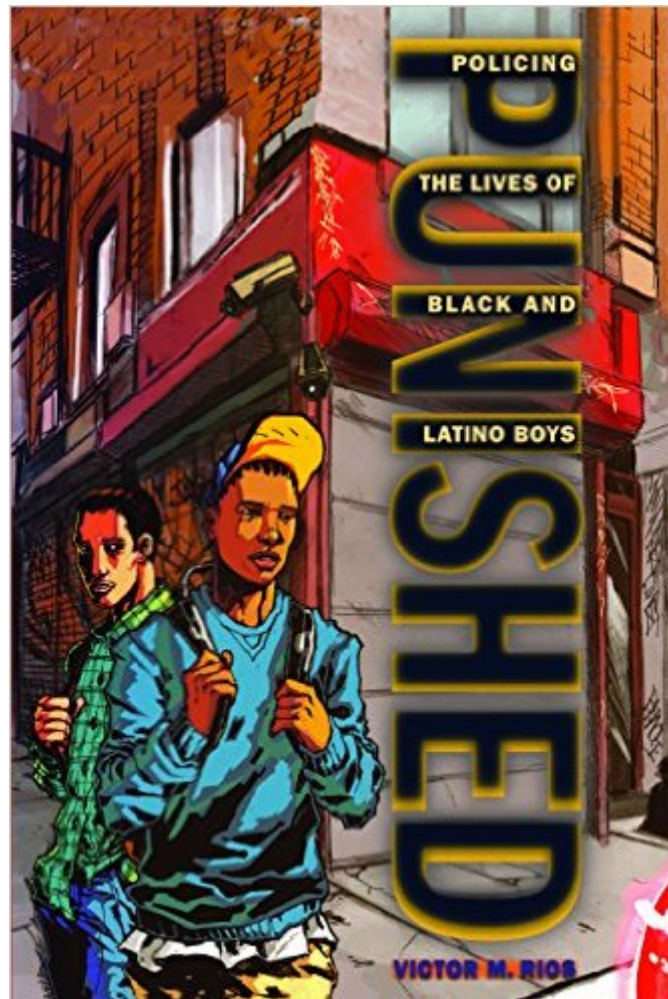


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# Punished: Policing The Lives Of Black And Latino Boys (New Perspectives In Crime, Deviance, And Law)



## **Synopsis**

Honorable Mention, 2014 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva Outstanding Book Award, presented by the Society for the Study of Social Problems  
Honorable Mention, 2013 Outstanding Book Award, presented by the Inequality, Poverty, and Mobility Section of the American Sociological Association  
2013 Oliver Cromwell Cox Book Award, presented by the Racial and Ethnic Minorities Section of the American Sociological Association  
2012 Best Book Award, Latino/a Sociology Section, presented by the American Sociological Association  
2012 Finalist, C. Wright Mills Book Award presented by the Study of Social Problems

Victor Rios grew up in the ghetto of Oakland, California in the 1980s and 90s. A former gang member and juvenile delinquent, Rios managed to escape the bleak outcome of many of his friends and earned a PhD at Berkeley and returned to his hometown to study how inner city young Latino and African American boys develop their sense of self in the midst of crime and intense policing. *Punished* examines the difficult lives of these young men, who now face punitive policies in their schools, communities, and a world where they are constantly policed and stigmatized. Rios followed a group of forty delinquent Black and Latino boys for three years. These boys found themselves in a vicious cycle, caught in a spiral of punishment and incarceration as they were harassed, profiled, watched, and disciplined at young ages, even before they had committed any crimes, eventually leading many of them to fulfill the destiny expected of them. But beyond a fatalistic account of these marginalized young men, Rios finds that the very system that criminalizes them and limits their opportunities, sparks resistance and a raised consciousness that motivates some to transform their lives and become productive citizens. Ultimately, he argues that by understanding the lives of the young men who are criminalized and pipelined through the criminal justice system, we can begin to develop empathic solutions which support these young men in their development and to eliminate the culture of punishment that has become an overbearing part of their everyday lives.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

