STATE OF THE DISCOURSE

THE RACIAL INCORPORATION OF LATINOS INTO THE U.S. MAINSTREAM

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WENDY D. ROTH, *Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformation of Race*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012, 268 pages, ISBN 978-0-8047-7796-4. Paper, $24.95.

HELEN B. MARROW, *New Destination Dreaming: Immigration, Race, and Legal Status in the Rural American South*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011, 392 pages, ISBN 978-0-8047-7308-9. Paper, $24.95.

For the last decade, scholars have pondered how the changing ethnoracial demographics of the United States would influence the country's racial, social, political, cultural, and economic landscape. Latinos are now the country's largest ethnoracial minority and the 2012 election provided an indication of just how significant this group will be for shaping the future of the United States. Scholars of race in particular have speculated how the ethnic and racial diversity of Latinos will change existing U.S. racial dynamics with some arguing that the historical Black/White binary will remain intact with Latinos falling on one or the other side of the binary. Yet, other scholars suggest that the Black/White binary will shift to a Black/non-Black binary in which Blacks will remain at the bottom of the U.S. ethnoracial hierarchy while Asian Americans and Latinos will be grouped with Whites. Going even further, another set of scholars argues that the size of the Latino population and its more fluid racial boundaries will trigger a Latin-Americanization of U.S. race relations such that Whites will remain at the top of the hierarchy, with Blacks and a few other lower-socioeconomic-status (SES) minority groups at the bottom while there will be an intermediate group between, "the Honorary Whites," that consists of mixed-race individuals and higher SES Asians and Latinos.

The books of sociologists Wendy Roth and Helen Marrow examine how three groups of Latino migrants are being socially, racially, politically, and economically

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incorporated into the United States in two different locations. While Roth's book *Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformations of Race* explores how transnational ties influence the racialization of Puerto Rican and Dominican migrants in New York City, a traditional immigrant destination, Marrow's *New Destination Dreaming: Immigration, Race, and Legal Status in the Rural American South* investigates how the increased migration of Latin Americans to the American South in rural North Carolina is challenging the deeply entrenched hegemony of Black/White race relations in a new immigrant destination setting. Though both books focus on different Latino subgroups in two distinct regions of the United States, together they compellingly demonstrate that Latinos have changed and will continue to change the face of U.S. race relations, not just in specific regions, but across the entire country. Read together, Roth and Marrow's exceptional research argues that despite being a pan-ethnic group, Latinos see themselves and are seen by other Americans as a *racial* group, with different histories and cultures from those of Black and White Americans. According to Roth, "Latino migrants have transformed it [views of race in the United States]. By bringing with them a racialized view of their nationalities . . . Latin American migrants have fostered the view, now accepted by much of mainstream America, that they do not fit into existing White or Black categories" (p. 189). Marrow also notes: "Many Hispanic newcomers appeared to be on their way to achieving incorporation into mainstream rural southern society as nonblacks, on the more privileged as opposed to disadvantaged side of an emerging black-nonblack color line." (p. 238). I begin with an overview of Roth's book, follow with one of Marrow's, and then conclude with a brief discussion of the implications of both works in light of recent developments regarding immigration reform, the restructuring of racial inequality in the United States, and the inclusion of *Hispanic* as a racial category on the 2020 Census.

Roth's *Race Migrations* explores how Latinos are culturally transforming our understanding of racial classification in the United States, as well as in their countries of origin. She interviewed 120 first-generation Dominican and Puerto Rican migrants in New York and nonmigrants in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Roth's main argument is that these groups navigate racial classification in the United States by relying on what she calls racial schemas, or "the bundle of racial categories and the set of rules for what they mean, how they are ordered, and how to apply them to oneself and others" (p. 12). According to Roth, this is a cognitive process in which individuals use information from their surrounding environment to make sense of racial categories, understand relationships between those categories, and figure out how people fit into those categories. These schemas vary from context to context and are shaped by institutions like families, governments, and schools. She suggests that three types of racial schemas shape Dominicans' and Puerto Ricans' racial classification options in the United States and in their countries of origin: (1) the continuum racial schema which includes intermediate racial terms between Black and White; (2) the (pan-ethnic) nationality racial schema that includes nationalities and ethnic groups as well as the pan-ethnic Latino/Hispanic category; and (3) the U.S. racial schemas, which she breaks down into two subschemas, the first of which is the *traditional* U.S. racial schema where any mixture of White and Black historically has been perceived as Black. The second is the *Hispanicized* U.S. schema which includes the White, Black, and Latino/Hispanic categories.

