he insists. He seems eager to explain himself. "I'm not always angry. I don't wake up all angry. I just don't like getting pushed up against the wall by a big male cop."

"Yeah, I pushed you. It's all on tape. You can report it!" one of the security agents says in a whatcha-gonna-do-about-it tone.

The young man says that he doesn't like getting pushed by a big white man. I get a pit in my stomach assuming that the officer will certainly not accept this as a reasonable explanation for the young man's non-compliance.

"Oh, so you don't like white people!"

"Let me rephrase myself." The young man realizes his mistake. "I have nothing against white people…. I don't like cops." (Again, I assume he's not doing any better with explanations.)

"So why don't you like cops?" the officer asks in a surprisingly curious manner.

"My neighborhood, the young man replies."

"But I don't work in your neighborhood."

The young man explains how he is tired of walking home to the projects and getting stopped all the time.

The tone of the dialogue has changed. The young man gets calmer. Everyone seems to be settling into waiting mode.

Mr. Henry takes the seat next to me. Resting his elbows on his knees, he shakes his head. "He doesn't know how to be quiet…. He shouldn't have been in the hallway." He attempts to makes sense of what is going on for me—and, I believe, for himself. I don't know what to say.

Several days later, I learn the young man's name is Jamal.

Conclusion

I end this chapter with the excerpt above because it reflects the authority and the power of the criminal justice disciplinary model and penal culture it cultivates. It points to the significance of the relationship between neighborhood policing and school policing, the educators' attempts at "putting the humanity in the policies," the internalization of the discourse of responsibility (note how Henry frets over Jamal's inability to be quiet), and ultimately, the significant limitations placed on the educators.

In several of the sections in this chapter, I discussed how educators negotiated the criminal justice framework—asserting their identities as educators, at times critiquing criminal procedural level strategies, finding ways to make the disciplinary process more humane, and even seeking alternatives. The principal confronted, one at a time, a whole history of organizational practices that have created the conditions for violence to flourish; the deans conducted mediations and counseled students, but these efforts did not significantly impact, or even challenge the existing culture of penal control that had permeated the school. The limitations placed on the agency of educators ware compounded by the weaving together of educational and criminal justice policy and the ultimate dominance of the criminal justice framework of school discipline. While the identity of educators remained intact, the prevailing framework became normalized and relied upon as educators became invested in the use of its strategies.

PART II

The Students

CHAPTER SIX
Students Making Sense of the Classroom

Like previous studies (Fallis and Opotow, 2003), my data suggest that selective cutting occurred when students became alienated from the classroom experience. Building on my analysis of how institutional forces and discourses fostered student alienation (see chapter three), in this chapter I shift the focus onto how *students* made sense of the classroom experience and why so many chose not to attend at least some of their classes. My data challenge the institutional discourses that emphasize students' "behavioral problems," low levels of academic skills, and (unexamined) disinterest. Interviews with a wide range of students suggested that they, many of whom were participating in selective cutting, often wanted to be engaged in the classroom but found so few access points. In the vast majority of cases, these were not students who had wholly rejected academic work as many structural and cultural theories of oppositional behavior and anti-achievement attitudes would suggest (see Ogbu, 1978; Giroux, 1983; MacLeod, 1995; McLaran, 1983; Willis, 1977). While some students' statements of interest in academic pursuits appeared to be more so a reiteration of mainstream values to which they *wanted* to adhere rather than a reflection of their actual efforts, many students showed more than an abstract interest (Mickelson, 1990) in academic work. This is, perhaps, not surprising in the context of today's post-industrial, service economy. Young people are bombarded with the message that, more than ever, education credentials are necessary for success in the current job market. But most students who I met expressed their interest in academic work in less instrumental ways. These students were trying to find connections to the material. Some of the better prepared students demonstrated a strong concrete interest in intellectual activity (see also Brotherton and Barrios, 2004). They showed me the novels they were reading or

rap lyrics they wrote, for example, and they could discuss them intelligently. At the same time, regardless of their level of academic skills, they expressed deep frustration with the classroom experience.

A number of themes emerged from the interview data. These themes represent the foremost issues on students' minds when asked about their classroom experiences. Their analyses of the classroom centered on misbehavior and disrespect, poor pedagogical practices, and the classroom as a hostile environment. I then elaborate on students' stated reasons for cutting their classes— a practice that, as I have previously pointed out, helps to justify the heavy police presence in the school and often leads to the student-law enforcement confrontations that result in students' entrance into the criminal justice system.

Before moving into my analysis, there is a theoretical point to be made concerning the notion of oppositional behavior. Students' comments, as well as the descriptions of the classroom I offered in chapter three, indicated that there was a significant level of oppositional behavior. Oppositional behavior theories have informed my work (particularly those of Willis [1977] and Foley [1992]), and I would argue that these theories provide important insights into how institutional and larger social and economic forces help to shape, or produce, students' transgressive behaviors. However, classroom misbehavior, although very much related to my study, is less central to my overall thesis. This is because students were generally not getting entangled in encounters with law enforcement in the classroom. In other words, it was not usually classroom misbehavior, itself, that was being criminalized. Rather, the more pertinent issue was student alienation and the practice of selective cutting. For this reason, I theorize misbehavior within the context of student alienation and the notion of normlessness. Normlessness, as I explained in chapter three,

refers to one's unwillingness to abide by societal norms, the loss of commonly held standards, and the use of any means to achieve what is desirable (Seeman, 1959). According to this theory, students who show irreverence for class rules and decorum might not have made any conscious or unconscious decision to reject education. Instead, they may be reacting to a very specific set of classroom conditions that they find meaningless and from which they feel excluded.

Classroom Misbehavior as a Source of Frustration

One of the things that students almost inevitably brought up during our conversations about their classes was the issue of their teachers' ability to maintain classroom discipline. Students generally like teachers who provide a focused, engaging environment with little disruption, and thus, the lack of classroom discipline appeared to be a major contributor to students' frustrations or dislike of a particular class. This was true even for students who misbehaved themselves. They claimed that, in a sense, it was largely the teacher's inability to teach or their lack of concern that created the opportunity for rampant student misbehavior.

In early October, I interview Jennifer and Carlos in the back of the detention room. Jennifer is a student in Ms. Klein's class (see chapter three). She and Carlos are boyfriend and girlfriend. I ask them to explain to me what makes a good class.

"When the teacher has control of the class," Carlos says. I ask him to elaborate.

"Like so many teachers can't even teach. All they know how to do is yell at the students."

"Really?" I say. "Do you have a lot of classes like that?"

"Yeah, like I'd say seven out of nine are like that. You can't even learn anything. But Mr. Hines' class is okay. He knows how to teach. He doesn't just yell at the students all the time."

Turning to Jennifer, I ask, "What do you think about this?"

After all the complaining I have heard from Ms. Klein's students, I am a little surprised by her answer. She says, "Well, it's true but like Ms. Klein, I like her because at least she tries. She always be reminding the students like how important school is and that we need to study and stuff like that. Some teachers don't even care."

On another occasion in the library, I meet with Manuel, Greg, and Darnell, a group of students whose science class I visited on a regular basis. We are joined by their friend Damian. I ask the group to discuss the reasons why students get into trouble in classes. Manuel replies that "kids are acting stupid."

"They don't!" Damian interjects.

"Kids don't act stupid? So you disagree, Damian. Let's have someone explain what it means to act stupid and then you [Damian] can disagree," I say.

Manuel begins, "I'm sayin' you know how people act in these classes."

Like fooling around?

"Yeah, they fool around like they have no home training. They think when they come to school they gotta act stupid."

"Yeah, like disrespect," Greg adds.

"Okay. But why would a student disrespect the teacher?" I ask.

Greg laughs. "No, the reason why they think they can be disrespectful is because it's that they didn't get no home training. Like, put it simply they don't care about school.

"Why do you think kids don't care about school?" I ask.

Damian, who has been waiting to speak, interjects, "I disagree with all of you!"

"Okay, tell us what you think, Damian."

"I'm telling you it goes back to how the teachers teach because if the teacher is mad boring and don't have fun with the kids then the [students are] going to be mad disrespectful. No matter what home training they have. Because my little brother, we all home trained and my little brother still acts up and we all home trained. We got respect for everybody. It's just that some teachers they don't know how to do their job. And like the students, they see that. And the teachers think that the students are stupid and, and they don't see that, but the students do see that. And they start doing what they want. That's what I think because I got English class and art. And [my art teacher] don't make it interesting. She makes it boring. People don't pay attention, and people like to talk. But in my English class, Ms. Cantrell, she makes the lesson interesting so everybody listens and we all have fun in her class. So if the teacher ain't going to do what she gotta do then the students ain't going to listen to her or be respectful."

"What do you think?" I ask the others. "Do you agree with that, or do you still think it's about home training?"

"I agree," Greg replies. And almost simultaneously Darnell nods his head and says, "I agree."

The above interview excerpts provide some insight into students' views of classroom misbehavior and the complexity of their analyses. For example, students who critiqued their teachers could almost always name a few that they liked, and one of the most common reasons for students liking their teachers was that the teachers were able to engage the

students, and learning took place, not yelling, such as in Ms. Cantrell's or Mr. Hines' classes. However, in Jennifer's case, she perceived Ms. Klein's yelling as a sign of her concern for the students.

Manuel and Greg offered an explanation rooted in the dominant discourse (often articulated by teachers) that students' misbehavior is the result of their home lives. This is a perception that was occasionally woven into students' responses. And interestingly, not just well behaved, more academically oriented students held this view; at times it was articulated by students with quite tenuous relationships to academic work. But the idea that students' misbehavior was due to "poor home training" was almost always complicated by students. So even when students brought this idea into their analyses, they also expressed some critique of either the teachers or the academic content of classes. Thus, what many students are articulating was that they believe widespread normlessness generated a lack of respect for the teacher and more alienation

Carlos's statement represents a commonly held view among students. He believed that students didn't behave because teachers did not know how to teach. Many students, like Carlos, spoke to me about "teachers who always yell." Similarly, Damian's analysis wove together two common themes. He explained that students misbehaved in class and disrespected teachers who "can't teach" and "think the students are stupid." So, for Damian, even students who have received "home training" sometimes choose to misbehave—a choice that grows out of their belief that the teacher cannot teach well or holds negative views of his or her students. Thus, it seemed that students were reacting to a specific set of circumstances, not wholly rejecting school itself. Or perhaps their behaviors were shaped,

not so much by one classroom experience but by the cumulative experience of years of having "teachers who can't even teach."

Classes are Boring!

When I asked students how they liked their classes, one of the most common answers I received were that classes were "boring," which as other researchers (Fallis and Opotow, 2003) have observed, is student-speak for alienating. This was especially true for students who cut at least some of there classes, but many students who attended classes on a regular basis also held this view. Often students had a difficult time articulating *why* their classes were boring; they would respond to my question with something like—I don't know. They just are.

The handout

But some students were able to come up with specific reasons. One of the most common complaints was poor teaching practices, such as the over-reliance on worksheets and handouts, which as I illustrated in chapter three was one of the key elements in the implementation of a transmission approach to teaching. Wanda (introduced in chapter three), a student I came to know quite well over the course of my year at Blakely, expresses the frustration many students say they feel. This occurs as she explains to me that she wants to transfer into some kind of innovative program. What kind of program would she like? Wanda explains, "*Something*, because me, I like sitting in the classroom, but I can't sit in the classroom that long and hear the teacher talk about the same thing over and over again and then give me a worksheet [or handout], like for what? We just did this worksheet in class." (She hands me a legal size, dark green paper with a small picture of Galileo and a description of his life and work written in painfully tiny print that fills the page.)

"Oh, that looks pretty boring," I say.

"[My teacher] gave us this worksheet. Like, *come on*, you're supposed to be a history teacher! Teach us about some history of something."

Looking down at the long passage and thinking of Ms. Klein's students, I say, "Yeah, I wonder how many students read this. There's like a billion words on this page." And again, I think back to Ms. Klein's class and picture dozens of colored papers scattered on the floor or left on desktops at the end of the period, some with elaborate doodled on them, as I have seen so many times.

"Nobody hardly read it." Wanda replies.

I begin to read aloud, "Galileo changes the universe…"

Wanda repeats emphatically, "Nobody did it."

Wanda appeared to be a student with above-average intellectual curiosity who struggled to remain engaged in her classes. But, eventually, relatively academically oriented students like Wanda (and many others I described in chapter three) often found themselves tuning in and out, or in some cases, giving up completely.

Technology

While some students focused on the ubiquity of boring handouts, others would bring up the dearth of technology. While there were computers in the building, I noticed that many of them were in disrepair. Moreover, classrooms were not equipped with computers. Alex, a junior who was in and out of trouble, echoed Wanda's sentiment that students are learning "the same old thing," but he also spoke to the issue of technology when I asked him if he was learning a lot in his classes.

He says, "No, cause everything they teach me I know already."

"Do you think it's important, relevant stuff?" I ask.

"No, they're teaching me stuff that I already know, and they're teaching stuff that we really wouldn't need."

"So what do you wish you were learning in class?"

"The stuff that I like."

"Like what?"

"Technology."

Duane (introduced in chapter three in court, chapter five in the detention room, and chapter six with Dean Henry), was another student who complained about inadequate access to computers. His response, when asked why he didn't like his classes revealed a considerable level of anger. He says, "Like my computer, we got some bull shit ass computers, them shits don't even work. It's like two people, three people to one computer [in the computer room]. You're supposed to have your own computer. Cause [the small schools], they got lap tops! Them shits work. All the schools inside this school besides Blakely, them computers is good besides ours. Who the fuck wants to go to class and sit next to a broken ass computer and do work."

Duane's rant brings up another important theme, that is, feelings of relative deprivation and their relationship to alienation (see Fallis and Opotow, 2003). At Blakely, feelings of relative deprivation (the sense of inequality or having less than another group) were most immediately linked to the small schools located in the building. While my study did not investigate disparity in resources, it was a common perception among Blakely students that the small schools were better funded.[43] Thus, the lack of high-tech resources

[43] In some cases, the perception is true. Many small schools received significant funds from private institutions causing great disparities in students' access to technology, books, lab equipment, and more.

appeared to increase students' feelings of boredom, and their sense of being denied technological resources to which other students had access appeared to heighten their levels of alienation even more.

Explaining Things, Making it Interesting, and a Little Joking

Another way students frequently began their critiques of the classroom was to focus on teachers not explaining the material. This common complaint was expressed somewhat differently by different kinds of students, but the underlying ideas were the same. Students feel disconnected from class content; they believe teachers do not always explain things, and, again, classes are dull.

One day sitting in the library with three seniors, Gillian, Lena, and Lorenzo, I asked how they liked school. Lorenzo spoke first, "Boring!"

"Really? Your classes? You find them boring?"

"Yes." Lorenzo replied flatly.

Gillian disagreed. She claimed she loved school and her teachers, but then she admitted that classes can be boring. "They teach us stuff but it's not at our level. I think it's below our level so it gets boring. We can learn something more."

Lena voices her agreement. Then Gillian continues. "And sometimes they can't even teach." The girls laugh.

"What does a good teacher do? How does a good teacher teach?" I ask.

Lena responds, "Like sit down and take time to explain a topic or whatever so that the kids understand because sometimes they don't even understand. They just go through [the material] like that and say, 'okay, now do it.' That's it. They don't explain."

Other small schools struggle, especially in terms of having adequate and appropriate space. For example, many small schools do not have gyms.

Gillian laughs, “That’s Mr. Magio!”

On the day I spoke with Damian, Greg, Manuel, and Darnell, a group of relatively earnest albeit less academically oriented students, they had this to say when I asked what could be done to make classes better?

“Make sure that the students understand what the teacher’s trying to say,” Damian quickly blurts out.

“Get more into it, you know, like with little jokes. Make it interesting,” Darnell adds.

“How does a teacher make it interesting?”

Damian explains, “Ms. Cantrell, when she says stuff, she explains it. She’s not like one of those teachers that say stuff and expect you to know what it is. She talks and explains stuff. If you can make learning a bit more fun for the kids, they’ll respond with a better attitude.”

Greg interjects, “Cause some of the teachers are just sitting around doing nothing just telling us to do the work and that’s it, and they just sit down and look at a newspaper.”

“Do you have a lot of teachers that do that? Like sit around and read the newspaper? I ask.

“Yeah,” Damian replies. The others nod.

Greg continues, “They just put work on the board and sit down.”

“Yeah, Mr. Connors,” Damian adds.

Greg’s face lights up. “Yeah, Mr. Connors! He do that *all* the time. He reads the newspaper all day,” Greg says smiling and shaking his head emphatically.

“He’s cool though,” Darnell says.

"How do you feel, though, Darnell, when you walk in a class and the teacher sits down and reads the newspaper?"

While Darnell shrugs his shoulders, Greg responds to my question. "I feel like I'm not learning."

This conversation reveals another commonly expressed belief; that is, many students had an appreciation for their teachers' abilities or willingness to joke. Joking, for students, however, was not simply about creating a diversion. Joking became a mechanism through which the teacher could develop a relationship with students. It also served to "make class more interesting," and a clever joke could even help to bridge the material to students' own experiences. Students also seemed to recognize that "good" teachers could joke because they were able to "get serious" when it was called for. Put another way, teachers who knew how to explain things were often the same teachers who can joke a bit. And these teachers were contrasted to "teachers who can't teach" or "teachers who yell all the time."

One day over lunch, I ask Jamal (introduced in chapter five) if he likes his classes. He responds, "As far as classes go there a lot of distractions. It's hard to focus."

"Why is it hard to focus?"

"I don't know," he says, "it's a tough. I can't even answer that."

"Do you find classes interesting?"

"No".

"Yeah, they're pretty boring some of them," I admit.

"Straight forward, copy this, answer that."

I go on to ask him what he'd like to see in his classes. "More laughing and more joking," he says. "More being able to be a kid, not even a kid, a teenager rather than be a

robot. Like mediation[44] gets such good attendance and more participation because of the way the teacher makes the class. Not because of the students. Not because we feel we have to talk [participate]; it's because we want to talk. That's why mediation is such a success [as compared to] all my other classes." He then goes on to explain why his math class is also such a success. "The teacher is more understanding. He understands that these kids are stressed out all day in this damn school. He lets us have a little fun."

"So, what does he do specifically that makes it more fun and helps you understand the material as well?" I ask.

"He change the subject rather than staying on math all day. While we're doing math, he'll make a joke. He don't have no problem sitting down talking to us. But he also makes it clear that this work's gotta get done."

"So there's a balance?"

"There's a balance of both so you know when it's time to joke and you know when it's time to get serious," Jamal explains.

Whether these students' critiques were expressed in terms of a need for more explanation or for more joking, they were all articulating the desire for more engaging and interesting classes. Students were also expressing their desire for more up-to-date modes of instruction (less handouts and better computers with more opportunities to use them). Thus, while expressions such as "more relevant material" or "more student-centered, culturally relevant pedagogy" (see Ladson-Billings, 1994) did not enter the students' discourse, they

[44] Mediation is a class designed to prepare students to mediate conflicts between their peers. Although the course was meant to be selective, choosing students with both the desire and the potential to be effective peer mediators, students are more often assigned to the course because it fits into their program or offers them "an easy way to pick up a credit." The course, which I observed throughout the year, offers an excellent example of making the classroom a relevant space to students' lives. Students were almost always highly engaged and attendance remained higher than average throughout the semester.

were offering an important and valid pedagogical critique of their classes. In sum, what students were revealing was the meaninglessness of the classroom experience. Their responses also strongly suggested possibilities for change that could provide meaning and decrease alienation.

Walking into a Hostile Environment

Finally, there was another common theme that emerged from interview data that had to do with the affective elements of the classroom experience, rather than the pedagogical ones. But, of course, these are related. The issue here was the pervasive belief among students that their teachers did not like them. The idea that "my teachers don't like me" came up almost daily while talking to students in the detention room. Often these were students who I did not know well, but from our conversations, I suspected many had quite tenuous relationships with their teachers and the classroom. So I tended to believe students. That fact was their teachers probably didn't like them, and perhaps given the students' behaviors, it would not be difficult to see the situation from the teachers' perspective. However, these students, with such tenuous relationships to the classroom, often saw their decision to go to class as a serious "step in the right direction." The classroom had come to represent a hostile or boring or even humiliating place (given some students' inability to understand the material being presented). So, as students often admitted to me, they may enter with "an attitude"—a posture they saw as a means to preserve their self-respect.

Steven, Duane, and Antoine, among others, reported how a teacher simply said, "Get out," when they walked through the classroom door. Others claimed they were "picked on," and when I would ask why they think they are picked on, they often said, "My teacher

doesn't like me." At other times, their responses took a more oppositional form. They might say something like, "Cause she's a fucking bitch!"

Other students with generally good rapports with their teachers also perceived their receptions in the classrooms as hostile at times. This often occurred when a student had been doing well in a class and then either suddenly stopped attending or began performing poorly. Jennifer's experience provides an example of this type of scenario. She developed some medical problems that necessitated frequent visits to the doctor. At the same time, she was placed in foster care disrupting her life and adding significant time to her commute to school. After a couple of weeks of non-attendance, she entered a classroom and claims that she was immediately told, in front of the other students, that she had already failed the class. She chose to stop going altogether.

At times, hostile encounters in the classroom were perceived as racism. Students often seemed cautious while broaching this subject with me. The tone in their voices when they brought up the topic made me think that they assumed I would not really believe them, perhaps because I am white. Or, it was like they thought they were revealing something they shouldn't. In a hushed voice, Takeisha, a sophomore I interviewed one day in the cafeteria, said as if it would be a revelation to me, "Miss, some of my teachers are racist." She then went on to claim that one of her teachers called her a black bitch. I did not hear such explicit charges of racism frequently, however. Many students who spoke of racism had a difficult time expressing why they believed a teacher was racist. What they appeared to be picking up on, though, was a teacher's hostility or disparaging comments directed at a whole

group of students from subordinated groups as racist,[45] which has been identified as a contributing factor to students' academic achievement (Ladson-Billings and King, 1993).

Students' understanding of the classroom as a hostile place reflects their sense of estrangement, one of the four characteristics of alienation. Estrangement describes one's lack of engagement with her or his surroundings, and includes a sense of isolation or *feelings of exclusion or rejection*. While many students were able to articulate their feelings of being excluded from the classroom (or from the class content), I suspect that many more students expressed these feelings in other ways, such as, "class is boring."

Student Alienation and Cutting

Given what has been described thus far, it is no wonder that the dropout rate at Blakely was about 70% and cutting classes was cited as the most, or one of the most, common discipline problems in the school by virtually every person I interviewed. The critiques of the classrooms that students offered spoke to their reasons for cutting classes; however, students' reasons for cutting were expressed in other ways as well.

During the course of my research, I learned from students who cut classes that there are myriad reasons for doing so. First, there was the common practice of selective cutting. Students offered a variety of reasons for choosing not to attend certain classes. These reasons reflected the complaints they stated above —finding a particular class boring and not getting along with a teacher.

Other students would explain to me that they were unable to get up in the morning in time to make it to their first and even second period class. Other students who tended to cut afternoon classes would say with a bit of indignation, "I'm not staying in school until 2:00!"

[45] As I pointed out in chapter three, however, teachers never understood their negative comments in explicitly racial terms. In fact, they often saw their comments as desperate attempts to get students to pay more attention or work harder.

Then, there was the semester-long strategy to attending and cutting classes. Students would explain, for example, that they never attended a class during the first (of three) marking periods because they could always catch up later in the semester. Other students would attend from the beginning of the semester but would stop going if they did not pass the first two marking periods. They would say to me, "What's the point? I'm going to fail anyway." School records corroborated these kinds of statements. That is, they indicated that cutting tends to increase during early morning or later afternoon classes and at certain times during the semester, particularly during the third marking period. Attendance data indicated that many of the classes that fell into these categories often had 50% or less attendance.

Such information about why students cut classes is nothing new. In fact, the administration has already used this information to inform their practice and change school policy.[46] However, some students' unwillingness to attend early morning or late afternoon classes, their disinterest in attending a class from the beginning to the end of the semester, and their choice not to attend a class because it's "boring" all suggest a deep level of alienation from the educational process. As I have described, alienated students often may have the desire to participate but perhaps find the material presented to be too difficult (or in a few cases, unchallenging), irrelevant, or so far removed from their own experiences that it is difficult to find access points. Alienated students may also experience the classroom setting as a hostile or humiliating place to be.

In the official discourse, cutting is constructed as a matter of an individual student's choice not to attend class. And indeed, ultimately, it is a student's choice to attend or not to attend class; however, there was a strong undercurrent working to push students out of

[46] For example, due to such low attendance during the first period of the day, the administration decided to change the starting time for classes beginning the following year.

classes and into the more alluring life of the hallways, stairwells, and cafeteria (see chapter seven). Unfortunately, pervasive student alienation and cutting in schools like Gilbert Blakely help to justify the influx of large numbers of law enforcement agents and the use of order maintenance policing. And although many students who become entangled with law enforcement officials in the hallways are not cutting classes, it is when students leave the classroom that they are most likely to end up involved in a confrontation with law enforcement.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented students' views of the classroom experience. Their comments provide insight into how students make sense of classroom dynamics and curricular content. The critiques they offered reveal how policy and practice fail to address the needs of students. Many find classes to be dreadfully boring. They express a yearning for something different—even when they have trouble articulating what it is that they want. Indeed, they have few frames of reference and no experiences to which they can compare their current circumstances. But they can plainly articulate that teachers do not explain the material, and at times, they encounter a hostile environment. And while they did not describe clearly what successful, engaging pedagogy looks like, they knew that handouts and worksheets were not it.

Additionally, many students viewed oppositional behavior—a phenomenon that frustrates them—as stemming, in large part, from poor pedagogical practices and teachers' lack of concern for students. Accordingly, I do not refute the idea that oppositional behavior is shaped by students' structural or social positions (class, race, ethnicity, or gender) and their efforts to preserve a sense of self and to protect themselves against real or perceived

threats of violence (see Dance, [2002] and Matue-Gelabert, [2000]), but I would argue that oppositional behavior can also be understood as a reaction to a specific set of circumstances and does not necessarily reflect a total rejection of schooling. Even when students express interest in academic achievement, the sense of meaningless they experience in the classroom can encourage normlessness, or the absence of any investment in classroom norms set by the school or the teacher. Many students, thus, will find creative ways to make meaning, to entertain themselves, and pass the time in class. Other students just stop going.

CHAPTER SEVEN
The Underlife of the School:
The preservation of self and everyday acts of resistance at Blakely

Gilbert Blakely, with its high tech security apparatus, law enforcement agents, top-down curriculum, regimentation and regulations over the body and mind, acts on the self to compel it to conform to a particular set of norms decided upon by the institution. Its aim, in a sense, is to produce docile bodies (Foucault, 1977) or expel non-conformers (through suspensions, transfers, or even incarceration.) But "wherever worlds are laid on, underlives develop" (Goffman, 1961:305), and in an institution where the dominant framework is a culture of penal control, the students will find ways to create meaning and maintain a sense of self. Goffman (1961) explains that within institutions, "…we find that participants decline in some way to accept the official view of what they should be putting into and getting out of the organization and, behind this, of what sort of self and world they are to accept for themselves. Where enthusiasm is expected, there will be apathy; where loyalty, there will be disaffection; where attendance, absenteeism; where robustness, some kind of illness; where deeds are to be done, varieties of inactivity… each in its way, a movement of liberty (304)." The underlife is the collective and sustained practice of what Goffman calls secondary adjustments, or the actions of individuals that go against the rules of the institution in order to reserve something of the self from the clutches of an institution. Goffman suggests that some secondary adjustments are over-determined—employed merely because they are forbidden—and through their pursuit one gains satisfaction. Although it was difficult to ascertain just how much satisfaction students received solely from breaking a rule, it appeared that even when there was a price to pay, actions that might be described as overdetermined secondary adjustments provided a level of personal autonomy beyond the

grasp of the institution. It is in the overdetermination of secondary adjustments that the construction and preservation of the self intersects with everyday acts of resistance (Scott, 1990). Everyday acts of resistance, Scott argues, are the "weapons of the weak"—the often clandestine and individual acts employed by subordinated groups for material or symbolic gains within existing structures. They do not openly challenge existing power structures; nevertheless, they constitute the daily struggle of subordinated groups in repressive settings (292), and challenge the notion of ideological hegemony.

In this chapter, I show how the idea of an institutional underlife and overdetermined secondary adjustments might be helpful in analyzing the world within the school that students at Gilbert Blakely created for themselves and how within this world, they maintained a sense of self, partly through their fleeting disruptions of power relations.

There is no doubt that there was insubordination and disruption at Blakely. Indeed, these behaviors have been used to help justify current discipline policies within public discourse, but in order to understand fully the prevalence and persistence of such behaviors, it is important to examine both how the institutional setting shapes student behaviors and how students benefit from their rule-breaking. These actions were by no means formal or organized forms of political resistance, but they did provide students with both material and symbolic gains. In this sense, at least some of their rule breaking can be viewed as everyday acts of resistance or, perhaps, as a kind of power-move. Ultimately, I argue that the suppressive nature of the discipline policies do little to curtail transgressive behavior.

