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**Colaboran:** Los Departamentos de Lingüística General, Lenguas Modernas, Lógica y Filosofía de la Ciencia; Teoría de la Literatura, Literatura Comparada (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UAM) y Departamento Interfacultativo de Psicología Evolutiva y de la Educación (Facultad de Psicología, UAM).

## PROGRAMACIÓN

**Lunes 23 de noviembre**

### **Ideologies of Mexican Immigrant Language**

**Lugar:** Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Aula 105 del módulo III

**Hora:** 10hs.

**Miércoles 25 de noviembre**

### **Mexicans as Model Minorities in the New Latino Diaspora**

**Lugar:** Facultad de Psicología, Seminario 3, Edificio Anexo.

**Hora:** 10hs.

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## Introducing One Latino Diaspora Town

Stanton E.F. Wortham

As Mexicans move to areas of the United States that have not had Latino residents, towns across the country are experiencing rapid and unfamiliar demographic changes. This rapid growth in the Mexican-origin population presents practical and symbolic challenges both for longstanding residents and Mexican newcomers, as well as the institutions that serve them. Schools and healthcare systems struggle to provide and expand appropriate services for the newcomers; immigrant families struggle to access these services in unfamiliar systems; students, teachers, parents, and community members struggle to make sense of each other, their new and changing community, and how to carry on the business of learning amidst the rapid demographic and personal change. While the very speed and novelty of this change in what Murillo (2002) and Villenas (2002) call “New Latino Diaspora” communities intensifies these challenges, it also opens up possibilities that do not exist in areas of longstanding Mexican settlement. In those places, Mexican immigrants face entrenched patterns of inequality. But new Latino diaspora towns like Marshall also “lack the historical baggage of intense interethnic and interracial conflict found in older destinations” (Gouveia, Carranza & Cogua 2005). Both inequality and flexibility appear in diaspora towns.

Murillo (2002) and Villenas (2002) describe the New Latino Diaspora as areas of the U.S. without a traditional Latino presence to which Latinos have moved in increasing numbers over the past 15 years. In areas of longstanding Mexican settlement, patterns of inequality have generally become entrenched. Mexican immigrants to these areas often confront longstanding physical and symbolic segregation, and long term residents often employ beliefs, arguments, and practices that have supported unequal ethnic relations (Foley, 1991). In areas of more recent migration, however, relationships between immigrants, longtime residents, and community institutions are very much in formation, and because immigration is new there Mexican immigrants face both more ignorance and more opportunity than in areas of traditional settlement. Host communities know less about Mexican cultures, institutions have less expertise in serving immigrants'

needs, and there are few second- or third-generation Latinos available as models and helpers. But diaspora towns also offer opportunities to develop

productive and sometimes unexpected models about who immigrants can aspire to be and about how communities can productively live together.

Marshall is one such new Latino diaspora community located in a large Northeastern metropolitan area. A suburban town of about 30,000, Marshall has undergone significant demographic changes since the 1990s. It was once mostly white and African American, comprised of Irish immigrants who came in the 1800s, Italian immigrants who came in the early 1900s, and African American migrants who arrived from the Southern US in the 1950s. Smaller groups of Puerto Rican, South Asian, and Caribbean newcomers have settled there as well. But the distribution of racial groups

underwent radical changes between 1990 and 2000—from 70.8% white, 26.4% African-American, and 2.7% Latino to 54.3% white, 34.8% African-American, and 10.5% Latino. The Mexican community, in particular, grew dramatically, and in 2009 represents almost one-quarter of the town. These changes underlie more subtle divides and issues that the city and the school district face as they accommodate the increasing diversity of the town.

## **CONFERENCIA 1**

**Lunes 23 de Noviembre**

### **Ideologies of Mexican Immigrant Language**

Long-time Marshall residents draw upon many resources as they form perceptions of their new neighbors. Many attend to external characteristics of the newcomers: the way they look, where they work, how they speak. While generalizations overtly based on race or ethnicity have become taboo in many places, oversimplifications about the language that immigrants speak or how they speak do not carry the same stigma. Yet value judgments about newcomers are often hidden in local discourse about language use, in talk about immigrants' English proficiency, for example, or about the language they speak in public and how they speak it. Beliefs and attitudes ostensibly about language can act as a proxy for beliefs about individuals or groups of people who speak a language and can influence how these individuals or groups are treated. In this paper we conceptualize these beliefs and attitudes as language ideologies, culturally-situated theories about the relationship between language and the social world (Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998;

Silverstein, 1979; Woolard, 1998; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). We examine how language ideologies circulated by residents and educators in New Marshall, as well as by immigrant students themselves, help both hosts and immigrants understand students' place in the social order of the community and their concomitant rights and responsibilities. In particular, we examine how the concept of an "educated person" is constructed in part through language ideologies in this community (Levinson, Foley & Holland, 1996; Wortham, 2001) and how this concept influences Mexican immigrant students. We focus on participants' talk about language as a site where language ideologies are revealed (Woolard, 1998). The data show how people often interpret low English proficiency—and uses of language characterized as such—as deficit, disability, lack of ambition, or even outright resistance, while Spanish proficiency is regularly erased or denied (Gal & Irvine 1995; Gal 1998; Irvine & Gal 2000). At the same time, we find that Mexican students develop both analogous and antithetical accounts about the meanings and connotations of English use and proficiency. We argue that these language ideologies play an important role in the constitution of social relations between immigrant students at Marshall High School, the educators who teach them and the community that surrounds them. As taken-for-granted ideas that often work under the surface of social interactions, these ideologies shape the experiences of young Mexican immigrants in New Marshall, the organization and quality of the services that are provided for them, and their post-secondary options.

## **CONFERENCIA 2**

**Miércoles 25 de Noviembre**

### **Mexicans as Model Minorities in the New Latino Diaspora**

In new Latino Diaspora communities where Latino immigration is relatively new and growing rapidly, longstanding residents often construe immigrants by comparing and contrasting them with other minority and immigrant groups. In Marshall, Mexican immigrants are often identified in ways that resemble "model minority" stereotypes—as hardworking contributors to the community who do not expect special treatment—likened to Italian Americans, for instance, and contrasted with African Americans. The model minority stereotype has at least four main components: the group is different from other minorities, group members work hard, they do not want handouts, and they do

not complain. Longstanding residents of Marshall characterize Mexican immigrants in all four of these ways. Some liken Mexicans to Italian immigrants to Marshall who worked hard because “they want[ed] to better themselves”, and many contrast Mexicans with African American residents who “just want everything for free” through the welfare system. Mexican immigrants are not seen as model minorities in all respects, however, and elements of this stereotype sometimes constrain the set of imagined futures for Mexican residents—young Mexican students in particular. Longtime residents often describe these immigrants as, for instance, not enterprising and not very successful in school, in part because they “come here to work” and their status as workers is often seen as the reason that they do not do well in school. In New Latino Diaspora communities, in particular, models of Mexican identity are diverse, with different models used in different situations with different results, and Mexican immigrants react to others’ characterizations in various ways. Drawing on five years of ethnography in schools, social service agencies, and the Marshall community in general, including interviews, participant observation, and videotaping, we trace both the model minority stereotype and other characterizations of Mexican immigrants as they are deployed, accepted and rejected, and we explore how the model minority construct works to both highlight Latino strengths and openings for host-newcomer relations, while also obscuring intra-group diversity and constraining imagined futures for Latino students. We thus offer an empirical account of complex identity politics in a rapidly changing new Latino diaspora town.