Because racial schemas are developed cognitively, Roth argues that people can hold multiple schemas at the same time and one may be activated in certain instances. This was especially important for her respondents whose ancestral origins were in the Spanish Caribbean, where as in the United States, there was a history of Euro-

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pean colonization, African slavery, and indigenous conquest. In the Spanish Caribbean, however, higher rates of interracial sexual unions due to the absence of rigid anti-miscegenation laws and social norms led to more fluid racial boundaries where having one drop of "Black blood" did not make an individual Black, as had been the case in the United States. Rather, racial mixture was embraced as part of the national ideologies in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic; this played a crucial role in the development of the continuum racial schema in both places. Consequently, Dominicans and Puerto Ricans (at home) rely on skin color, hair texture, socioeconomic status, and the intermediate "mulatto/morena/indio categories, rather than ancestry, to determine their racial classifications" (p. 19).

Nevertheless, migrating to the United States exposed Dominican and Puerto Rican migrants to the U.S. racial schemas. Through encounters with discrimination, living in residentially segregated neighborhoods, and interacting with other Latinos and Black and White Americans, Roth's respondents began to adopt different racial schemas based on their socioeconomic status, which shaped their ability to have interactions with Americans and learn more about U.S. racial schemas. Education level influenced the racial schema that both Dominican and Puerto Rican migrants adopted. Among Dominicans, those with lower education use a pan-ethnic nationality schema in which they assigned nationalities (e.g., Dominican, Cuban) to people they thought were Latino and classified non-Latinos as Black or White. On the other hand, more highly educated Dominican migrants adopted the Hispanicized U.S. schema, in which they classified anyone who was not White or Black as "Latino." Among more highly educated Puerto Rican migrants, there was a split between those who use the traditional U.S. schema and those who used a nationality schema. Puerto Rican migrants with less education used a nationality schema.

Roth's study is novel in three particular ways. First, unlike most studies of Latinos, which have tended to focus on Mexicans and Mexican Americans—the largest Latino ethnic subgroup—her study examines how Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in New York are challenging the existing Black/White racial binary of racial classification and forging a new classification system that includes Latinos as a racial category. Second, her methodological decision to ask respondents about their understanding of racial and skin-color categories by presenting pictures of different individuals with a wide range of phenotypes provided a clearer sense of how individuals used racial categories and interpreted social relations based on those categories in their everyday lives. Finally, Roth not only examines how Latino racialization is influencing the U.S. racial system, she explores how migrants' transnational ties and the power of "Latino" media also disperse U.S. racial ideals to immigrant-sending communities. She conducted research with nonmigrants in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic to show that such individuals are strongly affected by the race-making processes of the United States. For Puerto Rican and Dominican nonmigrants, she finds that education level influences which racial schema the groups adopt. Among more highly educated Puerto Rican nonmigrants and less educated Dominicans, the nationality schema is used to describe people's races. However, more highly educated Dominican nonmigrants use the continuum schema to classify individuals. Nevertheless, migrants' transnational transmission of U.S. racial ideals—more specifically, the Latino and Hispanic categories—to both countries has changed how nonmigrants think about racial categorization in those societies. Such a change has the potential to influence race relations and dynamics in both countries as well. This is perhaps the most important contribution of the book: the observation that race migrates just as individuals do.

While Roth's book is stellar and eloquently demonstrates how Latinos are racially changing the United States and how U.S. racial ideals—via transnational ties—are

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shaping existing racial schemas in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, there are two ways in which the book could have generated more knowledge about race in both contexts. First, it would have been helpful to hear more about the rationale for choosing Santo Domingo and San Juan as the research sites for the nonmigrant respondents. While they are their countries' largest cities, are they also their largest immigrant-sending communities to the United States? Related to this is the way in which differences in racial demographics in different regions of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic shape the national-level racial schemas and discourses in each place. For example, if the populations of Santo Domingo and San Juan are Blacker, Whiter, or more mixed compared to other parts of the country, does that yield local racial schema that are similar to or different from national-level racial schema? Additionally, the migration of Whiter, Blacker, or mixed migrants from each place might in turn shape the regional or local racial schemas in the immigrant-sending and -receiving communities. Finally, how might migration between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico shape the racial schemas and discourses in each country given their close proximity to each other? After all, it is not uncommon for Dominicans to migrate to Puerto Rico before coming to the mainland United States. These issues are important to consider because individuals experience racial discourses and schemas both nationally and locally.

The country of Brazil provides an interesting case to highlight the relevance of these issues surrounding national versus regional racial schemas and demographics. Though it is much larger than Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, different racial demographics in each part of Brazil shape local discourses of race, which I found in my research with Brazilian return migrants and nonmigrants in Governador Valadares, Brazil's largest immigrant-sending city to the United States (Joseph 2011, forthcoming). In that city, more individuals self-classify as racially mixed compared to people in the Northeast, who tend to be Blacker, and people in southern Brazil, who tend to be Whiter. Respondents felt that their city was more racially tolerant than other regions of Brazil because of their more mixed backgrounds. Thus, it is possible that local demographics and discourses in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic shape migrants' and nonmigrants' adoption of racial schemas in those two countries and in the United States as well.

