



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Language & Communication

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/langcom

Black flight: Heterogeneous accounts of Mexican immigration in a diverse community

Briana Nichols^{a,*}, Stanton Wortham^b

^a University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, 3700 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA

^b Boston College, Lynch School of Education, 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Available online xxx

Keywords:
Migration
Spacialization
Narrative
Othering
Community change

ABSTRACT

Once a predominantly White and Black community, since 1990 Marshall has experienced a 900% increase in residents of Mexican origin. This rapid demographic shift is particularly evident in changes to how commercial and residential spaces are owned and utilized. This article examines how residents of Marshall use spatiotemporal scales to imagine the economic and social trajectories of their town, and assign roles to different groups of people within these trajectories. We analyze how Marshall residents *spacialize* their accounts of community change by attending to two narratives that circulate simultaneously—the first is about community renewal following the arrival of Mexican residents; the second is about Black flight in response to perceived community disintegration. By tracing the production and circulation of these narratives, we move beyond an analysis of “othering” that presupposes a native “us” and immigrant “them.” Instead, we explore how Marshall’s diverse history of immigration, segregation, industrial development and decline produces heterogeneous, complex and shifting “others.”

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Joyce, Doreena, Tiffany and I sit around the dining room table. Tiffany, looking down, fingers the tablecloth as Doreena explains her experiences of change in the old neighborhood. These changes ultimately prompted her to sell her house and move to a senior living community in a neighboring town. Her new home, where our conversation takes place, is a modest brick bungalow tucked away in a neatly manicured development.

Doreena: It’s gonna run it down with that many people—right, they put a lot of people in the house. I don’t care what neighborhood you go in, they live in a neighborhood, instead of 2 or 3 you’ll see a million people come. And they use both doors—I’ve seen it.

Interviewer: What do you mean? Front and back you mean?

Doreena: The front door *and* the back door and you can’t keep up with them [laughing]. You don’t know how many people are coming out like that, and you don’t know how many people are living in there, and you would like to know your neighbors—but you know

Tiffany looks up towards her grandmother.

Tiffany: But we *did*—Remember, we *did* know them when they moved in next to you—because I went to school with them, Guadalupe, and they took us trick-or-treating.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: brianan@gse.upenn.edu (B. Nichols), worthams@bc.edu (S. Wortham).

Doreena, Joyce and Tiffany constitute three generations of an African American family that has lived in Marshall, a Mid-Atlantic town in the New Latino Diaspora, for the past 80 years. Doreena, the matriarch, was born in Marshall after her family moved north from Virginia in search of work in the area mills. Joyce, her ex-daughter-in-law, was married to Doreena's son and moved to the community to start her life with him. She has stayed in town, mainly because it is the only home her daughter Tiffany knows. Tiffany was born and raised in Marshall. She attended Marshall High School, and at the time of this conversation she was home for the summer before entering her sophomore year of college in Chicago. As the passage above suggests, members of the different generations position themselves distinctly with respect to the Mexican immigrants who have come to Marshall over the past 2 decades.

Doreena thinks of the Mexican immigrants in Marshall in terms of the changes they have brought to her old neighborhood—how they “run it down,” how she no longer knew how many people were living next to her, how she no longer knew her neighbors. Thus, she communicates her sense of dislocation. But her granddaughter Tiffany contests this representation. She reminds Doreena that she “did know them” and that in fact their families had social connections through trick-or-treating and attending school together. Doreena and Tiffany tell conflicting stories about the arrival of Mexican immigrants in Marshall. These stories illustrate the complex nature of “othering” in Marshall. “Othering” is a process in which self and other are mutually constituted as different and hierarchically organized (Crang, 1998) using essentialized dichotomies (Hinton, 2002). Othering takes place at multiple scales, including both temporal and spatial (Fabian, 1983), and the resulting evaluations and hierarchies often shift over time. In Marshall, diverse histories of immigration, segregation, industrial development and decline make processes of “othering” more complicated than the typical story of homogeneous hosts othering newcomers.

Once a predominantly White and Black community, since 1990 Marshall has experienced a 900% increase in residents of Mexican origin. This rapid demographic shift is evident throughout the community—but it is particularly felt in changes of ownership and use of both commercial and residential space. In this article, we examine how residents of Marshall imagine the economic and social trajectories of their town, paying particular attention to the roles assigned to different groups of people within these trajectories. We focus on how Marshall residents use space to tell stories about the transformations in their town. We examine how people explain the past, present and future of Marshall by deploying ideologies about commercial and residential space to help them understand various groups in their changing community. Specifically we look at narratives related to Marshall's nostalgic past (Cavanaugh, 2004), periods of economic decline, and the rapid emergence of the Mexican community. Through these narratives our interlocutors deploy differing spatiotemporal scales, and heterogeneously position the relationship between themselves, Mexican immigrants, and a changing community.

The stories of a changing Marshall draw on space and time to interpret social life (Carr and Lempert, 2016), making comparisons between then-and-now as well as us-and-them (Gal, 2016). Through these stories, spaces become invested with social meaning, a process De Fina (2009) terms *spacialization*. We examine how Marshall residents spacialize their accounts of community change, creating and presupposing “networks of association between representation, material conditions of existence and social relations” (p. 112) within the community. We understand processes of *spacialization* to be relational, both situated in and accomplished through the retelling of town trajectories. Time and space are not only aspects of the settings in which action occurs, but they are also interdiscursively produced, socially positioned forms of action (Blommaert, 2015; De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, 2003) that help produce ideologies that contribute to the trajectories of the community and its residents.

We attend to processes of *spacialization* by exploring two narratives that circulate simultaneously—the first is about community renewal that followed the arrival of Mexican residents; the second is about Black flight in response to perceived community disintegration. The politics of migration often involve racialized, nativist boundaries that produce an immigrant “other” (Chavez, 2013; De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, 2003). But this account of boundary formulation does not suffice to explain the more complex discursive dynamics of inclusion, exclusion and other positionings that happen in Marshall. In this article, we complicate the relationships between “immigrants” and “hosts” by describing a multiracial context in which residents occupy and assign positions beyond these two. As immigrants arrive, processes of inclusion and exclusion take place on multiple axes and involve heterogeneous assemblages of resources. “Othering” presupposes an “us” and a “them” (Gumperz, 1982), but in Marshall there are several different types of “them.”

Residents' *spacialized* accounts of Marshall narrate community transformation, describing neighborhoods and commercial areas as the town has experienced rapid demographic change. These spaces are some of the first places where community shifts become visible. As new businesses serving Mexican clientele open in Marshall's commercial areas, and as long time residents move out and make way for immigrant families, those who remain find themselves confronted with a community they thought they knew, but which now feels foreign to them. For some, these shifts are positive signs of revitalization and growth, while for others the changes feel alienating. Different accounts of these changes are given along racial and generational lines. Entangled in the history of Mexican migration are shifts in the local housing market, the opening of malls leading to the decimation of local commerce, potentially prejudicial housing ordinances and community policing practices, and the increasing suburbanization of the surrounding area. In this context, accounts of space reflect more than one type of contestation.

We trace how Marshall residents use both space and time to narrate imagined town trajectories and position themselves with respect to the demographic changes brought by immigration. We examine residents' accounts of residential and commercial space, analyzing how these renderings help residents make sense of their community and envision the town's future. Their accounts of community change are heterogeneous and tend to vary with the race of the narrator. Thus

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات