

**“Talking Back to Controlling Images:
Latinos’ Changing Responses to Racism over the Life Course”**

Abstract:

“Controlling images” are central to the reproduction of racial, class, and gender inequality, yet there is a dearth of knowledge pertaining to Latinos. Drawing from 62 in-depth, life history interviews with Latino men, we ask: How do controlling images of Latinos as gang members and sports athletes impose constraints and channel emotions? How do Latinos respond to these images? We document how institutions and people deploying controlling images blockade access to education and upward mobility. We find that life course stage shapes Latinos’ responses to this imagery. In their youth, Latino respondents used emotional strategies to resist racial subjugation. As adults, respondents resisted racist controlling images through leadership activities in the professional realm. Since adults possess more social power than youth, adults were better equipped to engage in leadership endeavors as resistance as compared to youth who, constrained by age, predominately utilized emotional resistance strategies.

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Five years after the 2010 United States Census reported that Latinos accounted for most of the nation's population growth (56%) from 2000 to 2010 (Passel, Cohn, and Lopez 2011), Donald Trump, a Republican presidential hopeful, stated in his presidential announcement, "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending the best. They're...sending people that have lots of problems and they're bringing those problems. They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, [and] they're rapists." This speech disseminated a controlling image, or deleterious representation, of Mexicans as criminals. "Controlling images," as "major instrument[s] of power," are ideological justifications of oppression that are central to the reproduction of racial, class, and gender inequality (Collins 1991, 68). The function of controlling images is "to dehumanize and control" dominated groups (Collins 1986, S17). The social institutions that circulate controlling images do so to suppress less privileged groups, restricting minorities' access to upward mobility, self-efficacy, and power of self-definition (Collins 1991).

Controlling images are a hallmark of systemic racism, justifying "the creation, development, and maintenance of white privilege, economic wealth, and sociopolitical power...[rooted in] hierarchical interaction and dominance" (Feagin 2000, 14). Controlling images are conceptually different from prejudice because they are ideological collective representations, not psychological. Prejudice involves negative emotion and stereotypes (Quillian 2006) whereas controlling images are systemic and cultural, existing beyond the affective and cognitive. Controlling images, prejudice, and discrimination are related in that controlling images provide a "strategy of action" (Swidler 1986) for prejudice and discrimination. Ann Swidler (1986, 273) conceives of culture (in this case a systemically racist

culture) as influencing action “by shaping a repertoire or ‘tool kit’ of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct ‘strategies of action.’” Controlling images are cultural tools that offer “strategies of action,” thus bridging systemic racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

Patricia Hill Collins (1986; 1991; 2004) theorized controlling images as intersectional depictions of African-descent people that justify racial inequality by masking structural racism. While researchers have elaborated the concept of controlling images for blacks (Ferguson 2000; Collins 2004, 1991), this work has not been done for other racial groups. How well does this concept extend to Latinos, a subordinated racial group that surpassed the number of African Americans in the U.S. by 2000 (Passel, Cohn, and Lopez 2011)?

A cursory glance at media reveals that Latinos are typecast as docile menial laborers, unauthorized immigrants, criminals, gang-members, rapists, seductresses, and athletes (Rodriguez 2008; Molina 2014). The controlling images most frequently reported to us by our largely middle-class sample of 62 Latino men were that of gang members and sports athletes, both expressions of minority male virility and peripheral status. While popular imagination might more closely knit gang membership and athletics to blacks than Latinos, our empirical findings contradict this assumption, revealing how class status shapes racialized imagery of Latino manhood and how racialized treatment can transcend the black/brown divide (Rios 2011; Jones 2012). Honing in on the two most frequently-reported controlling images of our 62 mostly middle-class Latino men respondents, we ask: How do controlling images of Latinos as gang members and sports athletes regulate opportunities, impose constraints, and channel emotions? How do Latinos respond to these controlling images? To what extent are these responses shaped by stage in life course? This article extends controlling images to Latinos and fills a noted gap

concerning subordinated groups' *reactions* to stigma (Lamont and Mizrachi 2012), theorized here as controlling images.

This article illuminates linkages between controlling images, the constraints they impose, and people's reactions to them. Controlling images (and the institutions and people that communicate them) are a *mechanism* to control underprivileged groups. Controlling images constrain: they divert education (Ochoa 2013, Vasquez 2011), impose suspicion of illegality (Molina 2014), block upward mobility, and cause stress (Feagin and Sikes 1994). Controlling images are intersectional, specific imagery applying to different groups based on axes of difference such as race, gender, sexuality, and skin color. In this way, "racial projects require sex and gender projects" (Donovan 2003, 708). Controlling images also funnel emotions, a less-investigated theme. This article fills theoretical and empirical gaps regarding responses to controlling images across the life course, a move which gives agency back to subordinated Latinos. By focusing on responses, we connect controlling images with their repercussions and we give voice to those whom institutions and people deploying controlling images aim to silence.

