



Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself: Latina Girls and Sexual Identity (Intersections)

By Lorena Garcia

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2013 Winner of the ASA Race, Gender and Class Section's Distinguished Book Award

While Latina girls have high teen birth rates and are at increasing risk for contracting sexually transmitted infections, their sexual lives are much more complex than the negative stereotypes of them as “helpless” or “risky” (or worse) suggest. *In Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself*, Lorena Garcia examines how Latina girls negotiate their emerging sexual identities and attempt to create positive sexual experiences for themselves. Through a focus on their sexual agency, Garcia demonstrates that Latina girls’ experiences with sexism, racism, homophobia and socioeconomic marginality inform how they engage and begin to rework their meanings and processes of gender and sexuality, emphasizing how Latina youth themselves understand their sexuality, particularly how they conceptualize and approach sexual safety and pleasure. At a time of controversy over the appropriate role of sex education in schools, *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself*, provides a rare look and an important understanding of the sexual lives of a traditionally marginalized group.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Finally, a scholarly book that dismantles the dominant narratives that pathologize young second-generation US Latinas as hyper-sexual and destined to be pregnant. Garcia convincingly documents how working-class young Latinas in Chicago maneuver attaining sexual respectability, engaging in safe sex, and being sexually active simultaneously. Garcia’s subjects –and their negotiations about their sexual respectability—belie national and dominant hysterias about working-class Latina sexuality and evince the complexities, contradictions, and courage behind sexual subjectivity and agency.” -Frances R. Aparicio,co-editor of *Musical Migrations: Transnationalism and Cultural Hybridity in Latin/o America*

"Garcia's intersectional analysis is brilliant as she always considers how pattern in mothers' and daughters' responses and actions reflect larger cultural discourses about women, motherhood, sexuality, race, or class. She is careful not to homogenize Latinas. She also carefully deliberates the complex, and sometimes contradictory, ways in which certain responses resist stereotypes or specifically gendered/ raced performances while bolstering instantiations of patriarchy or heteronormativity." -Jenna Vinson,*Community Literary Journal*

“The best book I have read on the formation of sexual subjectivities young urban Latinas assert in an urban, working-class community. Lorena Garcia’s fine analysis of adolescent sexuality and sexual practices redirects research and policy on Latinas away from a cultural deficit perspective towards one that incorporates difference and agency.” -Denise A. Segura,co-editor of *Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: A Reader*

“[...] [I]t would make excellent reading in courses on a variety of topics, including gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, social problems, and public health.”-*Social Forces*

“A groundbreaking study. . . .Garcia asks illuminating new questions that highlight how some Latina girls negotiate sexual safety and pleasure within the context of their racialized, classed, and gendered locations.” - Lourdes Torres,author of *author of Puerto Rican Discourse: A Sociolinguistic Study of A New York Suburb*

"*Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself* is an undeniably strong book that pushes research on youth sexuality and has much to offer gender, sexuality, and race scholars."-Laura Hamilton,*American Journal of Sociology*

About the Author

Lorena Garcia is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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