“Rude and in Defiance of Authority”: Arizona Anti-Mexican American Studies Legislation and the Discursive Positioning of the “Rude” Student of Color

much has been made of the need for civility in political discourse. Yet appeals to civility can be strategically used to avoid discussions of political harm. This article considers civility discourse centered on perceived “rudeness” of youth of color (YOC), and its use as a political strategy to avoid discussions of legislative impacts on students. I examine its efficacy in a case study of legislative attempts to dismantle Mexican American Studies (MAS) in Arizona. To avoid discussions of racial animus in legislation, politicians attempted to turn the larger conversation toward blaming YOC they associated with MAS for being “rude” and uncivil in their protests.