This article offers four contributions to the state of knowledge. First, it theorizes controlling images and extends the concept to the Latino population. We demonstrate the concept's utility and deepen understanding of controlling images' form, function, and effects. Second, this study focuses on people's agency and theorizes resistance strategies, a move that destabilizes oppressive structures and highlights micro-level power. Third, we demonstrate how stage in life course shapes responses to racist controlling images. Finally, this article demonstrates how the "racial project" (Omi and Winant 1994) of controlling images unites the topics of race, emotions, gangs, and sports.

Controlling Images, Life Course, and Emotions

Racial projects are “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines” (Omi and Winant 1994, 56). Controlling images constitute a racial project, the aim of which is to subdue, dominate, and manipulate oppressed racial groups. These racialized images instruct people on how to perceive and treat racial groups and, in turn, construct a racial order.

Alongside the term “controlling images,” Collins developed the notion of a “sphere of freedom” (2008, 129), an “‘inside’...changed consciousness” that is an avenue for empowerment. Life course literature indicates that this resistance space may be more accessible with age (Eaton et al. 2009), setting the stage to examine how responses to controlling images change over a lifetime.

By focusing on controlling images binding Latinos to sports and gangs, this article stands at the margins of established sports and gang literature. The conversations in these fields concern race and mobility, media representations of minority athletes, and the causes and consequences of gang formation. Yet threads from these fields pertain to our analysis. The sociology of sport literature addresses the exploitation of minority athletes and the risk for poor and minority men to view sports as their “best chance for success” (Messner 1992). With a gap concerning Latinos, media portrayals of black male athletes naturalize ideas about black athleticism versus white intellectualism (Bruce 2004) and create racialized and gendered models of “successful masculinity” (Smith and Beal 2007). The literature on gangs reveals that violence is a masculine rite of passage (Ferguson 2000) for minority youth, reinforcing the societal expectation that minority men experience and perpetuate violence. Additionally, the process of “hypercriminalization” whereby a racialized set of “everyday behaviors and styles become

ubiquitously treated as deviant, risky, threatening, or criminal, across social contexts” (Rios 2011, xiv) is implicated in controlling images of Latinos as gang members. These racist portrayals suggest that Latinos will never amount to more than one-dimensional imagery.

We turn to emotions because people have emotional responses to racism (Lamont and Mizrachi 2012; Fleming, Lamont, and Welburn 2012). A principal concern within sociology of emotions is how culture and social structure regulate emotions and how this regulation influences individuals, groups, and organizations (Wharton 1999). Arlie Hochschild (1983) argued that individuals actively manage their emotions in response to expectations associated with institutions and social spaces. Individuals manage their emotions depending on “feeling rules” or social norms that dictate which emotions are appropriate for a particular context. Feeling rules are not universal but are shaped by racialized and gendered expectations of emotional performance (Wingfield 2010; Wilkins 2012). This emotional management “[sustains] a system of inequality...that generates destabilizing feelings of anger, resentment, sympathy, and despair” (Schwalbe et al. 2000, 434). It is important to study emotions for two reasons: First, emotions are a window into people’s internal worlds and provide a peek into the “extra burdens” (Feagin 1991) with which racial minorities grapple. Second, emotions tap into how people respond to what controlling images communicate to them about their position in the racial hierarchy.

This article’s focus on reactions dovetails with literature exploring “antiracist strategies” (“the micro-level responses that individuals use to counter racist ideology in their daily life” (Lamont and Fleming 2005, 31)) and “everyday responses to stigmatization” (Fleming, Lamont, and Welburn 2012; Lamont and Mizrachi 2012). Class-advantaged African Americans respond to discrimination using middle-class resources (Feagin 1991), some directly confronting racism

and others deescalating conflicts by “managing the self” and gaining recognition by presenting a positive self-image or augmenting non-racial identities (Fleming, Lamont, and Welburn 2012). Latinos’ responses to racism have been explored less. Mexican Americans resist discrimination by attributing it to the pathology of the perpetrator, disarming it as illogical and ignorant, and proving themselves through overachievement (Vasquez 2011). Middle-class Latinos may assert their right to speak Spanish (Cobas and Feagin 2008) or educate others about Latinos (Vallejo 2015), these antiracist strategies signaling the possibility of social change (Feagin and Cobas 2013).

