Now We Are Here: Family Separation Policies at the Border and the Impacts on Immigrant Children's Education

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Abstract
In 2018, the Trump administration implemented a zero-tolerance policy to immigration, one of the cruelest migratory policies established in modern history. To discourage other people from migrating to the U.S., undocumented immigrants were threatened with criminal prosecution while their children were taken from their parents and handed over to the Department of Health and Human Services. The policy forcibly separated thousands of families, leaving children as young as 4 months of age under the care of U.S. authorities. The consequences of these border encounters reverberate long after release and reunification. This talk centers on the lives of twelve migrant families in the United States who experienced detention and/or separation at the border during 2018–2019, telling a story that weaves parental sacrifice, children's narratives of loss, teachers’ understandings of the trauma experienced by these families, and, ultimately, the impact of a global pandemic on families that were already vulnerable.

Required Readings

Biodata
Gabrielle Oliveira is associate professor of education and Brazil Studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Gabrielle's research focuses on immigration and mobility. Merging the fields of anthropology and education through ethnographic work in multiple countries, Oliveira also studies the educational trajectories of immigrant children. She is the author of Motherhood Across Borders: Immigrants and their Children in Mexico and in New York City (NYU Press). Originally from São Paulo, Brazil, Oliveira received her M.A. and Ph.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City. She has been engaged in studying Brazilian migration to Massachusetts and has extensively focused on how immigrant children and families navigate newfound educational systems amid a global pandemic.