Shifting racial stereotypes in late adolescence: Heterogeneous resources for developmental change in the New Latino Diaspora

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Shifting Racial Stereotypes in Late Adolescence: Heterogeneous Resources for Developmental Change in the New Latino Diaspora

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Introduction

One day Valeria, an 8th grade Latina, was sitting in the cafeteria of Marshall Middle School (MMS) with a group of Latina friends. The cafeteria contains eight long tables that span the length of the room. Eighth graders, the most senior students at the middle school, have the privilege of selecting where they sit. While there were a few mixed groupings here and there, across the lunchroom Black, Mexican, and White students formed racially homogenous social clusters at the tables.

Halfway through lunch, a Black boy bumped into a Mexican boy as he passed by with his lunch tray. The collision caused the tray to crash to the floor. The Mexican boy stood up, his body rigid in anger, and stepped toward the Black boy. Nearby, the Black boy's friend, another Black 8th grader, stood up in solidarity as the tension in the room mounted. Following his lead, a Mexican boy stood up to support the first Mexican boy, whose tray remained on the floor. Valeria sat watching with her peers as these events quickly turned into a massive racial brawl between Black and Mexican students.

Valeria, now an 11th grader, reflects back on this event, commenting on how the brawl was just one of many dramatic racial conflicts between Black and Mexican students in her 8th grade year. She muses about how, in middle school, she could feel the racial tension dividing groups of students, but that now, in high school, that tension has dissipated. The dramatic events are memories. Black and Mexican youth hang out together now, have friendships and even date each other. Reflecting on the shifting racial dynamics in her school and community, she pauses in confusion, as she can't really explain these changes.

In this paper we examine the complex and changing racial dynamics that Valeria describes in this vignette. We describe shifts in youths' perceptions of racial others and the changing racial models of personhood that they deploy. We argue that these changing perceptions are made possible by a complex set of contingent, heterogeneous resources, not by any widespread, predictable social or developmental process. We describe these

resources by telling the stories of Valeria and her friends Maria and Gabriela, as they move from middle school through high school in Marshall, a New Latino Diaspora town. Since the 1990s, Latino migration patterns within the U.S. have changed, with newcomers moving into geographic regions that have not been home to Latinos in the past. In these 'New Latino Diaspora' towns, attitudes and ideologies are often more elastic, allowing Latinos and longstanding residents some flexibility in how they imagine themselves and racialized others (Wortham et al. 2009). We document this flexibility in Valeria, Maria, and Gabriela's experiences in Marshall. From 8th to 11th grade their mobilization of racial models of personhood changes significantly. We describe how resources from multiple scales converged to facilitate this shift.

In doing so, we address the following question: **what resources, drawn from various spatial and temporal scales, contribute to the shifts in the three Latina girls' deployment of racial models of personhood between eighth and eleventh grades?** 'Models of personhood,' as described by Wortham, Mortimer & Allard (2009), are characterizations of the dispositions, moral strengths and weaknesses, typical behaviors, and life prospects of a person or group. We answer our question by drawing on Latourian (2005) actor-network theory, cross-event theories of language and social relations (Agha 2007; Agha and Wortham 2005; Wortham 2006), and theories of scale (Blommaert, 2007, 2010; Blommaert, Westinen, & Leppänen, 2014; Goebel, 2009; Hult, 2010; Lemke, 2000; Lempert, 2012). We understand 'scale,' following Blommaert (2007), as a hierarchical, power-laden ordering of social space-time. Scale is both temporal and spatial. As Lemke (2000) argues, all processes in the human world inevitably draw on resources from across scales. We use actor-network theory to conceptualize the mobilization of cross-scale resources, tracing 'assemblages' of resources that are heterogeneous in both scale and type. Latour argues that no particular process, scale, or resource is always relevant to making sense of any particular object. Analysts must not limit themselves to certain characteristics of 'shape, size, heterogeneity and combination of associations in the network' (p. 11). We follow his lead and illustrate how an analyst can trace the heterogeneous, cross-scale resources relevant to the shifts in the racial models of personhood the girls deploy.

Our analysis draws on data collected over three years at the beginning of this decade by Clonan-Roy, as part of an ethnographic project in this town that our research team has conducted over the past ten years. Clonan-Roy followed three female Mexican girls from 8th grade to 11th grade and documented how their discussions of race shifted over these years. The data were collected using ethnographic methods, including fieldnotes taken during middle school girls' group meetings, lunches and dinners with the girls, participant observation during the school day, and recorded individual and group interviews. Our analysis traces the assemblages of resources from various scales that contribute to changes in how the girls deploy racial models of personhood. As we trace these assemblages, we show how heterogeneous resources converge in different moments and in distinct ways for each of the girls as their experiences of race shift across their transition from middle to high school.

Resources, Scales, Networks and Trajectories

What resources, from which spatial and temporal scales, contribute to the girls' shifting

use of racial models of personhood across adolescence? How do we know what resources are relevant to these shifts? To answer these questions, we draw on their emic descriptions of race, their racialized behaviors, and narratives they tell about racial interactions, against the background of our 10 years of ethnographic work in Marshall. We examine how these heterogeneous resources become important for each girl in middle school and in high school, contributing to their changing use of racial models of personhood.

