

WENDY D. ROTH: *Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformation of Race*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012

With current debates about comprehensive immigration reform at the forefront of U.S.-American politics, Wendy Roth enters this conversation at a critical juncture by exploring the relationship between migration and racial identity. The crux of this monograph examines how migration influences perceptions of race and racial identity within a transnational context. Rather than highlighting how migrants learn about and adjust to U.S. racial schemas, Roth contends that, just as transnationalism allows the transmission of language and culture etc., the discourse on race and race relations flows between both sending and host societies. With the Latina/o community now the largest “minority” population in the United States, this book provides in-depth research that shows how their racialized identity has and will continue to impact race relations across countries.

Roth’s research starts to fill gaps in race and immigration studies by analyzing how migration shapes and influences perceptions of racial and national identity from “sending countries.” Her research methodology, grounded in qualitative research, uncovers how migrants transmit, both interpersonally and globally via mass media, U.S. racial constructs and perceptions of racial identities from the U.S. to their home countries. By focusing on the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, Roth moves beyond the traditional U.S.-Mexico immigrant framework and explores other complex migration narratives. Because the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico have a stronger, more prominent African lineage, studies on Latina/o racial identity and migration take on an added dimension. While migration studies focus largely on Mexican identity, studying two other countries enables Roth to examine migration within a black/African context. This expands the breadth of Latina/o critical race theory by integrating blackness into LatCrit.

Race Migrations ultimately creates a framework that positions the concept of race (and, by default, ethnicity) twofold, as: 1) part of *Culture* that reframes/reshapes how we understand acculturation; and 2) having a cognitive dimension that helps us process, filter in and out, and apply racial schemas that migrants and non-migrants learn from host and sending countries. These theoretical contributions delimit our understanding of race as purely an external construct and helps us reclaim a sense of agency about our racial identity. Her research clearly articulates that we are not free from external racialization and that the cognitive dimension of race is shaped by migrants’ and non-migrants’ understanding of and navigating through intersecting racial schemas (U.S. racial schema, Hispanicized U.S. schema, hybrid racial schemas, etc.).

By positioning Dominican Republic migrants within the U.S. racial schema, Roth leverages out their African heritage to complicate the “one drop rule” that

is traditionally held in the United States. This legal aspect of race upholds and maintains exclusive rights and privileges to predominantly-white, upperclass, heterosexual, White “American” men. African lineage in the Dominican Republic is tied to more than just “one drop,” but also to phenotype, heritage, customs, and country of origin. So when light-skinned, White-European-looking “White-identified” migrants from the Dominican Republic enter the United States their identity bumps up against mainstream and hegemonic views of Whiteness. By highlighting the intersections and interstices of migration, racial cognition, and identity politics, Roth develops new questions that will shape critical race theory as well as the understanding of immigration by non-migrants.

Puerto Ricans’ “migration” into the United States, as Roth points out, is less muddy because of its “citizen-lite” relationship with the U.S. Yet while the African Taino legacy is prevalent on the island, its impact on how Puerto Ricans see their black/African identity plays out much differently and, at times opposite from Dominican migrants. Puerto Rican migrants leverage a nationality racial schema (thereby racializing their national identity) to maintain a distinctness among Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os in the United States. Roth does a noble job of exploring how the intersections of social class and education provide migrants with an alternative racial schema to contextualize their identities.

Migration to the United States impacts migrants and their families in their home countries. Because migration is never one-way, what migrants learn and acculturate/navigate through in the United States is transmitted back to their native countries and their families. Based on interviews with respondents in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, Roth observed how U.S. racial schemas, such as Latino pan-ethnicity and the U.S. Hispanicized schema, were informally used during the interviews. Thus, we see how racial schemas have varying degrees of impact on different communities.

The shortcoming of this monograph rests awkwardly in Roth’s decision to not explore in depth her positionality and its impact on the project, the interviews, and the respondents. While she briefly touches on this topic in some sections, there is little self-reflection as to how Roth, a self-identified White-American, shapes the project from the outset. There is little discussion about the racial schema she applied to create the project, the process she used to select the photographs for the interviews, as well as how she privileges “racial acculturation” as a navigational tool for migrants. Without a transparent framework for readers to use as a lens for the project, the only option would be to either privilege her perspective regarding the respondents or to unpack/critique her positionality (both of which are problematic). This is not to say that her project is inherently flawed. But it indicates a critical disjuncture between her positionality, her research project, and our interpretation of her work.

Overall, Wendy Roth provides a timely contribution to the fields of sociology and critical race theory. The intersections and two-way flow of race and migration in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic offer critical race theorists as well as cultural theorists an opportunity to engage with identity politics from a transnational perspective. This book has the potential to provide fruitful dialogue about the racial binary that exists in immigration (that of Mexico and the United States) as well as Latina/o identity in an increasingly Latina/o-populated country.

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LAURA ANGÉLICA MOYA LÓPEZ: *José Medina Echavarría y la sociología como ciencia social (1939-1980)*. México: El Colegio de México, 2013.

La figura y el quehacer sociológico de José Medina Echavarría son inesquívables para quien anhele bucear en los orígenes y en el trayecto de las ciencias sociales en México y, en general, en América Latina. En efecto, Medina Echavarría trajo a estas tierras y difundió en ellas las ideas rectoras, primero, de la sociología francesa y alemana y, después, de la norteamericana, a través de la traducción esmerada de obras clásicas y el señalamiento de su pertinencia relativa en el espacio donde resolvió emigrar, de España a México (1939), como un *transterrado*. Sin embargo, no es fácil perseverar en la atenta lectura de este libro. Frases excesivamente largas, una sintaxis que se extravía con frecuencia, neologismos que no se registran aún en ningún diccionario aceptado del idioma castellano, referencias bibliográficas incompletas, y, en suma, una franca *obesidad* de conceptos y alusiones que desafiarán la paciencia de quien abra sus páginas.

La autora inicia el texto con una extensa introducción (26 páginas) que pone de relieve la importancia de los aportes de Medina Echavarría para la sociología mexicana y la “historia conceptual” (?). Esfera esta última conformada por tres autores (Kuhn, Lakatos y Landau) que habrían escrito obras importantes que, sin embargo, no merecen señalamientos explícitos en este escrito (pág. 14); en cualquier caso, ellos aportaron en verdad conceptos cardinales que organizaron lo que Moya López denomina el campo “disciplinar” (?) de la sociología. Sin duda, ella acierta al aseverar que es preciso recuperar la herencia intelectual de Medina Echavarría, aunque ésta se habría diluido en la “modernidad líquida” (?) al haberse verificado un vacío en la escritura de una “historia efectual” (?), según indica en pág. 16. Opino que no es correcto afirmar que el sociólogo español