Below, I identify two domains within the underlife of students through which they made meaning of the school experience and constructed their social identities against official rules and aims of the institution. They are: non-attendance (of classes) and general

rule breaking. Although there were myriad external forces that shape students' experiences inside the school, I observed that their experiences were also shaped by the specific context found within the school itself. Two of the most significant aspects of that context are pervasive classroom alienation and penal control. As students pour into the hallways, their experiences are shaped by the presence of a high tech security apparatus, a heavy presence of law enforcement, and order maintenance policing. But students do not encounter these disciplinary forces passively. In "declining to accept" the prescribed regimen of the school (through non-attendance and general rule breaking), they made small and sometimes clandestine "movements of liberty" as a means to "win space" and preserve a sense of self.

More specifically, I illuminate some of the everyday cultural practices of students who, to some degree, have become alienated, or disaffected, from the official view of what students should be putting into and getting out of the institution. I show how, for some, spending the day in the building without attending classes became a valued pastime and a worthy goal. These students' commitment to coming to school was influenced partly by the fact that their attendance was mandated by truancy laws. But coming to school and not attending classes opens up numerous possibilities for the redefining of the school experience and of themselves as members of the school community. In this sense, cutting, or non-attendance, becomes a social space through which identities are forged. Another important domain— rule breaking—can similarly be viewed as an area in which students make sense of school and maintain or develop as sense of self.

Strategies for Non-attendance

At the end of the last chapter, I presented students' rationales for cutting classes. For many, the classroom experience is alienating, frustrating, "boring," and even humiliating.

But why would students continue to come to school when they do not plan on attending a significant number of their classes. First, it is important to note that schooling is compulsory, and their attendance is enforced through community policing and truancy laws. Students also came to school because they paradoxically believed in the value of education even when their behaviors sometimes suggested a lack of interest in the official aims of the school (see Mickelson, 1990). Consistent with this idea, my data suggest that even the most alienated students usually made at least half-hearted attempts to attend and participate in some of their classes. Many even expressed the desire to "turn their situation around," to start passing their classes, and to graduate. But the social aspects of schooling and life outside the classroom are also important reasons for coming to school each day. I saw that students were invested in the school community, and they were invested in the ways in which they subverted the official reasons for being in school. In a sense, they appeared to become invested in the satisfaction they received through their everyday acts of resistance and the underlife of the school.

One day while walking through the cafeteria, I bumped into Tristan, a student I had met in a class and who I had seen many other times in the detention room. I greeted him and mentioned that I hadn't seen him in a while. "Have you been coming to school?" I ask.

"Sure. I'm always here," he replies.

"So, how are your classes going?"

"Classes? Oh, I haven't been going to any classes," Tristan says almost as if it were strange for me to assume that he was going to his classes just because he was coming to school. This brief exchange hints at an important finding about how students—particularly those who were alienated from their classes—made meaning of school. As Carlos once

explained to me as he compared his current GED program to the school, "Blakely's just a social place. Kids don't really go there to learn." For him, it was a simple matter of fact.

In some way, I understood this from the beginning of my field work. Indeed, almost every person I interviewed identified cutting classes, or hanging out in the hallways, as the most common and persistent disciplinary problem in the school. But it was difficult for me to understand how pervasive the phenomenon was and how it could actually be happening in a building that is so heavily policed.[47]

Can students really spend the day in the building and not go to classes? I began to ask around. I asked students and deans, a school aide who monitors the cafeteria, and police officers. When I bring the question up with the aide, she responds emphatically, "Oh, yes. It's possible. It's possible." As a cafeteria monitor, she was able to tell me about the various ways students used the cafeteria as a place to hide while avoiding classes. "Some steal other kids' programs so they can [enter the cafeteria] during that kid's lunch period. Some kids sneak a ride in the elevator.[48] And some kids just charge through the doors." She explained that there were so many students entering at once that sometimes aides or security agents had to make a quick choice whether or not to run after students who charged through the entrance past the scanner or to continue to monitor the door. She also tells me that students have been known to hide behind vending machines during the change of periods and then take a seat as the next group of students is herded into the enormous room. I was also repeatedly told by staff and students alike that students hid in the stairwells, the locker

[47] According to official "cutting sheets" (attendance records submitted by teachers for every class), unexcused non-attendance is rampant. Almost all cutting sheets indicate some unexcused absences, and it is not uncommon for cutting sheets to indicate attendance rates as low as 50%. But this does not mean all of these students are elsewhere in the building. There is no way to calculate this number precisely.

[48] Two elevators open up into the cafeteria, but students are restricted from riding the elevators so there is less security around them.

rooms, the bathrooms, and classes for which they are not registered. But the safest places, what Goffman might refer to as "free places," to go when avoiding classes were the auditorium and the detention room because these were official holding areas, thus security agents were not likely to question a student's presence there.[49] Another common strategy for non-attendance was a trip to the guidance counselor's office, the nurse's station, or a school administrator's office.[50]

Dean Jackson, who as one of the deans assigned to escort students who were cutting classes to the detention room, has a unique perspective. He shed some light on the matter one afternoon while we were sitting together in the detention room. Although the accuracy of the percentages he cites are questionable, the perception he offers is important and helpful in understanding the issue.

I ask, " How pervasive is it and what are some of the strategies do they use?"

"I would say at least 40% of the school in general."

"Would you say 40% are going to, say, half their classes or less a day?" I am a bit incredulous.

"Half," he says, "Of those kids I'd say about half are totally, like you see them. You know they're not going to classes. You're running into them out in the hall. The other half you wouldn't even realize they have an attendance problem because you might see them the first two periods and then they're real quiet, and they just disappear and you don't even know they were here the whole day. Or they come in late, and you don't even know that

[49] On a several occasions, I did witness deans telling students to leave the detention room when they did not "belong" there. The deans would send students to class or the lunch room (wherever their programs said they should be), but students in the detention room were never confronted by security agents and required to surrender their IDs.

[50] It should be noted that these types of strategies are also sometimes used by students who are highly academic and engaged with the official aims of the school.

they've missed half their classes. They come in after fourth period so they miss attendance period and everything. Now they're here and they're just hanging out. They're just chillin' in the boys' locker room. They chill with the gym teacher for a period; they chill in the library. I mean there's 20% that are just straight ignorant. They're in the halls walking around. They try to find a place to hide but can't find a place to hide. They sit in the stairwell."

"So you're saying that *several hundred students* are not going to class?" I need some clarification.

"Yeah, because I got four or five girls that walk around all the time especially like certain periods, third, fourth period."

"But that's four or five…"

"You still got Zack. You still got Steven. You still got Corry. You still got all those seniors. They're close to done, so… You still got the Jamaicans. You still got the Dominicans. You know what I mean? And within each group, put it this way, you got some nurse kids. They just go sit with the nurse. You got some guidance counselor kids. They're always going to the guidance counselors' and missing class. Then you have the cafeteria kids. Then you have your gym rats."

"Are there gym teachers that allow students to stay in class?"

Jackson went on to explain the rationales of gym teachers who allow students to stay in the gym while they are assigned to other classes.

Non-attendance takes on a life of its own. Below, I provide some illustrative examples of students' "movements of liberty," or more specifically, their strategies for avoiding classes, which actually constitute their school day.

Sitting in the detention room with Alex and Antoine one day, I bring up the subject. "Do you think there're a lot of kids who spend a good part of the day not in classes?"

Alex replies, "Yeah." Antoine laughs.

"How do they avoid class? You're laughing," I say to Antoine. "Tell me what you're day would be like…"

"Me personally?"

"As you come into the building and your intention is to not go to class."

"Okay, me personally. Alright, the first two periods I go to the auditorium. Aright, third period, yeah, I'm in the auditorium again. Fourth I have lunch. Fifth I got gym. That's my attendance period[51] so I always go to fifth, and then the rest of the time I just go to every gym period. It's not my gym period, but I just go."

"And what does the gym teacher say?"

"Nothing." (I verify this with a gym teacher who explains that it happens quite frequently. Some gym teachers reportedly make an effort to encourage students to attend their other classes, but ultimately they rationalize allowing students to stay in the gym because "at least the kids aren't roaming the hallways getting into trouble.")

"Why do you stay in the auditorium for the first three periods?" I ask.

"That's where everybody be at, who's late."

"They put you in there when you come in late, but if you come in second period, you could go to your third period class."

"Yeah, but I don't" he says.

"You stay in the auditorium?" I want to be clear.

[51] The attendance period is the period in which students' attendance is documented for official purposes. Thus, if they are present during attendance period, they are marked present for the day on school records.

"No, I go out, chill, and then back to the auditorium."

"Where do you go to chill?" I have pushed a little too far. Antoine seems reluctant to answer. There is a short pause.

I try again. "I'm just trying to understand. Not going to class seems to be a lot of kids' goal."

"It's not my goal" Alex interjects.

Now, Antoine wishes to shift the conversation. "It's third marking period," he says. "I go to class now. That's when the credit counts."

As I continued to ask both students and school personnel, I learned that Antoine's strategies for avoiding classes were the ones commonly used by students. But what did students do when they left the auditorium? When the bell would ring, all the students in the auditorium were ushered out the back door near the stage. They had been late for their last class, so at the start of their next class, they were released from the auditorium with the expectation that they would head to their next class. Many did. But some did not. On one occasion, I casually walked out of the auditorium along with about 100 students as the second period bell rang. The crowd of students dispersed, some going into the stairwell, others heading around the long hallways on the first floor. I spotted Jamal and a friend of his about twenty feet ahead of me. I decided to follow their path. They circled half way around the first floor and then headed into the stairwell, up to the third floor. It was the change of periods so the halls were very crowded with large numbers of students making their way clockwise around each floor. The two young men made a complete circle around the third floor. Just as the crowd in the hallway started thinning out, I watched as they re-entered the stairwell and headed downstairs. The second bell rang. Classes were in session.

I stood alone at the entrance of one of the third floor stairwells wondering where Jamal and his friend had gone. I realized that they were most likely not in a classroom.

My question about where Jamal and his friend had gone or where Antoine went "to chill" stayed with me as the weeks passed. So I asked Zack, a student who I had gotten to know quite well during the spring semester and with whom I had developed a considerable level of trust. Zack was a good candidate as I was aware that he was one of the students who frequently cut his classes, although lately he had been making an effort to attend more that usual. I asked Zack if he could explain his day to me, how he avoids classes he does not wish to attend. He invited me to spend whole day with him. He suggested that I could watch how he navigates the building and negotiates "security." I explained that his proposal presented a problem. If he were to be seen with me, school personnel and police officers would not engage him in the same way as they would if he were alone. So Zack suggested I "hang back," or follow him at a distance so that people would not realize that I was observing. I decided to try it aware of the methodological limitations.[52]

At first, Zack assumed that I wanted him to cut all his classes, which he was willing to do. Then I clarified, "No, no, go to any class you want to go to. Just do what you would if I weren't following you." I told him that I would simply attend classes with him as long as the teachers permitted it. As it turned out, Zack attended more classes than he cut, but even in the classes he attended, he found ways to "escape."

[52] I could not be sure how my presence influenced Zack's behavior that day. He could have been putting on a bit of a show for me. Having spent considerable time with Zack, hearing others tell stories about him, and observing people's reactions of his behavior the day I followed him led me to believe that some of his behavior that day was for show, but for the most part, it was consistent with his usual behavior and did not constitute anything extraordinary. Additionally, I could not be certain that school personnel or officers were completely unaware of my presence, but for the most part, my presence was not acknowledged, and their behaviors appeared typical.

On a late May morning, I wait for Zack at boys' scanning. He enters the building in time for his third period class, swimming. He has already missed his second period class. Zack passes through scanning and I find myself, once again, in that awkward moment diverting my eyes as he slips his belt back through his pants loops. Zack then leads me through the dank, maze-like hallways of the basement into a section of the school I have never seen. I can smell the chlorine; we are getting close. Zack introduces me to the swimming teacher and then heads to the locker room to change. I take a seat in the bleachers and watched the class. During the class, we only talk briefly when Zack asks me to fix his goggles. He clearly enjoys swimming. He tells me he was on the team but had to quit when he could not maintain the grade point average required for participation. He speaks with pride at having been a member.

The bell rings for fourth period. I meet Zack at the back entrance to the boys' locker room which leads into the basement hallway on the west side of the building. We head upstairs into the Special Education wing of the building for English class. Zack introduces me to the teacher who welcomes me into the class, and we sit down. Clarissa, Zack's friend, comes in and pulls a sandwich and juice out of her bag for Zack. It is his breakfast.

The class is reading a novel. Zack complains to me that they've been reading the same book for weeks and he's bored. He tells me he has already finished the book. As if the teacher heard him complain, she begins to challenge him with questions. One after the next, Zack provides vivid details and examples; he has clearly read and understood the text. When the teacher stops Zack so that another student might participate, he starts talking with Clarissa. Then he starts rapping. He is beginning to get agitated and bored. He turns to me and says, "I know everything." Admittedly, he has impressed me.

The bell rings for fifth period. Zack has a reading and writing class across the hall. He wants to attend. As the students settle into their seats, the teacher, a small, pleasant white man perhaps in his late 50s, tells me that Zack's problem is that his IQ is higher than his, but that he has difficulty settling down. Today the class is reading a story about a girl from Maine who writes a letter to the Russian president. Zack excuses himself to go to the bathroom. I wonder if I will see him again, but he returns in about five minutes. The story ends. The teacher asks the students how they liked it. There is silence. Zack has an empty look on his face. At a later moment as the students are answering questions about the story, Zack pulls his jacket over his head.

Sixth period Zack has lunch. Seventh period: Zack did not want to attend class. We join the flow of students on the first floor that circle through the hallway during the change of periods. It is easy to get lost in the crowd, but the second bell is about to ring and most students have left the hallway. Zack is officially cutting class. I keep my distance and watch Zack with a friend walking through the hall. A security agent sees them. At first, the agent ignores them, but then he reprimands the boys and tells them to go to class. He does not pick the boys up. I suspect it is because he knows Zack and is tired of taking action. But another possibility is that for all the students who get picked up by security, many more are left alone. The boys work their way around the south side of the first floor to the west side of the building where Juarez's office has been relocated.[53] Zack walks into the office looking for Juarez who has made a great effort to engage Zack. Zack meets with Juarez regularly and so can use his meetings as a strategy to avoid class. (While many school personnel in the building praised Juarez for how he reached out to students like Zack, some

[53] Juarez moved up to a first floor office from "Base" when Dean Henry was put in charge of the deans and took over Juarez's desk at the base.

qualified their praise by pointing out that Zack [as well as some other students] have been "given too much power.") But Juarez wasn't in his office. In the hallway outside the office, Zack and his friend met up with Clarissa. Zack took his (illegal) cell phone out and started playing music. Someone in Juarez's office closed the door to block out the noise. The three students started dancing down the hallway until they spot someone walking down the hallway. The three cutters join a small line of girls who are waiting outside the program office. I do not recognize the person but I gather she is either a teacher or a mid-level administrator. "Are you all waiting for someone?" she asks.

"Yes," Clarissa answers, and the woman keeps walking.

Zack continues on to the north corridor where the principal's office and other administrative offices are located. We lose the others. Ms. Sheldon, a high ranking administrator steps out of her office, walks across the hall and enters another administrative office. Three police officers are walking in our direction. Zack slips into Ms. Sheldon's office. I stand several feet from the office door pretending to look at the bulletin board. The officers walk by. Zack slips out of the office and continues toward the auditorium where he safely spends a few minutes before continuing on his way. Clarissa catches up to him. School personnel and security agents clearly see Zack and ignore him. One tells him to find somewhere to go. Clarissa gets called into the Special Education office by a school aide who needs her to translate for a Spanish speaking parent.

Zack stands in the middle of the hallway until the bell rings for 8th period. He attends his class and Clarissa joins him even though she is assigned to another class at that time. Ninth period, Zack's last class of the day, he leaves the building before it begins to go home.

Not all students can get away with what Zack and Clarissa get away with. To some extent, their success in avoiding classes has to do with the cooperation (or resignation) of school personnel and law enforcement. Nevertheless, Zack and Clarissa show how non-attendance can be accomplished through a variety of strategies—coming late, leaving early, visiting administrators, attending classes not on one's program, and even "hiding" right out in the open.

Taken together, these vignettes demonstrate how students could actively structure their school day around not going to class or choosing which ones they would attend and which ones they would not. They employed various strategies to subvert security agents and avoid getting into trouble. Antoine made full use of the very spaces (B-40 and the auditorium) officially designated to contain students who are not in classes (latecomers, "troublemakers," and students whose IDs have been flagged.) Zack took advantage of the sympathies of certain school personnel, and many students seemed to find ways to pass time in parts of the building in which they were not supposed to be. But many times students were caught. Then they were escorted down the detention room and dealt with in a variety of ways. A dean might lecture the student or talk with him or her about the importance of attending class. In a rare instance, a phone call home might be made. But, for the most part, students just sat in the detention room and waited for the bell to ring. Thus, getting caught and interacting with disciplinarians was simply part of the ritual of cutting, unless, of course, students were stopped by law enforcement and became entangled in a confrontation. This was when criminal procedural level strategies were employed and students ended up in handcuffs, summoned to criminal court.

Although numerous secondary adjustments were made in the classroom, in a sense, the underlife of the school began with cutting. It was outside the classroom where students were finding ways to make meaning of school, resist official policy, and construct their social identities. Most students used cutting strategies more surreptitiously than Zack, but there were dozens of students like Zack who were well known. Regardless of his reputation, his story is particularly useful in understanding how students found a satisfaction as they gained a sense of control over their environment through cutting strategies. In this sense, students' cutting gives meaning to the school experience and opens up the possibilities for winning space.

Breaking the Rules

Like cutting classes, I conceptualize general rule breaking as a social space in which students make movements of liberty. Commonly broken rules can be understood as everyday acts of resistance through which students manage, or gain leverage over, their self-presentation. I focus specifically on disruption, wearing hats, and gambling (and to a lesser extent, drug dealing) as illustrative examples. According to both school personnel and students, these were some of the most common disciplinary issues in the school.

"Everybody knows me here." (On being the disruptive student)

One of the reasons Zack was so successful in avoiding classes and avoiding disciplinary action was because he had created a reputation for himself. On several occasions, Zack explained to me, "I own this school." Or "I am the boss of this school." Other students, too, took pride that "everybody knows me here" (as Duane put it one day with a smile of satisfaction on his face.) These reputations came through chronic involvement in disciplinary cases, some serious, some not. They encompassed such

behaviors as screaming and running in the hallways, arguing with teachers, slamming doors, publicly taunting adults or other students, getting into fights, or otherwise causing some kind of scene. But like so many students regularly involved in disciplinary cases, charisma and sweetness also played a big role in constructing some students' reputations. When I mentioned Zack's name or the names of students with similar reputations to the deans and certain administrators and police officers, they would sort of roll their eyes and talk about how "misguided" or "crazy" these kids were, but they also acknowledged their endearing character traits. (I have heard students affectionately described as "big babies," "basically good kids at the core," and "loyal." Thus, "troublemakers," particularly those who were considered likable, positioned themselves well, and they often relished in the power their reputations afforded them.

Ultimately, being known often afforded students certain liberties. At times, agents appeared to get tired of policing these students. Administrators often took them "under their wing." And teachers, either fed up or feeling sympathy for them, often lowered their expectations and even provided them with a place to hide out. Thus, they ironically found a way to make secondary adjustments and subvert the disciplinary apparatus by placing themselves in the limelight. This bolstered their status among peers as well. This is why I came to think of the ways Zack negotiated the school environment as power-moves.

But this did not prevent these students from getting involved in the criminal justice system. Zack, for example, was certainly not immune to police action. During the school year, he had been involved in several police matters, had been arrested, and given summonses (both inside and outside school). Nevertheless, the reputations created by students like Zack were a great source of pride, and the police matters were simply

considered a part of the school experience and a part of being young and from "a neighborhood like mine" as students would often say to me.[54]

Like cutting classes, students' disruptive behavior did not have any direct political implications. These were not generally *informed* or *intentional* acts of resistance, but as Scott (1985) points out, everyday acts of resistance need not be collective, organized, or even principled. He argues that the intention is inscribed in the action (301). And here the action becomes a means through which students could shift existing power dynamics, gain status, and create a valued sense of self. Ultimately, however, in the context of penal management, students who misbehaved also facilitated in the reproduction of themselves as criminalized subjects.

"The way you look is the way people treat you." (On wearing hats)

The wearing of hats (of any kind but particularly baseball caps, the hat of choice) and do-rags in school, which was identified as the second most common infraction after cutting classes, provides another illustrative example of how students' transgressions provided a space in which they protected their sense of self and momentarily disrupted power relations.

Some teachers, deans, administrators, and police officers stated that they believed the enforcement of this rule had become so problematic that the "no head covering" rule should be done away with. It caused more problems than it was worth. One officer and a few deans explained to me that the policy was put into place because students used hats to signify their gang affiliation. So when all "gang paraphernalia" (colored bandanas, or "flags," beads, gang symbols, etc.) was banned, so too were hats. But these same officers

[54] This is not to say that students did not perceive disciplinary policy, particularly order maintenance as unjust. As the next chapter shows, there was a pervasive critique of order maintenance among students, but at the same time, there was a sense of "this is just the way it is."

and deans explained that students simply found new ways to indicate their gang affiliation. Additionally, I learned that hat wearing was so pervasive that vast majority students who wore hats were not gang members. One officer even explained that the NYPD had determined that hat bans were ineffective ways of curtailing gang activity, but apparently school policy was one step behind.

However, from speaking with other deans and teachers, it became apparent that the hat ban was not really about curtailing gang activity anyway, but about making students conform to "school values" as opposed to "street values." The theory behind this was that one who adheres to a "street style of dress" does not fit in school and would not likely do well academically. But students' "street" identity does not preclude their interest in intellectual pursuits, academic success, or their ability to be a productive part of a school community (Brotherton and Barrios, 2004; Dance, 2002). So these educators' claims were generally unfounded, but the hat (and do-rag) ban had enough support among staff that it was rigorously enforced.

Given that so many students were getting into trouble for wearing hats, I started observing students' hat wearing behaviors and asking students why they continued to wear hats when they knew it was against the rules. The excerpts below, based on my field notes, are offered to provide a glimpse into just how significant hats were in the lives of many students and how the breaking of the hat rule had much to do with the preservation and presentation of self.

One day after Carlos left Blakely to attend a GED program, he asked me if I would pick up his Yankees baseball cap that had been confiscated several weeks earlier. I asked the secretary in the deans' office how I might go about retrieving a hat for a student who was no

longer at Blakely. She handed me a key and escorted me to a large walk-in closet in the basement, down the hall from the deans' office. She said that the hats were in the closet, and I should be careful of rats. I opened the heavy, industrial-type door slowly and found a super-size black garbage bag full of baseball caps. There were probably over a hundred hats in the bag; close to half were Yankees baseball caps. I started sorting through the bag, which emitted a musty odor. Names had been written on little office sticky note papers, but most of the papers had fallen off their respective hats. I considered giving up, but I knew the hat meant a lot to Carlos. He loved to wear it. He seemed proud of it, and it was costly. All of these hats, I thought as I dug through the bag, had been confiscated from kids who wore them proudly. Why did these students risk losing their hats? I had seen countless students told to take their hats off, only to put it right back on their heads as soon as they turned a corner. It appeared to be a compulsion. A significant portion of the school population, especially the boys, seemed to have a very difficult time keeping their hats off their heads.

As I neared the bottom of the bag, I spotted a Yankees cap with the little yellow tag that read "Carlos Mendoza" still attached. I was pleased I would be able to take it to him.

"What about hats? Why do students refuse to take their hats off?" I ask Zack, a chronic hat wearer, one afternoon over lunch in a Jamaican restaurant.

"Sometimes they be having bad hair days or fashion. Fashion's a big thing in high school."

"Yeah, it seems really important to kids, like its part of their identity or something," I say.

"Yeah, it's like part of their identity," Zack confirms. "The way you look is the way people treat you. In high school, the way you look is the way they treat you and address you."

"It seems to me," I say, "that it's so much a part of the students' identity, like what they wear and who they are and what they feel comfortable in. Is it sort of like being asked to take your shoes off?"

"Yeah, that's how it would be. That's exactly how it would be! Honestly, yeah." My analogy has resonated with Zack. "It would be like walking around here with no shoes."

Although the official reason stated for the hat ban was the curtailment of gang activity, it appeared to be understood that the ban was more about initiating students into a particular school culture. Hats and do-rags, although very important to the vast majority of male students and some female students, were deemed inappropriate. Wearing a hat despite the ban appeared to be, in part, an involuntary force of habit not easily broken. But there was something intentional in students' hat wearing. They continued to bring them to school, take them out of their back packs, and place them of their heads. And in some instances, students have ended up in confrontations with law enforcement agents for refusing to remove a hat, at times, ending up with a court summons.[55] Thus, students' defiance of the hat ban may be seen as an example of what Goffman refers to as "ritual insubordination," (319) and the individual committing the act, "a stance-taking entity" (320). Goffman states that, "It is thus *against something* [emphasis his] that the self can emerge" (320). So perhaps

[55] Although no occurrence report directly mentioned the refusal to remove a hat, it seems likely there more often than not, this information is omitted from the reports. It was evident from interviews and observations that hat wearing contributed significantly to student-law enforcement confrontation and, very possibly, the issuance of summonses. It is just not cited as the official reason to explain disciplinary actions.

the owners of the hundred plus hats I found in the garbage bag locked up in a basement closet could be viewed as resisters engaged in the preservation of self.

"It's all about the hustle." (On making money in the cafeteria)

In my last example of general rule breaking, I shift the focus to a more clandestine type of secondary adjustment and one that entails a re-defining of a physical space as well as the self. I am referring to gambling and drug sales in the cafeteria. These illicit activities apparently occurred regularly in the cafeteria despite the presence of a large security team of deans, agents, officers, and school aides and the presence of security cameras. While these activities may involve a small percentage of students, they were mentioned during interviews frequently enough to warrant analysis. Additionally, I cannot say much about drugs sales as I was unable to verify that it was happening. For obvious reasons, no one admitted to me that he or she was selling drugs inside the school. There were eight occurrence reports for the school year that indicated that students were arrested in the building for drug possession, but none indicated an arrest for drug sales. So it is only through hearsay that I learned of drug sales in the cafeteria. Gambling, on the other hand, had become so pervasive in the cafeteria that game playing had been banned the previous year. It was also something frequently mentioned during interviews when I asked students what rules were commonly broken, and I observed gambling firsthand. (Interestingly, however, it did not appear that students were frequently getting caught or at least punished for this activity.)

Gambling, unlike most other school infractions, brings with it monetary incentives. It offers material as well as symbolic rewards. Zack explained to me that the cafeteria was "all about the hustle." Jamal suggested something similar one day as he explained the

difference between the students in the small schools who (as he perceived) wanted to come to school to go to classes and Blakely students who, according to Jamal, had other reasons for coming to school. He says, "[S]chool for us is more of a way to make money, for one."

"How do you make money in school?" I ask.

"Dice, cards, drugs. You understand what I'm saying? ... [J]obs out here [in the surrounding neighborhood] is not really, um, the job out here is picking up a gun and robbing somebody or getting a package [of drugs] and standing on the corner or even coming to school with a pack and standing in the hallway or playing in the lunch room all day…"

Jamal's statement linked the illicit activity in the school to the street and more extreme forms of illegality and violence; however, within the context of the school, gambling appeared to be as much of a friendly past-time as it was a way of making money, and at no time did it appear to be related to violent incidents.

By the spring, I had walked through the cafeteria countless times, but I could not make much sense of it. It was so big and crowded all the time. There was so much activity. I needed a guide. I asked Zack, who was well-known and liked by many, if he would give me a tour. As we made our way through the room during fifth period a few days later, Zack pointed out the various social groups. We started on the west side of the room. "Over here you have the small school kids, and over there are the Dominican kids." We sat with them for a few minutes. There were some Bloods sitting at another table. And apparently, Jamaican students liked to congregate toward the middle of the room and stand against the wall. Finally, at the east end, according to Zack, there were the "nobodies." Zack also pointed out the security cameras inconspicuously placed high on the walls just near the

cieling and explained how certain groups of kids always get tables away from the cameras. Then, somewhere near the middle, a few tables over from the Dominican students, against the wall, Zack pointed to the gambling section. As we approached a table, two boys hid some cards and looked up at Zack, then over at me. Zack nodded his head indicating that it was okay to continue. The boys took their cards out and resumed their game. Next to the table, there were a few more boys playing dice against the wall. We chatted with the boys for a few moments, but they were immersed in their games so we left. As we walked away from that section, Zack pointed with his chin to a boy pacing near the elevators. "See him?" he asks.

