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PAUL SPOONLEY and BEATRIZ MANZ  
with HAROLD EBERHART and MARIBEL LOPEZ  
Raised in the USA: An Exploratory Study of  
Latino Identity in California<sup>1</sup>



Paul Spoonley and Beatriz Manz with Harold Eberhart and Maribel Lopez  
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## Abstract

The ethnic and representational politics of the USA are being challenged and transformed by the size of the Latino population. But Latino identities are varied and reflect a range of historical and contemporary influences. The focus of this pilot study are a group of American-raised university students in California and how they see themselves in terms of self-claimed labels and identities – and the influences and implications of these identities. Is the country origin of immigrant parents an ongoing determinant of self and group identity? Or are new pan-ethnic identities more important? What has been transmitted and maintained by these American-raised in terms of, for example, Spanish language or morality? This report explores these and other issues as new generations of Latinos explore and negotiate identity in an American setting.

**Keywords:** Latino identity, American-raised Latinos, cultural/language transmission, transnationalism.

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HAROLD EBERHART and MARIBEL LOPEZ were students of Beatriz Manz at the University of California, Berkeley and were involved as researchers in the current study.

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## 1. Introduction

La raza!  
Mejicano!  
Español!  
Latino!  
Chicano!  
Or whatever I call myself,  
I look the same  
I cry  
And  
Sing the same.  
I am the masses of my people and  
I refuse to be absorbed.  
I am Joaquin.

R. Gonzales, "I am Joaquin", quoted in Gutiérrez, 2013: 20

In preliminary research in 2008 and 2009, we were intrigued at the way in which Latino culture(s) were being re-negotiated in both private and public spaces in the United States as new generations of American-raised engaged with shared public cultures – via social or other media, in schools and universities – and with what was happening in Latino families and communities all around the country. There is a considerable literature on what is commonly (and we think rather mistakenly) called “second generation Latinos”. And we wanted to explore the issues of ethnic labelling and self-identification (along with the practices and influences that underpinned such identities) with a select group of high performing Latinos, most of whom were studying at the University of California, Berkeley. It was a select group and the following material represents an exploratory study. As University of California, Berkeley students, we assumed that many, if not most, would progress to become successful and hold a range of leadership positions. Those positions, and their everyday lives as

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members of Latino communities, placed them at the centre of debates about ethnic identity. They would, we thought, be likely candidates to contribute to the evolving identities of American-raised Latinos and they would be likely brokers between Latino and other communities as well as political leaders (in the broadest sense of providing leadership in a range of settings, not simply as elected officials).

The size and growing influence of Latinos means that they are remaking ethnic politics in ways that are unprecedented.

Latinos are now writing an essential new chapter in the American narrative. Theirs is a unique story of belonging, because Latinos are at once “old” Americans, “new” Americans and “doubly American” (Suárez-Orozco and Gaytan, 2009: xxi).

This section sets out some of the conceptual and empirical questions that we explored in relation to American-raised Latinos. This immediately raised the question of what label were we to use to describe these Latinos. We wanted to ask them but we also need a label for the purposes of a report like this.

The question of how to describe the American-raised Latino is problematic in various ways. Firstly, there is the question of whether they should be given a pan-ethnic label, and one that reflects their American context. The most obvious are Chicano, Latino and Hispanic (see Arreola, 2004). Rodriguez, Sáenz and Menjivar (2008: 5-7) note that it does vary depending on where in the United States the community is, and that in Texas, for example, the term Hispanic is more widely used than elsewhere. Recently, a PBS documentary used the term “Latino Americans”. Part of the problem, as they go on to acknowledge, is the fuzziness of the Latino ethnic identity boundary. We would note that being Latino, which is the usage we adopt here, is a function of migration and the subsequent politics of ethnic identity in a destination society, both as a result of self-described ethnicity as well as operating as an imposed label (which inevitably means that the label and what it means is highly situationally defined) (see Planas, 2013; Segura and Teixeira, 2014; Taylor et al, 2012; Ana, 2004). Secondly, and as we discovered when we conducted the questionnaire that provides the empirical data for this report, many continued to attach national origin labels to their current American situation. In particular, many would indicate that they are “Mexican”, “Mexican-American” or even “Mexican-Latino” (or “Latino-Mexican”). But these hyphenated labels – involving country or national origins – were often used alongside a pan-ethnic label such as Latino (few used Hispanic or Chicano in the Californian context). The point is that homelands are used alongside a pan-ethnic label such as Latino to indicate layers of inter-Latino identity. The literature tends