Resources and Scales

'Resources' are anything that can facilitate a focal process—in our case the shift in these girls' racialized interpretations of their peers. Resources can be diverse signs and objects, such as widely circulating stereotypes, seminal events, embodied habits, local knowledge, laws, customs, taste preferences, languages, and so on. Not all potential resources are relevant to any given process of social identification, nor can the relevant resources be known a priori (Lempert, 2012). Analysts must determine which of many possibly relevant resources in fact play central roles in the focal process (Wortham, 2012; Wortham & Rhodes, 2013). We argue that the following resources are particularly important to the girls' shifting experiences and accounts of race: family narratives about and attitudes toward race, family migration experiences, both widely circulating and local narratives about race, the racial heterogeneity of Marshall, institutional structures in school, institutionalized racial narratives in school, peer group racialized discourses, social media discourses on race, individual racialized experiences, and national racial events. These resources become important at different times for different girls.

We use 'scale' to describe an ordering of social space-time (Blommaert, Westinen & Lappanen, 2014). Scales involve clusterings of objects that interrelate within a given spatial or temporal envelope. In a school, for example, many processes take place across an academic year: curricular concepts are elaborated and individual students' trajectories as successful or unsuccessful students are entrenched (Wortham 2006). Other processes take place across interactional time in a classroom: teachers explain particular concepts, students tease or flirt, etc. As Lemke (2000) argues, processes in the human world inevitably draw on resources from across scales. Almost no significant human process draws only on one or two scales.

Resources, and the scales at which they become relevant, are intertwined. As we have argued elsewhere, social scientists must move beyond 'macro-micro analyses,' which focus only on allegedly homogeneous 'macro' social processes together with 'micro' events (Wortham, 2006, 2012; Wortham & Rhodes, 2012). Instead, we must see that the resources relevant to human processes are contingent and heterogeneous. The resources that do the work of constituting a focal object come in different configurations, depending on the object being explained. Even for different instances of a similar process, the relevant resources can vary across cases. Instead of assuming that we can understand any instance of a given process—like Latina adolescents' use of racial models of personhood in New Latino Diaspora towns—by citing the same set of resources, we must explore for each case the contingent, heterogeneous set of resources that actually do the work.

Assemblages and Shifting Models of Personhood

We examine how the deployment of racial models of personhood shift across time. We look at the assemblages of heterogeneous resources that facilitate the shift in Valeria, Maria and Gabriela's experiences and models of race. We theorize the shift in racial models of personhood using Latourian (2005) actor-network theory. Latour argues that the resources which facilitate the emergence of any particular object—in this case, the shifting ways Latina adolescents make sense of racial others over time—are always contingent. There is no resource that is always relevant. Our job as analysts is to identify the particular configuration of resources that in fact make possible a focal object or process. Some of the resources relevant in this (and any) case also play an important role in similar cases, and are thus generalizable in a sense. But any particular case involves some contingent, context-specific resources and configurations, so an account that claims to capture all relevant resources across many cases must be incomplete. We hope to complicate notions of interethnic relations in the New Latino Diaspora by demonstrating the complex and changing ways that Valeria, Maria and Gabriela conceptualize themselves and others as they move from 8th to 11th grade.

Methods

Our ten years of ethnographic work in Marshall and four years of work with Latina girls in an after-school MMS girls' group provide data on many resources that contribute to the development of these three Latina girls' shifting racial models of personhood. Since 2005, our research team has conducted observations and interviews in schools across the Marshall School District, in churches, non-profit organizations, community centers, businesses and homes. These data provide information about the town, the school district, the history of Latino migration and the narratives about immigrants that circulate in Marshall. This article draws on observations and interviews conducted with Latina MMS students during and outside of Latina girls' group sessions, as well as on girls' social media interactions. For the past several years, Clonan-Roy has led girls' groups for fifth through eighth grade girls. Each group has 8-12 girls and meets weekly for an hour after school. Clonan-Roy has worked with over 70 Latina adolescents in the after school girls' group. The vast majority are 1.5 or first generation Mexican immigrants. In this article we follow Valeria, Maria, and Gabriela, three Latina girls that Clonan-Roy has built close relationships with across their 8th- 11th grade years. We examine the shifting racial models of personhood that they report across these three years.

Analysis

Our analysis describes resources from various scales that form a network that makes possible the girls' shifting racial models of personhood. In practice the resources are intertwined, with resources becoming salient for each girl in different ways at different times, but for rhetorical purposes we describe them separately in the following sections.

Family Narratives, Models and Practices

Valeria, Gabriela, and Maria's families all migrated from Mexico, where they reported having had few experiences with Black people. The families' racial models of

personhood shift as they encounter Black people in the U.S. and engage with racial narratives that circulate in Marshall. As we will show in our data, when older family members tell stories and jokes about Black people in front of their children, the younger generation can adopt those models and use them to interpret their own experiences. In this section we introduce the three girls, their immigration trajectories, their families, and the racial models of personhood they are exposed to at home.

The Flores Family

Valeria Flores' grandmother, mother, and aunt migrated from Mexico to Marshall over two decades ago, when her mother and aunt were children. Valeria's mother had Valeria when she was in her early twenties, but because she was unable to provide for Valeria, she gave Valeria to her Aunt Camila when Valeria was three years old. Today, Valeria is sixteen and lives with her grandmother, her Aunt Camila (whom she calls Mom), Aunt Camila's husband John (a White man), and her younger brother.