"Yeah."

"He's dealing."

"Drugs?" (I want to be sure.)

"Yeah." (I was never able to verify this.)

It makes sense that young men who have so few prospects for making money within the formal economy would be attracted to gambling in the cafeteria of their school. Boys[56] claimed gambling was fun and gave them a chance to make a little money. But on another level, through their actions, students participating in gambling (and other illicit activities) were actively re-making the space, creating personal territories (Goffman, 1961). These personal territories, it appeared to me, allowed students to be in control of their own milieu. Those who participated were giving themselves a sense of purpose, a reprieve from the monotony and boredom of the institution, and even perhaps, an economic reason for coming to school.

[56] I did not meet any girls who claimed that they participated in gambling.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to bring the reader into the world many students have constructed for themselves against the official aims and rules of the school. Not all Blakely students participated in this underlife; some diligently went to their classes and did their best to not break school rules, but would be impossible to pinpoint a percentage of how many students participated and how many did not. After a year in the school, it appeared to me that a large majority of students participated to some degree. As I have previously stated, school data indicate that the vast majority of students come into Blakely under-prepared. My data also show how the institution does little to reduce pervasive student alienation. But by law, young people must attend school. Indeed, many want to attend. Many articulated a strong desire to "turn things around" or "to start doing better." And some found relative success. Others liked coming to school because they found a certain satisfaction through participation in the social world they helped to create. If the classroom was not a place where these students could find personal satisfaction, perhaps the world outside the classroom could be.

I have also attempted here to show how students negotiate disciplinary forces. While the behaviors I have described were often the very behaviors some point to in order to justify criminal justice oriented school discipline, it seems unlikely that these behaviors would subside significantly under the current policies. Discipline policies and practices do not necessarily *produce* these behaviors, but they did help set the conditions for the kinds of movements of liberty in which students engaged.

CHAPTER EIGHT
Student Conflicts

Interpersonal conflicts and physical violence were a reality at Gilbert Blakely. Indeed, as I discussed in the first chapter, a long history of organizational practices has helped to create the conditions for conflict and violence to escalate inside the school. On the most serious end of the spectrum, the official on-line School Report Card (2004-2005) indicates that there were eight major crimes against persons.[57] Then, dozens of physical altercations ranging in severity were described in the school occurrence reports.[58] And finally, there were countless, often undocumented, interpersonal conflicts that did not result in physical violence. These data and the media's depiction of the school, particularly the highly publicized serious violent incidents, help to justify in the collective mind of the public current school discipline policies. Further justification comes from recent DOE data that indicate a reduction in violent incidents at Blakely and other Impact schools since the implementation of the new discipline code and more law enforcement agents. But NYPD/DOE data on violence and media depictions do not provide a clear understanding of why students engage in conflict and violence at Blakely or how they make sense of it. Indeed, these reports tell us virtually nothing about everyday life in the school and little about the specific reasons for decreased violence. Moreover, data on decreased violence tell

[57] Data on the exact nature of these crimes is unavailable. However, they were most likely felony assault or robbery. No other crimes in the "major crimes against persons" category were noted in occurrence reports or reported in the news. These would include rape and murder. Felony assault is the charge commonly given to known gang members who participate in physical altercations.

[58] Given that school occurrence reports are written by school personnel, it is sometimes difficult to ascertain the actual charge brought against a student. During the school year, there were 27 incidents of physical altercations described in the occurrence reports for which no police action appeared to be taken. According to the School Report Card, there were 8 felony assaults and charges were brought against 31 students for minor crimes. But this category covers several offenses, including drug charges, petit larceny, and criminal mischief, along with misdemeanor assault. Then there were over 200 non-criminal police interventions (221 according to the occurrence reports and 242 according to police records posted on the school report card), such as the issuance of a summons for disorderly conduct). The vast majority of these disorderly conduct summonses, however, were not issued as a result an act of physical violence.

us nothing about the unintended consequences of penal management. In this chapter, I use data from interviews with a wide range of students in order to develop an analysis of the nature of conflict and violence at Blakely and the ways in which students make sense of conflict and violence among young urban residents.

First, my data show that there are a range of student perspectives, and that these varied perspectives were shaped, in part, by the individual's structural location and the amount of exposure one had to street violence. All students I interviewed believed that the school was less violent and more orderly than it had been during previous years. Many students also took offense at the media's violent depiction of their school. But students who were more immersed in street violence tended to perceive the school as more dangerous than did students with little or no involvement in street violence. Students immersed in street violence had perceptions that appeared to be shaped by what might be called "an ecology of danger" (Fagan, Wilkinson and Fagan), or a process of socialization in which any social exchange is seen as potentially threatening and can lead to violence. These students did not usually admit to being afraid; however, the notion of fear appeared to be a powerful sub-text in their narratives. Moreover, within the "ecology of danger," violence was often not viewed as something that could be avoided, only managed. However, even for these students, the school was also seen as safer than the streets or at least as a more controlled environment.

My data also illustrate that street violence (see Dance, 2002; Devine, 1996; Matue-Gelabert, 2000) and sometimes even prison life played a significant role in the ways students made meaning of school conflict and violence, and it appeared to shape their participation in it.

Finally, my data indicate that while serious violence was usually seen as limited and isolated (except for a small portion of the students), all students that I interviewed viewed petty conflict as pervasive, and students tended to view all conflict—physical or otherwise—as a terrain where valued identities were formed, friendships were solidified, bravery and loyalty were demonstrated and power relations were worked out. Students, I argue, were practicing what Goffman (1967) might call impression management, or more specific to this context, what Dance (2002) refers to as "tough fronts." Students' ability to present a "bad" or tough image became a resource at hand. These pervasive kinds of minor conflicts became a central part of the underlife (see chapter eight) of the school—a terrain where students forged identities, vied for social status, and found enjoyment. Many students, particularly those most alienated from the classroom, were often deeply invested in this terrain of conflict and the meaning it gave their school experience.

School Violence and Conflict in Perspective

From the first day I entered Gilbert Blakely, the media representations of the school as a violent and out-of-control place loomed large. Students frequently asked me if I chose to study Gilbert Blakely because of its reputation. Some—generally the ones who were more academically engaged—were eager to dispel the sensationalized, almost mythic reputation. Others—generally the ones more immersed in violence-- wanted me to know that Blakely was indeed a tough place. In either case, media depictions of the school clearly helped to frame student narratives of conflict and violence. There was little discussion on this topic without students' tendency to contend with those media images, and this appeared to me to take a psychological toll on the students. Either they felt the need to disassociate themselves and their school from media representations or they internalized them.

Regardless of the media images, however, every student I spoke with who had been at Blakely for three years or longer contended that the school felt safer than it had when they first entered Blakely. Additionally, students insisted that gang violence was highly visible and received much attention but was not the major source of conflict in the school.

While most students agreed that the police and security contributed to the over-all feeling of safety in the school, the most common explanation offered for this was the changes in the administration or policies that emanated from the Department of Education. Wanda's statement that the new principal was responsible for the positive changes represents the views held by many of the students I interviewed. Her description of past years highlighted the worst of what she had witnessed and so may read as an exaggeration, but there was no reason to doubt that she did witness everything she described (given many other similar narrations): "[S]ince the [three] years I've been here, it's gotten a little better from seeing kids getting beat down in the hallways, from seeing blood on the floor from a kid getting cut in the hallway, it's changed a lot. I've seen two deans that used to work in this school get beat up. I've seen a kid get cut. I've seen a kid get chased out and hit with a bat outside. I seen his face actually twist to the other side. So I've seen stuff in Blakely. I've seen stuff. When we used to have Dominicans against Blacks, I been here for that. I seen garbage cans fly in the air over my head."

After she provided this vivid description, I asked what caused the changes. She replied, "Well, for once we have a woman in charge."

"Interesting, so you think a woman principal has made a difference?"

"Yes, she has. Like from the other principal we had, he wasn't really caring like, he was basically scared of the students. Like she, she stands up to the students. 'Take your hat off!'"

While it is impossible for me to assess the significance of the principal's gender on school disciplinary practices, testimonies like these suggest how students tended to view the school as a safer place than it had been and that the reduction of violence and disruption was an outcome of better educational leadership (a common perspective among educators in the building as well).

The second most common answer students offered to explain the reduction of violence and disruption in the school was the administration's removal of over one hundred students from the school during the previous year. This group of students was made up primarily of over-age students with few or no academic credits. Some of these students also had significant disciplinary records but not all of them did. I was told by several school personnel that these students were usually transferred into alternative diploma-granting programs or GED programs.

Much of the student discourse around the removal of "troublemakers" reflected the dominant institutional discourse that looked uncritically at the practice of exiling large numbers of bodies to alternative sites with questionable records for preparing students for academic success. Damian, for example, referred to this administrative action as "removing the cancer from the school." Malik, however, was one of the few who offered a critique of the practice. He noted that many of the students who were removed had been "very smart, good students" and now were "on the streets," but he conceded that their absence probably had a positive impact of the overall school atmosphere.

In sum, students spoke about Blakely as a relatively safe place, certainly safer than it used to be and safer than other domains in their lives, such as their neighborhoods or the "projects" they lived in. Serious violence was seen as fairly uncommon and isolated within the school. The majority of students I spoke with expressed that physical violence was not part of their daily personal experience in school and that it was possible to avoid physical altercations. They attributed the sense of safety mainly to administrators and deans and to educational policy.

Making Sense of School Violence and Conflict at the Street/Prison Nexus

As the physical spaces of school, the streets, and the institutions of the criminal and juvenile justice systems become instantiated in each other through policy, these domains appeared to become psychically linked in students' minds. So even though the school was perceived as (and was) a relatively safe place, the conflict and violence that take place within the school were, in part, structured by the logic of street and prison culture. Several researchers have previously observed the connection between street violence and school violence (Brotherton, 1996; Dance, 2002, Devine, 1996; Matue-Gelabert, 2002). Similarly, my data show that while school conflict and violence took on its own meanings, there was clearly what Matue-Gelabert (2002) would call a bi-directional conflict flow between school and street. Even small conflicts, such as those that arose over cutting in front of someone on the line to get into the lunch room, could quickly take on the logic of street violence. And for students who tend to be more street savvy or who had experience being incarcerated, the street and prison became especially central to the ways they made meaning of school conflict and violence. In this framework, these students relied on "street rules" to manage or avoid escalated conflict and violence.

I wake up to the same damn thing everyday.

"The inclination to violence springs from the circumstances of life among the ghetto poor—the lack of jobs that pay a living wage, the sigma of race, the fallout from rampant drug use and drug trafficking, and the resulting alienation and lack of hope for the future" (Anderson, 1999, 81).

Violence and conflict associated with the street appeared to be a prominent theme in the lives of Blakely students who come from high-poverty neighborhoods with staggering rates of poverty. Some student who I spoke with tended to view violence in terms of something that needed to be managed rather than something that could be eliminated from their lives. Its existence was embedded far too deeply into the social fabric of their communities. One day in the spring, I asked the students in the peer mediation class (where I observed and sometimes participated a few times a week) if they would write down their thoughts on youth violence. I asked "What role does violence play in the lives of young people? Why do you think some young people resort to acts of violence? How can individuals and groups resolve conflicts without violence?" Here are the answers I received:

Different cliques can be the cause of violence because of misunderstandings. I believe that it is very hard to resolve conflicts without violence between groups because there is always someone in one of the groups who seem dissatisfied with the other.

I think violence plays a huge role in young people['s lives] because we see it on the television and I rap about it a lot because it's what I know because they feel they'll get respect that way. I really can't answer that question [how do individuals resolve conflict] but the easiest way is to do something positive in life.

Violence plays a major role in young people['s] lives. Some young people resort to violence because we come from a time when violence is the first choice also because of gangster movies/music.

I think young people turn to violence because they feel hopeless and afraid and pressured. They feel they can't rely on adults.

The role that violence plays in young people['s lives] is like a monotonous quiz we take everyday. We always have to prove ourselves through it everyday.

Violence plays a major role in a lot of inner city youth[s' lives] because of peer pressure trying to fit in and it's easier to fight than to talk. I don't know [how to resolve conflicts without violence].

Violence plays the part of survival. I think they resort to violence because that is all they know and what they grew up with. They could come to an agreement by talking or forming a truce.

Violence plays a big role in young people['s lives]. It is good to resolve conflicts by talking but sometimes you have to fight because enough is enough.

These students' comments, like those of the students I interviewed, suggest that violence among young people was pervasive and difficult to avoid. Young people were pressured into it. It is a "way to get respect," "all they know," and a matter of "survival." Violence permeates their lives through music and gangsta movies, and it is viewed as a daily theme. It was also described as a phenomenon that grows out of fear and the absence of reliable adults.

All students with whom I spoke had regular experiences either as witnesses, victims, or instigators of street violence. It was generally accepted that street violence was a reality in their neighborhood. There was, however, a range of perceptions, as to whether or not violence was avoidable. For a small but highly visible group, it seemed unavoidable. For the vast majority, it was considered a continual struggle to avoid violence. And for a small number of students on the other end of the spectrum, avoiding violence meant remaining focused on academic work and, in some cases, a job and staying out of the streets.

The students I spoke with who viewed the avoidance of violence a daily struggle or nearly impossible clearly recognized their own (and other young people's) agency, but many of their comments also suggested a feeling of being born into a violent context. Age also seemed to play a factor in how these students understood violence. That is, some students tended to view violence as a function of youth as much as it might be a function of living in an urban environment. In this sense, an ecology of danger develops. Subsequently these young people described finding ways to forge valued identities and foster their sense of belongingness within its context. At the same time, young people also found ways to take some control over existing violence through strategic participation in it.

One afternoon while sitting in his living room, Carlos speaks to me about his history of getting into fights with other young people. He says, "I used to see it like it was a normal thing, you know. I used to see it like, oh, that's how it is here. Because you know, I'm from New York, so I'm thinking that's how it is, that's how it goes down."

Later in our conversation, he repeats this idea when I ask him to explain why he thinks young people engage in physical violence.

"I mean it's just how… like, I'm a kid from the Bronx, right?"

Carlos has trouble explaining exactly why young people fight. He can only say that he had believed that was what it meant to be from the Bronx.

Jamal, like Carlos, views daily experience with street violence and conflict as part of what it means to grow up in an urban environment. But although Jamal does not see an alternative to street violence, he can point out ways in which he negotiates the terrain of violence to his benefit. His reflections on street violence reveal how he relishes in the sense of camaraderie it provides him. He also understands it as an arena in which he can demonstrate loyalty to friends. As he contrasts himself to "rich kids" from suburban areas, he says of them, "You never really had nobody that you can say, that's my nigga for life, *for life.* You know what that means? A lot of people don't even know what that means, to have a friend for life, for life, for the rest of your life just because he was standing on the corner when somebody shot at you. That makes you friends for life. Cause we coulda died that day. And we would have been friends that same day so now it's for life. A lot of people don't know what that means. They don't even know what that feels like. That's the greatest feeling in the world. I don't care what anybody says. That's the greatest feeling in the

world to know that no matter what happens, no matter what happens in the streets, he's behind me, no matter what."

Jamal's narrative contains romantic images that seem to evoke the voice of a war-time soldier and stories of loyalty, ultimate sacrifice, and the ultimate emotional rush of friends escaping death together. However, Jamal's reflections also poignantly reveal a feeling of being trapped. For example, he once said, "So that's it. And I mean, I don't like it [street violence and always having to be on guard]. What can you do? I wake up in the same place every morning. It's not like I sleep in and wake up in Heaven. I wake up to *the same damn thing every day*." Like Carlos, Jamal appeared to have the sense that this was just the way life was supposed to be for young people living in poor and working class urban neighborhoods. Interesting, their perspectives are actually no different from the logic that supports order maintenance policing: violence (and crime) are inevitable so we should try to find ways to limit or prevent it. The police had their way of managing it; the students had their own.

Jamal's sense of feeling born, or waking up every day, into violence led me to want to explore issues of structure and agency with him. Did he feel responsible or implicated in the pervasiveness of street violence? Did he view young people as social agents or did he simply see young people as victims of circumstance? Jamal's narrative of conflict and violence illustrates the tensions between structure and agency. I ask him what adults can do to help reduce violence among young people. He says, "At the end of the day, it doesn't come down to them. It's not them that can prevent the violence. We [young people] can prevent the violence."

"How can kids do that?" I ask.

Jamal replies, “Get along.”

“Do you think that’s possible, or do you think there’s anything adults can do to help?”

“I mean I don’t know,” he says. “There’s rules in the hood that aren’t rules at all. Like they never been written down. But every person knows them. You understand what I’m saying?” he asks. “They not rules that say you can’t bring do-rags in [to school] but there’s rules in the street that say you can’t look at a guy like that. Regardless of anything, there’s rules to the streets. No matter, if you’re from the streets, those rules apply to you no matter where you go, if you go to prison, Catholic school, Harvard, they still apply because that’s in you. There’s rules you got to follow. There’s rules that say you can’t look at someone like that.”

“So who makes those rules?” I ask.

“The streets make the rules.”

Jamal refers to a kind of code of the street (Anderson, 1999), an unwritten code of conduct that, in some ways, helps to manage violence. At the same time, however, it serves to perpetuate it. But for young men and women who find it nearly impossible to imagine their neighborhoods free of violence, following the code provides several benefits. As other researchers have demonstrated, toughness and strategic engagement in violence can provide protection against further violence, a sense of self-respect, the respect of others, and sometimes economic rewards (see Brotherton, 2004; Bourguois, 1995). When educators invest almost nothing in providing a new or different framework for making sense of violence and conflict, street rules easily take hold inside the school building.

I'm gonna get my respect

The link between street violence and the school is evident. There is also a link between the street and prison life. In his theory of the symbiosis of prison and ghetto, Wacquant (2001) implicates segregated ghetto schools as part of the continuum linking ghetto and prison. He argues that schools in what he calls the "hyper-ghetto" operate as institutions of confinement and are stripped of the resources needed to carry out educative aims. In a school that has undergone a process of penalization, it stands to reason that some students might view school conflict and violence through a prison lens.

The conflict narratives of a small but highly visible group of students at Blakely point to the symbiosis about which Wacquant theorizes. The themes embedded in these narratives appear to be influenced not only by street violence, but also by the re-conceptualization of the school as prison. These themes center on the quest for respect, not being seen as a punk, and having an attitude. Again, students viewed these themes as related to gaining protection and enjoying an elevated social status. Steven's testimony provides one of the most cogent illustrative examples, although it is important to note that it represents an extreme. The vast majority of students at Blakely did not rely on a prison framework to explain school-based conflicts, nor did they speak about being the instigators of violence or blatantly taking pleasure from it. Steven, unlike most Blakely students, reported that he had been incarcerated on several occasions. He claimed that he was first incarcerated at the age of 13 for kidnapping his younger brother from foster care to bring him home. He told me he did four months "Upstate."

One day while sitting at a table at the far end of the cafeteria during a noisy lunch period with Steven and his friend Frankie, Steven reminisces about a "crew" he started

inside Blakely. He says, "I opened up my own crew. You understand? And we fucked up a lot of people. That shit was the best days of my life. We beat the shit out of a lot of people and my own boys snitched me out. My right-hand man snitched me out."

"Why do you do that?" I ask.

"What?"

"Why do you, um, fuck up other people, as you say?" Steven and Frankie giggle at my uncharacteristic use of language. They strike me as a little goofy.

"Because back then everywhere I'd go all I heard was, yo, you need respect, you need respect, you need respect. If you go to jail you gotta earn your respect. If you're in the school you gotta earn your respect. You understand? So I looked at it in a different way. I looked at it like I'm gonna get *my* respect…."

My eyes span the length of the enormous room over the throng of animated and boisterous students. From that distance, the significance of the social maneuverings of seating arrangements, territory marking, lunch time banter, dice games, and marijuana dealing is obscured.

"Why is respect so important?" I ask.

"Because if like you get no respect like this man (pointing to Frankie), people are going to think of him, when you go to jail, when you first get there, you think they're going to look at you and not do nothing? They're gonna do something."

"Respect is protection for jail?"

"No, it's protection everywhere. I got respect here [in the school]. No one will fuck with me."

As Steven explains the importance of attaining respect, he moves back and forth between the school and jail. At times, it is not clear which institution is forefront in his mind. I had asked him about conflict in school, but several times he shifts into a description of the need for respect in prison.

Along with the slippage between school and prison, Steven's narrative also highlights the significance of obtaining and maintaining respect among peers. Respect is instrumental; it serves as a form of protection. Students like Steven, sometimes coming from prison or other institutional settings, enter a school with a notorious reputation and decide that in order to be safe they must initiate a physical altercation as a means of reducing the likelihood of their becoming a victim. In this sense, the media, which help foster the notorious reputation of the school, play a role in shaping students' behaviors.

Steven also mentions starting a crew; others join established gangs. These networks serve as a form of protection, as well as a surrogate family for some.[59] While such students spoke about protection, they did not often talk about fear. Nevertheless, their non-gang affiliated school mates did. When I asked students who were not in gangs about the gang presence in their school, they often rolled their eyes. The following statements on why students join gangs are representative of those found throughout my interview transcripts. "They're afraid." "They're pussy. They don't want to fight alone." "They gotta hide behind their crew." Thus, fear appeared to play an important role in the decision to join a gang and participate in the more violent forms of conflict found in the school.

[59] There is a considerable literature on why young people join gangs and the functions they serve in their lives. (See Brotherton and Barrios, 2004, Campbell, 1984; Chesney-Lind, 1997; Kontos, Brotherton & Barrios, 2003). The statements I collected from students why reported being members of gangs or crews were consistent with these studies.

But it was not just serious forms of school violence that emanated from, or was shaped by, a street logic. Minor daily conflict was much more common at Blakely than the relatively few major incidents of fighting that had gotten so much media attention, and it was often infused with the logic associated with more serious forms of violence from the street or prison. Wanda, for example, spoke about the perceived need to take preemptive action or to be the first one in a situation to present a tough posture. She insisted that "having an attitude" can save a person from being seen as a punk, and this was beneficial for students who wished to avoid a physical confrontation. She explained it this way, "You have to defend yourself because if you don't, they [other students] going to take you for being a punk and they going to walk all over you… Let me show [how] attitude [can] work for you. There could be a girl that want to fight you, come up in your face, right. If you be like 'leave me alone, leave me alone.' The girl's gonna think you a punk. If you be like 'whatever, get out of my face bitch, you nothing. You this. You that.' It could help you. The girls going to be like, 'oh, wow. Yo, she really think she hardcore.'" So, in Wanda's estimation, having an attitude is about presenting a tough front (Dance, 2000)—a means of protecting oneself against real or perceived violence.

Almost every student I met in the school spoke about not wanting to be viewed by others as a punk. This appeared to be related to a student's desire to maintain a positive sense of self. But they almost always framed it as an issue of survival or protection. Students understood that tough posturing might escalate into a situation where they would have to strike another student, but their hope was that the tough posture would serve as a deterrent.

The above student narratives serve as an illustrative example of how the street and prison life became a framework for making meaning of school violence. This is consistent with previous studies of urban school violence (Dance, 2002, Devine, 1996; Matue-Gelabert, 2000). In this framework, students found it useful to assume tough fronts and even initiate fights. In doing so, they protect their reputations and themselves (from further physical violence) and gain social status.

The School as "A Safe Place to Take Your Beef"

The analysis above supports the notion that the prevailing school culture that I observed was one where many students felt that they must be on guard, ready to present a tough posture and protect their reputations. This was especially true for students who were in gangs or regularly involved in street violence. But students' narratives of conflict were complex and nuanced. Students also recognized that the school offered a certain element of safety. It was certainly seen as safer than the streets. Thus, in their attempt to manage violence, some students would choose to initiate a conflict or respond to a threat inside the school because the school was seen as a "safe place to take your beef." In other words, the school provided a space where conflicts could be worked out, through violence, but in a relatively controlled environment.

One day sitting in Base with Officer Hoffmann, I ask him about the nature of student conflicts and the influence of gangs. He says, "[T]here's such an infatuation at this point and time with gangs and kids and what's being displayed in the media and on MTV and all that stuff, so they're just assuming that that's the way you gotta do it. You got to have your posse. This is how you got to do things. If you're going to fight you have your 15 friends with you, you know, do your stomping. So in one way or another I think it's more like a

style that has formed from gang activity more so than it actually being gang related. Most of the real gangs out there aren't getting involved in these petty level gang fights."

Officer Hoffmann's idea that much of student conflict occurs in the *style* of the gang but is not actually gang-related is a theme that emerged in Dance's (2002) school-based ethnographic study of the influence of street culture on schooling. In her study, she notes that it is not so much the "hardcore" students that are invested in conflict, but the "wannabes," young people who are trying to create a strong image for themselves by assuming tough postures.

I then go on to ask Hoffmann about the specific connection between street violence and what he sees occurring in the school. His response reveals how students may be using the security apparatus in the school as a form of harm reduction. That is, street conflicts are not carried into the school *despite* the security apparatus, but, at times, *because* of it.

Hoffmann says, "Kids will feel safer here [than they do on the street] because, one, they know people are getting scanned coming in here so more than likely I'm not going to get shot in school. But also a lot kids, one of the things with schools is the only reason things might increase is because they know where the person's going to be. It's like I got beef with this guy. I know he's going to be at Gilbert Blakely today so I'm going there to deal with it, because if you notice, a lot of this stuff will materialize inside the school. In my opinion it's because they want to deal with it, but they really don't want to deal with it. They don't want to have to take it the full level because they know if they start a fight in school it's going to get broken up. A lot of times when a kid feels like he got punked by somebody he'll be like 'alright I got to step up to this guy or I'm going to look like a punk.' So what he'll do is pick that fight in the hallway in the middle of classes when there's a

school safety agent ten feet away from them knowing full well that somebody will be there in seconds. So okay, what, 'I got punched two or three times. Alright I still stepped up, and I don't look like a punk now.' So that's what I see in the school."

"They do it in a controlled environment." I say.

"Exactly, because I ask these kids why are you dealing with it here? Why don't you go deal with it in your neighborhood, or you know? I'm like you do realize one, you're less likely to get caught in you own neighborhoods, and I'm not *telling* them to go do it in their neighborhoods. I'm just trying to figure out why. And I'm wondering if that was it, but they're never going to tell me that."

I was not sure students would tell me either, but I decided to start asking. Jamal's testimony represents the kinds of responses I received. "Somebody once told me that they think that kids take their beef inside school because it's like…"

"A second home," Jamal interjects

"And it's also restricted because there's only a certain amount of violence that can occur because there're all these cops here, and there're security cameras. Do you think that's true?"

"Of course."

"So kids will take it to the schools…"

"Absolutely, think about it," he says. There's nothing in the street that when you walk over it, it goes 'beep, beep, beep, beep' to let someone know that you have a weapon on you. So when you're in the streets and you want to smart mouth, you got to think…"

After hearing responses like these, I came to realize that at least some students were conscious of their decisions to begin a fight or to protect their reputations through assertions

of toughness inside the school because it offered a relatively controlled environment compared to the streets. I wondered, as well, how many students not conscious of their reasons still based their decisions to engage in physical altercations inside the school on the fact that the violence would likely be contained.

In this situation, students' re-making of the school as a safe place to fight flies in the face of the penal control efforts in the school. These young people were provided very few and generally grossly under-supported spaces for effective and non-violent conflict resolution, so some have opted to handle conflict in the very place it is most suppressed so that they may limit the negative consequences. Additionally, they found a way to protect their reputations in a less threatening environment.

He Said/She Said and Other Stupid Stuff

Until now, I have focused mainly on the more serious kinds of conflicts, those involving physical violence or the potential of physical violence, but as I have stated, most student conflict developed over mundane and minor disputes—pettiness, snubs, gossip, and misunderstandings or disagreements. These kinds of disputes take on great significance, particularly for students who are alienated from the classroom experience. Like other aspects of the underlife of the school (including the terrain of serious violence), petty conflict is a domain where power relations get worked out, pleasure is experienced, and assertions of self are made. But petty conflict can also quickly escalate into more serious forms of violent conflict. In this section, I describe some of the ways students framed petty conflict and the meanings they attached to it.

Students' responses on the issue of student conflict varied, but there were several recurring themes. For instance, I repeatedly heard that boys fought over girls and girls began

fights over boys. Sitting with Damian, Greg, and Darnell, I ask, "What do you think are the most common causes [of conflict and violence]?"

"Girls," Damian blurts out before I can finish.

"Girls," Greg adds emphatically.

"Girls," Darnell agrees.

"Girls?" I repeat. "So when guys are fighting, it's over girls?"

Damian: "Not always but…:

Greg: "Not always."

"It always leads to something like that. And if it's not that, then the second reason is gangs," Damian says.

"Gangs," I say.

"And if it's not gangs then it's just beef, like from the streets," Damian adds.

"Yeah, stupid stuff," Darnell says.

"So stuff carries in from the streets. But what's that related to? Neighborhood fights?

"Just like, yeah. And it just like leads into the school," Damian clarifies.