The life course, consisting of “age-graded patterns” is crucial to comprehending how human development is contextualized by aging, historical time, and social institutions (Elder Jr., Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003, 4). Stage in the life course is an under-theorized dimension of power (Utrata 2011; Pugh 2014). This literature reveals that children and adolescents, like adults, are “active social agents, strategizing within their constraints” (Pugh 2014, 72). The possession of social power peaks in midlife (Eaton et al. 2009), people becoming more resolute in their attitudes as they age. Self-efficacy (the perception that one is a “causal agent in one’s environment” and able to “produced intended effects”) also plateaus in middle-age (Gecas 2003, 370). With confidence in the effectiveness of personal agency increasing until it declines after approximately age 60, middle-age is the life stage when self-assurance and attitudes are strongest. This insight into shifting social power as people age stimulates the question of how the age/social power nexus intersects with reactions to racism.

The next section describes our methods of data collection and analysis. The findings section shows how controlling images can forcibly constrain, highlights age-graded forms of resistance, and describes how people transition from constraint to resistance through the life

course. Systemic racism motivating controlling images of Latinos as athletes and gang members aims to constrain, yet Latinos retort that their lives transcend the narrow lines drawn by controlling images. We find that age affects strategy of resistance, young people utilizing emotional forms and adults employing leadership-oriented tactics.

Methods

This article draws from 62 in-depth life history interviews with Latino men. The data come from two research projects conducted by the lead author in 2004-2005 and 2010. Both research projects focused on Latino families and asked questions concerning racial/ethnic identity, family, community, and race and gender issues. Latino men's relationship to gangs and sports was an emergent theme: the interview schedules did not address gangs or sports but nevertheless respondents repeatedly introduced the topics, reflecting their importance in their daily lives. This exploratory article does not aim for generalizability but instead pursues an unanticipated, emergent theme of racist controlling images and reactions that respondents highlighted.

The combined data sources include 62 Latino men interviewees that range in age from 15 to 84 years old. All respondents self-identify as Latino, and most as Mexican American (87%), reflecting the Mexican-origin population's majority share of the U.S. Latino population (63% in 2010) (Lopez and Dockterman 2011). Most respondents are U.S.-born (90%), the remainder foreign-born in Latin American countries. Samples were drawn from two locales: California (San Francisco/Berkeley Bay Area and Los Angeles County) (79%) and northeastern Kansas (Lawrence, Kansas City, Topeka) (21%). While one of the two larger projects from which these data derive compares respondents from California and Kansas, this article does not theorize region but instead highlights the similarities found across field sites. Purposive sampling was

used to identify families to interview, recruiting from Latino-serving institutions (Catholic churches and community organizations), high schools, and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce. Since ethnic organizations were a recruitment source, more strongly-identified Latinos were likely included in the study. This is an unavoidable consequence of sampling on a specific identity trait: people must identify with it to participate (the phenomenon of the disaffiliated leads to an opposite problem of “disappearing” minorities who are not captured in research (Alba and Islam 2009)). To limit sample bias, snowball sampling was employed, the interviewer asking respondents for suggestions of family members, friends, and neighbors. Referrals were solicited from several social networks, this technique tempering bias in the sample since networks may vary by key characteristics. The interviewer’s status as a Latina (half Caucasian, half Mexican American) likely facilitated access.

The bulk of this sample is middle class, as measured by education, individual income, and occupation. Approximately one quarter of the sample has a high school degree or less (26%), not quite half has some college or a college degree (43%), and nearly a third (31%) has a graduate degree. Individual income measures show 15% of the sample below \$30,000, 34% in the mid-range \$30,000-\$70,000 brackets, and 32% above \$70,000 (with 19% not reporting). 27% of respondents held blue-collar or service jobs, 52% held white-collar managerial or professional jobs, and 19% were students (one retiree excluded). With only a fraction of the sample constituting students, who are the most “biographically available” to be activists due to few family and work obligations (McAdam 1988), we did not oversample student activists. Class status shapes experiences with racism (Vallejo 2015), the findings presented here limited by class.

The age breakdown for our respondents follows: 27% were teenagers to twenties, 51% were in their thirties to fifties, and 22% were in their sixties to eighties. For most respondents, the interviews were retrospective accounts that covered decades. Since we advance a life course argument that leverages life stories of adults that span decades, we do not compare age groups. Instead, in data collection and analysis we were attentive to stage in life course as respondents relayed encounters with racist controlling images. An advantage of life history in-depth interviews is that we can trace developments over time (such as forms of racism confronted and reactions) and theorize how these changes over the life course are patterned.