Valeria, Maria and Gabriela all characterize Valeria's parents (Camila and John) as less conservative, younger (in their mid 30s) and more modern than most Mexican parents. Valeria reports that her 'parents are not racist' like some other Mexican families, and that they always taught her to not hate others and to treat all people equally. Valeria explained that because her Aunt Camila spent the majority of her life in Marshall, working and attending school with Black and white peers, she has more tolerant racial attitudes than other Mexican adults who arrived more recently. Valeria did say that her grandmother is more conservative and 'old fashioned' and that sometimes she comments on how black boys 'wear their pants low' and are 'ghetto.' The grandmother has said that she would never date a black man, but her grandmother and parents have never set such racial boundaries for Valeria, explaining that 'every race has ghetto or bad people, but as long as she is with the best and they treat her right, it's OK.'

The Garcia Family

Gabriela's mother and father migrated from Mexico to Oakland, CA when Gabriela's mother was 19 years old. Gabriela's mother had Gabriela when she was 21. Two years later, her brother was born. In Oakland, her father worked a variety of jobs, including construction and painting houses. Because of neighborhood violence and high rent costs, the family decided to move. They relocated to Marshall when Gabriela was 5, because her grandparents lived there. She started kindergarten in October of that school year at Holbrook Elementary School. Today Gabriela lives with her mother, father, and brother in a low-income neighborhood in Marshall.

Gabriela and Maria describe Gabriela's parents, like Valeria's, as younger and more 'modern' than Maria's parents. Gabriela said: 'They just told me not to hate anyone…by their color. I guess it's because my parents have worked with all kinds of races and stuff.' Gabriela's father has worked with Blacks and Mexicans in California and Marshall, and Gabriela attributes her father's more tolerant racial attitudes to these working environments. Despite Gabriela's claim that her family is tolerant of other races, when a Black man broke into Gabriela's father's car and stole his radio Gabriela remembers her father being very angry and reports that her dad 'thinks that they [Black people] are the reason why there are so many drugs in Marshall.' To Gabriela, her parents are not racist; they 'just don't care. As long as they're [Black people] not

disrespectful to them, they don't care…Or get me into bad things.' Despite Gabriela's characterization of her parents as racially tolerant, she is still exposed to negative models of Black personhood at home, like the assumption that Black people will 'get Gabriela into bad things' and the claim that they are responsible for drugs and crime. In 11th grade, Clonan-Roy asked Gabriela if she could think of any stories about Black people. Gabriela responded simply with 'weed,' indicating how the narratives she heard from her parents about the Marshall community might have influenced her characterizations of Black youth.

The Alvarez Family

Maria moved to Marshall from Mexico when she was 3, with her parents and three older brothers. Today, Maria lives with her two parents. Her brothers Pablo and Oscar were deported to Mexico when she was in 5th grade and her brother Ricardo lives with his girlfriend and children.

Maria, Valeria, and Gabriela characterize Maria's family as more 'conservative' than Valeria and Gabriela's parents because they are from an older generation. As an 11th grader, Maria said: 'My parents are like the generation that don't fuck with Black people.' She says that the older generation is more racist. 'But I think that's because they grew up in that time, you know, when like their parents were racist.' Maria explains that her parents hate black people because 'black people hate us.' Maria has said that her dad told her that if she ever got married to a black man, the first thing her dad would do is 'buy a fucking gun and shoot him.' Maria did say that her parents like rich Black people, or the ones who study hard in school. She recalled racist comments and jokes her family members had told, like her brother saying, 'Black people should wear white in the night time because he almost ran over somebody the other day' and her father sometimes said 'mira los changitos' (*look at the monkeys*).

When Clonan-Roy asked Maria what influenced her beliefs about race in Marshall, she said that her brother Pablo was most important. When Maria was nine, Pablo married a back girl named Nicole and had two children. Nicole lived in the Alvarez household for many years. Maria explains that Nicole was 'Black. Ghetto Black. She's Black as fuck.' She said that, despite knowing his parents would hate Nicole, Pablo married her because he was open minded, which inspired Maria. She said that even though her brothers and father continued to make racist comments around Nicole, eventually her parents accepted the marriage.

Family Narratives as a Resource

In the narratives that the girls and their families tell, we see various models of racial personhood. Our data suggest that the following resources are especially salient in making these models possible: 1) family migratory experiences, histories, and trajectories; 2) family members' relationships with Black people; 3) the generation of the parents, and; 4) jokes or narratives told about Black people in Marshall. As an example of the first type of resource, the migratory history of the Flores family helped them form more flexible models of racial personhood. Valeria's Aunt Camila (who she considers to be her Mom and most influential guardian) arrived relatively early in her life trajectory, and because she had more exposure to racially diverse populations in Marshall, she has less entrenched racial attitudes. As an example of the second resource, Gabriela and

Maria both point to their families' meaningful relationships with Black people (Gabriela's father's working with Blacks in both Oakland and Marshall and Maria's brother's marriage to a Black woman) as a resource that facilitated more positive models of racial personhood. As an example of the third, the girls explain that older parents, like Maria's, are more traditional and racist towards Black people. Finally, as Maria's story demonstrates, family jokes and narratives about Black people shape racial models of personhood. These four aspects of the girls' family lives shape their beliefs. These resources are taken up by the girls in different ways as they navigate Marshall schools and interact with peers from other races.

Marshall as a Unique Community Context

Another resource that contributes to the girls' shifting racial models of personhood is the somewhat unusual town of Marshall. While technically a suburban community, downtown Marshall has the population density of an urban area and neighborhoods that are more racially integrated than in most U.S. cities. Black and Latino residents frequently live in close proximity. This racial heterogeneity gives Mexicans many experiences with Black people. Sometimes this exposure is positive, but at other times it fuels narratives about racial difference.