"That's interesting that you think 'girls' is number one."

Damian: "Girls is number one."

Greg: "Girls is at the top of the list. Yup."

Students, when asked about the causes of conflict in the school, usually batted off a list of things that sounded quite mundane. They would immediately bring up fighting on the lines going into the lunch room or pushing in the hallways or stealing food or teasing. "Kids are always pushing," several students explain, "and cutting in front of other students."

Students also frequently spoke about fights starting over "stupid stuff," incidents escalating out of simple misunderstandings or gossip. They also spoke about instigators (according to my data, mostly girls) who found it fun to watch others get into fights. Alex is one of a few who put these kinds of conflicts in terms of "he said/she said." I asked him to explain.

"They want to fulfill their needs. They want to see a fight," he says.

"Is it a third person who starts a fight?"

"Yeah, he said/ she said," Alex replies.

"What's that?"

Alex, who usually spoke to me in a relatively formal register and standard form of English, replies, "He said/she said is like a rumor that's made up. Like, say somebody comes to me and says, 'Oh, Alex, Antoine says, you a bum ass nigga. You was wearing his socks the other day,' and then he didn't really say that, but the person that told me then goes to Antoine and says, "Oh, Alex said you a dirty nigga. You don't wash up.' That's 'he said, she said.' And then we confront each other about it and just be like, 'well this girl said that you said that I was a bum ass nigga.' And then he be like 'I didn't say that. But Lindsey told me that you said that I was a dirty nigga and that I don't wash up.' And then it all comes to her. That's 'he said/she said.'"

Alex's explanation sheds some light on the social drama of gossip and conflict among students at Blakely, and perhaps young people in general. His narrative offers an example of how such conflicts offer opportunities for students to gain a sense of control over a situation. Some students even take pleasure in instigating conflict between other students. And there are other benefits. Like the more serious, physical altercations, these petty

conflicts serve as a pastime, a means of conquering boredom, gaining social status, and a way of showing courage or loyalty to friends. These benefits are kinds of symbolic resources for students as they make meaning of their school experience and carve out social identities within the school.

But these relatively minor types of conflict could escalate quickly. This was because even students who did not frequently participate in violence became invested in ensuring that they were not perceived as a punk as Wanda explained. So conflict labeled "he said/she said or other stupid stuff," which was the most pervasive type of conflict and typical perhaps in any adolescent environment, took on specific meanings in the context of Gilbert Blakely. Unfortunately, however, the way the school dealt with such conflict was ineffective. Many individuals, including the deans, Juarez, and Hoffmann, spend considerable time each day trying to manage these conflicts before they escalated into violent incidents, but in a school where the classroom held such little meaning for so many students and petty conflict took on such significant meaning, the efforts of individual adults was not enough, and the suppressive forces of penal management appeared more so to move conflict from one place to another and criminalize it more than actually challenge its existence.

Conclusion

Myriad structural and cultural forces lay the foundation for urban violence, and youthful conflict is inevitable in any environment. However, district level school policy, namely tracking, helped to set the conditions for violence at Blakely. For years, it was used as a place to send students with poor academic records. It has a disproportionately high number of students in special education, and it appears to have a disproportionately high

number of students with disciplinary records. Moreover, there was no systematic effort to engage such students intellectually. Most students enter Blakely with reading and math scores well below grade level. Students are then confronted with test preparation and materials that are often too difficult or irrelevant to their lives. They often have no prior framework for making sense of them. This is not to say that there are no efforts made on the individual level. Many individual teachers I met at Blakely showed tremendous effort, but myriad forces, as I discussed in chapter three, structure the classroom in a way that further alienates students from academic work. So it is no wonder that the underlife of the institution, including conflict, would take on such significance in students' lives.

Then, the school offers little space for non-violent conflict resolution. Again, on an individual level, there are several examples of valiant efforts being made, most notably, Ms. Orozco's peer-mediation class where students have the opportunity to role play relevant and realistic conflicts. They then develop strategies to resolve conflict non-violently to share with peers. The class also provides a space for important discussions about what is occurring in students' daily lives, topics that are routinely erased, ignored, or even forbidden in most spaces of the school. But there is little support for this class. It is not a school-wide program. In fact, I spoke to a number of students who had never heard about it or knew nothing about it. It was also designed for students who already demonstrated a certain level of competency in taking on positive leadership positions, but instead it was most often used for students who needed an extra credit. So the class ended up with some of the most marginalized students in the school, students who were immersed in violence, students with poor academic records, and students who found it difficult to sit in any class. While Ms. Orozco made the most out of this space and engaged these students in important ways, the

course, which was the only one of its kind, was not used for its stated purpose, nor was it used to its fullest potential. For the most part, conflicts, especially those involving physical altercations or gang members, were framed as violations of the law or major crimes and managed primarily through the penal system or criminal procedural level strategies. This only served to reinforce the street-school (and even prison) connection in the ways students made sense of conflict.

Left to their own devises, students develop certain conflict management strategies. They look for forms of protection and ways to minimize the negative consequences of the violence that already exists around them. Some students join gangs or form crews. Some partake in preemptive defense maneuvers, instigating a physical altercation so that they can position themselves well and limit the possibility of future attacks. But most students I met claimed they avoid conflict as much as possible but reported not backing down if someone were to approach them in an aggressive manner. Others talked about walking away from potentially violent situations, but it was admittedly not always an easy thing to do. Finally, there were students who took their arguments from the street into the school so that it would be contained, reducing the likelihood of getting hurt.

It was clear that physical violence and other forms of conflict played multiple roles in students' daily lives. Some students took pleasure in it. It was fun. And many used the terrain of conflict to make meaning of the school experience and as a way to construct a strong self-image. But this does not negate their fear and their efforts to manage and (potentially) minimize violence through strategic and limited uses.

CHAPTER NINE
Making Sense of Law Enforcement in School and Rationales for Non-compliance

More often than not, students at Gilbert Blakely received summonses to criminal court or even got arrested as an outcome of a series of interactions beginning with the breaking of a school rule. At times, the inciting moment was when a student was simply approached by a law enforcement agent. In chapter three, I examined these kinds of interactions and showed how the use of order maintenance policing criminalizes misbehavior, helped to create a prevailing school culture of penal control, and worked to link the school to an ideology of neighborhood policing and institutions of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Building on that analysis, this chapter presents data that show what the disciplinary process, particularly order maintenance policing, looked like from the perspectives of students. I examine how institutional practices shaped their perspectives and their actions. I also examine the possible relationship between attitudes formed within urban communities and attitudes formed within the school. Finally, I document, from the students' perspectives, the question of how minor rule breaking can lead to the issuance of a summons. It seemed to me that, at times, students could have avoided getting a summons if only they had cooperated with the police when confronted by them. Indeed, there seemed to be some truth to the institutional discourse that constructed the process of getting summoned to criminal court solely as a matter of personal choice—the student's choice. Why don't students just hand over their IDs, or answer the officer's questions, or head to class, or take off their hats, or agree to be escorted to B-40? Couldn't they just simply comply and avoid getting a summons?

Common themes that emerged in my data centered on the lack of respect law enforcement officials showed students and resentments over law enforcement's increased authority inside the school building. That is, students were not afforded the same civil rights protections they would be given on the street. I also noticed that students' views of the police in school sometimes appeared to be influenced by or entangled with the ways in which they made sense of the police in their neighborhoods. And if this were true, I wondered how the resentments that developed in the school might negatively influence their interactions with the police on the streets.

My data show that even students who generally chose to cooperate with the police believed that there were problems with the way students were addressed. These students spoke of such themes as harassment and discrimination. Students who tended to not cooperate with law enforcement when they were approached by an officer or agent appeared to be motivated by what might be called a kind of political indignation – a desire to "stand up for your rights," and by intra-group power relations (among students) and issues of social status. That is, students sometimes reported that non-compliance with law enforcement was brought on by a student's desire to look tough in front of his or her peers. But the power relations between students and law enforcement agents and the power relations among students were not unrelated. In the final analysis, drawing on theories of resistance, I will argue that students' non-compliance with law enforcement, regardless of its immediate or expressed motivation, was the most overt and conscious acts of resistance found within the school.

Making Sense of School Discipline: Dysfunction, Disrespect, and Frustration

Almost every student with whom I spoke had a critique of disciplinary practices in general. This was so prevalent, in fact, that I made an effort to find students who did not share this critique, one of the few which is presented later in the chapter. In a survey that I left for students in the detention room for one week, 73% (27 out of the 37 respondents who addressed this question) indicated that they believed the disciplinary incident in which they had just been involved had been handled unfairly. In itself, this is not surprising or very interesting. But their specific remarks are important for understanding the context in which frustration grows and non-compliance occurs. Students pointed to a host of frustrating experiences. These included what we might term bureaucratic dysfunction, such as school officials misplacing students' IDs after they had been taken away resulting in students being forced to remain is the detention room until they could get their IDs returned. Other students complained that their IDs were still "blocked" after the allotted time for a suspension (meaning that when their cards were swiped in the computer, it indicated that the student was still barred from the school and, therefore must continue sitting in the detention room or leave the building until the problem was rectified). Other responses suggested that students experienced high levels of inflexibility in the way policies were administered. Five students complained that they were brought down to B-40 for being in the bathroom when the bell rang, and nine students claimed they were "picked up" on their way to class, indicating they were only a few minutes late. In responding to the question "How do you feel about the way the situation was handled," one student wrote: *they should of [sic] let me go to class because I was in front of it.* Other responses indicated that students felt disrespected (*the dean went off on me; kids don't cooperate because they are disrespected*)

or believed they were not being listened to. In describing how he got kicked out of class for talking to himself, one student wrote: *I could have not talked to myself or curse but I don't think that is means to have security called on me… she [underline his][his teacher] could have calmed down for a second and maybe talked to me. That would have been more effective.*

Most of the students who were sent to B-40 were not given summonses. These were students who were late for school or who were stopped by deans or perhaps security agents for being in the hallway when they weren't supposed to be there and agreed to be escorted to the detention room. Others had problems in the classroom, and a relatively small number of students in B-40 had been sent there after some kind of incident, such as a fight. The statements these students provided—even students who had not been subjected to criminal procedural level strategies—suggest high levels of frustration with disciplinary practices and pervasive dysfunction. This frustration helps to set the context in which students make sense of and respond to order maintenance policing.

Law Enforcement Inside Blakely

As order maintenance takes hold inside the school, the boundaries between neighborhood policing and school discipline blur. Student views of law enforcement inside the school appeared to be, in some cases, informed by their neighborhood experiences and sentiments and the collective (and sometimes personal) memories of a history of strained community-police relations. Students' attitudes reflected the lived contradictions of individuals who come from communities where stories of police brutality and non-responsiveness generate anger and distrust. Yet, on the other hand, many individuals look to the police to protect them from neighborhood violence and crime.

What was more evident was how students' understandings of the presence of law enforcement in the school were shaped by a specific set of circumstance found inside the school. As I explained above, students expressed considerable frustration at how discipline was handled in general. They expressed feelings of not being listened to and being disrespected. Sometimes these feelings were related to frustrations experienced in the classroom. Students also pointed to bureaucratic dysfunction and the perceived unfairness embedded in discipline practices, and these perspectives were intertwined with the ways students made sense of law enforcement in the school and the ways they negotiated encounters with law enforcement.

Some students expressed resentment at the mere presence of law enforcement in the school, but most were mainly critical of the strategies they used. Virtually, every student I interviewed had some level of critique of the strategies that were employed and of the treatment students received. Within the school, students also tended to view the police presence as excessive—creating a situation in which students had multiple contacts with law enforcement officials each day. And many suggested that the police and agents had considerably more power inside the school than they did outside. This appeared to lead to greater amounts of animosity between students and law enforcement officials.

Animosity intensified despite the fact that the presence of law enforcement officials inside the school became normalized; daily interactions between students and police officers and agents became routinized and expected. As I pointed out in chapter two, daily rituals, such as the walk through the metal detector or hallway sweeps, usually occurred without contestation. In a sense, law enforcement officials appeared to have been absorbed into the school community, or at least they have come to be seen as essential players in the social

drama that characterizes the school experience. And in some cases, they even became friendly with students. The sections below identify and expound on the various frameworks students used to make sense of the police and their relationship to the police inside and outside school.

The community and the school

Students' attitudes toward law enforcement in their school can be understood within the larger context of the collective memories of strained community-police relations, especially in the Bronx and other areas of New York City. Whether or not a student had been a victim of maltreatment at the hands of law enforcement, the students in my study were part of a community with a history of distrust and strained police-citizen relations based on stories of police non-responsiveness, harassment, and brutality. Although my own study was limited to the school population, and thus does not document a variety of community members' perspectives of the police, there is significant documentation on the public outrage (see for example, NYS Office of Attorney General Office's Report on NYC "stop and frisk" practices [1999] and Davis and Matue-Gelabert, 1999) over police misconduct and abuse associated with the police tactics of former NYC mayor Rudolf Giuliani's Quality of Life Campaign (see chapter one for a detailed discussion) and the shootings or abuse of such men as Anthony Bias, Amadou Diallo, Abner Louima, and Patrick Dorisman whose names have become emblematic of police brutality. My data are consistent with these accounts of strained community-police relations as they reveal students' resentments and distrust toward the police, based on personal experience or stories they have heard in newspapers or circulating through their neighborhoods.

Jamal believed that youth, in particular, want to avoid the police. He said that there was no mutual respect among the police and young people in his neighborhood. When I asked him why he thought young people did not respect the police, his response revealed how he views police officers as a group in opposition to his own interests as a young Black person.

He says, "Cause the cops *say* they're from the streets, but *we're* from the streets. And we're from the ghetto. If you go through this neighborhood or any other neighborhood that's going through the same problems this neighborhood suffers from, you'll hear the same answer. Not probably everybody. Probably senior citizens might be happy, mothers, fathers probably be happy, but as far as youth, you know…We don't talk to the cops. We don't associate with the cops. We don't have anything to do with the cops. We don't. We stay away from all that. You understand what I'm saying? We want to live our life."

Jamal's sees the police as outsiders in his neighborhood and notes that young people generally want to stay away from the police so that they can "live their lives." Additionally, he appears to believe that the police position themselves as if they are from the communities they are policing, but Jamal implied that he and his fellow (young) community members were the authentic members of "the ghetto" Jamal takes a certain pride in his identity of "being from the ghetto"—one that is constructed in opposition to the police.

At other times, students expressed their distrust of the police when they refused to turn to the police when there was a potentially dangerous situation. For example, one afternoon I came across Ms. Jenkins in the hallway speaking with a girl who was very upset. A group of female students had threatened to beat her up. Ms. Jenkins tried to calm the girl down and devise a plan. She suggested that the police should be informed and that perhaps

a security agent could escort her out of the neighborhood. But the frightened and agitated girl would not accept the plan. "The police don't make me feel safe!" she kept repeating. "They never did nothing for me."

Strained relationships with the police were also apparent among some of the students who believed that the police play an essential role in school and neighborhood safety. For example, Alisa, a sophomore who did well in her honors classes and was a member of the student government, had this to say when I asked her about the police. "The police, I didn't care for the police at all. My uncle was attacked by the police." She pauses and then adds, "But now I see they're trying to do their job, now that they're here [in the school]."

"How do you feel about them being here?" I ask.

She shrugs her shoulders. "I like them here. You know, it takes time to get over stuff like [having a relative attacked]. I mean they're doing their job."

Alisa's comments might reflect her reluctance to speak too ill of the police in front of the white woman sitting across from her. However, they may also represent the lived and historical contradictions embedded in the complex relationships between poor and working class people of color and law enforcement. Anger over abuse and injustice coexist with a desire to feel safe in neighborhoods wrought with violence and a hope that the presence of community police officers might contribute to increased levels of public safety as they purport to do.

After Carlos received the assistance of the police one night in late January when he and his girlfriend Jennifer were attacked by a group of young people, I was curious to see if his strong critique, which I had heard him voice on many occasions, had shifted. It did. It had become more nuanced. That is, in light of the incident, he conceded for the first time

since I met him that some officers were committed to the good of the public. He said, "[T]here's always crooked cops. But then when something happens to you, they're the first ones you call for help. But I felt like, you know, it's good that they're here. But I always, there's always those cops that do the job because they want to help people, and they want to help the community and maybe change the world. And there's those cops that turn [become] cops because they think that kids are punks, and all they like to do, you know '[kids are] all thugs.' And then that's how they treat you. You know, there are two different ways of looking at it."

These statements about the police illustrate how students' attitudes might be influenced by experiences they have had beyond the confines of the school. These kinds of comments do not necessarily reflect new attitudes based solely on the police presence in school; they reflect a history of distrust and a collective memory of abuse and non-responsiveness, as well as a desire for, or in Carlos's case, an instance of, police coming to the aid of a citizen.

"They come out real ugly."

Inside the school, however, the nature of "community"-police relations and experiences with law enforcement took on unique characteristics. Whether students were academically engaged or not or had been involved in a discipline case or had not, virtually all students I interviewed held some level of critique of the actions of law enforcement in the school, especially those of security agents. Indeed, most students running for student government positions included a statement about the need to address police/security agent "harassment" and reduce the number of summonses students were receiving. Ronald, a senior and a member of the student government, described a type of "profiling" as he

critiqued the practices of law enforcement in the school. He argued that certain students, based on the way they dress, are treated differently when confronted by law enforcement in the hallways. He contrasted his experience of being stopped in the hallway with those of other students.

He says, "I believe that it's profiling that's going on in the hallways. Like when I was asked for my ID, I told [the agent] the reason I was in the hallway…. I was cooperative, but I believe in asking questions, being assertive and asking questions. Like, I asked, 'will I be taken down to B-40?' and he said 'no', he just wanted to see my ID. Then I explained why I was in the hallway, and they *listened* to me. They weren't like, the reason that some kids don't show their ID is because [security agents] approach them [in a rough manner] and aggression feeds aggression."

I ask Ronald if he could explain a little more what he means by profiling.

"It's about the way I dress, for example, white buttoned down shirt… They will look at me and think, alright, 'he doesn't look like a person who will be causing trouble. But if they see a person walking down the hallway with a hat on his head, which is illegal in the school, they will stop this person and approach him in a different manner. I believe there is a profiling going on."

Ronald was the type of student Ferguson (2000) would have characterized in her ethnography *Bad boys: Public schools and the making of black masculinity* as a "schoolboy," as opposed to a "troublemaker." Ronald was constructed by the school as a "good" young man. He was academically oriented and a leader in the school. And he had considerable cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977; see also Ferguson, 2000). His mother was a teacher, and he spoke in what we might call a middle class register and affect. Thus, he was

afforded a certain respect which was often not extended to other types of students when they were confronted by law enforcement agents or school personnel. Ronald understood that, as a "schoolboy," he was treated differently. And even though he was not usually subject to aggressive police behavior in the school, he also recognized that the police and security agents can exacerbate conflict between perceived "troublemakers" and themselves.

Students also made important distinctions between the behaviors of police officers and behaviors of security agents. Most of the students I spoke with believed that security agents were particularly confrontational with students.

Comments made by Lena, Gillian, and Lorenzo, the seniors first introduced in chapter six, were representative of students with whom I spoke. When I asked them about discipline policies in the school, Lena brought up the subject of the security "guards" (agents).

She says, "Sometimes when the security guards see you, they just want to bother you for no reason. Probably just because that's their job. That's what they do."

"How do they bother you?" I ask.

"They see you walking in the hall, they say, 'let me have your ID,' for no reason."

Lorenzo adds, "They see you with a pass, and they still bother you. The pass is a waste of time."

"And some of them are disrespectful," Lena continues. Her frustration with the situation comes through in her voice.

"How are they disrespectful? Can you give an example?"

"Like the other day I was walking down the stairs, and one of my friends touched me on the side, but I thought that it was one of the security guards. So I said, 'oh I though it

was him.' So on the way walking down the stairs, the security guard walking behind me asking me, 'what, what did you just say?' Like he was gonna argue with me. So I just looked at him and just walked away. And he walked with me down the steps asking questions. 'What did you say?'" She mimics his confrontational tone.

Gillian interjects, "And sometimes they want to fight the students. I saw it! I saw it!"

Lena: "They step up to you like they want to fight you!"

Gillian: "In your face!"

This exchange demonstrates how students sometimes made distinctions between police officers and security agents. However, students were well aware that the security agents worked under the auspices of the NYPD, and they believed that the main difference between the two groups was that security agents had less status and did not carry guns. This is why they were commonly referred to by the students as "toy cops" or "wannabes" or "cops in training."

Despite the fact that Gillian, Lena, or Lorenzo did not frequently become involved in disciplinary cases, they, like Ronald, held a strong critique of the ways in which law enforcement agents approached students. These academically oriented students recognized and pointed out what they viewed to be ill treatment and discriminatory practices.

One day while hanging out with Zack, I ask him about how things have changed in the school. "They're starting to lockdown, the school," he says. "The only thing is, you know, the cops. That's the main thing right there."

"What about the cops?" I ask.

"…You know the cops in the school is really bad. They talk to you like you nothing, like you some criminal in the street. But really you a student attending high school. And they talk to you like, 'oh, fuck that, you asshole, you dumb ass.' They say a lot of words. Well, the cops in the school, is like they run it. They *are* the school. But if you really look at it, the cops are supposed to be the law. Cops ain't supposed to be education. You know what I mean?"

The cops *are* the school. Indeed, Zack's comment suggests how the police presence in the school and the power they assert shift the actual meaning attached to the institution for him. At the moment, though, as I listen to Zack, I am stuck on the language he claims law enforcement agents use. "The cops say stuff like that?" I ask.

"The cops say, literally like that. They come out real ugly. They don't come out as respectful. Now if you come out ugly, they going to come out more ugly. If they don't like you already, they going to come out like that. Or if you come out real, real respectful, you gotta really, excuse my language, you gotta really suck up, you got to kiss ass to do anything. Like for the cops to be good to you. I got two friend cops in there [the school], Mendez and Hoffmann. I'm close to those cops, like they real friendly. Like they don't, they talk, you know what I'm saying?"

During my year at Blakely, I never heard police officers or agents curse at students, but on numerous occasions, I observed officers and agents antagonize students with both verbal and physical (getting close to their faces and pushing them, for example) aggression. Indeed, his account is not that different from Ronald's, although Zack was speaking as a

student who was frequently involved in disciplinary cases—a definite "troublemaker." Thus, he would have argued that he was at risk of being approached in "an ugly" manner.[60]

The above testimonies represent the views of a wide spectrum of students. Although most students maintained that some police presence in the school was beneficial, overwhelmingly students expressed frustrations or indignation at the daily practices of law enforcement official.

"Don't be pulling on the kids."

Students often reported that law enforcement officials, particularly the security agents, did not just speak harshly to students. At times, they confronted them physically. Wanda emphasized the actual physical contact agents made with students as she expressed her frustrations over law enforcement and their practices. Additionally, her testimony points to the increased levels of power students believed officers and agents had inside the school.

She complains, "…don't be pulling on the kids. Because you have one of the kids that's there and you pull on him the wrong way they can snap. You don't know if that child's been abused, that child has been raped, you don't even know if that child takes medication and you grabbing on that child! Because the same way you grab that child, that child could turn around and say you raped them. 'I been raped by a security guard,' just saying in general. I've never been raped, but I'm just saying that child could turn around and be like, 'I been raped.' Like I said, I don't step in your box, you don't step in mines. And the security guards say, 'we have boundaries. You don't step in our box, because when you step in our box, we feel like you're trying to harm us.' So you don't step in *our* [the

[60] It is important to note that Zack is one of a small but highly visible group of students who sometimes exhibit bizarre and inappropriate behavior (see chapter seven). In this sense, then Zack is at times a provocateur. Nevertheless, similar frustrations and feelings of indignation motivate the behaviors of a student like Zack and others who tend to not comply only when they are drawn into entanglements with law enforcement.

students] box because we feel like *you're* [the agents] trying to harm *us* [the students]. They should have that understanding between the students in the school. If they had that understanding, I bet you there would be no security guard yelling for back up. (As she speaks, I recall the day a security agent grabbed me and how unsettled I felt.)

"If they just had a little bit more respect, particularly of students' space, or physical boundaries…?" I ask.

"Yes, yes! Because you know how many security guards got hit in this school because of that."

Wanda attempted to explain why it is so important that security agents do not touch students. She contended that students, especially those with histories of abuse or students on medication, may react physically to what they perceive as bodily assaults at the hands of the agents. She also noted that security agents demanded that their personal space not be violated, and that the respect that the agents expected from students *should* be reciprocated. In other words, if the agents want respect, they should also respect the students.

"Grudges in the "home"

Jamal's narration below serves as an illustrative example of how animosity, or grudges, build when one is subjected to seeing the same law enforcement officials every day. His comments also speak to the increased powers law enforcement officials have inside the school. One day in late spring, he spoke to me about the incident when he claims to have been hit by a security agent (see chapter five). Jamal claimed that the school was his second home, that he lived his life there. Yet, he remarked that the school was also the officers' home. He went on to explain how this impacts the dynamic between students and officers.

He says, "Now, even when you get into a dispute with the cops, you see the same cop everyday. So that grudge is still going to be there cause you still get to see his face. Now, it's different if you get into a problem with an office on 183rd Street and you live on Gun Hill Road [which is several miles from 183rd St.]. What's the chances of you ever seeing that cop again? So the grudge is automatically gone. Yeah, this cop arrested me. He punched me in my face, but whatever. He's out doing his own thing *[in the street]*. Now, when I got hit in my face [in school], and I swung back and that fight happened between me and the officer, I got to walk in [to school] everyday and say he punched me in my damn face. And I have to sit here and look at him and no, I can't even do anything. When you're in this building rules apply. But now I see the same officer inside and outside in the street. He has the connection inside the school, but I have the connections outside. I step into his world, he steps into my world."

"So, do you see the school as the cops' world?"

"Yeah. This is their safe spot. This is where they're safe at regardless of anything because they're cops. This is their home. This is their domain. This is like the Knicks at Madison Square. Out there [in the streets], [it's] a whole different ball game. [The police] don't tell me what to do when I'm out there. [They] can't ask for my ID card. In the streets, I have certain rights. I can turn around and say 'get the hell out of my face' and walk away. And all they can do is sit there and say 'hey, what can we do, our hands are tied. He hasn't do anything wrong yet.'"[61]

[61] Jamal's account captures the relatively accurate basic understanding of his legal rights, but is somewhat misleading. The U.S. Supreme Court case Terry vs. Ohio, 1968, dictates that for a police officer properly to effect a "terry" stop on the street, the officer must be able to articulate "reasonable suspicion" that a criminal activity is "afoot" (Office of the NYS Attorney General, 1999).

Like Zack, Jamal contended that the school had become the domain of the police, and he implied that the institutional setting provided officers with a certain kind of protection that they do not have on the streets and increased power (to enforce school rules, to demand an ID, and to take criminal procedural level action against individuals who were not breaking the law). Jamal doid not focus on the fact that the increased power infringes on the civil rights of students inside the school. Instead, he emphasized his feelings of disempowerment and frustration within the school and the presence of grudges that build up as a result of continued contact with the same officers.

These themes, feelings of being disrespected by law enforcement, resentments over intensive policing, unprovoked stops in the hallways, and being grabbed or touched by officers, and the recognition of increased police powers in the school context, all shaped students' views of the police and security agent presence inside the school and the ways in which students chose to interact with them. Additionally, it seemed likely that students' views of law enforcement inside the schools and the ways in which they chose to respond to them were influenced by community experiences and attitudes. And perhaps, more importantly, it is possible that the resentments students built up against law enforcement inside the school may indeed spill over into their interactions with law enforcement in their neighborhoods potentially increasing the number of routine encounters that end in arrests.