We coded all respondents according to a skin color scale (1=racially white appearance; 2=light-tan; 3=medium-tan; 4=dark-tan; 5=racially black appearance). We designed this five-point scale by selecting one picture of a Latino celebrity from the Spanish-language *People* magazine website as the exemplar for each skin color code, the interviewer assigning each interviewee the code that corresponded to their skin tone. Half of the sample is represented by the two lightest skin color codes (24% coded as #1, 26% coded as #2). 35% of the sample was coded as skin color code #3 (medium-tan), 15% as code #4, and no one was categorized as code #5. Our findings cannot speak to the experiences of phenotypically-black Latinos. Attending to skin color is important because light-skinned Latinos are more likely to be perceived as whites or “honorary whites” whereas dark-skinned Latinos are more likely to become part of a “collective black” category (Bonilla-Silva 2004) and be subject to more virulent racial discrimination. In our analysis, however, skin color was not of paramount importance. Nevertheless, we do not deny that skin tone is a salient feature that stratifies Latinos’ experiences, especially when considered in combination with other embodied traits.

The principal investigator conducted in-person interviews at a location of the respondents' choice, usually their home, workplace, or a coffee shop. The interview schedules included questions about race, racism, and culture within and outside the family; controlling images were an emergent theme. The term "controlling image" was never used, priority placed on acquiring life histories without the interference of researcher bias. Without an overt concern regarding controlling images in the interview protocol, there was no researcher agenda that respondents could detect and conform to, eliminating concern about social desirability bias (Chambliss and Schutt 2012). The interviewer tape-recorded and transcribed all interviews in order to utilize verbatim narratives. Writing field notes after each interview captured personal affect that gets lost in written transcripts, attention paid to details about a respondent's physical appearance, demeanor, and tone during the interview. All names were replaced with pseudonyms that correspond to interviewees' Hispanic or Anglophone first and last names. Depending on the funding situation, respondents either received no compensation (2004-2005) or twenty dollars (2010).

In-depth interviews allow for discovery, complexity, and unexpected insights (Chambliss and Schutt 2012). A semi-structured life history interview protocol allowed respondents to reply at length on meaningful, and sometimes unanticipated, themes. The inductive process of "discovery" led to the conceptual categories that are the basis of this article. Both authors collaboratively coded, analyzed, and wrote this article. Our initial round of coding focused on gangs and sports. Using an inductive approach to analyze the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987) allowed for related categories to emerge, leading to a second round of coding on emotional and behavioral reactions. Through gradual clarification of conceptual categories we sharpened our research questions and data-driven answers. We jointly honed the conceptual

categories used during coding, boosting inter-coder reliability, and combed through the data numerous times to ensure it was comprehensively coded. We used Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software program, an advantage being that this platform allows for data-sharing. During coding, we identified common patterns and exceptional cases that illustrate prominent themes and variations. Grouping interviews according to relevant themes and teasing out associations is the basis of the findings section.

Findings

This findings section first illustrates how people and institutions that circulate sports and gangs controlling images constrain Latino respondents and then theorizes resistance tactics. We find that age shapes resistance strategies, emotional tactics prevalent among youth and leadership techniques predominant among adults.

Forcibly Constrained

Effective controlling images regulate opportunities, impose constraints, and channel emotions. As Latino men interviewees reflected on their youth, they recalled feeling restricted by imagery that depicted them as athletic bodies lacking mental capacity worthy of an education. Schools teach formal curriculum as well as “hidden curriculum,” including modes of social control that reflect the dominant class’s hegemony (Ferguson 2000; Ochoa 2013). Controlling images are one piece of hidden curriculum that indoctrinates minority students with lessons of racial subordination. The controlling image of the athlete curtailed Latino men’s aspirations and diverted their educations onto sports fields. These men were rewarded only for their physicality, the athlete controlling image relying on a body/mind dichotomy established during slavery

relative to black/white race relations that has had repercussions for other racial minority groups (Collins 2004, 1991; Molina 2014).

In his youth, the educational system diverted Harry Torres, now sixty-five, out of education and into athletics. Harry uses the phrases “locked me out” and “forced” to explain the institutional racism operating through controlling images that re-routed him toward sports:

Since I was a straight-A student in grade school, they put me [in] all the AP [Advanced Placement] classes [in high school]. The teacher...lock[ed] me out of it. This one teacher knocked me out of the highest English class: ...she sent me down to a lower English class. ...They forced me to take...shop class...I guess they figured this guy is going to pick up one of the manual skills. ...I didn't fight it. ...I went out for sports...it wasn't as hard.