Wortham et. al. (2009) describe how Mexicans in Marshall are often represented as 'model minorities' by white residents, insofar as they are family oriented and hardworking, but also as lacking academic ambition and success. Wortham, Allard, Lee & Mortimer (2011) discuss racialization in Marshall by analyzing narratives of 'pay-day muggings,' in which Blacks are positioned as violent and criminal, while Mexicans are positioned as naïve victims. Both of these widely circulating narratives in Marshall are resources that influence the racial models of personhood Marshall youth adopt. Both White and Mexican speakers tend to compare Mexicans to the town's Italian residents, portraying them as hard working immigrants and contrasting them with African Americans, who are often constructed as lazy, criminal and welfare dependent.

In 8th grade, Latina girls told stories that included these models of Black criminals and Latino victims. Many Latina girls reported conflicts between Black and Mexican gangs, as well as conflicts on the bus with Black youth who told them 'to go back to Mexico'. Often they interpreted these events by citing alleged Black criminality. The middle school girls adopted assumptions about race from the narratives already circulating in Marshall, confirming them in their own experiences, like conflicts on the bus and racialized lunchroom clashes.

In the summer before their 9th grade year, Clonan-Roy asked Maria, Gabriela, Valeria and other girls if they swam in community pools during the summer. The girls said 'no because Marshall does not have a pool.' When Clonan-Roy pointed out that there is a pool, Valeria explained that 'it is a black pool.' She said that they 'don't go there because all the black people go there and it's nasty.' In other conversations, Maria told everyone that 'people were talking about how Mexicans should leave and be deported.' But, she continued, if the Mexicans left, 'Marshall would be like shit, man.' She said that there 'would be trash everywhere because Mexicans are like the cleanest people ever.' Gabriela said that Black people 'robbed everybody in the street' and broke

into her stuff. Maria added that 'Marshall is going to be fucked up in a few years' when Mexicans make more money and leave the community.

In describing their aversion to the pool and their understandings of Blacks as 'ghetto,' the girls draw on evaluative characterizations of both Blacks and Mexicans which circulate in their families and across the Marshall community. In middle school, the girls racialized Black *others*, emphasizing how Black spaces are poor, ghetto, and crime ridden.

Experiences in Schooling

First Experiences of Substantive Racial Mixing: Elementary School

School is often the first place where youth experience extended racial mixing and have the space to elaborate their own notions of racial personhood. School mixes youth together and often espouses norms of sociality and cooperation, at least in its explicit ideology. This gives young people an opportunity that the older generation does not have, the chance to interact daily with racial others and develop their own models of racial personhood. We found that the school environment is an important resource as the girls develop racial models of personhood, but it does not influence all girls in the same way. School experiences, like all resources, take effect only within the ontogenetic trajectories of individual girls.

The Marshall School District has several elementary schools. When Clonan-Roy asked the girls if there were major racial differences between the various schools, they did not say that any one school had more Black, Mexican, or White youth than others (as they did for the district's three middle schools, as discussed below). Valeria and Gabriela went to Holbrook Elementary School. Valeria, born to fluent English speakers, was never in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Unlike Gabriela, Valeria did not report many events involving race in elementary school. Gabriela arrived from California in October of her kindergarten year. She was placed in ESL and spent time in segregated, predominately Latino, pull-out ESL classes. Gabriela remembers having lots of Black children in her non-ESL kindergarten class. She recalls disliking Black people because one Black girl constantly teased and pinched her. Not having had exposure to Black people in California, Gabriela says that this negative experience influenced her early accounts of Black people. Maria went to Barry Elementary. Because Maria had been in the U.S. since she was three years old, she had strong verbal skills in English, but she struggled with literacy and was placed in ESL. According to Maria, Barry had a much smaller population of Black students than her middle school. However, when reflecting on her schooling, Maria said that, despite her inclusion in homogeneous ESL classes, she had the most Black friends in elementary school because 'when you are little, you don't think about color.'

Elementary school experiences were an important resource for some girls' emerging racial models of personhood, but not for others'. Differing school structures like the ethnically homogeneous ESL program, and the varying racial composition of the student bodies across elementary schools, shaped the girls' exposure to and views about Black peers. Individual experiences with conflict or friendship, like Gabriela's experience of being bullied, can become important to how a girl views Black youth later. As these girls moved into middle school, their varying early experiences with school-structured

racial mixing became part of a broader network of resources that organized their beliefs about Black peers.

Racial Populations and Segregation in Middle School

As the girls transitioned to middle school, institutional arrangements shifted. Student populations changed as a student moved from period to period, and students had more peer interaction in unstructured spaces like hallways and the cafeteria. Later in middle school Maria and Gabriela also moved out of ESL and into mainstream classes with more diverse peers. This gave the girls an opportunity to change their beliefs about Black peers.

The Marshall School District (MSD) has three middle schools: Saulter, Rowan, and Marshall Middle School. According to Valeria, Saulter had mostly Black and Latino students, Rowan had mostly Black students, and MMS was mostly white. Valeria and Gabriela went to MMS, and Maria went to Saulter until 8th grade, when she switched to MMS. Maria agreed that Saulter was 'full of Black people,' and that many of her acquaintances there were Black. Maria and Gabriela were both in ESL classes earlier in middle school, and they explained that for recently arrived Latino students, ESL often sheltered them from making friends from other groups. But Maria added that ESL did not prevent her from making Black friends, because she 'is an open minded person'.