Analyzing Non-Compliance: Contests over respect, saving face, and resistance

What is the nature of the student-law enforcement confrontation? In chapter four, I argued that order maintenance does not simply work to criminalize non-criminal behavior; when certain officers and agents confront students on a daily basis in a way that so many students view as aggressive and disrespectful, they actually contribute to the production of

the behavior that is then criminalized. In the following sections, I explain how students make sense of this process. Not surprisingly, confrontations between students and law enforcement officials came down to contests over respect. Almost all of the students I spoke with at Blakely were concerned about being treated with respect and maintaining respect in the eyes of authority figures and peers. But while there may be a common sense notion that poor and working class youth of color are "obsessed with respect" (as I heard many times during my conversations with teachers and other school personnel), my data show that school personnel and law enforcement officials were equally concerned with being respected (as I alluded to in chapter four), and students' desire for respect is best understood in relation to the institutional demand for it. Jamal aptly referred to this dynamic as a tug of war.[62]

An analysis of contests over respect is an analysis of power relations between the dominant group (law enforcement) and the group subjected to their force (the students) There are several theoretical points to make concerning power relations and students' non-compliance before presenting the data. First, there are several student practices which I have identified in previous chapters that I frame as everyday acts of resistance (Scott, 1985). Scott (1985) argues that everyday acts of resistance committed by individuals of subordinated groups do not necessarily need to be overt, conscious, or collective actions to constitute resistance. Scott is more concerned with individuals' repositioning of themselves within social structures, finding ways to make material and symbolic gains. In fact, for Scott, resistance often manifests itself in the "hidden transcripts" (1990) of individuals from subordinated groups. When they interact with members of the dominant group, they tend to

[62] In the case of the security agents, their concern with respect may stem from a similar cognative framework as the students since they are often structurally located in similar ways. However, the institutional fixation on respect appeared to be more associated with the dominant culture's fixation on "law and order" and the school's perception that students (children) must learn to respect authority figures (adults).

strategically adopt a more deferential, agreeable demeanor. Other theorists of resistance in the field of education, may argue that students' misbehavior, or oppositional behavior (the kinds I described in chapter seven, for example), have the potential of becoming acts of resistance if they are born out of, at least, semi-conscious rejections of the dominant culture or critiques of institutional and external structures (see Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1983; Willis, 1977 for examples). Henry Giroux, for instance, warns that, "the concept of resistance [should] not be allowed to become a category indiscriminately hung over every expression of 'oppositional behavior.' On the contrary, it must become an analytical construct and mode of inquiry that contains a moment of critique… On another level, it is equally important to argue that all forms of oppositional behavior represent a focal point and a basis for dialogue and critical analysis" (1983:110).

Students' defiance during confrontations with law enforcement officials cannot be theorized in the same way other transgressions are. Students' non-compliance shares *some* qualities with these other acts. For example, they lack collective organization, and students offer multiple and complex explanations for their actions that do not always indicate a sense of political indignation. Nevertheless, non-compliance is often based, at least in part, on students' willingness to challenge what they perceive to be an injustice (at a significant cost), and unlike other transgressive acts, non-compliance engenders none of the pleasure associated with other transgressive acts.

"So where do our respect come in?"

When I asked Jamal about relationships between students and officers in the school and students' reasons for defiance, he explained that there is a pervasive sense that students are not respected. Defiance, in this framework, becomes a means to establish respect.

He says, “Actually, I’m gonna tell you the truth. A lot of the cops in this school aren’t bad in my eyes because they only get involved when they have to get involved. Everything else is the security guards, but you still have your selective few out of the ten, eleven cops in this building. You still have your few that feel as if they have to prove something. I don’t know what it is. I think they want to prove that we’re not bad and we’re trying to tell them that we are bad. So it’s more of a tug of war going on between the two.”

Initially, I did not understand what Jamal meant by police officers wanting to prove that students weren’t “bad.” But as I continued questioning Jamal, I realized that what he meant by “bad” is what I would think of as “tough.” Most students I met at Blakely were invested to some degree in demonstrating their ability to be tough. It was equated to maintaining self-respect and dignity in the eyes of authority figures and peers. And, in Jamal’s view, the police and agents were attempting to strip students of that dignity by subjecting them to unfair disciplinary practices.

I ask Jamal why students want to convince the officers that they are tough and he says, “So we could have our sense of respect, because they have their respect. They automatically have their respect the minute they say ‘give me your ID.’ That’s respect automatically. You look at the ID card. They have their respect. It automatically says ‘this card must be carried at all times. It must be shown upon request.’ That’s respect automatically. So where do our respect come in? We have no respect. Their respect is on the ID card. Their respect is on the walls. ‘No do-rags upon entering class.’ That’s respect to the teacher. Where’s our respect? There is none.”

But students are not the only individuals in the school concerned with maintaining respect. Below, I provide just a small sample of occurrence report statements, like those I

presented in chapter four. These reports show the pervasive *institutional* discourse around respect.

(September, 22, 2004) A female student was issued a summons by PO _____ of the XX pct for misbehaving.

(November 5, 2004) A male student was issued a summons by Officer _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct and insubordination. He refused to show ID and was cursing at staff members. Officer _____ also arrested the student for an outstanding warrant.

(November 10, 2004) A male student was issued a summons by SSA _____ for Disorderly Conduct. He refused to show ID and became irate and disorderly. A suspension is pending.

(April 6, 2005) A female student was issued a youth referral by Officer _____ of the XX pct for Disorderly Conduct. She was approached by Officer Jenkins and was disrespectful and used inappropriate language towards him. A suspension is pending.

(April 6, 2005) A male student was issued a summons by Officer _____ of the School Safety Task Force for Disorderly Conduct. He refused to show his ID card and swung at SA _____. He received a principal's suspension.

The idea that students were receiving summonses as a result of a contest over respect is certainly evident in Jamal's (and the other students') statements, but, as I previously argued in chapter four, it was also evident in the institutional discourse as presented in the occurrence reports. Indeed, many indicated that summonses were issued for disorderly conduct and insubordination or even misbehavior, but summonses were not technically issued for insubordination or misbehavior because these are not violations of the law. This is where the ambiguously defined charge of "disorderly conduct" becomes helpful in maintaining penal control over students. Additionally, some occurrence reports even made the explicit connection between the students' lack of respect for the agent or officer and the issuance of a court summons. (Note the female student who was "disrespectful" when approached by an agent on April 6th and received a referral to juvenile court.) Thus, when we analyze students' comments in relation to the institutional discourse of respect and take into account how often students receive summonses for what amounts to acting disrespectful, it becomes clear that there was, indeed, a kind of "tug of war" going on.

"And I stand up."

So then, um, [the security agent] was, like, 'you gotta go back to B-40,' and I was like, 'watchu mean I gotta go back to B-40?' because I already spent like a lot of periods there because they didn't bring my ID back. So then they were like, 'oh, you gotta go to B-40,' and that's when I got upset, and um, they said, 'oh, if you don't go down to B-40, we gotta bring you down in cuffs' and I said, 'no, cause I don't want to spend another period in B-40. I just want to get my ID. I already did the time. Now I want to go to my next class.' Then they cuffed me, and then they gave me a summons for disorderly conduct.—Carlos

As I have illustrated, students often "chose" not to comply. Carlos's testimony above, for example, describes the events that led up to his receiving a summons for Disorderly Conduct. He was non-compliant only after he had spent several periods in the detention room waiting to get his ID card returned to him (recall the earlier discussion on general dysfunction). He had "done his time." (Prison metaphors abound!) After being told that his ID had still not been delivered to the deans' office (where he would normally retrieve it), he had gone to look for the agent who had taken it. When he still could not retrieve his ID, he became upset, and that it how he explains his non-compliance. He was tired, indignant, and wanted to go to class.

Carlos's narration was typical. When asked about why they were non-compliant with law enforcement, students usually indicated that their actions were a stand against something they believed to be unfair and disrespectful.

When asked about student non-compliance in school, Wanda explained that it was a matter of students "knowing their rights." As we sit in the detention room together, she says, "Alright. Because sometimes the cops, which is a.k.a. the po-po, be harassing the kids, be harassing the students, so you don't give your ID. You know your rights! You know you didn't do nothing wrong, why show ID? Like I'll be damned if you, it's like you're going 10 miles and hour, the cop pulls you over. 'Why you going 10 miles per hour?' You trying to be safe. You're not in the 40 lane, you're in the 20 or whatever lane. Wouldn't you ask

the officer why you pulling me over? Wouldn't you tell the officer you know your rights? It's like the students saying 'I know my rights.' I didn't do nothing wrong so there's no reason for me to pull out my ID. That's like saying I know my rights. And sometimes the officers will try to talk to you like 'give me your ID' like you don't know your rights. I know my rights. I'm not showing you my ID because, number one, I didn't do nothing wrong. And number two, I'm not showing you no ID because I know my rights, I know my rights. That's like me walking down the street and the officer says, 'excuse me, young lady come over here please, can I see some ID, some identification, please?' You're like, for what officer? And he can't explain to you what you did wrong, you're not seeing my ID!"

As Carlos and I sat in the courthouse in late November waiting to see the judge for a summons he received (see chapter 4), he explained his rationales for non-compliance in terms of standing up for himself. He told me that there was a time when he had a good rapport with the police, but that ended a year or so before I met him when what he sees as a misunderstanding (that took place in the street) led to his being dragged to the ground and restrained by three officers. As we talk, he showed me the scar on his wrist left by the handcuffs. Now, Carlos says that he gets angry when the police approach him and speak to him in a way he views as disrespectful. In an interview about a week before the court date, he says, "To me there's only like two choices. Like stay quiet and go home or stand up for what you feel is right and wind up in the precinct. And usually I stand up."

Carlos and Wanda's examples reflect the merging of neighborhood and school policing. Likewise, they reflect the distinct nature of student-police confrontation inside the school. For Carlos, his more nuanced analysis, which he developed after he and Jennifer were attacked on the street, is an illustrative example of how students respect the authority

of law enforcement when it is seen as supportive of the community, but they do not respect police authority when it is abused, as so many students tended to believe it was in the context of the school. Carlos claimed that some cops were "crooked," and "like the cops in court treat me with more respect, but the cops in school and in the street, they like to pick on you." It was when cops "pick on you" that students were more inclined to act in defiance.

In Carlos's case, his decision to "stand up" for himself outside school contributed to his landing in jail one night when he, Jennifer, and another friend were caught sneaking into a movie theater. Carlos claimed that the security guard working in the theater started pushing him around and provoking him. According to Carlos and Jennifer, the security guard called the police when Carlos "stood up for himself." When the three friends were brought to the precinct house, Carlos was held overnight because he had a warrant out for his arrest due to a missed court appointment from a summons he had forgotten about. Thus, the question of how the ways in which students make sense of law enforcement in their school can impact their interactions outside school arises. Carlos's experience and the other students' statements suggest that these young people felt the weight of the kinds of policing to which they were subjected on a daily basis inside school, and that this could lead to increased levels of conflict with police officers outside the school.

Their testimonies also help to re-frame non-compliance. When an action is explained by a declaration of one's rights or as a conscious stance against an abuse of power, we can no longer dismiss these actions as purely oppositional. As Giroux might note, these actions contain "a moment of critique." They, thus, take on political undertones and potentially become focal points for mobilization.

On Being (or not being) a Punk

There are other rationales that students discussed when explaining non-compliance with law enforcement. Many students brought up issues of "saving face," preserving an image, or as they often put it, not being a punk.

One day early in my fieldwork, I sat at a desk in the deans' office talking with a student who had been given a summons for disorderly conduct after refusing to hand his ID card over to a security agent. He was a small boy who looked as if he could have been eleven years old. But he was fourteen. He rested his chin on his arms, which were crossed on top of the desk.

I look down at him and ask, "So why didn't you just give your ID to the agent when he asked for it?"

The boy's eyes widen and he looks at me as if I had suggested something unthinkable. Without lifting his head, he says with great conviction, "Cause then I'd be a punk!"

"Would that be so bad? I mean it would have saved you this trouble with going to court and all?"

But he just could not fathom it. Surrendering his ID was just not something he would have done. I was a little surprised by how certain he appeared. I began asking this question of students I met in B-40, and the notion of not being a punk frequently came up. As I sat with students in the detention room, they would often give me that same incredulous look. "Cause I'd be a punk!" they would say as if nothing was worse than that. Some students, like Jamal who wanted to appear "bad" (tough) in the eyes of the police, were concerned with maintaining a particular image with law enforcement, but students who did

not comply with law enforcement were often just as concerned with not appearing "soft" or like a "punk" in the eyes of their peers. Being a punk in front of one's peers would lower one's status and make the person an easy target for students looking to fight. (Recall Wanda's explanation in chapter eight on the benefits of having an "attitude.")

On the detention room survey, one student wrote about non-compliance with authority figures in terms of peer-pressure. He writes:

Some students do not cooperate with authority because of the way they are approached. Some students like to act big and bad in front of friends. From my point of view us students are put under peer pressure by peers. Some of us would like to follow rules but can't take the fact that others are watching you and after, the student is mentally or physically abused by another person. It's more easier [sic] to be bad than good and everyone should know that. Some of us must blend in with the crew so they won't be picked on. It's like a game. Someone must lose and someone must win. The losers are the people who do all their work and follow the rules. The winners are the loud mouth wanna be gangsta ones. But what we fail to understand is that in this game the losers are going to make it somewhere. The winners stay where they are or worst [sic]. All I'm saying is that we don't obey rules because in the eyes of others we don't wanna look like fools.

The young man's analysis explores several of the themes that came up during interviews and conversations with students. He started be providing the most common answer I received when I asked students about non-compliance—students do not like the way they are approached, but he quickly moved into a poignant description of how students often feel they "need" to challenge authority in order to maintain a certain image among their peers. Kids who did not appear tough or "big and bad" risked getting picked on or mentally or physically abused by other students. Sadly, the student recognized the irony in all of this—that the "winners" ultimately stay where they are or worse (perhaps prison).

Several testimonies included in the previous chapter on student conflict and violence, as well as the statement above, illustrate how students were compelled to act tough among themselves in the absence of adults, but my data suggest that it was as equally important for students to "save face" among their peers while embroiled in confrontations with authority

figures including, teachers, administrators, deans, and law enforcement. Appearing too cooperative during an interaction with a law enforcement official, especially one who was already showing disrespect, caused a student to look weak. Students who were gang members and those who were more street-oriented were particularly at risk. Appearing too "soft" could make them vulnerable to serious physical violence (see Anderson, 1999; Brotherton and Barrios, 2004; Carter, 2000; Dance, 2002). So often the reason students gave for being "bad" was that they needed to do so in order to protect themselves or maintain status among their peers.

Agents and Officers as Members of the School Community

Finally, there was another dynamic specific to the school environment that appeared to influence students' non-compliance with law enforcement officials inside the school. While students complained about the practices of law enforcement officials, especially those of security agents, observational data indicate that some students had friendly relationships with law enforcement officials. *Students* did not express their non-compliance in terms of these "friendships," but several deans made comments to me about students not taking the authority of officers seriously at Gilbert Blakely. Within the context of the school, these deans believed, students did not acknowledge police authority. In a sense, this is an alternative analysis to my own—one in which the emphasis is shifted from animosity and resentment of authority to an emphasis on relationships that are *too intimate* and *too routinized*. In this framework, students lose respect for law enforcement and refuse to comply because they lose sight of their state sanctioned authority and who or what they represent. I argue, however, that it is not unreasonable to maintain that animosity and friendliness co-existed.

I observed close relationships between students and law enforcement officials, but I was not convinced these relationships were the basis for students' non-compliance. My data strongly suggest that non-compliance primarily grew out of resentments, indignation, and an insistence on being respected (by both parties involved). But, in order to present a more nuanced and accurate account, I describe these relationships briefly and suggest that they possibly play a role in student-law enforcement interactions.

Officers and agents often appeared to be caring individuals who saw themselves as part of the school community. At times, they appeared to develop friendly relationships (perhaps even inappropriate ones, although I did not observe any) with students. This was particularly true with the security agents—the same individuals who were critiqued by students so much for their disrespect of students. Virtually all were individuals from surrounding or similar communities. In terms of class status, racial background, educational levels, and at times, even age, they resembled the students more than any other adult group in the school (with the exception of some of the school aides). Given this, and the fact that they had constant contact with the students, some developed relatively intimate relationships with the students (see Brotherton [1996] and Devine [1996] for similar analyses of student-security guard relationships). One such example of this intimacy was demonstrated one day while I was walking through the cafeteria with a male student. He stopped to converse with a female security agent. Although they were both English dominant, they slipped in and out of Spanish conveying their shared ethnicity and familiarity with each other. She inquired about his girlfriend who hadn't been well the way a concerned neighbor might do so, and they spoke of some woman's baby shower.

Another indicator of some students' closeness with security agents were the complaints I frequently heard from students who were not or rarely involved in disciplinary cases. They would contend that some students would form alliances with certain security agents, and these students would get away with breaking rules that other students could not break.

For me, over the course of the school year, I also grew accustomed to, indeed comfortable, being around police officers and agents. In September, they made me uncomfortable. But as the months went on, there were a few police officers with whom I began to really enjoy having conversations. Most of the ones that I spoke with (with a couple of glaring exceptions) demonstrated much concern for kids and generally spoke well of them. One officer in particular, Hoffmann, who expressed his interest in "working with kids," focused much of his efforts on the more serious incidents of violence and gang related events. He showed considerable insight into why young people joined gangs. "I don't condone it," he assured me, "but I understand it."

One day in early winter during a quiet moment in the deans' office, Officer Hoffmann (who is white) and Duane—one of the highest ranking Bloods in the school—are having a relaxed conversation about weather or not Duane was a callous individual. Hoffmann jokingly accuses Duane of not caring if he found him lying in the street bleeding.

Duane's response reveals how the police officers were fully integrated into the school community, and some had positive relationships with students. Duane leans back in his seat and says in a quiet tone, "No man, you're my nigga."

It is certainly possible that such bonds that developed through daily interactions did influence students' perceptions of and interactions with law enforcement officials as the

deans often contended. One dean said to me during a conversation about students' non-compliance, "You see, the students don't think of the cops as cops. They treat them the same way they would treat any adult in the school. They don't realize the power the police have. They don't really learn. So they think they can just mouth off the same way they do to teachers and deans."

Another dean made a similar comment. In describing how students end up with summonses, the dean points out, "… the kids give PD [police department] the same respect they give anybody else. It's not like they're like 'oh, that's the police department.'"

But while students' familiarity with law enforcement officials, their fondness for some of them, and their sense that they were a "normal" part of the school community may play a role in non-compliance, these factors did not shift the significance of student resistance. It is possible that congeniality concealed other feelings. Perhaps some friendly interactions were strategic moves on the part of students to generate some of their own power in relation to law enforcement officials (see Scott, 1990). The idea of students forming "alliances" with certain security agents (a theme that regularly came up in conversations) suggests this. But it would not be surprising if individuals who spent day after day together grew genuinely to like each other, even when there were asymmetrical power relations and real or perceived abuses of power. In any case, non-compliance was largely constructed by students as a matter of "standing up for oneself" and maintaining respect.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I showed how students at Gilbert Blakely made sense of law enforcement inside their schools and how they made meaning of non-compliance. When

viewing these matters from the perspectives of students, it becomes evident that politicians and high ranking educators need to re-think (and ultimately change) current discipline policies. The suppressive nature of order maintenance, particularly as it is enacted inside the school, may have served to lower rates of violence in the school, but this has not been proven. Individuals inside the school tended to think otherwise. But even if order maintenance has decreased violence in the school, it does nothing to address the causes of violence and disruption.

Students offered valid and important insights into the negative consequences of order maintenance in the context of the school. Most of their responses pointed to how the disciplinary practices, themselves, inspired non-compliance. Students were frustrated and indignant over the experiences they were having in their classes, the dysfunction of the disciplinary process, and the way they were treated by law enforcement officials. Their non-compliance, thus, can be seen as overt, although not organized, resistance to authoritarianism.

CHAPTER TEN
Theories of Reproduction and Resistance

In this chapter, I present two theoretical discussions that help extend the analyses for each of the two parts of the dissertation. The first discussion ties together the chapters in Part I of the dissertation by engaging two bodies of literature, one on reproduction theories in schooling and the other on crime and punishment. The second discussion links the chapters of Part II. I frame these chapters as a study of resistance and show how three separate set of student practices—general misbehavior (chapter 7), participation in conflict and violence (chapter 8), and non-compliance with law enforcement (chapter 10)—reflect the relations of power among students and between students and institutional and state agents. I argue that it is useful to analyze all of these practices in a resistance framework and that they can be seen as "everyday acts of resistance" (Scott, 1985).

Re-thinking Reproduction

Part I provided an institutional analysis. It is in those first five chapters that I told the story of the institutional practices and discourses and the external forces that shape the schooling experiences of students at Gilbert Blakely. I examine the educational policies and organizational practices that helped to create schools like Blakely with disproportionately high numbers of students who have disciplinary records and who are academically under-prepared and over-age. These are some of the most marginalized and vulnerable students in the public school system, but there are thousands of these students in cities across the United States. Instead of attempting to understand their needs and create meaningful educational experiences for them, too often they are placed in large classes where they experience the questionable pedagogy associated with high stakes testing and exhausted, if not out of touch, teachers. The academic alienation with which they enter high school is then only

exacerbated. Pervasive student alienation, I argue, can be viewed as a reflection of a disinvestment in these particular students' education—poor and working class, Black, Latino/a, and often academically under-prepared. A small number of students who enter high school with a strong academic orientation, and perhaps a home life that has not been ravaged by poverty, make it to graduation and into college. But the majority of students never make it to graduation, and for those who do, the likelihood of graduating from college is statistically slim.

High levels of alienation help to create a space for behaviors that go against institutional norms, and such behaviors help to justify penal management—the installment of metal detectors, cameras and so forth, the adoption of zero tolerance, and the daily policing of students' movements. The new disciplinary paradigm seems to permeate the school and overshadow efforts at meaningful academic engagement. Criminal procedural level strategies, such as the use of handcuff and the issuance of summonses to criminal court, become common methods of control and punishment. I have referred to this transformation of the school as the process of penalization. The school assumes penal responsibilities, and penal control becomes the prevailing cultural theme. Disciplinarians, even well-intentioned, critical ones, tend to internalize the idea that criminal justice-oriented policies are necessary given the high levels of disruption and violence. In a school devoid of a serious academic mission, penal management comes to be seen as "normal." It becomes normal for students to get confronted by police officers and agents on a daily basis; it becomes normal to work through student conflict in the context of police intervention; it becomes normal for students to get summoned to criminal court or hauled off to a precinct house for disobedience.

Penal management is routinized within the emergent school culture through an appropriation of criminal justice themes, such as "zero tolerance," focus on low-level "disorder" as a means of prevention, "tough on crime," and retribution, that are found in the larger society and through an institutional tendency to fetishize respect. The institutional fetish with respect appears to be framed as a need to teach students a lesson about taking responsibility for one's actions and facing consequences for breaking rules. In practice, if a student does not show respect to an authority figure, he or she is subject to criminal procedural level strategies even if the student did not violate the law. Even when disciplinarians are critical of the criminal justice-oriented practices in the school, discourses such as "better five days [in jail] now, than five years [in prison] later on" reveals the willingness, or at least acquiescence, of school personnel to work within this framework.

Although my project was not a comparative study that examined experiences of discipline across a variety of schools, there are extant data that indicate that criminal justice-oriented school discipline policies have exacerbated racial bias in disciplinary practices and play out differently in different kinds of schools. Thus, while all students attending public schools in the United States are subject to zero tolerance discipline policies, data suggest that not all students in the U.S. are subject to the constant policing to which Blakely students are subjected. At Blakely, a large racially segregated school serving some of our most vulnerable public school students, we find the systematic and pervasive use of criminalizing practices that we would not likely find in schools with strong academic missions—both those in the suburbs and the more selective public schools in the city.

There are two sets of theories that help to explain the role of schools like Gilbert Blakely within the larger society and the reasons for their appropriation of a penal logic.

First, in considering the historical functions of urban public schools, I engaged theories of reproduction. Early theories of reproduction described how schools serve to reproduce the economic and social class structure of the larger society (see Althusser, 1970; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bowles and Gintis). Later empirical studies demonstrated how reproduction works through students' exposure to different curricula and pedagogical approaches along class lines (Anyon, 1980) and through a cultural process in which working class youth embrace working class ideals and romanticize manual labor (Willis, 1977). These scholars provided an important framework for understanding the relationship between schools and the larger society and schools and other domains such as the labor market. But their research took place before the dramatic shifts in the political economy. Their research also focused primarily on the reproduction of a white labor force. So my questions now are: what is the significance of reproduction in the context of deindustrialization, high unemployment, and the mass incarceration of people of color? Indeed, is reproduction the most relevant framework for understanding the kinds and levels of racial stratification and economic and educational exclusion in today's political economy? And what economic and social imperatives are being met through the new disciplinary framework?

The concept of reproduction, I would argue, is still germane, but it needs to be complicated. Societal notions of social class have changed with the shifts toward a post-industrial service economy. The manual/mental split that previously helped to characterize the different segments of the labor force, and was highlighted in Willis's (1977) classic study of cultural reproduction, has been complicated, and the structure of American schooling has shifted to reflect the changes in the labor market. Some small theme-based schools are working to prepare the children of the poor and working class to enter the

various segments of the service economy—health careers, law enforcement, and military academies, for example. Other new schools that have been established through recent reform efforts have taken the most privileged and academically oriented urban students from the regular local schools to provide them with access to more rigorous, college preparatory curricula (Lipman, 2002, 2004; McNeil, 2000). My primary interest, however, is the kinds of educational experiences created for the thousands of poor urban students of color living in cities all over the United States who have reached their teen years academically under-prepared, often with tenuous or even troubled relationships to the school, and with few options for viable future employment. The young people I introduced in this dissertation fall into this category—students who come to high school with reading and math scores well below grade level, enter classrooms with thirty or more students, and must contend with a tightly controlled curriculum which appears irrelevant to their lives. The school becomes fertile ground for disruption and the violence that already surrounds urban youth.

In essence, institutional forces helped to create schools like Blakely, setting the conditions for wide-spread academic failure, disruption, and violence. The common sense solution then, in the words of Mayor Bloomberg, was to establish "zero tolerance for unruly teens and undisciplined schools" and "swift punishment for minor school offenses" (Gendar, 11/26/02).

Simply put, reproduction does not work the way it used to. There are a number of new sorting and tracking mechanisms at work funneling urban students into various segments of the labor market, and then there is a whole population of urban students existing at the margins of the labor market, or perhaps entirely excluded from it. Schools like Blakely have assumed explicit responsibilities in the penal management of these students. Thus, I

theorize the penalization of the school and the cultural practices that emerge in that context as explicitly linked to racial and economic exclusions and the exigencies for new mechanisms of control at this historical moment.

Indeed, the school actually becomes an integral part of the criminal justice project. To understand the nature of the institutional links that have developed, I have incorporated into my framework theories of crime and punishment. Like educational and juvenile justice historians who wrote about the repressive functions of the urban public school (see Katz, 1967 or Mennel, 1973, for example), social theorists of crime and punishment have also linked schools to larger disciplinary processes and the criminal justice system. Michel Foucault (1971) wrote extensively about schools as part of what he refers to as the carceral archipelago. He contends that the lines between judicial punishment and other institutions of social life—the school, the family, the workshop, and poor laws—came to be increasingly blurred by the development of new disciplinary techniques and surveillance in the modern society. The new disciplinary techniques marked a shift away from the spectacle of punishment and the body as the object of punishment to a process of normalization in which a combination of self-disciplining mechanisms, such as surveillance technologies, examinations, and definitions of what is "normal," were put into place to compel individuals into conformity. So while the prison represents the ultimate in the use of disciplinary technologies, other institutions, particularly schools, also use them, creating what he describes as a totalizing system of domination. However, Foucault's analysis does not address the current forms of repression found in schools like Blakely, such as the use of handcuffs, body searches, and the regular issuance of court summonses and arrests.

Wacquant, a contemporary theorist of "the ghetto," links schools to a societal project of discipline and punishment, or penal confinement. He (2001) implicates the segregated urban public school in his description of a prison-ghetto continuum. He writes, "Public schools in the hyperghetto have deteriorated to the point where they operate in the manner of institutions of confinement whose primary mission is not to educate but to ensure 'custody and control'—to borrow the motto of many departments of corrections. Like the prison system, their recruitment is severely skewed along ethno racial lines." (p. 108) Although Wacquant offers a depiction of the segregated urban public school that highlights its penal role, his theorizing around schools is under-developed. He relies mainly on the description of the school that Devine (1996) provides in his ethnographic work to make his claim, and he does not address *how* the segregated urban public school functions as a penal institution beyond confinement.

Garland (2001), likewise, mentions schools as an institution of civil society that has assumed crime control responsibilities. And although he does not elaborate on how schools assume penal responsibilities, his description of the different criminologies of control—"criminologies of everyday life" and criminologies of the dangerous other"—are particularly useful in understanding how schools with zero tolerance discipline policies and a heavy police presence are linked to the criminal justice system. Schools like Blakely contain large numbers of youngsters who have already been criminalized; they have already been constructed as "the dangerous other." So within the prevailing logic, the school becomes an ideal site to take on penal responsibilities as the crime control project expands into the fabric of everyday live.

In sum, Garland's theory of punishment helps to explain how urban public schools like Gilbert Blakely are no longer primarily reproductive institutions. As they assume penal responsibilities, their more explicit function becomes one of management of a disenfranchised group. In this framework, the school becomes linked to institutions of the criminal justice system. If schools like Blakely are playing a reproductive function at all, we may need to consider its part in the reproduction of a criminalized subject.