A strong student in elementary school, high school teachers used race as a proxy for mental ability and “knocked [him] out” of advanced classes. Education is both a racialized and racializing institution (Vasquez 2011), and here we witness school teachers detouring Harry into menial labor classes (Maldonado 2009). Authority figures racialized him as only fit for “manual skills” that emphasize bodily rather than mental labor. Using “inaction as an emotional strategy for preventing the emotional pain of racism” that struggle would entail (Evans and Moore 2015, 447), Harry “didn't fight it” and instead “went out for sports.” As a youth, Harry directed his attention to sports, succumbing to the controlling image and the system's expectations for him. With institutional racism propping up controlling imagery, Harry perceived resisting being typecast as a body without a brain as “hard” whereas not “fight[ing] it” translated to conforming

to subpar expectations. The athlete controlling image naturalized sports participation and made bucking a system enforced by authority figures onerous to challenge.

Younger and older men, only some of whom were involved in gangs, complained about the difficulty of shirking the expectation of gang membership. Thirty-six year old Vincent Venegas, a former gang member, discusses the confinement of gang life: “Since I was a gang member...the possibilities are even smaller. ...It contained me.” Poignantly, “contain” is a synonym for “control,” suggesting the efficacy of the controlling image which limited his access to legal jobs, self-expression, and contribution to society. Vincent’s fifteen year old son, Pablo, “fell into” the controlling image of the Latino gang member due to peer pressure: “*Cholos* [gangsters] were cool. They were cool because they were hip, they were fashion.” The controlling image required a particular display of masculinity: “being a man, being cool, being...gangster.” The gangster controlling image plus the controlling image of the low-achieving Mexican student combined to contain Pablo’s academic success. Believing that he did “not [need] to be educated because he already knew everything,” Pablo and his peer group reserved academic achievement for Asian and White students: “Oh, they want an education. They're going to college. Nah, they're too gay for us.... Let the white people get their education.” Controlling images threatened to derail his education until Pablo’s uncle “pounded some sense into [him]” saying: “You are a minority. The blacks are a minority. The whites and Asians, they're getting their education. They're going to make more money.... They're the higher race. ...You should be trying to get to the top.” Pablo’s constraint stems from seductive controlling images that maintain the racial hierarchy. This narrative reveals the appeal of gang imagery, illustrating how in his multiracial urban context controlling images exert control by confining visions of the future—in Pablo’s case, convincing him to that being a gangster is a

“cool” aspiration until his uncle intervened.

These retrospective tales indicate that Latino men were more constrained by controlling images when they were young than once they entered adulthood. The controlling-ness of controlling images is stronger for youth who, by virtue of their age, are still learning how to navigate racist terrain. While some people can remain constrained by controlling images, our largely middle-class sample reported constraint in youth that transformed into resistance as they grew older.

Emotional Resistance: Gaining Esteem in Youth

Emotional resistance involves an internal, psychological, feelings- and attitude-centered struggle to recuperate self- and group-worth. There is a life course dimension to resistance styles: youth, who typically have lower levels of social power, expressed resistance emotionally whereas adults, who attain greater power with age, resisted through leadership activities related to their professions.

Twenty-eight year old Moises Ramos was emotionally committed to proving himself above the low bar of expectations that controlling images establish, sensing that his future prospects were at stake: “People automatically judge you as being something you’re not just because of the way you look.” In response, he adopted an “[I] don’t give a fuck” attitude as a way to anesthetize the negativity embedded in controlling images. Expending emotional and psychological energy (Feagin and Sikes 1994), Moises explained his emotional resistance: “just the attitude of ‘who cares what others think of me’ and ‘that’s not going to stop me from doing what I need to do to achieve my goals.’” Emotional resistance can lead to behavioral resistance, as Moises notes: “I’ve got to still prove myself because people are...always going to have this

doubt about me.... So the more that I prove myself the better that I feel about myself.” A career counselor at a city college, he challenges controlling images, using educated English to alter incorrect assumptions: “If I open my mouth...[people] are...thrown off because supposedly I can’t comprehend what they’re saying.” A young adult, Moises employs two forms of resistance: he uses emotions and attitude to safeguard his sense of self and he uses speech acts to disrupt misperceptions.