A second issue to consider is to what extent return migration has shaped the acceleration of U.S. racial schemas in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, and how such a process might differ from focusing solely on nonmigrants and their transnational ties with U.S. migrants. In the book's introduction, Roth explicitly mentions that her focus is not on return migration, "but rather on how those transnational connections are maintained by individuals who live full-time in the US" (p. 30). However, given the amount of back and forth movement that occurs between the United States and those two countries, it is difficult to imagine that return migration does not affect nonmigrants' understanding of racial categories. Incorporating return migrants—especially since Roth conducted research in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico—would have allowed for a stronger analysis of how individuals' movements between the United States and the two countries shape these ideals. Some questions left unanswered by the present work that might then have found solutions are: (1) What messages do returnees share with nonmigrants about race in the United States and how does that sharing in turn transform the race relations derived from racial schemas in the home country? (2) Do returnees' racial schemas resemble those of nonmigrants or of the immigrants still in the United States? and (3) Do returnees continue to use U.S. racial categories to self-classify, revert to pre-migration racial classifications, or develop a hybridized schema com-

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prising the existing racial schemas that Roth develops? In other words, incorporating return migrants whose migration experiences came full circle would have shed additional light on how racial schemas travel with people on the move between and across contexts. Both of these issues are worthy of more scholarly inquiry; perhaps Roth or other researchers can examine these issues in future work.

Whereas Roth focuses on racial schemas among Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in New York, in *New Destination Dreaming*, sociologist Helen Marrow examines the social, racial, economic, and political incorporation of Latin American immigrants (mostly Mexican) in rural North Carolina. Given that most U.S.-based immigration studies have focused on one aspect of the incorporation of Latino immigrants in traditional immigrant urban settings, Marrow's study phenomenally sheds light on this multifaceted process in a region of the country that has seen a significant increase in immigration since the year 2000. Because the American South has been perceived as highly racially intolerant and the Black/White racial binary has been deeply entrenched there, studying the racial incorporation of Latinos in that setting yields a significant contribution to the study of how U.S. race relations are shifting in new immigrant destination settings.

To explore how Latino newcomers are faring in the rural South, Marrow conducted interviews from 2003–2004 with 129 Latin American, African American, and White respondents in two small rural counties that have seen an influx of immigrants, one predominantly White and the other predominantly Black. Focusing on the two counties allowed for a unique comparison of how racial demographics influence the context of reception and incorporation of Latino immigrant in a mostly Black and mostly White setting. In spite of the rural South's racially intolerant reputation, Marrow finds that immigrant newcomers have a more positive experience than would be expected. More specifically, she shows that newcomers in both counties are able to experience some social mobility into the rural Southern working class: ". . . Hispanic newcomers' short-distance mobility in food processing, is . . . facilitating rather than impeding their entry into the economic mainstream compared to what would be the case in traditional gateways" (p. 102).

Doing comparative work allowed Marrow to examine potential differences in newcomers' mobility and social incorporation in each place. Newcomers had more opportunities for social advancement in the food processing plants of predominantly White Wilcox county given structural factors such as an internal job-posting system, direct encouragement by supervisors, and long-term competitive business strategy that led to in-house promotions. On the contrary, lack of documentation status and limited English proficiency provided more obstacles to better jobs in the manufacturing factories and textile mills in predominantly Black Bedford County. However, Marrow attributes this lack of mobility in Bedford County to the contraction of the U.S. manufacturing industry rather than tenuous or explicit anti-immigrant hiring or promotion practices.

Another surprising finding in Marrow's work is that the newcomers felt more positively received by Whites than Blacks in both counties, but she points out that "immigrants' own anti-black stereotypes and whites' preferences for immigrants over African Americans facilitate[d] racial distancing from blacks and blackness" (p. 142). Thus, the study illustrates that the insertion of Latino newcomers into the Black/White binary of Wilcox and Bedford Counties yields the development of a Black/non-Black binary, with newcomers on the more privileged non-Black side. However, Latino newcomers' undocumented status and lack of English proficiency results in what Marrow calls nonracial discrimination from both Whites and Blacks. Though Latino newcomers had more positive social interactions with Whites, such

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interactions were shaped by Whites' negative assessment of Blacks: "[M]y results suggest a classic pattern of racial assimilation, where Hispanic newcomers in eastern North Carolina seem to be joining a long line of American immigrant groups by quickly learning that one of the surest ways to demonstrate moral virtue and make a full claim on American citizenship is not just to be 'not black', . . . but also 'anti-black'" (p. 173). These findings provide relevant insight on Black/White/Latino relations, which have been less studied in the American South and demonstrate how newcomers learn and internalize anti-Black attitudes to socially distance themselves from Black Americans in order to experience social mobility.