Theorizing Resistance and Resisting Refusals

The second part of the dissertation examined how students make meaning of their school experiences and their cultural practices and the various forms of resistance that I observed. I began Part II with an analysis of how students make sense of their classroom experiences. Students exhibited varying levels of alienation. That is, their narrations (as well as their behaviors) suggested a deep disconnect from the classroom. Students often appeared disinterested in the material, voiced considerable frustration, and sometimes indicated that they did not see a reason to comply with classroom norms. Yet most spoke of a desire to do well in school and to be engaged. Some expressed that they were not learning what they wanted to learn. Other comments suggested that they needed more supports; they wanted teachers to "break it down" for them. Very few students appeared to embrace an anti-school attitude, and among those who did, they did not generally demonstrate an anti-intellectual attitude. They demonstrated, for example, interest in reading political/hip hop magazines and novels, poetry, writing raps, video making, computers (surfing the Internet, designing web pages, navigating chat rooms, etc.), and mastering the elaborate set of "knowledge" associated with a particular gang. Overall, there appeared to be evidence of what Mickelson (1990) refers to as concrete and abstract attitudes about schooling. Their

expressed desire to do well reflected an abstract interest in the idea of getting an education and a degree. Their behaviors, however, often reflected a concrete understanding that the classroom experience was not drawing them in or offering what they perceived as useful knowledge.

The subsequent chapters in Part II analyzed the students' social world and cultural practices (or "the conceptual and affective configurations" within which the students operate [Ortner, 1995:181]) in a school where there is a pervasive sense of alienation and where penal management prevails. In essence, these last chapters comprise a study of resistance.[63] There were three sets of practices found predominately outside the classroom that I addressed—students' transgressive behavior, or movements of liberty, student conflict, and student contestation during confrontations with law enforcement officials. These various practices comprise distinct forms or resistance and warrant separate analyses, and indeed, a case needs to be made for why student conflict is related to resistance at all. I argue that it is related, and I include it in my study of resistance in order to present as complex and as detailed a description of power relations as I can and to avoid what Ortner (1995) calls the ethnographic refusal—a "thinning" of ethnography that stems from some ethnographer's tendency to romanticize resistance and desire to obscure the contradictions and perhaps less than heroic behaviors of individuals subjected to domination.

My understanding of resistance is informed by Scott's (1985) description of everyday acts of resistance. For Scott, an action does not need to be organized or even intentional in order for it to be thought of as resistance. Scott's work helps to broaden and

[63] The kinds of classroom behaviors I observed have been theorized as oppositional behavior, or as an implicit form of resistance (Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1983; Willis, 1977). While I do not disagree with these analyses, I have chosen to examine behaviors outside the classroom in my study of resistance. I do this because it is mainly outside the classroom where penal management is so visible and new forms of power relations in the school have emerged.

complicate traditional understandings of resistance as organized opposition to power (Ortner, 1995). He focuses instead mainly on the non-confrontational, yet transgressive acts, of peasants in a Malaysian village, pilfering, arson, character assassination, and individual boycott, for example. Scott explains how, while these acts do not constitute open rebellion, they do provide certain rewards for the peasants in terms of self-esteem and recognition within the community. Scott also interprets these acts as related to the sense of unfairness concerning new forms of repression that the peasants' experienced and their sense of justice surrounding these experiences. That is, their sense of justice helped to justify their transgressions. In this sense, the actions of the peasants are characterized as a form of class struggle. Ortner (1995) also points out that resistance needs to be conceptualized broadly. She goes so far as to say, "we are not required to decide once and for all whether any given act fits into a fixed box called resistance… the intentionalities of actors evolve through praxis, and meanings of the acts change, both for the actor and for the analyst" (175).

Ortner (1995) notes that just as Scott drew attention to the pervasive, everyday forms of resistance, Foucault (1978, 1982) drew attention to the pervasive, everyday forms of power. His contention that "where there is power, there is resistance…" (1978) suggests that power is not totalizing and top-down. It does not only work negatively to dominate. Instead, power is everywhere local and works to produce forms of pleasure, systems of knowledge, discourses, and so forth. Building on these conceptions of power and resistance, I argue that a study of resistance is a study of power relations. And the salient question is not, "is a particular practice an act of resistance or not?" but "what do students' cultural practices tell us about historically specific forms of power?" In this sense, resistance

becomes a diagnostic of power (Abu Lughod, 1990), and students' actions can be understood as a struggle to position themselves more strategically in relation to the adults in the building and in relation to other students. For this reason, I refer to students' transgressive acts as "power-moves."

To understand the power struggles within the school, and thus to gain insight into resistance, I argue that it is important to resist the temptation and tendency toward ethnographic refusal. Ortner explains (1995) that there has been a tendency in ethnographic studies of resistance toward a stance of ethnographic refusal, which involves a "refusal of thickness, a failure of holism or density" (174) that is taken up in an effort to represent individuals from subjugated groups in valorized ways and to save resistance from the messiness in which it takes form. She identifies three forms of refusals—sanitizing politics, thinning culture, and dissolving subjects—that I attempted to resist in my representation of student life at Blakely. These three forms of refusal entail, first, a thinning, or erasure, of the internal politics (or conflicts) of the subordinated group, that is, in terms of this study, the conflicts among students. Secondly, the thinning of culture refers to the tendency to gloss over the cultural richness of a group (including the creative cultural practices that sometimes work to reinforce negative images and, in the case of this study, reproduce students as criminal subjects). Finally, the dissolving subject refers to an ethnographic description that lacks full explanation of research subjects' subjectivity—their intentions, fears, projects, and so forth. If an emphasis is to be placed on resistance as "ordinary class struggle" (Scott, 1985) and as "never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1978), then it seems crucial that such refusals are resisted by the researcher.

I theorize the first set of practices I observed—selective cutting and other insubordinate behaviors, such as disruption, wearing hats, and gambling that occur outside the classroom—as secondary adjustments (Goffman, 1961) or as movements of liberty—another of Goffman's phases that I believe captures well the meanings students assign to these actions. These are not consciously political acts, but they are consciously and often gleefully irreverent; they are power-moves. They help to shift social relations in that they can increase social status, produce pleasure, conquer boredom, offer a sense of autonomy, and preserve a sense of self in a repressive context. The movements of liberty make school life tolerable and meaningful for students. They can even provide material and physical benefits, such as gambling earnings and protection against violence. My attention to these details, which dispel any notions of the student as angelic victim, are meant to provide a culturally rich depiction of student life, one that helps to explain how meanings are assigned to schooling and that highlights students' creative responses to the circumstances in which they find themselves and the perceived and real benefits found in their actions.

The next set of practices, student conflict and violence, is the most troublesome in terms of analysis and representation. I felt much anxiety over illuminating the very behaviors that often help to justify penal management within public discourse. But erasing conflict and violence from my representation of life inside Blakely would have been dishonest. Participating in that kind of ethnographic refusal—sanitizing politics— would have weakened my analysis because we can learn something about the nature of power relations by observing intra-group conflict. Foucault (1978) contends that power is not simply imposed from the top. Power is localized, and thus, patterns established within various institutions within society (the family, schools, etc.) interact with patterns of power

throughout the social body. Abu Lughod's work (1990) examining resistance practices among Bedouin women in Egypt helps to bring to light this understanding of power and resistance. Building on a Foucauldian analysis of power and resistance, she points to the relationship between the internal (gender) dynamics found within the Bedouin community she studied and the relationship between the community itself and the Egyptian society in which it exists. She shows how the everyday acts of resistance of women in the traditional Bedouin community, for example, can pit older women against younger women (through such practices as the younger women's purchasing of negligees and adoption of Egyptian consumerist practices) and enmesh, in new ways, the younger women in power relations within the larger contemporary Egyptian society.

These ideas shed some light on the significance of student conflict and violence at Blakely. In the "he said/she said" dynamic that I described in chapter seven, for example, some students become instigators of conflicts between other students by starting rumors or spreading gossip. Many of my informants, including Officer Hoffmann, believed that girls are more likely than boys to participate in this behavior (recall Alex's story in which "Lindsey" becomes an instigator of conflict between two boys). If this is indeed true, then perhaps girls are positioned within the social world of students in a way that makes them more vulnerable than boys, and thus more compelled to seek the sense of power and control over a situation that comes from instigating conflict between boys. Instigating conflict, in this framework, can be viewed as a power-move.

My findings related to violence provide another example of the significance of internal conflict in relation to domination. For example, my data suggest that it is the most structurally and institutionally marginalized students who come to see violence as

unavoidable and who live in an "ecology of danger." These young people, especially the boys, create valued street identities that reflect the dominant society's notions of masculinity and valorization of toughness. Not backing down from a fight is like a badge of honor, particularly for these young men and sometimes women who have little else (see Anderson [1996] and Dance [2002] for a similar analyses). Then, when one is enmeshed in the ecology of danger, violence ironically is perceived as (and actually becomes) a means of (potentially) preventing victimization and ensuring respect.

The descriptions of intra-group conflicts among students, I would argue, become a diagnostic of power; they help in the theorization of how power works inside an urban public school. "He said/she said" and more serious forms of conflict involve localized forms of power and interact (or shape and are shaped by) relations between students and law enforcement officials and personnel inside the school. School-based student conflict also interacts with social and economic forces external to the school, such as dominant representations of urban youth, a societal valorization of violence, economic structures, and policies and discourses around crime and safety. For these reasons, I chose to include the "less than heroic" (sometime distasteful) behaviors of students, and to represent them as the complex individuals they are.

Finally, in chapter nine, I examined students' non-compliance in the face of law enforcement and argue that these acts constitute some of the most explicit forms of resistance I observed. They constitute outright acts of contestation. It is easy to understand how these acts get framed as the incorrigible behavior of disrespectful, out-of-control youth, but this kind of judgment obscures the larger context, the multiple dimensions, and layered rationales of such actions. Students, for example, state that non-compliance sometimes

grows out of a desire to appear tough in the face or authority or in front of peers. At other times, particularly around the issue of refusing to show ID, a student may claim that "she knows her rights" or wants to "stand up for himself" when being subjected to "unfair treatment." As a researcher concerned with issues of representation, it is tempting to under-play students' first stated reason in order to highlight the responses that were more explicitly political in nature. But I contend that to do so would be an attempt to depict the students as noble and monolithic figures in search of justice, which is unrealistic and obscures their full humanness.

The questions that get at the deeper meanings of their actions are: why do students become so invested in appearing tough? What does this investment say about their location within power relations? I would argue, in much the same way Abu Lughod does of her female research subjects, that students are enmeshed in multiple sets of power relations simultaneously, and these relations impact one another. Ultimately, disrespecting authority and non-cooperation with authority figures are power moves that help students "win points" on other terrains—among peers. This is due in part to the fact that law enforcement and institutional agents are pervasively seen as disrespectful toward students and assume the role of the opposition in a school that offers so little to its students.

In the second set of student explanations ("knowing their right"), there is an explicit intentionality of protest that we do not find in the other forms of resistance I've identified. The problem is that students' non-compliance is not acknowledged by the institution as a form of resistance or political protest, because it is so easy to frame this behavior as incorrigibility (in part because of the ways dominant discourses have framed urban youth and school violence and, in part, because elements of juvenile mischief exist in their

actions). So the institutional response becomes an even more pronounced demand for respect and further criminalization. Nevertheless, I believe that these most explicit forms of resistance found in the school can serve as important starting points in the public critique and mobilization of the marginalized students at schools like Gilbert Blakely.

CONCLUSION

I initiated this study because I, like many urban educators, was alarmed by the persistence of high levels of student alienation, high dropout rates, under-preparedness, and abysmal conditions found in a vast number of urban public schools. I was also concerned about high levels of violence that, despite the "tough on crime" stance, remained too high. (In September 2005, a year after I first entered Blakely, for example, three students were stabbed outside the school by youngsters who attended another school.) Additionally, I was deeply concerned that the images that justified discipline policies and the practices that emanate from those policies only work to further marginalized students of color, and I worried about their prospects for life after high school. So my goal was to examine critically life inside a school that was under-going a process of penalization and to analyze what I observed in the school within its larger economic and social context. In this sense, my project was multi-layered.

A multi-layered analysis necessitates a multi-layered set of recommendations. I attempt to provide this by suggesting a variety of reform (or transformative) possibilities in several areas, criminal and juvenile justice policies, educational policies, the political economy, and the dominant culture—all of which I argue have had a role in shaping urban school discipline.

Severing school discipline from the criminal justice framework

Criminal justice oriented school discipline is a reflection and an outgrowth of our nation's over-reliance of the criminal justice system and the pervasive acceptance within the dominant culture of aggressive policing tactics as a means of suppressing disorder. As I have argued, the nation's crime control project has extended into institutions of civil society. So

it seems logical that in order to change the way urban school discipline is handled, reform within the criminal and juvenile justice systems would be necessary. In essence, we need to shrink it.

The United States currently has the highest rates of incarceration among all developed nations. One out of every three Black men spends time in prison during his life (The Sentencing Project, 2003). This reality has profound negative consequences for urban families of color (Maurer and Chesney-Lind, 2003), and evidence suggests that there is no direct correlation between locking people up and reduced crime rates (Western, 2006). Even professionals working within the criminal justice system tend to see mass imprisonment as cost ineffective (Garland, 2001). The policies, such as "three strike," current drug laws, and stringent, unrealistic parole regulations, that keep incarceration rates high are proposed by politicians to a public that remains fearful of rising crime even when crime rates are dropping.

There are also studies that demonstrate how costly and ineffective juvenile prisons are (Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2006; New York Correctional Association, 2002). In the last decade, they have tended to resume their historical role as institutions charged with the management of poor children. Nationally, the vast majority of youngsters who enter the juvenile justice system have committed non-violent crimes, status offenses, such as truancy and running away, or they have committed a violation of the law, such as jumping a subway turnstile while having the misfortune of residing in foster care or having a parent who is unreachable. In New York, there has also been a significant increase of young people jailed for non-violent drug offense and a reduction in the number of violent offenders getting locked up.

It is also unclear whether or not youth prisons do very much to redirect youth away from crime or make urban streets safer. During the course of my data collection, I met young people who had been incarcerated who claimed that the experience "set them straight." But these are often youngsters with little social and economic supports. Might other interventions been more effective in "setting them straight?" Furthermore, more often than not, the opposite appears to occur; incarceration does not work to redirect children away from crime. Rates of recidivism among boys in New York City are as high as 80% (NY Correctional Association, 2002). Many of the young men I spoke while conducting my research— usually locked up for fist fights, holding or selling drugs, or lesser offenses— claimed that they actually "learned to be a criminal" in a youth prison. That is, the experience actually lessened their chances of finding an alternative path. For these reasons, I advocate for the elimination of juvenile prisons, except perhaps in the most extreme cases. The NYC Department of Juvenile Justice website boasts about the comprehensive services children receive is their facilities. Health care, counseling, education, and recreational opportunities are all provided. Indeed, this is not surprising considering the amount of money spent on these facilities, which far exceeds school funding[64]. But youth prisons should not be one of the primary institutions for providing needed social services to poor children.

I would argue that working to shrink our current burgeoning prison systems could set the stage for re-thinking criminal justice oriented school discipline policies, because the prison is at the core of the criminal justice system. But lowing incarceration rates alone could actually have the opposite effect. As I described in chapter one, in the other

[64] This comparison is based on data from the NYC DJJ found on their website: www.nyc.gov/html/djj/home and NYC on-line school report cards that can be accessed at http://schools.nyc.gov.

prevailing crime control framework, the "criminologies of everyday life," crime control responsibilities are assumed by our civil institutions. In contrast to incarceration, this is considered the more cost effective. The focus is on prevention and low-level forms of repression, such as the wide-spread use of criminal court summonses for minor "quality of life" offenses. Thus, if the nation worked toward reversing incarceration trends, we would need to make changes in neighborhood policing as well. A shift in philosophy on this level could influence how police are used in some schools.

Improved community-police relationships could improve the dynamic between officers and agents and students inside schools, thus helping to decrease the occurrence of confrontations, but the law enforcement strategies *specific to the school environment* intensify the problems. At Blakely, students are stopped by officers for behaviors that are not crimes. Indeed, there is usually not even a suspicion of a crime. On the street, individuals have some protection under federal and state laws guiding "stop and frisk" procedures. The laws state that officers must be able to articulate reasonable suspicion *of a crime* (NYS Office of Attorney General, 1999). So, it is no wonder that, in the context of the school, where "stops" are commonplace and often baseless, any resentment toward the police the students might have is exacerbated.

What I believe needs to occur in schools like Blakely is a severing of the institutions, or put another way, the dismantling of the criminal justice oriented disciplinary framework and a restoration of students' civil rights. In order for schools to reduce their reliance on law enforcement, there would need to be a systemic transformation of the school, itself, its mission, the educational system, and the society, but before describing what that might entail, I will outline the basic changes in disciplinary approaches that need to occur in order

to restore the civil rights of students. First, the number of law enforcement officials in schools needs to be dramatically reduced. Students' movements should not be routinely monitored by law enforcement officials. They should be monitored, guided, counseled, and, when needed, punished by school personnel with training in child development, pedagogy, and counseling, not criminal procedural level strategies. Then, only in cases when real acts of violence or crime are committed should the police intervene. It appears that the most confrontational law enforcement officials are the security agents. They play a major role in the patrolling of hallways and other spaces in the school, and according to my data, they tend to have the most adversarial relations with students. At Blakely, there would be little work for security agents at all if the role of the deans was expanded. If the team of deans, who are trained as teachers, were to be increased and given more release time from classroom duties, they could do the jobs of the security agents. Indeed, they already do. Many deans are assigned to hallway duty and work effectively with students. Indeed, at Blakely, the deans, in general, do important and meaningful work. Other teams of school personnel could also be buttressed, such as the guidance counselors. Guidance counselors, social workers, and the individuals from community-based organizations, such as ASPIRA and SPARK, who already have a school presence, like the deans, could play expanded roles in institutionalizing a comprehensive conflict resolution program and anti-violence initiative and providing the other kinds of supports students who are frequently involved in disciplinary cases need.

I suspect that this does not occur for two reasons. First, current policies are supported by a public and political discourse that places tremendous faith in law enforcement. Moreover, students at schools like Blakely are seen as in need of being

policed. This makes good sense to the mass public. And it often makes sense to individuals working in the school. Secondly, security agents are paid far less than teachers and counselors. So it makes good economic sense to utilize them in schools. But students should be engaged by professional educators and counselors in matters related to school discipline, not under-prepared, pre-professional[65] employees of the police department.

The only occurrences for which deans or school administrators need the assistance of the police are actual crimes and gang-related incidents. I have observed Officer Hoffmann doing good work with gang members. He engages them with respect and shows tremendous concern for them. But the structure in which he and his colleagues work is designed for the suppression and expulsion of gang activity, through heavy surveillance, arrest, forced transfers to other schools or GED programs, extended suspensions, and expulsions. These tactics do not address the needs of students in gangs, nor their possible desires to succeed in school or leave a gang. It has been documented that young gang members, particularly girls, often have been sexually or physically victimized in their homes; they also tend to come from low-income and, many times, fragmented or troubled families (CITES). There is no structure in urban schools to systemically deal with youth in gangs in positive ways and to address the problems and obstacles they face.

Next, the security apparatus needs to be dismantled or greatly reduced. It frequently creates humiliating and alienating situations for students, and is most often used to enforce rather inconsequential "offenses" such as carrying a cell phone into school. However, in the present context, there are instances where the apparatus has served a useful purpose, such as, identifying weapons or capturing an attack on video. Thus, the dismantling of the security

[65] I use this term because the NYPD recruitment material to attract prospective security agents explicitly states that becoming a school security agent can be a stepping stone to becoming a police officer. Moreover, while agents do receive some training, they do not have to have a college degree.

apparatus needs to occur simultaneously with fundamental changes to the structure of the school. (I address some of these fundamental changes in the sections below).

We also need to reverse the patterns of punishment that have emerged since the implementation of zero tolerance. We now have ample evidence of how out of control the policy has become. Indeed, punishments appear to be mindlessly meted out. There is considerable documentation of incidents in which children as young as five have been suspended from school or worse—placed in handcuffs and subjected to court proceedings for such behaviors as having a tantrum, giving another child an aspirin, stealing a dollar, carrying a toy gun, or making a threat of violence (see Advancement Project and the Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, 2000; American Bar Association, 2001 for comprehensive analyses). We also know that children of color have been disproportionately impacted by zero tolerance. Thus, I would argue that we need to turn our brains back on, use discretion in such incidents, and stop criminalizing behaviors that often reflect a child's developmental stage or emotional needs.

In New York City, the rules themselves, as outlined in the Discipline Code, also need to be reconsidered. What would happen if students were simply allowed to wear hats in school, for example? Most deans seemed to think the effort it took to enforce this rule made it counter-productive. They often pondered at the absurdity of a student ending up in handcuffs for an incident that began with an adult telling a student to take his (or her) hat off. Letting students wear their hats in school may have the added advantage of creating the feeling among students that their identities were respected by the institution.

Severing urban school discipline from the criminal justice system requires that educators resist the criminal justice framework. It requires that we think and act as

educators, not as law enforcement agents. Positive approaches are not simply more just, they simply work better. Students respond to positive reinforcement; they do better when they feel respected and listened to, and violence is reduced when it is approached in holistic and constructive ways, not when it is attempted to be suppressed through punishment. But for positive approaches to be most effective, we need not only a total transformation of the disciplinary framework, but educational and societal transformations as well.

Educational solutions

I argued in chapters three and six that many educational policies and classroom practices work to increase levels of student alienation. If classroom environments were created that were inviting to the most marginalized students and if they were presented with opportunities to learn that seemed relevant to them, alienation could be reduced bringing more order to the school. In view of my analysis, this could begin to occur through, the elimination of current standardized, high stakes testing procedures, the implementation of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and programs that address students' academic needs, such as literacy development, and an increased focus within teacher education programs on doing the difficult work of having teachers confront their own disparaging perceptions of their students and developing an understanding of the larger social, political, and economic context of urban education.

There is mounting evidence that standardized tests weaken curriculum and exacerbate the already high dropout rate among poor and working class students. My data similarly show a situation in which a tremendous amount of material is (sometimes frantically) transmitted to students without any time or attempt to make connections to their life experiences or even to check for comprehension (for excellent extended analyses of how

standardized tests shape teaching and learning see Amrein & Berliner, 2002; McNeil, 2000; Lipman, 2002, 2004; Orfield & Kornhaber, 2001). At the same time, other scholars' work suggests that culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994) and culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2000) improves the academic success of children of color. We also have evidence that the quality and perspectives of teachers do make a difference in the classroom. Ferguson (2006) has recently suggested that teacher quality is the single most important factor in ensuring a child's academic success. It has also been documented that negative teacher attitudes lowers student achievement (King and Ladson-Billings, 1993), and Nieto's recent work (2006) suggests that teachers' love for their students and active roles in issues of social justice may have lasting positive effects of students learning. My own work is consistent with all of these findings.

There are two other areas of educational reform essential to the creation of an environment that supports academic success rather than control. First, the physical structure of a school is important. Studies have shown that smaller schools have fewer problems with disruption and violence largely because teachers and administrators know their students by name, can better foster a sense of community and engage students in positive ways. Nevertheless, we need to look critically at the current drive to create small schools. It appears that they create new forms of sorting in which the most highly academically oriented students are being provided their own schools for their preparation for college. Blakely stands as testimony to what happens to the students who are excluded. And as Blakely itself transitions into small schools, what will happen to the most vulnerable, marginalized students in the school? It is likely that some small schools will be designed specifically for these students. Indeed, there already are such schools, and without systemic

change, they are likely to replicate the culture of penal control presently deemed appropriate for these students.

The other needed reform is a move toward fiscal equity. City schools in general receive considerably less funding than their suburban counter-parts[66], and the funding for Impact schools is below the city average. Students at Blakely were sometimes painfully aware of the difference. Frustration and indignation resulted from the lack of resources, such as working, up-to-date computers. But equity itself is not enough. Equal funding does not ensure equal outcomes when poor and working class students face considerably more obstacles than do middle class students.

Even equal funding does not ensure equal outcomes when poor and working class students face such mounting obstacles. If the country were truly invested in creating opportunities for these children, we would create well-resourced schools with smaller class sizes, state-of the-art technology centers and libraries, and well trained support staff. And I would argue that such changes—in terms of testing procedures, classroom practices, teacher training, school structure, and funding scheme—would very likely reduce levels of disruption and violence in schools.

Macro-structural factors and an "expanded" view of school reform

But schools alone cannot do it all. And in order to address academic alienation, disruption, and violence, we need to look beyond the educational system. There appears to be an expectation that students at schools like Gilbert Blakely, regardless of whether or not they make it to graduation, will likely end up as workers in the low-wage service economy, or perhaps working within the informal economy selling drugs or participating in some other

[66] For information on the struggle in NYS to secure equal funding for city children see http://www.cfequity.org/.

illegal endeavor. The reality is that only a handful of students who begin at Blakely in the ninth grade ever make it to college and even fewer are likely to get a college degree. According to Anyon (2005), even if they do get a degree, the prevalence of low-wage service work, exacerbated by weak unions and a minimum wage that keeps families in poverty, makes it extremely difficult for them to earn a living wage and attain some economic security. So the motivation to change the educational system is not there.

Therefore, I contend that we need to invest in young people attending schools like Gilbert Blakely, not just by improving classroom practice and conditions in schools, but by implementing policies that foster the growth of well-paying jobs and making them accessible to young urban adults. I argue, along with Anyon, that, "unless we make some changes in the way the macro-economy works, economic policy will trump not only urban school reform but the individual educational achievement of students as well" (p. 29). That is, improving schools on the inside will not likely lead to improved economic prospects for urban students on the outside. Thus, urban educational reform must take an *expanded* approach. As Anyon argues, it must, "include strategies to increase the minimum wage, invest in urban job creation and training, provide funds for college completion to those who cannot afford it, and enforce laws that would end racial segregation in housing and hiring" (p. 13). Anyon also argues that, given our current state of mass imprisonment, we need to create comprehensive programs to assist formerly incarcerated individuals into educational and training programs, meaningful employment, and social support networks.

My version of expanded urban education reform additionally emphasizes the role of the political economy in shaping our criminal justice policies. Investing in job creation and training and increasing the minimum wage could also help to reduce our nation's

(perceived) reliance on incarceration. Indeed, there is a strong correlation between concentrated poverty and imprisonment (New York Correctional Association, 2002; Western, 2006). So, it is possible that a reinvigorated labor market available to urban residents may *help set the conditions* for a reduction in incarceration rates.

But, as I argued in chapter one, criminal and juvenile justice policy decisions, although rooted in the economy, largely play out on the cultural level. It is one thing to argue for lesser sentences for non-violent offenders, or more alternatives to incarceration programs for juveniles, or more discretion in school discipline matters; it is wholly something else to challenge the public perceptions and attitudes and political discourses that legitimize current policies. There is an extraordinary amount of data that *should* make our nation reconsider current trends in criminal justice and educational policy, but the alternative seems to go against our collective "common sense." We are a nation that believes in toughness, and the notion of justice has become synonymous with retribution. We also live in fear of crime and of terrorism. As a nation, we have become willing to invest billions of dollars in high tech security apparatuses and detention facilities, but the notion of investing in the creation of a culture of non-violence is almost non-existent. For example, we know that the proliferation of guns on inner-city streets has led to increased gun-related deaths among adolescents. Yet politicians are often reluctant to go against the powerful gun lobby. Why are we not marching by the millions to demand stricter gun laws to protect our children? And in schools, zero tolerance somehow gets privileged over systemic conflict resolution programs as a response to violence, particularly when it comes to responding to the transgressions of children of color. What I am suggesting is that there needs to be a

cultural transformation along with an economic and social one, and the struggle for change will likely need to occur from the "bottom up."

A new social movement and the role of Blakely students

Anyon (2005) argues in her book, *Radical Possibilities,* that there is a need for a new social movement in order to create change, and history demonstrates that social movements do help to bring about a more equitable, democratic, and just society. She points to the labor movement of the early part of the last century, the women's suffrage movement, and the civil rights movements of the 1960s as examples. She goes on to argue that urban education reform needs to play a central role in social transformation because, "urban schools are at the center of the maelstrom of constant crises that beset low-income neighborhoods. Education is an institution whose basic problems are caused by, and whose basic problems reveal, the other crises in cities: poverty, joblessness and low-wages, and racial and class segregation. Therefore, a focus on urban education can expose the combined effects of public policies, and highlight not only poor schools but the entire nexus of constraints on urban families" (p. 177). She suggests that educators need to form alliances with community and parent groups, educational organizers, and school reformers. Additionally, she suggests, in the tradition of critical pedagogy, that the classroom can become a movement building site. She points to several examples of where these collaborations are already happening and gaining momentum.

Likewise, I would argue that educators need to collaborate with the myriad groups organizing around issues related to educational quality in general and, more specifically, school discipline and criminal and juvenile justice, and that such groups should relate discipline issues to economic and social ones. In New York City, as in other cities around

the country, many groups are already mobilizing and making connections between increased spending on incarceration and decreased spending on the education of urban youth. Some groups also emphasize the links between poverty and increased incarceration rates. Groups who have become a visible presence in New York include the Prison Moratorium Project, Brooklyn-based Make the Road by Walking, Bronx-based Youth Force, and Friends of Island Academy located in Manhattan, an organization established to assist young men and women upon release from Rikers Island jail. Some of the most dynamic organizers are the youth themselves or young men and women who have been incarcerated.