Latino interviewees whose adolescence or young adulthood intersected with the social movements of the 1960s developed lasting emotional strategies of resistance. Raymond Talavera of California, now fifty-one, speaks to the importance of the Chicano Movement which asserted an unapologetic racial minority identity in rebutting controlling images. In his teenage years during the Movement, Raymond emotionally rejected controlling images: “If I’m treated that way, it’s *them*, not me.... That was really the lesson of the Chicano Movement: ‘this is who we are, we don’t have to be what the corporate leaders of America say we have to be.’” Raymond conceptualizes emotional resistance as living beyond the restraints of controlling images: “The Chicano Movement...said, ‘...We are who we are, this is who we are. I know who I am. I know I don’t have to be Joe Smith, Jr. of the Junior League.... I am Raymond Talavera of the Hispanic Chamber. ...Accept us for who we are.” The call to “accept us as who we are” is poignant since freedom equates to living outside of controlling images. Social movements like the Chicano Movement can teach emotional resistance strategies which can last a lifetime and be converted into other forms of resistance as people age.

Given that “stigmatization often triggers indignation” (Fleming, Lamont, and Welburn 2012, 408), this emotional state may guide action. When competing against whites he perceived as racist, Oscar Cota used athleticism to vent his frustration: “We sort of had a chip on our

shoulders because we...were trying to prove that...we weren't going to put up with the B.S. [bullshit] that they were dishing out to us.” Even as this reaction affirms athletic value, Oscar’s emotional intervention is to assert his worth and steel himself for competition. Rob Esposito was also emotionally dedicated to proving himself equal to others, showing the fine line between emotional and behavioral resistance: “You have to show ‘em, show ‘em, show ‘em that you’re just as good as them. ...You’re going to have to be a little bit better to even be considered on the same level.” Both men place hope in the meritocracy of sports where they can indisputably be the fastest or score the most points. Rob tied emotional resistance to specific action: “Just that anger—I was going to have to show them, show them I was better. [That was] a driving force for me, made me competitive.” Rob expected that his *objective* achievements in athletics would improve *subjective* opinions of him as a Latino man. However, because this resistance occurs in a context of athlete achievement on a sports team it activates a racialized controlling image that designates sports as a limited space for Latino success. It is through emotions such as anger that these Latino men perceive the racial projects that denigrate them, revealing how “feelings...are central in the gendered processes of racialization” (Saraswati 2013, 13).

Leadership as Resistance: Giving Back to the Community in Adulthood

Resistance does not stop with emotions but can convert into action as people age and their social power increases. When younger respondents reported behavioral resistance it was limited to sports contests or fighting, a physical manifestation of emotional turmoil. Among adult respondents, most of whom were professionals, resistance materialized as “giving back” to their community. Encounters with controlling images inspired economically-stable Latino men to

contribute to their racial group through leadership efforts that teach equality, cultivate civic improvement, and model paths of mobility.

Most adult Latino respondents who discussed action-oriented resistance to controlling images referenced education. Despite formal desegregation, schools continue to track students by race (Ochoa 2013; Vasquez 2011; Pollock 2008). Teacher-student and student-student interactions teach students about the racial order and their location within it (Ferguson 2000; Ochoa 2013). Latino respondents, who as men were socialized to be active in the public sphere, were vocal about contributing positively to schools as a mentor, teacher, or administrator. These men formally expand their students' knowledge base and informally serve as models of professionals. By investing in the younger generation, these Latino educators "give back" by broadening students' vision and demonstrating that they can unlock the shackles of negative imagery.

Revealing a variable relationship to controlling images over the life course, before aspiring to be a teacher, twenty-one year old Ricardo Torres believed that an athletic career was his best chance for success (Messner 1992). Sports has historically been a space where minority men were allowed to succeed (Romero II 2004). After "barely squeaking" through high school, Ricardo enrolled in community college and began working at a grocery store where it "clicked in [his] head": "This is what I'm going to do with my life." He placed more effort into his schoolwork with a dream of attending University of California, Berkeley. However, in Ricardo's eyes, it was not a Berkeley *education* that would provide a vehicle for success, but rather, the prestige of the university's *athletics*:

I wanted to go to Berkeley. I remember Jason Kidd, seeing him play, and thinking, “Someday I’m gonna go play there.” I thought I was going to be a professional basketball player, to be honest. I was pretty good, but I’m not Shaquille O’Neal. But for a while I thought, “I’m either gonna play basketball [or] I’m gonna be a rapper.” How am I gonna get outta here? Just to rise above...living rough.

Pointing out two athletes he admires (both of whom have African American ancestry), Ricardo hoped to “rise above” his circumstances through a professional basketball career. He grasps onto the controlling image of the Latino athlete (notably, alongside a rapper) as his best shot at success. As a youth, his question “How am I gonna get outta here?” suggests emotional yearning for a plan. Once invested in his education, Ricardo realized that “things are really bad for everybody on the bottom.” With age and education enabling him to envision his future detached from athletics, he rebelled against the controlling image of Latinos as athletic paragons that he had succumbed to in earlier years. He newly appreciated that the allure of success via athletics was a “façade” that detracted attention from structural inequality.