to adopt labels such as Latino as a convenient pan-ethnic identity, but for those involved, it appears to be too crude and not representative of how they feel, as well as inappropriate in particular contexts. Being a Mexican in the United States might be as important, if not more so, than being Latino. And this might apply equally to American-raised Latinos. Finally, we want to express some concern about the term “second generation”. It is widely used in both the popular and academic literature, but it is misleading. For us, the American-raised Latinos are just that – products of migrant parents but equally of the environment and of the communities and country in which they grew up. They are hardly migrants. Their transnational connections and orientations are another matter but these operate and are relevant in relation to an American context, of “being here” rather than “being there”. We have tended to use the term “American-raised” in preference to “second generation”.<sup>2</sup>

We considered the question of what these American-raised Latinos call themselves as both an empirical question – they should be asked rather than have labels imposed – and a political question. The claiming of one identity or another, of one label or another, is about claiming an identity in public spheres and typically has specific connotations. In particular, it is about positioning both individuals and communities in the spectrum and spaces that constitute the politics of ethnicity in the United States, thus raising questions about the issues of recognition and inclusion, about respect and resourcing. As an exploratory study, we were keen to understand why – and when – American-raised Latinos would forego different identities or different parts of their identity as well as what influenced these different identity claims or practices. The material provided by the study raises as many questions as it answers.

The literature often stresses the “otherness” of being Latino in the United States, but again, we thought this ought to be treated as an interesting empirical question : is it necessarily true that Latinos are relegated to a “political, economic and cultural ‘otherness’ ...[by] dominant social structure[s]” (Torres-Saillant, 2009: 438)? Did those surveyed feel excluded or overlooked by American institutions and non-Latino communities? We only got a partial answer to this question and it is one that deserves to be explored further.

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2 For simplicity, we use the term “American-raised Latinos” to encompass those born in the USA as well as those born in another country but raised in the USA. We checked to make sure that the majority of their up-bringing, including their schooling, was carried out in the United States. In essence, the 1.5 generation was defined by the fact that they spent the bulk of their primary schooling and all of their secondary schooling in the United States.

To sum up, we are keen to approach the question of what label to use as an empirical question. Our preference as a second order concept that is needed for this report is to adopt the label of “American-raised Latinos”<sup>3</sup>. We hereby indicate that these individuals are not migrants; they are products of an American context and an engagement with key institutions such as the education system, and they are actively exploring what this means in terms of identity in a way that embodies some significant differences when it comes to immigrant parents on one hand or non-Latino communities on the other.

This brings us to our next broad survey question: what is transmitted from the migrant generation to those born and raised in the United States (intergenerational transmission, Moschion and Tabasso, 2013)? What persists? What is rejected? What is transformed? In part, we used the available literature to identify possible areas of transmission or difference, but we also left it open for respondents to add their own suggestions on these matters.

Different approaches to questions of morality was one area that was particularly interesting, especially in relation to the differences between immigrant parents and American-raised children in religious values but also with regard to issues such as homosexuality and dating. This was prompted in part by some of the students who were involved in the early development of the questionnaire but also from the literature. Smith (2006: 171) talks about the “muchachas de la casa” (“inside the house girls”) and Carola Suárez-Orozco (see Smith, 2006: 170), “las encerradas” (the shut-ins) to refer to the way in which parents sought to “protect” teenagers, especially females, from the “dangers” of American society, however that was manifested. They discuss the nature of the lock-down after school that limits the possibilities for these teenagers and tries to ensure that traditional values are preserved. This, Smith (2006: 123) goes on to point out, is part of the negotiation of gender. So, in no particular order, we wanted to know whether there was a correspondence between parental religious affiliation and practice, the preservation of certain moral values and practices – especially in relation to American-raised Latino females – and issues such as homosexuality and dating. Related to this is the question of relations between migrant parents and American-raised children. What elements, if any, are valued in an American setting and what might be the cause of embarrassment (intergenerational dissonance/dissonance; Zhou, 1997)? Here, we return to some of the issues