Individual educators, such as the Bronx principal of a small school located inside one of the Impact schools who was arrested for obstruction of justice while advocating for a child who had been entangled in a confrontation with law enforcement, have also spoken publicly against current discipline policies. And a growing, dynamic teacher organization, New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE), has created a committee know as Committee Against the Criminalization of Youth (CACY) to organize educators who oppose criminalizing disciplinary policies and seek alternatives.

Students on some campuses have also protested. Over 1500 students demonstrated outside their Bronx high school last year when a metal detector was installed, and more recently, a growing number of students at some of the better performing schools and their parents have begun to organize. This happened largely as a result of the expansion of the cell phone ban and Mayor Bloomberg's announcement that roving metal detectors would circulate throughout the system (among schools that do not already have a permanent set up).

Strikingly, though, there was no organized protest found at Gilbert Blakely. This is not surprising given the structural locations most of the students occupy. Students at Blakely are structurally located in such ways that easy and trouble-free political mobilization is not an *immediate* option, but such students are immersed in struggle. Many have wonderfully critical minds, and there exists great potential for unified efforts to challenge policies. They are, in a sense, primed for mobilization—around issues of disciple, as well as issues of pedagogy and equity. Indeed, I would argue that students' acts of non-compliance could be reconstructed as acts of civil disobedience with the help of educators, advocates, and social activists from the community. These groups may need to engage alienated students (inside and outside the school) *politically* and help connect them to community-based efforts that represent their interests before they can be *academically* re-engaged. It also seems likely that only through such political engagement will young people who participate in more serious forms of crime and violence find alternatives and more positive directions.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Critical Ethnographic Research

Critical ethnography has been framed as an effort to link micro-interactions found within a social world to the external forces that shape them and as social action oriented. Thus, for me this project entailed gaining insight into the shifting functions of the segregated urban public school in the context of high unemployment and mass imprisonment and the nature of the relationship between the school and the institutions of the criminal justice system. In this sense, the heavy policing of students in the hallways and stairwells of the school and the issuance of summonses to criminal court for small behavioral infractions, I would contend, represent a major shift in criminological thinking and the permeation of crime control efforts into myriad aspects of civil society and everyday life, which is described in close detail in the work David Garland (1990, 2001). These shifts in crime control policy and public sentiment have been linked to changes in the political economy by numerous scholars (Parenti, 1999; Tonry, 1998; Wacquant, 2001). Thus, the new disciplinary paradigm found in schools like Blakely is theorized as intrinsically related to class and racial exclusions of low-income youth of color in a deeply stratified, post-industrial service economy.

Moreover, in keeping with goals of critical ethnography, this project was about developing a descriptive analysis of cultural themes and practices inside the school and analyzing how these themes and practices exist in a dialectical relationship with larger social forces. For example, an examination of institutional discourses such as "the punishment fits the crime" or "better five days now than five years later on" (see chapter five) suggest how the dominant *school* culture is shaped by the dominant *societal* culture, particularly retributive themes and the emphasis on justifications for low-level forms of penal control

found within mainstream criminal justice. Likewise, the *local* culture of the urban street, as I demonstrated in chapter eight for instance, impacts school culture. And finally, as new forms of power are institutionalized in an effort to manage large numbers of academically under-prepared and economically/educationally excluded urban youth, students attach new meanings to the school experience (see chapter seven), and new forms of resistance emerge.

Positionality

In my introduction, I described various aspects of my social position that shape my analyses and the relationships I developed with my research subjects. For the most part, I am an "outsider"—a white, middle-class woman in my thirties who grew up in the suburbs of New York City. So even though I lived in the Bronx for many years as an adult, worked as a teacher in a similar school to Gilbert Blakely, have forged meaningful associations and friendships with my neighbors and students, and have developed a relatively deep understanding of the daily life of my research subjects, I cannot experience the streets of the Bronx or the classes and hallways of Gilbert Blakely in the same manner. And I cannot understand, firsthand, the psychic toll of racism and living in poverty. With this in mind, developing a descriptive analysis that reflects the realities and experiences of my research subjects, as they understand them, required a constant self-reflexivity. I did this through my own reflective process at each stage of the research process and within dialogue with my research subjects.

Choosing a School, Gaining Access, and Building Relationships

In the following sections, I discuss a number of issues related to my decision to use Gilbert Blakely as my field site and the anxieties and questions I had once I had gained access to the school. My concerns centered on questions related to generalizability, building

relationships, issues of selection and trust, individuals' perceptions of my allegiances to other groups within the school, and identifying and depicting variation.

In terms of building relationships, I anticipated resistance on all levels, and I worried about the impact that appearing too friendly with one group might have on my ability to develop relationships with other groups. For example, if teachers perceived that I was forging alliances with students, would they act dismissively or refuse to engage me themselves? These kinds of anxieties seemed particularly warranted given the internal politics and divisions found within schools. I had firsthand experience in a high school as a teacher, and I had read newspaper articles on the subject. From what I could gather, administrators at some schools fiercely defended the implementation of new discipline policies; at other schools, school personnel had been arrested for their defiance of police intervention. Some students appeared to be embracing new policies while, at the same time, others were mobilizing to protest them. And these examples provide only a glimpse into the complicated internal politics inside a school. Nevertheless, when I entered Gilbert Blakely and began to forge relationships, there were a number of surprises, as I discuss below.

My initial concerns did not turn out to be insurmountable obstacles. I was able to implement effective selection methods, identify the variation that existed, and develop trust with a wide range of individuals in the school. My aim, here, is to share with the reader some of the challenges of beginning an institution-based ethnography and what I learned in my first few month of field work.

The superintendent

Given the nature of my study, the thought of pursuing access to a school and building relationships with a wide range of individuals in the school gave me quite a bit of

anxiety. In terms of accessing the school, I thought: what principal in her right mind would want some doctoral student scrutinizing the school, shedding light on all its pathologies and dysfunctions, and writing about it, in perhaps, a very public way? I was sure no one would invite me into his or her school. I also worried about the issue of generalizability. If the school I entered was highly segregated, low-performing, and heavily policed, would it be representative of other schools? What could I learn about urban public education in general?

When it came time to locate a school, I called the best contact I could think of, my former principal from the high school where I worked in the South Bronx, Mr. G., who was, at the time, working in the Bronx superintendent's office. Mr. G. greeted me warmly and offered to help. He asked me to send him a description of the kind of school I was hoping to enter. I gave him two criteria. I wanted to study a school that had a full range of disciplinary policies in effect. That meant I would need to enter a school with a history of and reputation for high rates of violence where the new policies, such as an increased police presence, were being put into effect. I also wanted to enter a school that was representative of the "typical" large urban public neighborhood high school.

Immediately, Mr. G. suggested Gilbert Blakely. It fit my criteria, and it was a school that he oversaw. He also mentioned that the new principal, who had arrived the previous year, was doing a great job and that she would very likely be amenable to my presence. I still had trouble believing any principal would want me snooping around her school airing the "dirty laundry," but I was hopeful.

As the process of access was underway, it occurred to me that my two criteria, together, may present a dilemma. If I were to enter a school with a violent reputation and a

full-scale implementation of new disciplinary policies, would I be in a school that was at all representative? Indeed, Gilbert Blakely had been labeled one of the most violent schools in the city by the Department of Education, the New York City Police Department, and the media (and later I learned by the students and school personnel as well). It also represented an extreme is other ways. It had some of the highest rates of low academic performance, dropout, racial segregation, and poverty. Nevertheless, despite Blakely's tendency toward the extreme, it was not that different from any other large neighborhood high school in a low income inner-city neighborhood. In New York City alone, the vast majority of high schools in the outer boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx have less the 5% of a white school population. Schools in some neighborhoods, particularly in Queens, tend to have more ethnic and racial diversity (including immigrant and second generation students from virtually every corner of the world) than schools in many parts of Brooklyn and the Bronx where there are high concentrations of African Americans, other students of African descent, such as West Indian and African immigrant students, and Latinos. And some schools in Brooklyn and the Bronx tend to have more black students while others tend to have more Latino students, depending on the ethnic/racial make-up of the immediate surrounding neighborhood. But, for the most part, the majority of schools in New York City are marked by high rates of racial segregation. And this reflects a national trend (Orfield, 2004). Likewise, levels of academic performance and rates of poverty found at Blakely are similar to schools located in similar neighborhoods. Many schools in the Bronx, according to school on-line report cards, actually have higher rates of students living below the poverty line.

In terms of levels of violence, there is also reason to believe that Blakely has comparable levels to many similar schools around the city and in other cities throughout the United States. I was told during a conversation with a high ranking official in the Office of School Safety that patterns of violence shift so that it is very difficult to say definitively which schools are truly the most violent high ones in the city. Moreover, it is very difficult to ascertain rates of violence in schools for comparison. Different schools have different reporting mechanisms and guidelines. Within the NYC schools alone, it is widely known that principals use discretion in reporting incidents. Even accurate data on specific types of incidents that are relatively easy to define, such as stabbings, can be misleading. If one school has two stabbings occur during a school year and another school has three, it could *appear* when statistical data are presented that the second school is significantly more violent than the other, when in fact, both schools, it could safely be argued, are troubled with violence. (Blakely reported no stabbings the year of my data collection.) Thus, the reality is that many American schools are troubled with high rates of violence, especially schools in inner-city neighborhoods, and Blakely is among those schools.

Finally, I had to contend with the question of whether or not the policies found at Blakely represented an extreme. They probably do, although there is no comprehensive data to my knowledge to determine just how extreme Blakely's disciplinary policies are. It is clear that they reflect a national trend. In fact, New York has been a leader in quality of life or order maintenance policing strategies, and other cities have looked toward New York as a model and have moved in similar directions. Additionally, zero tolerance is a national movement, and school-police partnerships and police interventions in schools are also now commonplace throughout the country (see Brown, 2005). Furthermore, data show that such

trends have disproportionately impacted students of color (Brown, 2003, 2005), and the most extreme forms of new disciplinary policies (high tech security apparatuses, aggressive policing, and other "paramilitary" strategies [see Devine, 1996]) have been implemented in urban schools with high numbers of students of color from poor and working class families—the very population of students I had decided to study. That is, I had set out with an interest in the educational trajectories of young men and women of color growing up in low-income urban neighborhoods. So it made sense to be at Blakely, and while Blakely represents an extreme in one sense, the problems found at Blakely reflect the realities of a growing number of urban public high schools around the country. Mr. G. facilitated my entrance, and Blakely became my field site.

The principal and the assistant principal

I felt fairly certain that the principal of Gilbert Blakely would agree to let me conduct my research at her school as I expected she would feel obligated to comply with her superior, Mr. G. So I was a little nervous upon introducing myself to Ms. Alvarez, the principal. I thought she might see me as an intrusion she had to accept at her boss's request. Over the summer of 2004, we had exchanged a few e-mails and I had arranged a face-to-face appointment with her through her secretary. Ms. Alvarez immediately struck me as a take-charge woman. She was courteous, professional, and obviously very busy. She told me that she had agreed to grant me entrance into her school because she, herself, was working on a doctoral degree and wanted to accommodate another doctoral student in her effort to conduct research. This eased my concerns a little. I also realized after my first few visits to the school that Ms. Alvarez had a stellar reputation and that administrators at the Department of Education as well as members of the school community believed she was

making a tremendous difference at the school. And if the first year of Ms. Alvarez's tenure was any indication, Blakely appeared to be a school that would eventually be touted as a success case. So I suspected there was no reason for her to be overly concerned with what I found. I would find disturbing situations, yes. Ms. Alvarez implied this during our first meeting when she spoke about police interventions and seeing students in handcuffs. She actually subtly warned me not to get involved. But I would not find a principal and staff who weren't doing the best they could.

Ms. Alvarez then passed me off to Mr. Juarez, the assistant principal of school safety. She expected he would set some parameters for my inquiry, introduce me to relevant people, and explain the disciplinary process at Blakely. Once again, I anticipated resistance where I found none. Mr. Juarez was very welcoming. He immediately indicated to me that there were tensions between school personnel and the police (which over the course of the year significantly subsided). He made his own critical position clear, and I had the sense that he viewed me as a potential ally. During an early visit to the school, Mr. Juarez gave me a tour of the school, which was extended by numerous interruptions that allowed me to observe him in action. At one point, as we were in his office, a parent walked in and complained about her son receiving a court summons for the second time for a minor school infraction. Mr. Juarez explained that there wasn't anything he could do once an incident became a police matter, but he suggested that the woman call the media. Perhaps they would be interested in the story. Later, Juarez asked me if I had taken notice of his strategy. He saw his suggestion as a way of resisting the growing powers of the police inside the school. That same day, Juarez introduced me to dozens of students including a football player who had been arrested the year before. Juarez maintained that the student was "a

very good kid" and had been arrested unfairly. He suggested that I interview the student to document his story.

On another occasion, after a police officer made a comment to him that I was taking too many notes, Mr. Juarez explained to the officer that I was "okay," that I was "working with" them. And with this perception, Mr. Juarez gave me free reign. He provided me with school records, incident reports, and other textual data. He introduced me to the deans and set the tone for my involvement. He didn't need to tell deans to be welcoming, not to my knowledge anyway, but I believe his apparent comfort with my presence and congeniality facilitated my entrance into the daily lives of the deans. I could also see how much the students seemed to like Juarez. Being seen chatting with him, I estimated, would probably not cause most students to avoid me (I hoped). In order to help settle me into the school, Juarez arranged for me to spend time "following" Jackson, and then I was, more or less, on my own.

The deans

Jackson, who was a twenty-eight year old African American, took a little ribbing from another dean for spending time with a white woman, but he was gracious, albeit a little self-conscious. By the end of our first day together, it appeared he had grown comfortable having me around. He liked to talk, to narrate his work experience, and over the course of my year at the school, we spent numerous times immersed in lengthy conversations. I conducted two formal (audio-recorded) interviews with him, each one lasting over an hour. Other deans were welcoming as well. Dean Henry, at times, invited me to sit in on discussions with students, and like Jackson, he was willing to allow me to follow him around, ask questions, and engage him in conversations. He also did two audio-recorded

interviews with me and had countless informal conversations. Ms Orozco, the dean in charge of the peer mediation program, graciously allowed me to join her and her students for two semesters of the peer mediation class. She also granted me two interviews and numerous informal conversations. Several other deans conversed with me informally on a daily basis and granted me recorded interviews. We spoke on a wide range of topics, many related to the school and school discipline, others not related. We spoke about politics, current events, the students, and even some personal aspects of our lives. For example, I knew where many of them had grown up, whether or not they were married or had children, if they had other jobs, what they did for Thanksgiving, and what movie they might have seen over the weekend. And they learned similar things about me. One dean, who had done some doctoral studies in sociology, and I had frequent theoretical discussions centered on critical pedagogy, political economy, and the impact of current policies. These conversations provided a "site" in which theorizing (related explicitly to the literature) could occur in the field (in the midst of data collection), and I am grateful to that particular dean for those moments.

I have no reason to believe that the deans weren't completely comfortable with my presence in their workspace, and if they were uncomfortable or resentful, not one of them made it known. Nevertheless, I can only imagine that there were conversations they reserved for times I was not present. Like any researcher, I cannot be sure, and in fact highly doubt, that they were entirely "open books."

Law enforcement

My relationships with law enforcement agents developed slowly. This is due, in part, to my own initial perceptions of them as "outsiders." Although there were security

agents and a few police officers at the school where I had taught during those years, they were much less visible than they were at Blakely and seemed to me to play some kind of auxiliary function. At Blakely, I was struck by the highly visible presence of the police and viewed it as an intrusion. The situation seemed to be "off;" it didn't seem like a school. I also believed that if students saw me talking with the police, I would lose credibility. So I was resisted engaging them. They did not appear eager to meet me either. I assumed they saw me as an educator and did not normally go out of their way to converse with educators. The sergeant thought I took too many notes and complained to Ms. Dempsey. Officer Hoffmann was the first to break the ice. He introduced himself and offered his assistance. I did not immediately take him up on his offer, but eventually, he became a great source of help. He provided information about the gang structure in the school, granted me interviews, and took interest in my project. I also came to realize that he had gained the trust of many students (in fact I never heard a student say anything disparaging about him). And he appeared to genuinely like and respect the students. Eventually, I would converse with the officers and some of the agents, but I did not get to know them as well as I did the teachers or deans. The security agents were the most difficult group to get to know. While the police seemed comfortable talking with deans and administrators, the agents appeared to me to be quieter. They also did not congregate in the deans' office the way some of the officers did. If they were in there, they were immersed in a situation. I did spend considerable time observing this group, but I did not get to know any of them personally. I was granted an interview with their supervisor, but the supervisor would not permit me to interview his subordinates. During his interview, he stressed the agents' training and the

philosophy they use for "approaching and dealing with students." His statements seemed to contradict much of what I saw in practice.

The teachers

I set out to meet teachers by visiting department offices with the assumption that this would the easiest group to access. After all, I had been a teacher and could relate to them. But my initial impression was that, in general, they appeared suspicious, haggard, and somewhat taciturn. I had witnessed these dispositions many times before as an educator. Indeed, I knew firsthand how draining and demoralizing the job could be. But it was only September, and I expected more cooperation. Some teachers barely looked up when I introduced myself and rolled their eyes when I said I was studying the disciplinary process. Sarcastic comments would often follow. "Good luck with that!" Or, "You're in the right place." Other teachers went into a rant offering their critiques of everyone but themselves—the students, the administration, the DOE, and quite often, parents. Some conceded that the school was safer than it had been and suggested that the administration was "more responsive" than it had been in previous years. Others thought the police presence made the difference. Still others saw no "real" difference.

Something else that struck me was the invisibility of the teachers outside the classrooms or the department offices. I almost never saw them in the hallways during the change of periods when the students filled the halls. In fact, it was as if they had a secret passage way back to their offices. Part of their apparent withdrawal may have to do with what Devine (1996) calls "the marshmallow effect," that is, students push the limits of the rules until the system breaks down. In the framework, the teachers have no authority and thus, retreat into resignation and let the police handle situations. But it appeared to me that

other dynamics were playing out as well. Teachers may have been particularly demoralized, or apathetic, because they believed they were about to lose their jobs. Regularly, teachers admitted to me that they were actively pursuing a position at another school. They believed that the restructuring of the school into small schools put them in jeopardy of losing their job. They often told me that, "the writing's on the wall." Additionally, it would be a distortion of the reality to say that teachers were generally apathetic. After a couple of months of trying to engage them, I began to meet several teachers who expressed much affection and concern for the students. I observe a number of teachers working in an informal counseling capacity with students. A number of teachers also criticized what they saw as the over-policing of the students, and some provided critiques of the educational policies that do not meet their students' needs. Like with all the groups, there was considerable variation in terms of perspectives, teaching styles, levels of dedication, and love for the students among the teachers. I observed and met most admirable teachers, and ones who I thought should probably consider retiring early.

The students

As I was in the process of building relationships with the deans and teachers, I was also meeting students and trying to develop relationships with them. My plan was to get to know well six or seven students who were involved in disciplinary cases on a regular basis. I also set out to meet and interview a broad range of students—those involved in disciplinary cases and those who weren't (see section on interviews below). This was somewhat overwhelming, and several issues arose for me. There were so many students in the school, and I knew virtually nothing about them or their very complicated social worlds except for what they themselves told me. Could I trust them? They seemed to be honest and upfront,

but was I being fooled? Did they view me as an agent of the institution and thus perhaps someone who could not be trusted? Could they ever trust some strange white woman regardless of my institutional affiliation?

Another set of questions also arose. In a full-scale institutional study, it is difficult to know where to begin or, for that matter, where to go from there. Was I meeting the "right" students? Was there such a thing as a "right" student? I couldn't be certain that I was meeting the range of students I would need to meet in order to depict the variation among them. And I did not know who most represented those "frequently involved in discipline cases" or not.

In order to deal simultaneously with the issues of trust and selection, I went about meeting potential research subjects in a variety of ways. One strategy I used to meet students is known as "snow balling" (LeCompte, 2000), which refers to having one informant introduce the researcher to others. So certain students introduced me to other students. But perhaps the more fruitful use of snow balling was when deans (and eventually a police officer) introduced me to students. This was especially helpful when it came to identifying students who had a history of involvement in disciplinary cases.

While I was careful not to take the adult's description of the student at face value, their perception and knowledge of an individual student was helpful. And mostly, they confirmed what the students told me. For example, Duane was introduced to me through Dean Jackson. Jackson told me that Duane was one of the highest ranking gang members (a Blood) in the school. He discussed Duane's personal profile (he lived with his grandmother in the Bronx when I met him and then moved to Brooklyn to live with his father). Jackson also discussed his positive attributes. For example, Duane had the potential to be a highly

academically engaged student and he was generally trustworthy. (I could believe what he told me, and he would not intentionally create problems for me. For example, while walking through the streets with him, I could trust that he would consider my safety.) As I got to know Duane, I found that his self-representation was consistent with what many adults told me about him. The fact was that despite his participation in some of the most violent forms of conflict in the school, he had developed considerable trust with many of the deans and a couple of police officers, particularly Hoffmann. I realized, then, not only that Duane was a reliable research subject (and representative of a particular portion of the student body), but that he would not be threatened by my apparent closeness with the deans. Indeed, he had his own close relationships with many of them. (See chapters five and eight for commentaries on Duane's relationships with Dean Henry and Officer Hoffmann. He was also particularly close with Dean Dempsey.) Duane's and my connection continued after he transferred to a school in. Before he left, however, he introduced me to a host of other young men, including Alex who is quoted in chapter eight.

Wanda was also introduced to me by Jackson, and similarly, her self-representation was very consistent with what Jackson told me about her. Wanda was a young woman who had a long history of involvement in disciplinary cases and the juvenile justice system. She had spent time in a gang (she would not identify which one) and a few months incarcerated in a juvenile custodial facility. However, when we met, she was in the process of trying to "turn her life around." She even associated with several of the students who I met in the school leadership office. But toward the end of the year, Wanda had grown very frustrated and her future was uncertain.

Zack was introduced to me by Officer Hoffmann. This particular example suggests just how complicated, and perhaps unpredictable, the dynamics were inside the school. I had never imagined that a police officer would introduce me to one of my key research subjects who was a member of a gang (a Blood)! Hoffmann was "working with" Zack, trying to keep him out of trouble. Juarez also tried to work with Zack to the point that some teachers complained that Zack had "too much power" in the school. Despite their efforts, Zack got into all sorts of trouble inside and outside the school. But this did not undermine the mutual respect and sense of trust he had with Hoffmann and Juarez and other adults in the school. Zack also introduced me to other students.

I met Carlos in another fashion. He was sitting at Dean Dempsey's desk one early October day, slumped over, resting his head arms and head on the desk. He looked defeated or bored. I simply struck up a conversation with him, the way I often did with students in the detention room. It turned out that I was conducting regular observations in the Global History class (Ms. Klein's) of his girlfriend, Jennifer. Over the course of the year, I became very close with the two of them, going to movies or bowling or just hanging out listening to music. After Carlos dropped out of Blakely and began attending GED classes, we continued spending time together. Given the connection I developed with Carlos and Jennifer, I consequently saw Carlos's mother on a number of occasions, and she and I took Jennifer and Carlos out to celebrate Jennifer's birthday the year after I met them. While there were many things that Carlos and Jennifer told me in confidence and, thus, were not verified by Carlos's mother, much of the details of his life were verified by her (although I had no reason to doubt Carlos or Jennifer.)

In most instances, students were well aware of my connections with their teachers and the deans. I met students in classes in front of their teachers. Each would see me openly conversing with the other. I met Jamal in Ms. Orozco's class (although I had seen him in the deans' office [see chapter five]). I met Greg, Darnell, and Manuel in their science class; Damian (see chapter six) was their friend. Ultimately, I remained aware of potential feelings of betrayal students may develop if they saw me casually chatting with their "enemies," and I tried to avoid a public image of having close associations with or being an ally of any one group. But, my initial anxiety over building relationships across various (sometimes conflicting) groups was misplaced. The ways in which I met my research subjects and identified reliable ones happened in ways I had not expected. This is because the alliances, relationships, and dynamics between individuals within the institution were more complicated than I had anticipated. I tried, throughout the dissertation, to illustrate these complexities.

In terms of trust, I had to consider why the myriad students I met throughout the year—many of whom I only spoke with once or twice—would trust me and why I should trust them. My sense was that the relationships I developed with the core group of students who I met through adults and/or with whom I spent considerable time provided some context. I could be fairly certain that those students spoke honestly and openly with me. I learned from them much about how students' make sense of schooling and the world around them. I also had spent many years developing relationships with my own students in a similar school and even neighbors in my Bronx and Harlem neighborhoods to have a framework for understanding the realities of Blakely students' lives. So when it came to engaging students who I did not know as well, I had some frame of reference from which to

interpret their levels of trust (or distrust) and to gauge their honesty. I cannot be certain students never lied to me. In fact, I am fairly certain some did, especially when it came to describing their own misbehavior. I also know that many students did not initially trust me—not that they were inclined to lie, but omission occurred often. This was confirmed when students would sometimes later, after several weeks or months, tell me new details about an event they had previously discussed with me. The new details usually involved very personal information (about having been raped for example), information about illegal activities or gang affiliation, or admissions of misbehavior previously not reported. But, despite students' initial guardedness, I believe there was a sense that they had nothing to lose by being candid. The police were often already aware of their deeds and school personnel had already constructed them in one way or another. Additionally, many students appeared eager to share their thoughts with anyone who would listen. I believed they *wanted* to trust me. I presented them with a forum to voice their perspectives in front of an adult, often into a tape recorder, and instead of viewing the adult and the recorder as a potential danger, they seemed to view them more as a means of creating legitimacy for their viewpoints. I found only a few students to be self-conscious around the tape recorder, and many students, even those who reported involvement in illegal activities, wanted me to use their real names. (I didn't.) Only once was I met with hostility and a refusal to speak while trying to engage a group of students in the detention room. I left them alone.

Finally, when I had worked through the assumptions I had about different groups' perceptions of conflicting allegiances and issues of trust, I still wondered if I was meeting the "right" students—both in terms of the smaller number of students I was spending considerable time with and others who I saw only two or three times. I wanted to know if I

was meeting a wide range of students that reflected the variation among the total population. I wanted to know if I was meeting the well-known "troublemakers" as well as the kids who floated under the radar, the ones immersed in the institutional culture (as "good students" or as "infamously bad kids") as well as the ones with tenuous relationships to the school, and students who went to classes along with those who practiced selective cutting. In terms of meeting a range of students, within a few months, I felt confident I had succeeded in this. This is due, in part, because I met students in a variety of ways and settings within the school, but even the students who I met in the detention room and the ones who I came to know well represented a wide range of experiences. Almost all had some experience within the juvenile or criminal justice system, but that was not surprising. In other respects, the group of students I came to know well differed from one another in important ways. Some were in gangs; others were not. Some were involved in illegal activities (usually drug sales); others' worst offense was occasionally jumping the subway turnstile. Some, like Duane and Zack, were well-known. Zack was particularly "notorious" as were Steven and Frankie (see chapter eight). Carlos was virtually unknown, one of many in a sea of Yankees-baseball-cap-and-baggy-pants clad young Bronxites getting by, or not. Jamal was not a frequent visitor to the deans' office, but he became better known after that spring day when he was accused of swinging at an agent (see chapter six). Other students were not so well known in the deans' office but had a visible presence in another part of the school—their classes or the school leadership office where I met Ronald, Alisa, and others, for example. In terms of placement in special education, an important indicator of high risk of incarceration, I chose not to emphasize this variable. Some of my research subjects were in the school's Special Education program; others were not. And while it was clear that the

special education wing of the school had a considerable amount of the "action" in the building, at a school like Blakely, where almost all incoming freshmen are over-age and performing below grade level, status as a student in Special Education appeared to play a less significant role in likelihood of being subjected to criminal procedural level strategies than it might in another environment.

So, in the end, I believed I had developed a good sense of the various kinds of experiences different students had in the school, and my research subjects reflected that variation.

