

Book Review: Victor M. Rios, *Human Targets: Schools, Police and the Criminalization of Latino Youth*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-0226090856 (Cloth). 224 Pages. \$60.00.

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Although the United States Constitution has over its working duration designated race, sex, class and to some degree sexual orientation as protected classes, communities and peoples of these backgrounds are not the target of opportunity or access. Rather, they are and into the foreseeable future best understood as targets of surveillance, subjected to the multiply and varied apparatuses of anti-Blackness and White Supremacy violence and policies. Being of color and an immigrant is a fraught experience, one where you have been lured and recruited by the enticing promise of American exceptionalism, mobility, education, and entrepreneurship.

That people of color are targeted by policies borne of the War on Drugs and War on Poverty has been made clear by a growing and potent body scholarship on the school to prison pipeline, stop-and-frisk policies, and the hyper-police state is clear evidence of the enduring legacies through which second class citizenship is forged and reinforced. Often preconfigured as criminals rather than citizens, Black and Latinx youth are especially vulnerable to surveillance that emanates from these anti-Black, anti-immigrant, and anti-youth policies that seek to control and constrain them instead of empowering and encouraging them.

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In *Human Targets: Schools, Police, and the Criminalization of Latino Youth* Victor M. Rios brings this reality into sharp relief, rendering a powerful sociological analysis where the personal is not only sociological but political as well. At the outset, Rios argues, "that institutional process and power overdetermine young people's ability to adopt and refine specific cultural practices and actions that impact their well being" (7). Demonstrated and conveyed over seven highly-accessible chapters, Rios details the sites and approaches that agents of the State deploy to police and surveil America's youth. These places are those as mundane as liquor stores and train and bus stations painted across urban America, and as high-level as policy rooms and think tanks.

In each case, Rios finds that there is a working tension between the *surviving* and the *thriving* frames. While survival intends to get by or get through, thriving seeks to improve and succeed. Although many youth attempt to lean into a thriving mindset, the society's apparatus often compels them into survival mode, leaving little room to strategize and attempt to thrive in America's growing carceral and neo-liberal approach to policing and criminal justice.

Rios proves that in spite of multiple attempts by agents of the State (e.g. Chapter Five's analysis of stop and frisk) to limit the outlooks and outcomes of Latino youth, they manage to hold on to, if only by the tips of their fingers, their dreams, aspirations, thriving in spite of all that is stacked against them. Here, Rios's own biography and sharing of such with the readers is especially instructive. As a former gang member for whom being a scholar was not necessarily pulled from the existing set of opportunities presented young poor and working class youth, Rios's analysis is not once extracted from a place of distance. Rather, it is his biographical familiarity and proximity that help forge an analysis that is rich sociologically and meaningfully actionable for policy wonks and the like.

As both a strength and limit, the book focuses centrally on Latino youth. Over the chapters, Rios is sensitive to and does offer some gestures toward the continuity of the experiences he describes for Latino youth as ever-present in the lives of Latina and Black youth. An important contribution of this work is that it helps to further hone our social scientific and public gaze on the effects of the racial politics and racial capitalism driving criminal justice and the brutal violence required of the apparatus of racialized and gendered surveillance in the United States. Whether at the hands of criminal justice professionals (e.g. Police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri) or unlicensed "concerned" citizens (e.g. George Zimmerman in Sanford, Florida), youth of color are

uniquely predisposed to the dangers of this common racially and gender motivated anticipatory surveillance, whereby elites and agents of the State watch Black kids not because a crime or violation have been committed; rather, because they are convinced that wherever one or more move about freely crime and violence are sure to come and it their job to hold and enforce the line.

Though not an explicit feature or argument of the book, in my reading one key extension of this work is important to point towards, particularly as we follow Rios's description and analysis of the ways that space and place are used against Latino youth--their lives often reduced to the mechanics of survival, dodging school officials and poor public policies producing subpar educational and employment outcomes. That is, the apparatus of oppression and criminalization that has been deeply effective at subverting the outcomes for Latino youth is especially effective as it is the beneficiary of centuries of practice and implementation in the lives of Black women and girls and sexual minorities.

For example, as we learn from sociologists Beth Ritchie (2012) and Dorothy Roberts (1999), as a matter of principle and policy Black women's lives, families, and work have been intentional sites for inventing and improving systems of punishment, anti-Welfare State policies, misogyny, capitalism and surveillance. In this way, what we read in *Human Targets* then is a story best understood as an ethnographic lens into many of the ways public institutions, policies, and prisons imagine and then render Latino youth Black. While present this point is mostly bubbling beneath and within Rios's observations. The passages drawn from Rios's numerous ridealongs especially reflect this overlap. "Clearly, most officers thought of themselves as service workers who were trying to help," Rios notes, "however, under pressure from the public to eradicate gangs, they resorted to punitive tactics that turned good intentions to bad practices" (133).

A future and important extension of this work will include closer attention to intragroup differences as well, namely the role of sex and sexuality in shaping gender, race and ethnicity. There are many youth, especially from racial and marginalized communities, who by virtue of being transmen, gender nonconforming and or gay have an even more vulnerable relationship with the State, masculinity and intragroup solidarities. This is the next frontier in this area of research, and is indeed bolstered by *Human Targets* (and of course Rios's larger body of work and community activism).

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To be sure, *Human Targets* is an important addition to the long-standing tradition in the study of race, criminal justice, and urban America in sociology. By employing an assets-based approach while operating in full acknowledgement of the structural deficits that serve as a firewall around opportunity and success for marginalized populations, Rios continues an important sociological legacy rooted in agency and social justice proffered by scholar-activists such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett and W.E.B. Bois (see e.g. Hunter and Robinson 2016).

With straightforward and clear prose and analysis, Rios provides an important window into the experiences of and constraints put on Latino youth as they venture to mature and attempt to live their best lives. Students in high schools, undergraduate and graduate courses will find the book deeply engaging, thoughtful and helpful in delineating next steps to create a future where existing deficit approaches to youth are shifted and/or dismantled altogether. Scholars, activists and practitioners alike will find *Human Targets* a valuable and insightful resource.

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