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3 Elsewhere, we have used the phrase “American-born” (see Spoonley et al., 2014) but as a reviewer pointed out, this excludes 1.5 Latinos. We have emphasized the fact that we studied the impacts of an American context on identity.

such as maturation, sexually and in terms of an adult identity and responsibility. We note Wessendorf's (2013: 42) comments and wonder whether they apply equally to our sample:

My own research has confirmed that disagreements between parents and children mainly revolved around issues of control in the realm of gender relations, sexual orientation, obligations towards kin and ideas of care and responsibilities within the family

Language was a second broad area of transmission and cultural maintenance, and was an important factor in identity. We have explored the degree to which Spanish as a language has been maintained between the migrant and the American-raised generations, and what this means, both for Latino identity and levels of competency. As Suárez-Orozco and Gaytan (2009: xviii) note, Spanish as a language “continues to be a dominant identity marker for millions of Latinos”. Was this true for the American-raised – and what did they see as being important in terms of language transmission and as an identity marker for the next generation, the children of the American-raised Latinos?

Thirdly, we were interested in the nature of the connections with a parental homeland and what this means for defining the American-raised Latino and a sense of place. Wessendorf (2013: 3) uses a distinction from Vickermann that distinguishes between “transnational and a “transnational consciousness”, or an awareness of ties with the parent's homeland without concrete transnational engagement”. But is this true? To what extent are the American-raised Latinos engaged, or otherwise, with these homelands? And what does such engagement – or non-engagement – mean, and is there evidence of transnational consciousness?

Throughout the study, a key question (and an assumption that we brought to the research) was the importance of agency. There are, of course, structural and other constraints that influence the options available to individuals or communities, especially when there is evidence of the socio-economic and social marginalisation of Latino communities. But we want to gain a picture of what might be called the “politics of resistance” or perhaps less grandly, the nature of renegotiation for this cohort of Latinos. How did they exercise agency of whatever sort – and what were the implications for an understanding of what it meant to be an American-raised Latino?

Ultimately, we are interested in describing the third spaces that are emerging for the American-raised Latino as part of “cultural and linguistic mixing” (Hall, 2010:

28)<sup>4</sup>. They will, in many circumstances, continue to express and practice elements of cultural and social life that derive from their migrant parents but they will also reflect those cultural elements that they have absorbed/borrowed from American culture, especially popular culture. They are creating new forms of identity and cultural practices that, elsewhere in the literature, are often labeled as hybrid (see Mabardi, 2010). We prefer the idea of third spaces; they have not entirely or completely abandoned the cultural elements and practices of their migrant parents, nor do they fully adopt those of America.<sup>5</sup> But in addition to what they borrow and reproduce from either their migrant background or their US location, they are also adapting and innovating in terms of how they see themselves and what they do as Latinos. As Rambaut and Portes (see Wessendorf, 2013: 4) note, these new generations do not “simply continue their parents’ culture and traditions but create new forms of Mexican-ness or Haiti-ness”. Surely, we would ask, they also create new forms of “American-ness” or perhaps more accurately, “Latino-American-ness”.