Marrow's examination of how Latino newcomers were politically received found that public bureaucrats in schools and social-service agencies were more receptive to the needs of the newcomers than local and state politicians. Despite the lack of resources available in the two rural counties, bureaucrats implemented programs and initiatives to help newcomers learn English and attend compulsory schooling. While newcomers felt this was helpful, the lack of resources, in addition to undocumented status, minimized newcomers' chances for group-level incorporation. More specifically, lack of funds and slow responses to include Spanish interpreters and Latinos in law enforcement and court proceedings made it difficult to meet the legal needs of the newcomers. At times, newcomers felt that authorities' lack of Spanish proficiency and cultural sensitivity led to racial profiling because of newcomers' Latino appearance and the assumption that they were undocumented.

Marrow's study was meticulously designed and does not leave much room for criticism. Though the fieldwork was conducted from 2003 to 2004, Marrow addressed how changes in local immigration policy and the national discourse on immigration since that time have led to policy changes in North Carolina that have derailed the prospects of social mobility for newcomers like her respondents. She also provides specific policy recommendations that address how newcomers in her study and other immigrants could be more fully incorporated into the U.S. mainstream: "Thinking broadly, granting and ensuring access to these four things—legal statuses, the labor market, higher education, and health care—would significantly improve the situations and prospects of many Hispanic newcomers and their families in eastern North Carolina and elsewhere today. . ." (p. 259). Given the subject matter of her book, she also took care to address potential criticisms the work might receive from pro- or anti-immigrant advocates. Thus, she covered as many bases as possible in this work.

Marrow's study would have been improved by examining to what extent the racial ideals with which Latino newcomers arrived in the United States shaped their perceptions of White and Black Americans. For example, how does the racial discourse on *mestizaje* in Mexico or other Latin American countries influence immigrants? Furthermore, given the influx of Afro-Mexican immigrants to North Carolina, how does their being both Latino and of African descent influence their interactions with Black and White Americans? This is especially important to consider because if they are perceived as Black in North Carolina, their social mobility may be more limited than that of those who look more mestizo or indigenous. This is where Roth's book—and more specifically her findings on the racialization of Dominican immigrants—provides some insight regarding the incorporation of Afro Latinos, relative to White or mestizo Latinos, in the United States. Other studies have also demonstrated the downward social mobility that "Black-looking" migrants from other countries experience due to anti-Black discrimination in the United States.

Both studies are timely and relevant for understanding how racial, social, economic, and cultural incorporation among Latinos at the micro level are shaping macro-level discourses of race, ethnicity, and politics in the United States. Given that

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comprehensive immigration reform is likely to be on President Obama's second-term agenda and that Republicans and Democrats now fully recognize the importance of capturing the Latino vote, Marrow's and Roth's studies masterfully illustrate that foreign and U.S.-born Latinos' political capital and social influence in the country can no longer be ignored. Yet the road to their full inclusion into U.S. society will be long. If it has taken 150 years since the abolition of slavery for African Americans to make important social, economic, and political gains in the midst of significant remaining Black/White disparities in education, income, wealth, and health outcomes, how might the process of inclusion unfold for Latinos in the near and distant future? In light of existing anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric that make it difficult for many Latinos, regardless of documentation status, to live in safe neighborhoods, complete high school and attend college, get jobs in which they will not be exploited by employers, and receive medical care, the process will not be an easy one. Furthermore, the incorporation of Latinos into the U.S. mainstream will also influence ethnoracial stratification such that inequality may need to be measured using a White versus Latino, White versus Black, and Black versus Latino model to determine how Latinos' social position is changing over time.

This brings us back to the question of how current race relations will yield to accommodate Latinos: will the Black/White binary prevail, give way to the Black/non-Black binary, or facilitate a Latin-Americanization of race relations? Evidence from Roth's and Marrow's work suggests that the latter two are occurring. Current racial discourse in the United States has already begun shifting to accommodate Latinos, who are seen by most Americans, and who see themselves, as a distinct racial and ethnic group. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which is responsible for creating Census categories, is prepared to acknowledge this change. Since 1970, individuals of Latin American descent were asked to racially classify in one of the traditional categories and then indicate if they were of Hispanic origin. However, the OMB has proposed to include *Hispanic* as a stand-alone racial category alongside the traditional White, Black, Native American, and Asian American categories in the 2020 Census. Thus, while the racial incorporation of Latinos in the U.S. mainstream has already begun, only time will tell how their full political, economic, and social inclusion will follow suit.

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