



Youth Gangs, Racism, and Schooling: Vietnamese American Youth in a Postcolonial Context (Postcolonial Studies in Education)

By Kevin D. Lam

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Youth Gangs, Racism, and Schooling examines Vietnamese American youth gang formation in Southern California, with an emphasis on the experiences of those heavily involved in the 1990s. Lam traces the genealogy of the Vietnamese American youth gang phenomenon as part of the conflict in Southeast Asia. He describes the consequences of war and migration for youth as well as their racialization as "Asian American" subjects. Grounded in the critical narratives of three gang members, Lam addresses themes of racism, violence, class struggle, style, and schooling in an era of anti-youth legislation in the state and nationally. In this dehumanizing context, Lam frames Vietnamese and Southeast Asian American gang members as postcolonial subjects, offering an alternative analysis toward humanization and decolonization.

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Editorial Review

Review

2016 Critics Choice Book Award, American Educational Studies Association

"*Youth Gangs, Racism, and Schooling* is a pioneering book about the interplay of colonialism, racism, and the production of Vietnamese youth gangs in Southern California. Lam's narrative is moving, rigorous, and deeply compelling. Weaving his own personal experiences with the poisonous dynamics of American imperialism, diaspora, displacement and the reconfiguration of place and agency, Lam provides a searing commentary on Vietnamese American youth gang subculture, the dynamics of racism, disruption, and poverty that now mark a notable chapter and offshoot of American domestic and foreign policy. The subculture of youth gangs is understood by Lam as a way not only to analyse a politics of disposability and state racism and violence, but also to connect the related matters of empire, immigration, geopolitics, and education. This is a brilliant book which should be required reading by everyone concerned about politics, power, and what it means to take seriously learning from historical memory in order to treat youth in general as part of the project and promise of a radical democracy." - **Henry A. Giroux**, McMaster University Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest, The Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy, and Professor of English and Cultural Studies, McMaster University, Canada

"Kevin Lam is a new voice in critical education. In this rich account, Lam provides compelling analysis of Vietnamese gang formation in a framework that combines studies of political economy, racialization, and empire. Stuck between model minority and gang-banger status, Vietnamese youth seek meaning as criminalized and perpetual strangers in the U.S. As Lam shows, they are neither victims of their circumstances nor freely acting subjects. We peer into a world of contradictions where hope resides as a concrete possibility through Lam's retelling of their migration and social struggle." - **Zeus Leonardo**, Professor and Affiliated Faculty Member of the Critical Theory Designated Emphasis, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, USA

Review

Winner of the American Educational Studies Association 2016 Critics' Choice Book Award

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