But as we discuss the answers that we receive from our survey, we would not want to essentialise or homogenise Latino identity/ies either. As the material here signals, there is considerable variation in relation to being a Latino in a relatively defined location such as San Francisco, or in the Bay Area (in relation to those interviewed). Canclini (see Mabardi, 2010: 252) argues that the Latino hybrid is a product of social systems, which tend to give it a “determinacy” and which “regulate the fragmentation”. We would agree with this to some extent; third space Latinos do not exercise agency in some free form without the constraints of structure and the influence of institutions of which they are necessarily a part, although we are interested in how agency is exercised and what systems and institutions remain influential in this negotiation of a third space. But we also need to acknowledge that while Latinos are “reconstituting borders/boundaries” (Rocco, 1998: 367), as well as the content within those borders/boundaries, the result is not static or unidimensional. The borders/boundaries are often situationally fluid and determined, especially in those “sites where reality and relations are constructed and lived” (Rocco, 1998: 373). As Torres-Saillant (2009: 439) notes:

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4 Hall (see Vertovec, 2010: 268) refers to “new ethnicities” to signal the restated or reconfigured identities in a destination setting. The fact that these are “new” (i.e. different to those ethnic identities of their parents), we would accept, but the extent to which they formed and shared [ethnic] identities with their own cultural content remains an empirical question for us, one that prompted this research.

5 We would want to problematise what “American culture” might mean quite apart from what it is in the everyday context of particular communities.

...the historical, contingent nature of the presumed Latino unity seeks to suggest that the need for unitary political practices does not translate automatically or unproblematically into ontological sameness.

We therefore anticipate that identities and ethnic label claiming will vary significantly, so that the label “Latino” is used quite differently, depending on the context and time, even amongst the group to which it is applied (and self-used). We would acknowledge the limits of surveying a group at a particular point in their life, even if this point is a particularly (and potentially) influential one that will change depending on life stage and circumstances. We want to emphasize the influence of life stage/course in identity negotiations and claiming. In this sense, the material is quite specific to a particular life stage. Further, we are interested in how third space cultures are emerging as key influences to produce new cultural practices and identities. In summary, this research therefore represents a pilot study as a precursor to further investigation on the evolving identity(ies) of American-raised Latinos. It focuses on:

- (i) Given the select and modest nature of the sample, how do these young adults self-identify in terms of ethnicity – and what does this mean in terms of ethnic identity claims in a US context?
- (ii) Associated with this, is the issue of whether there is an evolving pan-ethnicity, as American-raised Latinos see “social economic or cultural advantage[s] thereby augmenting their numeric power and influences around the issues that bring them together” (Gutiérrez, 2013: 2). Gutiérrez discusses the emergence, in the 1970s, of Latino pan-ethnicity as a result of greater levels of interaction among different national groups but also as a result of a “heightened sense of oppositional consciousness” (Gutiérrez, 2013: 2). Is a label like “Latino” used in this way – or does it reflect a range of ethnic political and lifestyle influences?
- (iii) What are the components and influences of particular identity and label claims in terms of this select group of American-raised Latinos?

## 2. Methodology

Discussion – and some initial questioning of students – during classes at the University of California, Berkeley, on Latino identities in 2008 and 2009 provoked some questions for us about how Latino identities, both personal and public, were evolving amongst those born or raised in the United States, especially in such a Latino-

dominant state as California. This provided an initial set of research questions. This was followed up by a search of the literature.

The questionnaire is attached as an appendix to this report. As will be readily apparent, there were distinct elements to the questions:

- Demographic material (age, where born, education, including degree at UC Berkeley)
- Parental birthplace and their arrival in the United States and their ethnic identity
- Interests and identity, especially how the respondents saw their own identity and whether this was situationally dependent, and pride in being America
- Media interests (type of music or TV programme liked)
- Involvement in Latino organisations
- Transnational and homeland linkages
- Agreement/disagreement with parents
- Language use and competency

The questions include the opportunity for both open-ended and limited option responses and, as is often the case, the open-ended responses provided extremely interesting and varied material. Perhaps one of the most significant outcomes is how much variability there is in terms of the language and orientations of those interviewed. It is a timely reminder that while as researchers, we would like to generalise and to draw firm conclusions, there is often a spectrum of experiences and views that makes analysis and the ability to draw hard and generalizable conclusions difficult. Moreover, a sense of belonging and how it is practiced can "...change during the life-course, and public representations of belonging have been shown to be particularly important during adolescence and young adulthood" (Wessendorf, 2013: 11). It is that sense of belonging and the identity of young adults that we are most interested in here, but we also accept the warning that what we will describe is not static and might well change significantly during different life stages.