MMS, the school in which Maria, Gabriela, and Valeria all spent their 8th grade year, has a complex racial history. The building was renovated and expanded in 2007, and more diverse students were bused to the larger building. MMS is in a more affluent section of town. Educators refer to it as the 'country club school' and youth often refer to it as 'the white people school,' despite the fact that White students are in the minority. When a larger number of Black and Latino students were transferred from their neighborhood schools to MMS, teachers reported that there was a lot of racial tension and the new students were angry about having to go to a school in a different neighborhood. Teachers, as well as Latina youth, reported conflict in school and on buses, often involving Black youth saying that Mexican youth did not belong in the school and community. Redistricting thus increased racial mixing and surfaced racial tensions. According to educators, these tensions were accompanied by an increase in performances of gang affiliation. The tensions have been reduced over time, but there are still occasional racial conflicts and peer groups continue to be racially divided.

Interpreting Racial Events in Middle School

In middle school, the combination of negative personal experiences with Black peers (for instance, Black youth telling Mexican youth to 'go back to Mexico'), together with narratives that youth heard from adults about Black people, often led the girls to racialize their Black peers in problematic ways, as 'poor, ghetto, smelly, dirty and violent.' The following field-note offers an example. It also shows how negative racial models of Black peers intersect with the girls' individual experiences as Mexican females and immigrants.

> *Valeria had said something a couple of seconds ago that I did not catch and I asked her what she said about black people. Maria said, 'We're not racist, alright?' Valeria said 'I'm racist, well at points I will be racist*

because Black people like to walk down the street and comment on what I am wearing.' I asked if black boys or girls did this and Maria and Valeria both responded 'black girls.' Valeria added, 'black boys are always checking out my butt.' I asked her what black girls say about her clothes. She said that they make fun of her for not having expensive clothes. I asked if Black girls had expensive clothes and Maria jumped in and said 'Ya, that's why they're poor as shit man.' Valeria added, 'Ya, that's why they are poor and can't afford a good house. But I have a good house and a lot of electronics.' Valeria added, 'They're the one's that are racist because they're always the ones that say I that I should go back across the border…They just do that because we're the easiest ones to target since we're already on the news, we already have Mexicans…um, the drug cartel, and all that other stuff, we're just really easy to target.' Blanca added 'and we come here because we want a good education and want to work, unlike them.'

Here the girls explain that 'at points' they are racist because Black youth perpetrate racial offenses against Mexicans. Some of these offenses likely occur because adolescent girls often have conflict over the symbolic economy of style (an array of gender-specific commodities used as markers of distinction among different groups) and differences in race and class performances of femininity based on stereotypes of how different girls should act (Bettie, 2003). The history of racial tension at MMS and their personal experiences with Black peers telling them to return to Mexico contribute to their beliefs, as do local and nationally circulating stereotypes of Mexicans as victims and 'model minorities.' All of these resources become part of the network that facilitates the girls' developing racial models of personhood.

Racialized Accounts of Promiscuity and Romantic Borders

In middle school, as youth enter puberty, discover their sexuality, and are more likely to have romantic relationships, they often confront intersections of race, romantic boundaries, and sexuality. Latina girls experience these intersections in unique ways in Marshall, especially in MMS. Clonan-Roy created the 'MMS Latina girls' group' at the request of MMS staff who were concerned that Latina girls were dating much older boys, experiencing sexual abuse, becoming sexually active and getting pregnant earlier and more frequently than girls from other backgrounds. Other researchers have documented how similar models of Latina teen personhood position Latina girls as making poor choices, dropping out of school, becoming teenage mothers, engaging in romantic relationships with gang members, and being hypersexual and exotic (Denner & Guzman, 2006; Lundström, 2006; Rolon-Dow, 2004). Collins (1991) describes how intersecting stereotypes involving race, class, gender and sexuality objectify women of color as 'other' and are often 'constructed in contrast to…values associated with white women, like piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity' (Collins 1991, p. 76). Such intersecting stereotypes serve as resources that contributed to staff and peer positioning of Latina girls as hypersexual.

Clonan-Roy collected multiple narratives from Latina girls showing how they are keenly aware of and frustrated by this positioning as hyper-sexual. During one girls'

group meeting in 8th grade, Valeria explained that Mexican boys are the 'ones we usually go out with' and that Mexican girls 'don't really date Black boys,' often because their parents would not permit them to do so. In middle school, the Latina girls often contrasted themselves with the 'White girls,' whom they characterized as lame, studious, and conservative, and the '*morenas*' or 'Black girls,' whom they characterized as dirty, poor, ghetto, and more sexually promiscuous than Latinas.

In one girls' group meeting in 8th grade, the girls were talking about the value of virginity in Mexican families and Clonan-Roy asked if they thought that Black and White girls were as concerned with preserving their virginity. Maria replied, 'isn't it weird that people think that we're the ones that lose virginity first? But, I swear to God, man, Black people be losing their virginity first.' The girls resisted the widespread characterization of them as the most sexually promiscuous by characterizing Black girls, from whom they have experienced the most discrimination and from whom they most want to differentiate themselves, as the truly sexually promiscuous students.

This racialized account of sexualization that constructed Black girls as 'the sluttiest' group was facilitated by several resources across multiple scales: 1) widely circulating stereotypes about women and girls of color; 2) MMS staff's sexualization of Latina girls; 3) the social work that gossip does in adolescent peer groups; and 4) previous experiences with Black peers. Circulating models about non-White women and girls probably influenced educators' sexualization of Latina students. Latina students' awareness of how they are positioned encouraged them to use gossip about Black girls to contest this sexualization and to offer a counternarrative, positioning Black girls as the most sexually promiscuous.