Based on three years of research with 40 Black and Latino boys in Oakland, California, Victor Rios provides just the right blend of the boys' personal stories, his own critical analysis (and perspective as a former gang member from this community), and social science theory. He illuminates the processes of punitive social control that are taking place nation-wide, but focuses on the specific political-economic context of Oakland. His central claim is that the "youth control complex" systematically criminalizes young people; police harassment, while pervasive, is only part of the youth control complex. Families, schools, businesses, community centers, and probation officers, even while they are trying to help young people, are integrated into a web of punishment. As I read, I was caught up in the stories of the young men and gained new insight into their daily lives and struggles. Rios doesn't romanticize their lives or excuse their bad behavior, but he does show how limited their options are and how their efforts to turn their lives around are often undermined by the same individuals and institutions that are telling them to change. He shows that seemingly self-destructive behavior makes sense once we understand that the teens are striving for dignity, even when they know it will result in a loss of freedom. While all of the boys understand the processes of criminalization that enmesh them, some of them become activists protesting police brutality and mass incarceration. Rios ends on a hopeful note, calling for a "youth support complex" to nurture the great potential of the young people in our society who currently face not only enormous odds against them but also a system that is actively pushing them into criminality.

A phenomenal scientific analysis of the social contexts surrounding "gang-associated" young men. The book reads well on many levels; a good account of social theory, yet easily read by a layperson. Rios balances deep narratives of the boys' lives with a larger understanding of the world around them. Although his 3 year study provides snapshots of the lives of young men in Oakland, CA, their stories are understood on a much broader scale of criminal justice and social reform.

A compelling story which needed to be told. I especially value that this book was written by an

academic who is person of color who has experienced the over policing/under policing contradiction that is endemic in inner city communities, rather than by a well meaning "white anthropologist" researcher. Excellent book.

"Punished" is written beautifully! This study, conducted by author Victor M. Rios, focuses on the institutional injustices faced by Black and Latino male youth. Although, as a minority, I was already aware of such injustices, Rios' work provided me with the vocabulary necessary to further comprehend "the system." Overall, my opinions were changed. I once dubbed my low-achieving, male peers as lazy wanna-be delinquents. After reading "Punished," I realized these boys are not to blame. There are so many outer forces prohibiting these boys from realizing their full potential. Everyone should give this book a read! It'll definitely teach you something new.

Wonderful book! Does an excellent job of digging deep into the lives of youth in Oakland and gives an amazing account of their daily struggles. Rios masterfully explains how the youth in Oakland (and the US more broadly) are increasingly surrounded with police-like institutions which severely damage their opportunities for success. I would definitely recommend the book for anyone who wants to have a better understanding of youth and what we might be able to do to alleviate the problems they face.

This book is interesting, but nowhere near as good as it could be. I would say 80 to 90 percent of the book is Rios detailing the issues of the criminal justice system and only 10 percent is about his experience with the young men in the study. Most ethnographic works rely on the personal experience of those in the study, and then the author helps the reader understand the situation through a sociological (or other) lens. This book is quite the opposite with Rios preaching and then using brief, specific examples to boost his claims. I would not recommend it unless like me it was required for a class. It is not an ethnography like it is supposed to be, and worse, it uses a sample of 40 to make sweeping generalizations which is inadvisable.

Booked shipped quickly, so I can't complain. Rios' book is also brilliant. I was fortunate enough to be able to sit down & speak with him about his studies when he visited my university and came to appreciate all the work put into this book even more. Anyone interested in violence and the justice system surrounding youth of color, you'll enjoy this read.

A vivid revelation of the physical and mental malnourishment of our marginalized youth in the inner-city. Dr. Rios analyzes the detrimental effects and inevitable failures of criminalization and punitive social control as it operates in our present day juvenile justice system and community spaces. His graphic account of daily life in the inner-city for Black and Latino boys begs one to ponder the clear violation of basic human rights that are denied to marginalized youth on a regular basis. At the same time, Rios offers alternative means that prove more dignified, healthy, and efficient than the current noxious setup. As a researcher, Dr. Rios does not attempt to defend or condemn; instead, his research seeks to find answers that are linked to the complex life stories of the youth involved in this study. This book retrospectively details the deficient state of justice in the inner-city and is a call for much needed reform. A must read for anyone in an influential role in the lives of youth, especially youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

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