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BOOK REVIEWS

Jennifer A. Jones, *The Browning of the New South*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019, ISBN-13: 978-0-226-60098-7, 300 p.

Review by Cristina MATIUTA

Researching how immigrants adopt and adjust to a new cultural environment is a fertile ground for immigration and race scholars. If we refer to the United States, studies on immigration have traditionally focused on several key states and urban centers, which no longer paint the whole picture. Perhaps the main merit of the book briefly reviewed here, *The Browning of the New South,* written by Jennifer A. Jones, assistant professor of sociology at University of Illinois, is revealing, with ethnographic lens, the changing of social relations and racial identities in the southern city of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Like other cities in the Southeast America, Winston-Salem has changed fast in the last decades, moving from a nearly perfectly biracial middle-class town of blacks and withes, to a tri-racial city, of blacks, whites and Latinos. According to statistical data, Latinos are now the largest minority group in the United States and more than half of foreign-born growth in the US population between the 1990s and early 2000s was Latino. Therefore, their role in shaping issues such as electoral politics, immigration policy and generational change is transforming the social landscape.

This book, as the author mentions from the beginning, tells "…the story of the contemporary Winston-Salem, through the eyes of its new Latino residents. It has been tumultuous. They have been welcomed, un-welcomed, and then partially re-welcomed, in a relatively short period….The contributions of this book are at least two-fold. First, it uncovers solidarity between Latino immigrants and African Americans based in common experiences of racialization that fly in the face of standing theory. Second, it helps pinpoint the formal mechanisms and informal interactions that engender this positive, collaborative, two-way relationship" (p. 5).

The book is based on a solid empirical analysis, in which interviews and ethnographic data are examined in tandem. It was built from the ground up, informed most broadly by community level, in an effort to link institutional relationships to the mechanisms that shape neighbor-to-neighbor relations. It also examines the role of church spaces as key locations of race-making and political activism. Doing dozens of interviews with black, white and Latino community members, the author asked participants to reflect extensively on the experiences of newcomers and on immigration and race relations in their communities over time, perspective that helped in developing a holistic outlook of community perceptions and views on integration.

The book opens with a historical overview of the economy and race relations in Winston-Salem (Chapter 2- "Open Doors: Race and Immigration in the Twenty Century"), focusing on large-scale economic and demographic change through the region in in the 1990s. We find out from this chapter that, if at the end of 1990s Latino immigrants believed that Winston-Salem provided the context for their social integration and economic mobility, in the coming years the economic changes (the economy was no longer expanding and it could not absorb new workers or provide opportunities to move up) together with the political ones (a new set of immigration reform policies, proposed in 2004, put the issue of immigration back on the national agenda) altered this perspective. As the author points out, "by 2006, Mexican and other Latinos in Winston-Salem would not suffer discrimination as a result of simply being undocumented. Rather, they began to experience a new status: unwelcomed" (p. 65).

The chapter 3 ("Closed Gates: The Rise of Local Enforcement") examines this shift in public opinion, shaped by legal changes (legislation that denied access to state identification and driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants), municipal actors and local bureaucrats. It explores what the author calls "*reverse incorporation*, in which Latino immigrants who had previously been welcomed were abruptly denied access to both structural resources and welcoming attitudes, underscoring the significant damage it did to Mexicans' prospects for upward mobility". The next chapter ("Racializing Mexicans: New Latinos") explores the ways in which Latino immigrants came to understand their identities as racialized and the importance of that shift both for their understanding of themselves as Latinos and for their relations with blacks and whites in town. Because Mexicans were aware of the discrimination faced by blacks in the region and saw their interaction with blacks and

whites were divergent, they interpreted their discrimination experiences as akin to those of blacks. As one of the interviewees states, “because African Americans have suffered in a sense…. I believe they identify more with us, because they also lived in a situation like us” (p. 100). The intergroup relations between Mexican and African Americans in Winston-Salem are observed also in the fifth chapter (“Making Minorities: The African American Embrace and Minority Linked Fate”). The chapter explores how African Americans, as a reference group as well as a peer group, are engaging in the process of reinforcing the new sense of Latinidad among Winston-Salem’s Mexicans and producing a strong sense of “minority linked fate”. Chapter 6 (“The New South: New Minority Coalitions and White Retrenchment”) turns to a broader political landscape, the author applying the patterns observed in Winston-Salem to other sites throughout the region that have experienced similar significant shifts in demographics, economics and local immigration enforcement. The social relations between blacks and Latinos around the country, especially in large and medium size cities, are increasingly looking like conditions in Winston-Salem, with similar trajectories of welcoming and closure, alongside increasing support from black activists and political leaders, as well as increased Latino racialization.

The concluding chapter of the book (“Making Race: Conflict and Color Lines”) highlights how contextual change spurs the racial identity re-formation. Race will likely persist as an essential category that structures social relations, but the experiences and practices of groups will not remain static over time. The findings in this book indicate that Latinos, particularly Mexicans, are increasingly likely to experience and perceive discrimination in way that racializes them as minority. As withes continue to decline demographically, the voice of those experiences a sense of racial threat are likely to grow louder, undermining efforts to build positive relations between whites and racial minorities and providing legitimate motivations for interminority coalitions (p. 193). Thus, building up from the local, examining local and regional patterns and shifts, this study is a very useful tool for understanding the cross-ethnic coalitions and for predicting how race and race relations may change across the United States and across the twenty-first century.