Encountering Racism and Beginning to Question Power

Although the girls often made racist comments about their Black peers in 8th grade, there were a few instances when the girls began to examine how Latinos and Blacks were marginalized in similar ways. We can see this in the following vignette from the girls group.

> *Maria asked if she could ask a question. She asked if we ever noticed that on TV shows and commercials it was all white people and then 'like that one black guy.' She gave 'Family Guy' as an example. I asked why they thought TV was all white people. Blanca said that she thought that 'only white people allowed, only black people allowed' was coming back. I asked her if she meant segregation and she said yes. Gabriela said 'wait, that really is?' Blanca clarified like she just felt like it was because of TV shows and because if you go somewhere fancy like Red Lobster, all you see is white people. And, if black people come in, they don't serve them right. Gabriela said 'IHOP too.'*
>
> *Elena then asked, if segregation came back, would they be considered white or black. Maria said that 'I bet we would be with the black people because we are not white' and that it goes by your color and that Elena and Gabriela would be white because they are so light. Maria then told a story about an older family member (by marriage) who was black and*

grew up during the 60s and she was so light that the black people hated her because she was so light but the white people hated her because she was too black, so she did not really have friends.

In this fieldnote, recorded as the girls were entering 9th grade, the girls begin to articulate more complex accounts of race, beyond stereotypes like 'Black people are dirty and White people are lame.' Maria recognizes power and privilege in her community. The girls consider their relative lack of status and recognize that, like Black residents, they are socially and economically marginalized.

As the girls approach high school, they more often describe how power structures marginalize both them and their Black peers. In the next section we illustrate the heterogeneous resources from various scales that allow them to change their focus in this way: school structures, peer group narratives about sexual activities, community narratives and racial tensions, and individual developmental experiences. This assemblage of resources facilitates a shift in how the girls talk about race.

Transitioning to High School and More Extensive Racial Mixing

In high school the girls encountered a more heterogeneous mix of youth who went to all three middle schools. Valeria explained that 'people become more tolerant of other races and develop casual social relationships with people of other races because there is only one high school and everyone is mixed together.' She claimed that this kind of mixing 'forces you to get along and get to know people, and so all of the racist and dramatic stuff from middle school kind of disappears.' Maria and Gabriela added that in high school you have more 'together time,' classes are integrated, there is more free time and chances for social mixing. Valeria said that, although close friend groups are still racially divided, acquaintance groups are more racially heterogeneous. Even Mexican students who had recently arrived made Black friends and mixed with non-Latino students within a year at the high school. Clonan-Roy observed the girls having more frequent conversations with Black youth in high school and posting more pictures with Black youth on social media. However, over this same time span, the girls did not develop many White acquaintances.

Redefining Romantic Boundaries and Racialized Accounts of Promiscuity

Valeria, Maria and Gabriela reported that there is much more interracial dating in high school. Maria said, 'I mean, nowadays, you see Latina girls going out with Black guys, and even having mixed babies…And then, some Black girls do go out with Mexican guys.' Both Maria and Gabriela reported in middle school that they would not date Black boys, and that their parents would not allow it, but in high school they said that they would be open to it.

Valeria explained that more contact led her to be attracted to boys of other racial groups for the first time, which changed how she viewed racial others and her personal racial boundaries for romantic relationships. She said

that in middle school, she only dated Mexicans and thought that she would never date a black boy. However, she then got to high school and

discovered that she thought multiple black boys, and other boys from different races, were attractive. Then she started dating Aaron, who is half black and half white, and that really changed her opinion. She said that you cannot keep negative opinions about a racial group if you love someone in that racial group.

Developing romantic feelings toward someone from a different race helped change romantic boundaries for Latina youth like Valeria, and this shifted their racial models of personhood.

As these romantic boundaries changed, the girls' racialized accounts of promiscuity also evolved. Valeria, Maria, and Gabriela explained that, although they used to consider Black girls the sluttiest group in middle school, now both black and Latina girls have bad reputations. Valeria said that a lot of Latina girls get pregnant, claiming that Black girls hide pregnancies better but that Latina girls return to school more after having a baby. She said that promiscuous Black and Latina girls need to use contraception and take better care of themselves. When asked who was the most promiscuous group of girls in high school, Maria and Gabriela went back and forth, counting individual cases of girls who had become pregnant, eventually concluding that both Black and Latina girls have gotten pregnant. In high school, then, changing institutional structures and more racial mixing lead the girls to reconsider generalizations they made about race in middle school. In high school, more girls are having sex than in middle school and one consequence of that activity (pregnancy) is visible, and this forces the girls to modify their racial models of personhood.

Acting White or Black

Youth interpret certain social performances as 'acting black' or 'acting white.' Gabriela and Maria claim that even Mexican students who as freshmen only hung out with other Mexicans 'all hang out with Black people now' because the Mexicans 'like how they [Black people] act.' They claim that this often changes Mexican students' personalities: they start to 'act ghetto' and 'talk Black.' Maria said that the racial mixing 'is cool' but 'becoming ghetto is not.' In this section we explore what 'acting Black' and 'acting white' means at Marshall High School.

'Acting Black' is often used to describe youth who adopt some African American Vernacular English, and it is sometimes used synonymously with 'being ghetto.' When Clonan-Roy asked the girls what it meant to 'act Black' or 'ghetto,' the girls responded with words like 'ratchet,' 'doing drugs,' 'isn't involved in school,' and 'is about that trap life.' When Clonan-Roy asked 'what does it mean to be about that trap life,' Maria and Gabriela said 'Oh my God, you're so White' and explained that it meant to 'be sellin' drugs.' 'Acting Black' is thus sometimes associated negative characteristics. But 'acting Black' also is also 'cool.' Maria and Gabriela explain that Mexicans hang out with Black people because, stylistically, they 'like how they act' and they claim that even White people 'try to act Black.' Mexican youth often use the word 'nigga,' often to describe a friend ('my nigga'). When Clonan-Roy asked if Black people were offended by their use of the term, the girls said that 'you have to watch who you say it around' but that they use the term frequently because they have the 'N-word card.' White youth, too, use the word 'nigga,' and some of them 'act Black'. Pop culture often values and markets elements of

African American Vernacular English and African American performances of identity. The fact that these behaviors are 'cool' provides another resource that influences the girls' shifting models of Black peers.

Gabriela in particular is often identified as 'Black' by her peers. She relates with 'acting Black,' noting that she has so many Black friends that it is hard to tell whether she has more Black or Mexican friends. But she contests the idea that having Black friends encourages her to 'act Black.' Gabriela says that she does not care when people say she is 'Black' because she is 'not rachet' and 'doesn't fit in with that stereotype,' thus differentiating between a (positive) model of personhood that is 'Black' and a (negative) one that is being 'ratchet.' Maria, on the other hand, is often identified as 'acting White.' Her White vocational tech teacher says that Maria 'talks like a White girl.' Maria explained that she 'did not know if [she] should be offended' by that characterization, but that she thinks 'it would be worse if they tried to call [her] Black.' Thus there is variability in the girls' experiences and use of racial models of personhood. Perceptions of 'Blackness' and 'Whiteness,' interactions with peers, interactions with staff and pop culture are all relevant resources that influence how a particular girl positions herself and is positioned. Peer group boundaries and appropriate behaviors are less rigid than in middle school, and racial models of personhood are more complex.

Engaging With and Learning From National Racialized Events

These girls' racial models of personhood were also shaped by nationally visible racial events. Contingent historical events were important resources in the network that facilitated change in these girls' models and experiences. Maria, Gabriela and Valeria went through the middle years of adolescence in a social moment that has raised awareness of racial violence and police brutality. The murders of Black youth such as Trayvon Martin (2012), Mike Brown (2014), and Tamir Rice (2014) received national media attention, and widespread discussion of these events encouraged the girls to consider racial hierarchies and their place in the social world. After Trayvon Martin was killed in 2012, Maria, Gabriela and Valeria discussed how such a racist event was horrible. During a casual lunch at Wendy's, following the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's shooter George Zimmerman, the girls said that the murder of Trayvon was racist and Gabriela said that she was going to 'kill Zimmerman.' Maria claimed that if Zimmerman had been Black and Trayvon White, then Zimmerman would have been found guilty. Valeria pointed out that the murder of Trayvon was portrayed as racist by news media, but that the media often overlooks racist crimes against Latinos. She reported hearing a story about twelve Latino gang members being shot in a revenge killing at a funeral, and she was mad that no one talked about this event as racist.

These national incidents of racial violence became resources that increased girls' awareness of how both Latinos and Blacks are marginalized in American society. In the following transcript, the girls note relationships between policing, race, and power.

> G: I hate how the police always think it's OK to take advantage of people. You know what I mean?
> M: I feel like police, now, always think they are powerful, which is not true. Because they're technically supposed to be helping us, but they're making situations worse.

C-R: For Black people?
M: For everyone. Because, like, so far, they've been killing Mexicans and Black people and stuff, because, you know, most cops are racist. But, I think…Like, they haven't killed any white people at all.
C-R: What do you think that means?
M: It means that they're fuckin' racist….

M: I don't know. I don't think that the police ever want to listen to you.
G: They just want to boss you around. Like, you're not my mom.
M: I don't know, I just think that they are really taking advantage of the fact that they have, um, like if you do something, they're gonna try, to, like, mix the words up and either way, they are going to end up winning something.
C-R: What assumptions do you think that the police have about Mexicans?
M: That they're always doing bad stuff too. Or that they're always drunk. Or that they're always trying to sell drugs apparently.
G: I don't know who I was walking with, but I was walking with this guy, and he was Black. And I don't know if Officer Sheppard was following him. First he followed him. He waited until he got into his class and then he started following me. And he just, like, stood at the corner watching me and where I was going to go. And once I turned again, he went the other way. And I was like, Oh my gosh.

Here the girls recognize that they are relatively powerless, as youth of color, against the police in their neighborhoods. They describe stereotypes that guide the actions of police and provide personal examples, like being followed by the school officer.

A particular event in the high school recently provoked the girls to reflect further on race. A high school secretary, in response to the recent shooting of a police officer in a nearby city, posted on her Facebook page that the Black community should be 'ashamed' by the criminals they 'are breeding', and that they should pull up their 'damn pants' and take off their hoods in order to look less 'shady'. In response, 100 high school students walked out of school and held hands in protest for 20 minutes. The girls saw this event as connected to other racialized events across the nation, and they were inspired by the activism that was visible nationally in response to police shootings. Broadly circulating discourses critical of police brutality against people of color helped the girls develop a critical perspective and recognize how Black and Mexican youth are both marginalized.