Now a college student, Ricardo says that people assume that a facial scar is a gang-related injury and typecast him as a gang member. Working against that controlling image, he aims to affect change through “being a teacher” and “really helping people.” He sees becoming a teacher as a way to intervene in what scholars call the “school to prison pipeline” (Rios 2011) whereby minority male youth are channeled from one institution of social control to a far more restrictive one. He elaborates on what “giving back” looks like to him:

Just educate. ...I'd rather work in low-income communities.... I definitely want to go back to Watsonville [California] to teach.... I want to see more *raza* [Mexican Americans] come up.... Not every [teacher] can deal with Spanish-speaking students.... It's better [for me] to use that skill than to leave it on the floor.... And I can't lie that I want to see more brown faces here in [University of California campus] or just successful. ...I'd like to...give the biggest voice I possibly can.

Sensitive to racial and class disadvantage in his hometown, Ricardo wants “to do something,” by providing education to aid the advancement of his “*raza*” or racial group. The term “*raza*” was used in the Chicano Movement as an empowering term of self-definition, this word-choice signaling Ricardo's familiarity with the Movement. Use of the term “give voice” taps into the notion that less privileged groups have less power to express their needs. A college student who has inherited a post-civil rights lexicon, these qualities in combination with his race, class, age, and education shape Ricardo's aspiration to leverage a career in education as resistance.

Not all who resisted controlling images through leadership did so through education, some staging resistance through other professions that serve the public, such as sixty-two year old architect Gilbert Ornales. As a native of Los Angeles, Gilbert's awareness of racial segregation peaked when he witnessed the creation of Dodger Stadium through the relocation of Latino residents of Chavez Ravine: “They were just going into the *barrios* [neighborhoods] and moving people. ...Things were being planned for Chicano neighborhoods without no input [sic] or without sensitivity to the people living there. That's how we decided...we're gonna...be spokesmen architects for the people.” Gilbert incorporates community representation in his

public architectural projects. He explains how he sought feedback from gang members when redesigning a park that now bears the name of a local gang:

I designed [the park] with the input of the gang leaders. They wanted a Mexican park.... I designed....a stage and...stairs...[that] simulate...the mountain in Mexico City, Popocatepetl.... They wanted a piñata. So I designed a piñata pole.... One of the gang guys went back to school and wrote a paper on the process.

By including gang members in community redevelopment and highlighting their community-member and student statuses, Gilbert troubles the dichotomy between gang and student identities.

By enacting resistance through leadership in professional realms, these Latino men convert frustration with controlling images into constructive action. Emotions remain present in that they undergird and motivate action. By undertaking leadership activities, these men weaken controlling images by promoting life pathways beyond the prescription of controlling images. By giving back to the community through teaching, mentorship, and community involvement, these men invest in their racial group and challenge restrictive imagery.

Adult Retrospectives: Life Course and the Transition of Resistance Strategies

We have shown how life course stage is an important dimension in the construction of resistance strategies. Using the retrospective narratives of Latino men, we now demonstrate how respondents invoke differing forms of resistance throughout their lifetimes.

Self-efficacy increases with age, as illustrated by sixty-two year old Paul Zagada's reflection on how his reaction to the athlete controlling image changed over time. He describes his high school experience in California and his youthful acquiescence:

I was really good in...track. ...They called me "the bullet" because I was fast.... In order to play, I needed to have a minimum C average. My coach, literally...wound up selecting all my classes, dealing with all my teachers. I didn't have to deal with nothin'. I would go to classes: typing classes, business classes, classes that I didn't have to do [anything in] and I thought this was the greatest thing in the world, not realizing what was happening. Because academically...they were just passing me....

The fact that his education was shortchanged was a shock to Paul when he applied to college: "I'm going to college," I said, "...because, man, I did good in school." I took the SAT test and...I was horrified at [my] scores.... I was disastrous. That's when it hit me." Controlling images of Latinos as sports stars, not smart students, directed Paul into extracurricular activities rather than knowledge-building classes, this racist mechanism implying "that well-educated children of color [are] not...in the common interest" (Pollock 2008, 176). Upon recognizing the injustice that had "happened to [him]," Paul earned bachelor's and law degrees. After achieving his law degree, Paul verbally confronted a college counselor who years earlier had informed him that he would never survive in higher education: "I have survived. ...I'm probably like many stories where people weren't given the opportunity. Give me the opportunity to survive!" Paul's plea hits at the central nervous system of controlling images: they curtail opportunity and chokehold minorities' aspirations. As this narrative that reviews decades of a respondent's life

highlights, resistance is crafted differently at various life stages. As a youth, he passively accepted his place in the racialized school system, unaware of how school practices undermined him. It was not until Paul reached the more powerful stage of adulthood that he channeled his emotions into a verbal confrontation meant to recuperate his agency from years before.