Data Collection: Interviews, observations, and textual data

Interviews

In the above section, I provide some description of the fieldwork, but below I provide specific details about my methods, my plans upon entering the field, and the realities that shaped my ultimate research design. First, my original plan was to conduct about 30 semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews with students, fifteen with students involved in disciplinary cases and fifteen who were not involved in disciplinary cases. I would conduct ten interviews with teachers, five with deans, several key (relevant) administrators, and as many officers and agents I could (assuming access would be limited). This original plan presented some dilemmas. For example, how would I define an interview? Or how would I count them? I had lengthy conversations with students that were not audio-recorded, but I had ample notes from the exchanges. I also interviewed some students a few times. Carlos granted me four tape recorded interviews (plus one video taped interview conducted in his living room for a documentary he was working on) and Zack two, for example. I also had interviews that included several students. So my final

presentation of my interview data collection process reveals something a little messier than I had planned. Altogether, I audio-recorded thirty-three students and conducted semi-structured interviews with them. Of these 33, seven students gave me more than one interview. Three interviews were group interviews. Almost all of the students I tape recorded I spoke with on a number of occasions. Only nine of the interviewees were girls. (While many girls were getting involved in disciplinary cases, boys were more visible in the process; they were over-represented in discipline cases, gang activity, and hallway antics. Many argued, however, that girls often played more subtle roles in conflict, such as that of the instigator. Finally, the under-representation of girls in my interview data could be due to the tendency of girls who were involved in disciplinary cases to be less willing to speak about their experiences as they were perhaps in more vulnerable positions than boys. When I began to see the under-representation of girls in my interview data, I actively tried to recruit girls for interviews. Several girls agreed to be interviewed and then repeatedly did not show up at the scheduled time.)

The guiding questions I used during interviews were meant to illuminate students' perspectives on discipline policies, kinds and levels of disciplinary problems found in the school, and their classroom experiences. While the questions did help structure the interviews and I made an effort to address every question with every student, interviews tended to take a very conversational tone. We often went off on long tangents, and students would point out aspects of discipline and conflict that I had not considered. Spindler (1982) suggests the strength of a semi-structured interview approach when he states that, "conversational management of the interview or eliciting interaction must be so carried out

as to promote the unfolding of the emic [local] cultural knowledge in the most heuristic, 'natural' form" (7).

I had countless un-recorded conversations with students. I would estimate that I spoke to anywhere from twenty to forty students a week in brief to lengthy exchanges. Among these students, girls were more evenly represented.

Another issue that arose when I began conducting interviews with students involved the problematic (false) binary I had created between students involved in disciplinary cases and those who weren't. I learned quickly that few students were easy to categorize that way. Most students had been involved in some kind of disciplinary case. Some were students like Wanda who had a history of frequent involvement but when I met her, she was not getting into trouble. Another student who I met early on in Ms. Klein's class who I perceived as very studious and compliant to school rules surprised me one day when I bumped into him in the deans' office after he had been in a serious physical altercation with another student. So, instead of using these initial categories I had set up, I aimed to interview and spend time with a wide range of students in various contexts. I met students in the detention room, classes I observed, the school leadership office, the lunch room, and the library. I also met students through other students. Ultimately, I felt as confident as possible that I was getting to know and learn from students from a very wide range of sub-groups—gang members, student government officials, students on the verge of dropping out, others looking forward to graduation, students who rarely got in trouble and others who were in daily entanglements with deans and police officers.

Interviews with students usually took place during their lunch periods or when they were in the detention room. I did not encourage students cutting a class to meet me, but I

am aware that it happened. Usually, I learned, these were classes students normally cut. It was often difficult to find a quiet place to conduct an interview (the cafeteria and the detention room could get very loud at times.) So we had to be a little creative. Once in a while, we borrowed an office, and often we found an isolated stairwell or hallway area and sat on the floor. I also conducted several interviews in the library, but this was not a location that all students felt comfortable venturing into.

I conducted semi-structured, recorded interviews with fourteen teachers, including one department assistant principal and six deans who are also teachers (I regularly elicited their perspectives as teachers as well as deans), and one guidance counselor. As I detail above, several of the deans granted my more than one recorded interview and many others had regular conversations with me. The principal, Ms. Alvarez, granted me a recorded interview, as did AP Juarez. Officer Hoffmann gave me two recorded interviews, and the supervisor of the security agents gave me one. He was unwilling to allow me to interview any of his subordinates (the security agents). I did, though, have frequent exchanges with a number of officers and agents. Another officer who I spoke with on occasion agreed to be interviewed, but then went on a leave of absence.

Participant observation

In terms of participant observation, I visited the school three or four days a week. I spent a few periods a day in the deans' office and the adjoining detention room (B-40). In these rooms, I was able to interact with the deans, students involved in disciplinary cases, and police officers. I was able to observe central components of the disciplinary process, including body searches, post-arrest procedures, and interactions between students, deans, security agents, and police officers.

I also frequently walked through the hallways and other "public" spaces of the building, such as the entrance area. These areas were important spaces for observing such practices as sweeps, scannings, and body searches. I also sat in the cafeteria talking with students or faculty members, visited the school leadership office, and attended classes. I attended twelve (semester-long) classes throughout the school year, six of them of a regular basis. I also occasionally visited department offices where teachers would go when they were not in the classroom, the library, and the teachers' lounge located inside the library.

I followed deans around; I hung out with students and had informal conversations with them on a wide range of topics. Like with the interview process, I was unable to label explicitly the six students I intended to get to know well and "follow" through the year. There were five students whose court proceedings I observed (including the two bothers I met the day I was with Carlos [see chapter four]) and four other students who I spent time with outside the school. Among these, I grew particularly close with Carlos, Jennifer, Duane, Zack, and Wanda. Then there were a number of others who I caught up with regularly in school and got to know quite well. These students included Gillian, Jamal, Alisa, Ronald, Alex, and several more. I got to know dozens of other students from their classes (the ones I observed) or the school leadership office, and I would have brief exchanges with them whenever we saw each other.

I attended classes throughout a semester on a semi-regular basis, once or twice a week. I would also catch up with the teachers and the students outside of class to keep informed as to what had been happening in the classes I missed. I observed in a range of classes including two semesters of peer mediation, one English Language Arts (ELA) class, two Global History classes, a special education science class, a bilingual history class, a

mainstream science class, a special education ELA class, a special education writing class, a special education Global History class, and a gym class. Except for occasional input in peer mediation, I did not participate in the classes. I would sit toward the back on the room, observe, and take notes. I also collected handouts from days I attended the class and occasionally from classes I did not attend. In the peer mediation class, I sometimes contributed to the class discussions, asked questions, and once during the fall semester when Ms. Orozco was absent and a substitute was present, I was able to facilitate the session. Another time during the spring semester, Ms. Orozco allowed me to lead a discussion on the topics of youth violence and rebellion after the students had viewed the film *To Sir with Love.*

My observations provided me with four small notebooks of data, each with an average of about 150 pages of notes. These notes included mostly detailed descriptions of events, people and physical spaces, notes from conversations, and initial reactions. I also kept a separate reflection journal at home, an electronic document of over 100 pages of full descriptions of individuals, challenges I was facings, questions I had, things I wanted to follow up on, connections between different comments I heard or events I witnessed, emerging themes, and the like.

Textual data

As I mentioned, I was given much freedom in terms of collecting textual data. Filing cabinets were literally opened for me at times. I was given access to the occurrence reports and made copies in the same office they were located of all of them. A high ranking administrator in the school gave me copies of reading and math scores for incoming freshmen, and a person working in the attendance office gave me a sample of attendance

sheets and cutting records. I also collected fliers, handouts, letters that went out to students or their parents, and other paper documents related to policies or happenings in the school. And I had several copies of the discipline code.

I accessed other information about Gilbert Blakely and other schools on the New York City Department of Education Website. Each school posts a "report card" with data on demographics, performance, levels of violence and disciplinary incidents, and other such information. The Office of School Safety also provides more detailed data about disciplinary incidents. While these on-line documents are full of useful information, I was careful how I used them. Within the field of education (teachers, administrators, and scholars, for example), there is considerable discussion around the accuracy of these data. Many people complain that reporting mechanisms leave much room for subjectivity and omissions. Even Ms. Alvarez complained that other schools under-report disciplinary incidents. But I was able to cross-check the information on-line with the data I collected in the school. In terms of numbers of disciplinary incidents, demographic information, and academic performance measures (reading scores, Regents grades, and dropout rate, for example), the different data sets were generally consistent.

Linking the Micro and the Macro: Research strategies and theory

In ethnography, it is often very difficult to make unequivocal connections between the actions and beliefs of individuals encountered in the field and the invisible, or less visible, social and economic forces that shape those actions and beliefs. Making these connections became particularly important to me as I took on the dual-task of documenting in thick ethnographic detail student behaviors that were sometimes seemingly irrational, belligerent, or self-destructive while attempting not to reinforce negative images of urban

youth. On the one hand, Steinberg (1997) emphasizes the problem of what he calls the ethnographic fallacy. This refers to the common ethnographic practice of taking statements or observations at face value (removed from their larger context). He contends that some ethnographic work "suffers from a myopia that sharply delineates the behavior at close range but obscures the less visible structures and processes that engender and sustain the behavior" (quoted in Duneier, 1999: 343). Thus, if I could not connect students' disregard for institutional norms in the classroom, selective cutting, hallway antics, and acts of violence to the structures and processes that sustain and engender such behaviors, I would be failing to provide the fullest and most accurate analysis I could of the social world of the school.

Yet, on the other hand, I did not want to strip students or other individuals in my study of their agency by providing an overly structuralist account. Furthermore, I wanted to avoid contextualizing discourses of political economy that were not reflected in empirical data (Marcus, 1998). Marcus argues that too many ethnographies present political economic analyses that are disconnected from the ethnographic data, thus they do not really demonstrate how ones actions are shaped by external social and economic forces. Ultimately, I employed a number of strategies in an effort to illustrate the dialectical relationship between the micro and macro.

In my research, I was very mindful of the political economy of schooling and of criminal justice and crime control. I had read numerous works delineating the relationships between abstract economic and social structures and cultural shifts and educational and criminal justice policies, including the work of Anyon (1997, 2005), Apple (2001), Lipman (2002), Torres and Burbules (2000) in education and Wacquant (2000, 2001, 2004), Tonry,

(1998, 1999), Christy (1994), Young (2001), Foucault (1977), Western (2006), and Garland (1985, 1990, 2001) in the study of punishment. I had also read a host of policy analyses that examine the impact of current educational, school discipline, and criminal justice policies (Brown, 2003, 2005; Drum Major Institute, 2005). Such analyses indicate correlations between placement in special education, low-academic performance, dropping out of school, and increased chances of incarceration. Race and economic and employment status have also been linked to involvement in the criminal justice system, and in the area of school discipline race has been identified as a significant variable. These kinds of studies provided an important context for me, but still, citing these works did not provide evidence of a *causal* relationship between school-based zero tolerance policing and entrance into the criminal justice system or future incarceration. Then again, showing any sort of causal relationship was never my intention, nor would my methodology allow for it. I was interested in the lived experience of the policies I was studying and the ways in which students made sense of schooling in the context of the policies. I did, though, want to make at least implicit connections to dominant cultural processes and the political economy and, when I could, explicit connections.

I attempted to do this in a number of ways. First, I employed what Marcus (1998) calls multi-sited research. In this approach, the researcher recognizes the connection between the site of inquiry, in this case a school, and other "sites," such as the streets, home life, the job market, the criminal justice system and juvenile justice system. Multi-sited research allows the ethnographer to move through the micro-level (everyday interactions and behaviors), the mezzo-level (institutional policies, practices, and discourses), and the macro-level (macro-structural forces and dominant cultural themes) through ethnographic

means. He suggests such approaches as "following the people, the story, or the plot" beyond the confines of the field site. In my case, this was accomplished to some extent through ethnographic interviewing. Yet, trips to places such as criminal court (when students receive summonses for disorderly conduct or some other offense), transit court, and students' neighborhoods provided an even greater opportunity to examine empirically the relationship between everyday life in the school and the criminal justice system and the larger social forces shaping the lives of the young people in my study.

For example, by spending time in students' neighborhoods with them or interviewing them about their experiences (when I could not accompany them), I was able to observe (or hear about) the material conditions in which they and their families lived, the attempts they made to find jobs, how they negotiated public spaces such as the street or subway stations, and the kinds of police surveillance they faced outside the school. By using this approach, I verified that my research subjects and their parents, indeed, represent those individuals whose difficult circumstances have been presented in aggregate terms in the work of scholars of social and economic structures, such as Wilson (1996), Massey and Denton (1993) and Sassen (2000)—those who hold low-paying service jobs, struggle with unemployment and under-employment, scrimp and rarely save, and feel the impact of the dramatic changes in policing and crime control policies.

Additionally, my observations in court illuminated the daily experiences of the thousands of individuals in low-income neighborhoods (as well as the students) who must appear before a judge in criminal court for minor "quality of life" offences. These types of observations provided a lens through which I could make meaning of school-based order

maintenance and allowed me to document the parallels between school-based order maintenance and neighborhood policing.

I was also able to find textual data on the local circumstance that helped to bridge a relationship between larger macro-level studies and my research subjects' lives. For example, in chapter one, I include information of the poverty and employment rates of the area surrounding the school and other near-by neighborhoods. I also include information of which neighborhoods in the city have the highest percentages of youth involved in the juvenile justice system. While these data do not provide any solid evidence of a connection between macro-structural forces and the micro-interactions found inside the school, they do help to fill in a gap between larger studies and daily life at Blakely. For example, Western's (2006) study statistically demonstrates a link between poverty and low educational attainment and imprisonment. The documents indicating high poverty rates and low graduation rates in and around Blakely, thus, provide the link between studies like Western's and my own.

But ultimately, I can make few empirical claims as to how the penalization process of a segregated urban public school and the cultural practices that emerge in that context are explicitly linked to racial and economic exclusions and the exigencies for new mechanisms of control at this historical moment. It is in addressing these questions that I turn to theory. Burowoy (1991) argues that one way to link micro-interactions to the macro-structural forces that shape them is by engaging, and re-constructing existing theories. Weis and Fine (2004) make a similar point as they connect the act of theorizing to doing research for social justice. They state that it is necessary to, "theorize explicitly, that is connect the dots, to render visible relations to other groups and to larger socio-political formations," and to

locate the emergent montage of groups within "historically shifting social and economic relations in the United States and globally" (xvii).

In developing a theoretical framework, I have engaged both educational theory and social theories of punishment and crime. I have considered the relevance of reproduction theory in the context of eroded, or nearly meaningless, academic missions, zero tolerance, and order maintenance in schools and poverty, high unemployment, aggressive neighborhood policing, and mass imprisonment outside schools. I theorize a spatial and ideological confluence between the school, the street, and institutions of the criminal justice system. A penal logic, as well as a "street logic," is found inside the school—both in the institutional discourses and practices and student narratives and practices. I also show how the school takes on penal responsibilities. In this framework, reproduction may not be the most salient construct for understanding the role of schools like Gilbert Blakely, at least not in the sense that a school's function is to produce workers for a particular segment of the labor market. While the emergence of small schools and other current reforms complicate traditional notions of reproduction (see chapter one and my conclusion), current school discipline policies and practices at Blakely suggest at least a partial shift from preparing students to enter the labor market to an explicit and primary focus on control.

Additionally, I have examined students' oppositional behaviors and non-compliance in the context of order maintenance through the lens of resistance theories (see my conclusion for a full discussion of this), and I highlight students' perspectives and rationales of behavior, which I believe, help to dispel pathologizing interpretations of their behavior. In this sense, I attempt to reframe the student behaviors that are highlighted to justify punitive disciplinary practices. Finally, I have considered how the segregated urban public

school and the institutional practices I found within might fit into, or inform, a critical theory of punishment.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abu Lughod, L. (1990). The romance of resistance. *American Ethnologist 17(1)*: 41-55.

Advancement Project and the Civil Rights Project, Harvard University (June,2000). *Opportunities suspended: The devastating consequences of zero tolerance and school discipline policies*. Washington DC: Author.

American Bar Association (2001, February). *ABA zero tolerance report.* Washington DC: Author.

Amrein, A.L. & Berliner, D.C. (2002, March 28). High-stakes testing, uncertainty, and student learning. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *10*(18).

Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy*, New York, Monthly Press Review.

Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the street: Decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Anyon, J. (1980). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. *Journal of Education 162,* 67-92.

Anyon, J. (1997). *Ghetto schooling: A political economy of urban school reform,* New York: Teachers'College Press

Anyon, J. (2005). *Social policy, urban education, and a new civil rights movement.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Apple, M. (2001). *Educating the 'right way': Markets, standards, god, and inequality.* New York and London: Routledge Falmer.

Ayers, W., Dohrn, B. & Ayers, R. (eds.) (2001). *Zero tolerance: Resisting the drive for punishment in our schools.* New York: The New Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J.C. (1977). *Reproduction in society, education, and culture.* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications**.**

Bourgois, P. (1995). *In search of respect.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. (1976). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life,* New York: Basic Books.

Brotherton, D. (1996). Contradictions of suppression: Notes to a study of approaches to gangs in three public high schools. *Urban Review, 28(2).* 95-118.

Brotherton, D. and Barrios, L. (2004). The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation: Street politics and the transformation of a New York City gang. New York: Columbia University Press.

Brown, J. (2003, May). *Derailed: The schoolhouse to jailhouse track.* Washington DC: Advancement Project.

Brown, J. (2005). *Education on lockdown: The schoolhouse to jailhouse track.* Washington DC: Advancement Project.

Burawoy, M. (1991). *Ethnography unbound: Power and resistance in the modern metropolis.* Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Burbules, N. & Torres, C.A. (eds.) (2000). *Globalization and education: Critical perspectives.* New York: Routledge.

Campbell, A. (1990). Female participation in gangs. In Huff, R.C. (ed.) *Gangs In America*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Casella, R. (2001). *At zero tolerance: Punishment, prevention and school violence.* New York: Peter Lang.

Casella, R. (2001). *Being down: Challenging violence in urban schools.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice (2006). Testing incapacitation theory: Youth crime and incarceration in California. San Francisco, California: Author.

Chesney-Lind, M. (2002). Imprisoning women: The unintended victims of mass incarceration.
In M. Mauer and M. Chesney-Lind (eds.) *Invisible Punishment: the collateral consequences of mass imprisonment.* New York: The New Press.

Chesney-Lind, M. (1997). *The Female offender: Girls, women, and crime.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Christie, N. (1994). *Crime control as industry: Towards gulags, Western style.* New York: Routledge.

Coalition for Juvenile Justice (2001). *Abandoned in the back row: new lessons in education and delinquency prevention*. Justice Policy Institute (Annual Report*).* Washington DC.

Cole, D. (1999). *No equal justice: Race and class in the American criminal justice system.* New York: The New Press.

Correctional Association of New York (March 2002). *Rethinking Juvenile Detention in New York City: A Report by the Juvenile Justice Project of the Correctional Association of New York.* New York: Author.

Correctional Association of New York (2005). *Juvenile detention in New York City*. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved on August 26, 2006 at: http://www.correctionalassociation.org/JJP/publications/detention_fact_2006.pdf

Dance, J. (2000). *Tough fronts: The impact of street culture on schooling.* New York Routledge Falmer.

Davis, R. and Mateu-Gelabert, P. (1999, March). *Respectful and effective policing: Two examples in the South Bronx.* New York: Vera Institute of Justice.

Devine, J. (1996). *Maximum security: The culture of violence in inner-city schools*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

DiIulio, J. (1996). *How to stop the coming crime wave*. New York: Manhattan Institute.

Dorfman, L. & Shiraldi, V. (2001, April). *Off balance: Youth, race, and crime in the news.* Washington DC: Building blocks for youth. On-line report: http://www.justicepolicy.org/downloads/OffBalancemediastudy.pdf

Drum Major Institute for Public Policy (2005). *A look at the Impact Schools: A Drum Major Institute for Public Policy data brief.* New York: Author.

Duneier, M. (1999). *Sidewalk.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Fallis, R. and Opotow, S. (2003). Are students failing school or are schools failing students? Class cutting in high school. *Journal of Social Issues, vol. 59 (1):* 103-119.

Fantini,, M., Gitell, M. and Maget, R. (1970). *Community control and the urban school.* New York: Praeger Publishers.

Ferguson, A. (2000). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of black masculinity.* Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

Fine, M. (1991). *Framing dropouts: Notes on the politics of an urban public high school.* Albany: State University of NY Press.

Fine, M. & Weis, L. (1998). *The unknown city: Lives of poor and working class young adults.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Foley, D. (1992). *Learning capitalist culture: Deep in the heart of Tejas.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Fordham, S. & Ogbu, J. (1986). Black students' school success: Coping with the burden of 'acting white.' *Urban Review 18*: 176-206.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison.* New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Garland, D. (1985). *Punishment and welfare: A history of penal strategies.* Brookfield, VT: Gower.

Garland, D. (1990). *Punishment and modern society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Garland, D. (2001). *The culture of control: Crime and social order in contemporary society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gendar, A. (2002, Nov. 26). Schools boss readies the rod, *New York Daily News, News*, p. 2.

Giroux, H. (1983). *Theory and resistance in education: A pedagogy for the opposition.* South Hadley: Bergin and Garvey.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situations of mental patients and other inmates*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books.

Gootman, E. (2006, August 10). Metro briefing New York: Schools' Discipline Code Criticized, *The New York Times, sec. B, col. 5, Metropolitan desk*, p. 141.

Gootman, E. (2005, February 9). Arrest of Bronx principal spurs criticism of the city. *The New York Times, sec. B, col. 1, Metropolitan desk*, p. 3.

Hagadorn, J. (1998). Gang violence in the post-industrial era. In M. Tonry & M. Moore (eds). *Youth violence.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Harcourt, B. (1998). Reflecting on the subject: A critique of the social influence conception of deterrence, broken windows theory, and order maintenance policing New York style. *Michigan Law Review 97:* 291-389.

Harcourt, B. (2001). *Illusions of order: The false promise of broken windows policing.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ignateiff, M. (1978). *A just measure of pain.* London: MacMillan.

Kantos, L Brotherton, D. & Barrios, L. (eds.) (2004). *Gangs and society: Alternative perspectives.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Katz, M. (1967). *The irony of urban school reform.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *Dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African-American children.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

LeCompte, M. & Judith, P. (2003). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research,* (second ed.). San Diego: Academic Press.

Lipman, P. (2002). Making the global city, making inequality: The political economy and cultural politics of Chicago school policy. *American Educational Research Journal, 39(2).*

Lipman, P. (2004). *High stakes education: Inequality, globalization and urban school reform.*New York: Routledge Falmer.

Lisante, T. (2002) The Education of Court Involved Youth in New York City. Deputy Superintendent Alternative, Adult& Continuing Education School and Programs. unpublished document.

Males, M. and Maccallair, D. (2000). *The Color of justice: An analysis of juvenile adult court transfers in California.* Washington DC: Justice Policy Institute.

Males, M. (2000). *Framing youth: 10 Myths about the next generation.* Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press.

Males, M., Maccallair, D. and Doyle, M. (2006). Testing incapacitation theory: Youth crime and incarceration in California. Washington DC: Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice.

Marcus, G. (1998). *Ethnography through thick and thin.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Massey, D. and Denton, N. (1993). *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the American underclass.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Matue-Gelabert, P. (2000). *School violence: The bi-directional conflict flow between neighborhood and school*. New York: Vera Institute for Justice.

Maurer, M. (1999). *Race to incarcerate: The sentencing project*, The New Press.

Maurer, M. & Chesney-Lind, M. (eds.) (2002). *Invisible punishment: The collateral consequences of mass imprisonment.* New York: The New Press.

MacLeod, J. (1995). *Ain't no making it: Leveled aspirations in a low-income neighborhood.* Boulder: Westview Press.

McArdle, A. and Erzen, T. (2001). *Zero tolerance: Quality of life and the new police brutality in New York City*. New York: New York University Press.

McCarthy, J.D. & Hoge, D.R. (1987). The social construction of school punishment: Racial disadvantage out of the universalistic process. *Social Forces, 65,* 1101-1120.

McCormick, J. (2000). Aesthetic safety zones: Surveillance and sanctuary in poetry by young women. In L. Weis and M. Fine (eds.) *Construction sites: Excavating race, class, and gender among urban youth*. New York: Teachers College Press.

McCormick, J. (2004). *Writing in the asylum: Student poets in city schools.* New York: Teachers College Press.

McLaren, P. (1983). The ritual dimensions of resistance: Clowning and symbolic inversion. *Journal of Education, 167 (2)*: 84-98

McNeil, L. (2000). *Contradictions of school reform: Educational costs of standardized testing*.New York: Routledge.

Mennel, R. M. (1973). *Thorns and thistles: Juvenile delinquents in the United States, 1825-1940.* Hanover: The University Press of New England.

Mickelson, R. (1990). The attitude-achievement paradox among black adolescents. *Sociology of Education, 63:* 44-61.

New York City Department of Education Discipline Code (2004). New York Department of Education.

New York City Department of Education (2004-2005). School Report Cards. Retrieved at: http://schools.nyc.gov/daa/SchoolReports/

New York State Education Department (2001). Project SAVE: Safe schools against violence in education: Guidance document for school safety plans. Albany: Author.

New York State Office of Attorney General's Office (1999). *New York City police department's "stop and frisk" practices: A report to the people of the State of New York from the Office of the Attorney General.* Albany: Author.

Oerlemans, K. and Jenkins, H. (1998). There are aliens in our school. *Issues in Educational Research*, *8(2):* 117-129

Ogbu, J. (1978). *Minority education and caste.* New York: Academic Press.

Orfield, G. and Lee, C. (2006). *Racial transformation and the changing nature of segregation*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Right Project at Harvard University.

Orfield, G. and Kornhaber. (2001) (eds.). *Raising standards or raising barriers: Inequality and high stakes testing in public education.* The Century Foundation Press.

Ortner, S. (1995). Resistance and the problem of ethnographic refusal. *Comparative studies in society and history, 37(1)*:173-194.

Parenti, Christian (1999). *Lockdown America: Police and prisons in the age of crisis*, New York: Verso.

Pettit, B. & Western, B. (2004). Mass imprisonment and the life course: Race and class inequality in U.S. incarceration. *American Sociological Review, 69:* 151-169.

Poe-Yamagata, E. & Jones, M (2000). *And Justice for Some.* Building blocks for youth initiative. Washington DC: Justice Policy Institute.

Previti, D. and Schill, M. (2003). *The state of New York City's housing and neighborhood 2003*. New York City: Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy.

Ritchie, B. (2002). The social impact of mass incarceration on women. In M. Mauer and M. Chesney-Lind (eds.) *Invisible Punishment: the collateral consequences of mass imprisonment.* New York: The New Press.

Roberts, D. (1999). Race, vagueness, and the social meaning of order-maintenance policing. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology 89,* 775-788.

Rushe and Kircheimer (1968*). Punishment and Social Structure*, New York: Russell and Russell.

Sandler, Susan (2000). *Turning to each other, not on each other: how school communities prevent racial bias in school discipline*. San Francisco, CA: Justice Matters Institute.

Sassen, Saskia (2001). *The global city.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Schlossman, S. (1977). *Love and the American delinquent: The theory and practice of "progressive" juvenile justice, 1825-1920.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Scott, J. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Scott, J. (1990). *Domination and the art of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Seeman, M. (1959). On the meaning of alienation. *American Sociological Review, 24(6)*: 783 791.

Sheldon, R. (1999). *Detention diversion advocacy: An evaluation*. Washington DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Skiba, R. Michael, R., Nardo, A. & Peterson, R. (2000, June). The color of discipline: sourcesof racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. Bloomington: Indiana Education Policy Center.

Skiba, R. & Peterson, R. (1999). The dark side of zero tolerance: can punishment lead to safe schools? *Phi Delta Kappan, 80,* 372-382.

Smith, N. (1996). *The new urban frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city.* Ew York: Routledge.

Steinhauer, J. (2002, Sept. 18). When it comes to school discipline, Bloomberg's motto is safety first. *The New York Times, sec. B, Metropolitan desk*, p. 3.

Tonry, M.(1998). *Malign neglect: Race, crime, and punishment in America.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Tonry, M. (1999). Why are U.S. incarceration rates so high? *Crime and Delinquency, 45(4)*: 419-438.

Tonry, Michael and Moore, M. (eds.) (1998). *Youth violence.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

U. S. Department of Health and Human services (2001). Youth violence: A report of the Surgeon General. Rockville: On-line report: http://www.sugeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/default.htm.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S. Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Villarruel, F. & Walker, N. (2002). Donde la justicia? A call to action on behalf of Latino and Latina youth in the U.S. justice system. Institute for Children, Youth, and Families, Michigan State University. On line report: www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/Full%20Report%20English.pdf.

Wacquant, Loic (2001). Deadly symbiosis: When ghetto and prison meet and mesh. *Punishment and Society 3(1):* 95-134.

Wacquant, Loic (2004). The penalisation of poverty and the rise of neo-liberalism. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research,* special issue on Criminal Justice and Social Policy, 9(4): 401-412.

Wells, A. S. (1993). *Time to choose: American at the cross-roads of school choice policy*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Western, B (2006). *Punishment and inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: Why working class kids get working class jobs.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Wilson, W. J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor.* New York: Vintage Books.

Ziedenberg, J., Brooks, K. & Shiraldi, V. (April, 2000). School house hype: Two years later. Washington DC: Justice Policy Institute.

Zimring, F. (1998). *American Youth Violence.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Zweifer, R., & de Beers, J. (2002). Zero tolerance impacts our most vulnerable children. *Michigan Journal of Race and Law, 8,* 191-220.