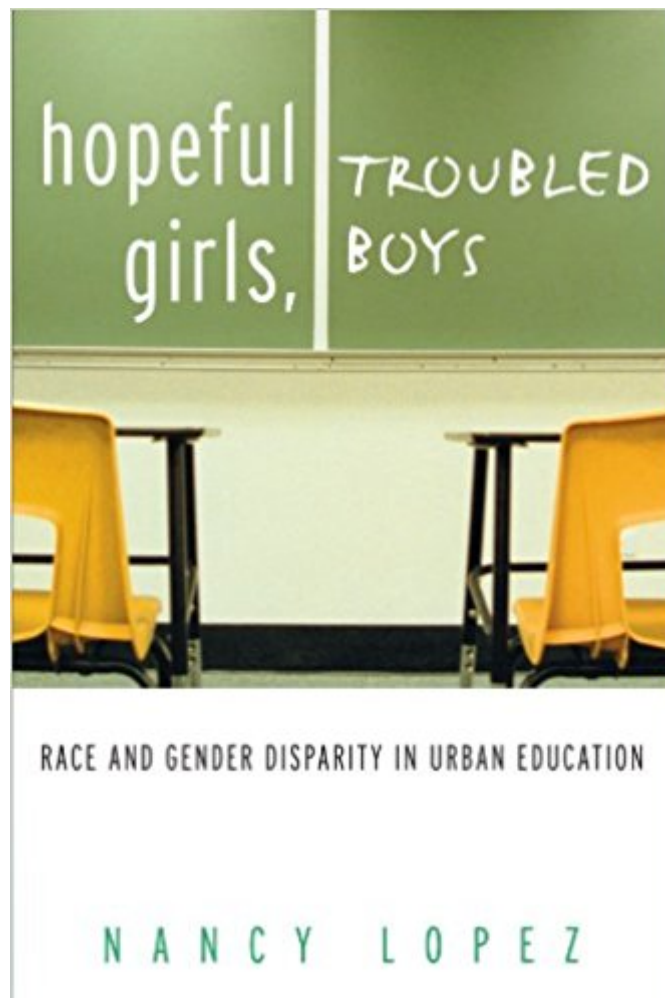




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# Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys: Race And Gender Disparity In Urban Education



## Synopsis

This book is an ethnographic study of Caribbean youth in New York City to help explain how and why schools and cities are failing boys of color.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Nancy Lopez brings us into the world of Dominican, West Indian, and Haitian American youth as they struggle to fulfill their parents' immigrant dreams while becoming 'American' in the overcrowded schools and on the mean streets of New York City. "Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys" contributes not only to our understanding of education, but also to the changing nature of race and inequality in America today. This is an important book, one the reader will not quickly forget."-Philip Kasinitz, author of "Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race" "Beautifully written and passionately argued, "Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys" is a major contribution to our understanding of education, the experiences of minority and immigrant youth, gender, and poverty. This should be required reading for anyone who wants to understand and improve the state of American urban education and the lives of poor minority youth."-Mary C. Waters, author of "Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities" "An intriguing analysis of the day-to-day practices and classroom dynamics that challenges previous educational research linking failure rates to peer, family, or community pressure. If you intend to face, rather than deny, the reality of the gender-race gap in education and the workforce, read this book."-Mary Romero, author of "Maid in the USA: 10th Anniversary Edition" "Lopez's important book, theoretically elegant, methodologically robust, and

empirically sound, furthers our understanding of the dynamics at work in one of the most interesting issues of our time. It is a substantial contribution to the sociological study of immigration, and should be read by scholars, policy makers, and the informed public interested in the so-called 'new immigration'."-Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, co-editor of "Latinos: Remaking America" Lopez book provides a realistic and in-depth examination of the life experiences that shape immigrant youth's attitudes about education. This book will be of great interest to people studying education and inequality."-"Contemporary Society