Resources at various scales contributed to the girls' emerging racial models of personhood in their own community and the larger society: broadly circulating stereotypes and discourses; nationally visible events; local racial events and histories; school structures that encourage more racial mixing in high school; and peer group communication, especially social media. The assemblage formed by these resources helped the girls to shift their racial models of personhood, allowing them to draw connections between themselves and the once racialized *other*.

Conclusions

As the girls moved from 8th to 11th grade, they developed more complex ideas about race, identity, and power. In the following transcript, Maria criticizes Latinos and acknowledges that you cannot consider racial groups to be homogeneous.

> C-R: Can you think of any other stories that you have heard about Black people in Marshall?
> G: My dad just thinks that they are the reason why there are so many drugs in Marshall.
> M: I don't think that's true though. I think everybody brings drugs and violence. Like, us Mexicans, they brought stuff in. Like, what the fuck?...Cause, like, you're trynna come somewhere and you're trynna get a better life, but you bring all the bad stuff with you, like, what the fuck, bitch? Like, what the hell is wrong with you?

Being able to acknowledge heterogeneity within racial groups, including their own, indicates the girls' emerging tolerance of and connection with Black peers. In middle school Maria criticized Black youth as being offensive, dirty, and poor, but now she says, 'it just depends on who the person is. Cause I feel like there are some Black people that are really nice and down to earth and cool.' Gabriela also reports that her views have changed. Although she used to think that Black people were mean, generalizing from her experiences in elementary school, she no longer does. Valeria now has a serious boyfriend who is half Black and her racial views have changed because she loves someone from that group.

In the following transcript Maria and Gabriela differentiate between racism and prejudice. Maria says she is prejudiced, but not racist, and Gabriela comments on how being racist limits your ability to navigate the social world.

> C-R: What does it mean to be racist?
> M: Like, when you don't like a person for their color.
> G: I hate people like that.
> M: I think racist and prejudiced is different.
> C-R: What do you think the difference is?
> M: Cause, I mean, like, when you're prejudiced, you're like, against something. But when you're racist, you're, like, against the whole, like people.
> C-R: Can you give me an example of that?
> M: Mmm… Like the Dominicans. I could dislike one of the Dominican people and stuff, but that does not mean I am really against all of them.
> G: That's just one person.
> C-R: Do you think you are racist?
> M: Sometimes.
> G: No.
> M: I am more prejudiced.
> G: I don't think I'd be walking around in restaurants and eating here.
> C-R: If you were a racist person?

G: Because there are people around me that I wouldn't like. And I don't think I would be going into cosmetology in the first place. Because people of all different kinds of races are going to come to me. You know?

Maria acknowledges that she will always have a certain level of prejudice, but now she distinguishes between individuals and racial groups. The girls have also come to understand that White supremacy marginalizes Blacks *and* Latinos. When commenting on increased racial mixing in high school, Maria said 'I told you, the Black people and Mexican people are getting united. They're coming together. They're going to turn on to the white people.' Gabriela responded, 'we are, Katie.' In a world where White police officers shoot youth of color and where White educators post racist comments about youth of color, these girls have developed a sense of common struggle with their Black peers.

The girls also credit their immigrant identities as having given them a more complex view of how race operates in their social world.

G: It is the worst thing, being a child of an immigrant.
M: Especially when you are an immigrant yourself.
C-R: Do you think you have a more complicated view of the world, than, say, white people who don't have to deal with those things?
G: Yes.
M: Yes.
G: I just hate how people look down at us, you know?
M: That's if you let them look down at you. You know?
G: Ya, that's true.
C-R: Do you think having that experience shapes how you view others in your community?
M: Ya.

The girls acknowledge that growing up as a child of immigrants in Marshall gives a person experience with how it feels to be looked down upon. Such experiences are another resource that contributes to the girls' changing attitudes toward Black peers. When Clonan-Roy asked if race relations were changing in Marshall, Gabriela said yes, and then she added that race relations were changing worldwide due to recent racialized events. Maria said that in Marshall, 'everyone [Black and Latino youth] are just a little bit closer than they used to be.' Talking about national racial dynamics, Gabriela explained that she had the sense that 'it's just the whole world. Everyone has different opinions now. Everyone likes Black people.' Valeria also added that she thinks that the younger generation is changing faster than the older generation, because youth have important 'experiences with Black people in high school that change their thinking.' In making these types of claims, the girls claim that racial change is occurring on multiple scales, on the scale of their individual ontogenetic development, in their schools, their community, and more globally.

The girls' changing views of race are not natural or inevitable. They could have developed different racial models of personhood, but a contingent assemblage of resources facilitated the shift we have described. Heterogeneous resources from societal,

community, school, family, peer and individual scales came together to shape the racial models of personhood that Maria, Gabriela and Valeria adopted as they moved through high school. Resources from the broader society (widely circulating racial stereotypes), the community (racial models of personhood in Marshall), the school (moving from ESL to mainstream classes), and individual ontogenetic development (gaining autonomy) converged to facilitate the girls' shifting accounts of Black youth. It would be more convenient for analysts if the same configuration of resources—like a predictable combination of 'micro' and 'macro'—always led to a phenomenon like the changing racial perspectives of Latina youth. But this is not the case. Analysts must attend to a heterogeneous configuration of resources from various scales in each case in order to uncover the sometimes unusual configurations that make social processes possible.

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