Fifty-nine year old Rafael Treviño grew assertive with age, converting the emotional frustration of his youth into action:

I wasn't set on the right track. ...There wasn't a time when [school guidance counselors] sat down with you and said, "Look, Rafael, you need to get yourself an education. You can become a lawyer. You can become a doctor. You can become a biologist. An astrologist. An astronomer. Whatever!" They could have motivated me. They could have given me some ideas. But they didn't. Because I wasn't one of the chosen. ...They didn't build my self-confidence. Instead, they were telling me what I couldn't do.

Clarifying that the school counselors were white, Rafael believes he was not a "chosen one" fit to be groomed for a profession because he was Latino. Now the director of a community health organization (without a college degree), Rafael is poised to more actively resist controlling images of Latinos than when he was younger. Rafael encourages his employees to become professionals: "[An employee] just passed the bar [exam]. I let her study here at work. I encouraged her to be an attorney. ...You know why? Because of what happened to me in high school [with] the counselors." Directly linking his discouraging school experience to support for coethnics' professionalization, Rafael demonstrates how age shapes resistance strategies, his

responses to controlling images transforming from troubled acquiescence to emboldened action over the course of his life.

Thirty-six year old Vincent Venegas found protection and friendship in gang membership until at age nineteen he became “fed up” witnessing his “friends die, go to jail, be on drugs.” He proclaimed, “I want out. Jump me out,” his emotional destitution and awareness of fatal consequences of violence inspiring his youth gang prevention work. He now volunteers with an organization where he visits schools as a mentor to “tell the kids that there’s nothing there [in gangs].” In adulthood, Vincent uses his experience to help other minority men resist containment by dead-end controlling images.

Adults possess more social power than youth (Gecas 2003; Eaton et al. 2009). This authority enables people to translate the emotional resistance of youth into behavioral—specifically leadership-oriented—resistance in adulthood. Changes in social power associated with stage in the life course facilitate the translation from emotional resistance in youth to emboldened, action-oriented responses to racist controlling images over time.

Conclusion

Institutions and people that circulate controlling images of Latinos aim to constrain their opportunities, self-images, and futures. Controlling images organize experience, channel emotions, and shape expectations and aspirations. A tool of systemic racism, portrayals of Latinos as sports athletes and gang members can be effective, forcibly constraining Latino men’s futures. Yet resistance occurs, younger men enacting emotional forms of resistance and older men activating leadership tactics in their professions.

Life course stage shapes antiracist strategies. Adults possess more social power than youth, people transforming the emotional resistance of youth into action-oriented resistance in adulthood. While these categories may overlap, the data reveal that age conditions form of resistance to controlling images. By investigating *reactions* to racialized depictions, we give agency to the oppressed and showcase the process of social change. By analyzing “everyday practices,” we reveal how micro-level resistances constitute “sites for the transformation of social hierarchies” (Lamont and Mizrachi 2012, 367).

Due to Latino men’s masculinity which is *already* coded as violent, criminal, and dangerous (Ferguson 2000; Vasquez 2010; Collins 1991), the racial project of sports and gang controlling images systematically restricts Latino men’s lives. Latino respondents provide a counter-narrative, their resistance strategies constituting a racial project of their own that establishes a more comprehensive, meaningful, and accurate self-definition. This article contributes to knowledge about how controlling images affect Latino men and how Latino men recuperate their agency through resistance strategies that are shaped by stage in the life course.

Since controlling images are intersectional, future research on controlling images pertaining to Latina women would show how gender intervenes in racial projects. Given our predominately middle-class sample, our findings are skewed toward experiences of and tactics used by college-educated and higher-income earning individuals. An important elaboration of this research would be to investigate how class status influences which controlling images are salient and how socioeconomic status shapes resistance strategies. Since skin color and other physical features signal racialization, research elaborating how physical appearance correlates with racist experiences and reactions would be a welcome addition. Controlling images, as instruments of domination, attempt to contain Latino men as athletes and gang members (among

other images), roles that picture them as bodies and offer little chance of upward mobility. While most effective against youth, most Latinos touched by these controlling images resist, their methods of resistance shifting with age. Latino men respond to controlling images principally with emotion in their younger years until they achieve greater social power with age and then resist through leadership in their public-service professions.

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