Nancy Lopez is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of New Mexico

In this book, Dr. Lopez evaluates low-income Dominican, Haitian, and West Indian students to see how gender differentiates their views of society, school, family, and the workforce. Dr. Lopez is "a subject from within": a Dominican-American who was raised under the same circumstances as her subjects. Progressive academics have argued for years that thinkers have not produced enough theory that juggles issues of race, class, and gender. Here, those three issues are tackled. Equally important, race and class are taken into account and gender is the primary lens of analysis. This is rightfully called gender studies as both men and women are examined. Dr. Lopez observes a homogenous school, thus this book makes almost no comparisons between Caribbean Americans and European Americans. Gender aside, this book looks at the sad state of public schools in many parts of America. Post-911, Giuliani has been embraced as "America's Mayor." However, this book points to the former mayor's assault against NYC public schools and illustrates why Black and Latino residents have historically resented him. In the school examined, teachers don't have offices. The walls are crumbling. The students don't even get textbooks. There is absolutely no mention of extracurriculars, so my guess is that they don't have any. There is more emphasis put on students' going through metal detectors than getting a good, critical education. Teachers and security guards spend more time ripping off boys' hats than making sure that they learn or feel safe. The most important point of this book is how Dr. Lopez shows that gender matters. Women may not like police, but they are not physically assaulted by them. Women are given responsibilities at home and ordered to submit to authority and learn to exhibit the habits that teachers reward. Women value education even when they are getting shoddy ones. Women get away with antics in the class for which men are severely punished. Many progressive readers may feel that Dr. Lopez is preaching to the choir. Race and gender are not separate worlds; they are categories that sit by each other constantly informing each other. For those who don't know this, this will be a shocker. For those

who do, much of what Dr. Lopez says is nothing new. The second chapter which concerns men's fears of physical violence and women's fears of sexual stereotyping is nothing new, again. Dr. Lopez has a purposeful project of challenging those thinkers who would say it's their own fault if Caribbean-American men and women don't succeed in American schools. I applaud her for that. However, she states that Caribbean boys don't study because they are insulted by the simpleness of the books they are given. I highly doubt that every unsuccessful male student does poorly because he is not challenged. Surely, some male students, of whatever ethnicity, would get As knowing that a 4.0 GPA from a bad school would still give them access to college admissions and scholarships. No such male is ever mentioned in this study. Dr. Lopez said that none of her subjects considered performing well in school as "acting white", but maybe that's an African-American concern rather than a Caribbean one. Dr. Lopez details that the streets are more important to males than the home, but this gendered divide of the public and private is a well-established topic; she never recognizes that. Dr. Lopez puts the chapter on families after her chapters where she observes the students in class. I would have put it before so that the book had more of a chronological flow. She describes 4 classes in the chapter on girls, but only one on the chapters on boys. I am not sure to which gender this may show a partiality. Because she looks at how gender differentiates individuals in and outside of the schools, anti-sexist teacher may be frustrated by her results. Nothing is clearly spelled out to show how teachers can affect change in such a way that males start attending college as much as females. But I don't fault her for being holistic, and possibly exhaustive in her examination. As the only Caucasian group to which the subjects have contact, they often compare themselves, and somewhat rag upon, Jews. This may feel anti-Semitic to some readers. But remember that New York City has its own unique ethnic conflicts that can't be applied to the rest of the nation. Dr. Lopez interviews many people who want to be doctors, lawyers, and Ph.D.s I love of hearing of people of color aiming high. However, I would have loved to have heard more people aiming to be teachers, business owners, or public administrators. Regardless of race, only 19% of medical school applicants will get into any medical school whatsoever. I hope these subjects don't end up without a paddle. The careers cited can be just as difficult to enter as the rap world or the sports arena. Dr. Lopez has a bright career ahead of her. Despite my critiques, I appreciated this book. I think it will be embraced by many.

Very informative book and it brings a new perspective on classroom environments! Very well written as well.

Perfect.

This is an excellent book in so many ways. I am an academic, and from an academic standpoint, one can tell that so much labor has been put into interviewing people, culling through the interviews and choosing interesting quotes, and putting this all together into themes. It is very well-written and easy to read. It's interesting and engaging. And it fills in a huge gap where there is virtually no research on this topic on this group in such vivid detail. This book paints a rich picture of what the daily lives of these children look like.

informative book

I read this book as part of my graduate education classes and found it to be complete drivel. It ranks with the absolute worst writing in social science. The author, like many in her field, seems to equate creating terms for things with explaining them. For example: "gender" is not called "gender" in this book? Why? Probably because that would make it blatantly obvious that the author has nothing new to say on the topic. Instead, Dr. Lopez calls it "gender(ing)". Because it's a \*process\*, get it? No? Me neither. As the precociously wise cartoon character Calvin once said, the purpose of academic "writing is to inflate weak ideas, obscure poor reasoning, and inhibit clarity", and Dr. Lopez seems to have taken this as advice, not satire. A litmus test: This book will allow you to explore why the author's "Race/Gender Experience Framework" is a fascinating alternative to both social constructivism/symbolic interactionism and structural-functionalism. Is that up your alley? Buy the book, you'll love it. Does that sound like it will drive you nuts? It will.

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