The students were recruited from amongst those who identified as Latino, mostly from the campus of the University of California Berkeley in 2010 and 2011.<sup>6</sup>

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6 Before any work was undertaken, ethical approval was required from the University of California, Berkeley. It was an extremely rigorous process that sought to ensure that the highest standards of research were preserved on behalf of the University of California system and that the interests of those participating were protected. The detail required was frustrating at times but we are still pleased to have been given approval for what follows.



The various Latino organisations on the University of California campus were approached for help in recruiting participants. There were leaflets distributed around the university and personal contacts were also used in a snowball technique to attract respondents. Those participating were given the assurance of anonymity and the number of 100 was chosen as a sample target. In the end, 106 participated. These recruitment techniques, especially in terms of approaching those who were part of campus and community Latino organisations, meant that those who were subsequently interviewed had already demonstrated a developed sense of Latino identity.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. The Background of Respondents and Their Immigrant Parents

The survey concerns the American-raised but they are influenced and defined by their immigrant parents. This initial section describes the background of both in order to provide a context.

The majority of parents, both mother and father, were Mexican-born, as you might expect given the overall demographics of the Californian Latino population. In the case of mothers, 79 per cent were born in Mexico with El Salvador (10 per cent) and Guatemala (2.8 per cent) providing the second and third places of birth. For fathers, the figures were Mexico (78 per cent) and El Salvador (9.4 per cent) with the remainder being a mix of other Central American countries. The parents had arrived in the decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s – 67.9 per cent for mothers and 74 per cent for fathers. What was surprising were the percentages of parents who had arrived in the 1990s – 11 and 12 per cent respectively for mothers and fathers in comparison to the most likely decade of arrival, the 1980s (45 per cent and 35 per cent, again respectively). The country/regional origins of families are influential given the interest in how this sample self-identifies (see next section on ethnic identity) and the practices and politics that underpin this self-labelling. As the next section demonstrates, the largest group used country or national origin labels. As Ana (2004) notes:

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<sup>7</sup> The material was entered on to SurveyMonkey and then subsequently transferred to SPSSx by Deena Seesaegnom who was a researcher on the Integration of Immigrants Programme at Massey University. She ran frequency tables and cross-tabs to provide us with the material in this report.

“... most Latino families are first and foremost Mexican-American or Chicano families... Family is the first socializing unit, where we experience and absorb the first facets of our identity: culture, language and heritage. So while outsiders may call our families Latino as a shorthand for unspecified ethnicity or nationality, for the greater majority of the millions of us, our families are ethnic families, above all else”.

Family is critical in social capital formation (Zhou, 1997: 997), and has direct consequences for identity formation. The significance of this becomes apparent in the next section.

The respondents were asked about their birthplace. We were keen to talk to American-born but did not necessarily want to exclude those who constituted a 1.5 generation – those born elsewhere, but who had spent most of their life in the United States, including their formative years at school. Most (80.2 per cent) were born in the United States (nearly all in California), while 17 per cent had been born in Mexico and another 2.8 per cent in other Central American countries. We wanted to make sure that they had grown up in the United States and so two further questions were asked: in which country did you grow up and where in the United States? The first question was not clearly answered; 59 per cent said they grew up in the United States but another 37 per cent indicated that the question was “not applicable”. We are not sure why this response category was so high. Was it because they took it as given that they were raised in the United States? We simply do not know. This then affected the subsequent questions about the nature of the community in which they were raised. Bearing in mind that between 42 and 47 per cent indicated that subsequent questions were not applicable, most indicated that they had grown up in urban/suburban areas of the United States (a smaller group of about 10 per cent in rural areas) while about 21 per cent identified the area as a medium socio-economic area and more than a third (35 per cent) in a lower socio-economic area. These must be taken as being broadly indicative rather than definitive given the level of “non-applicable” responses.

What was interesting were the open-ended question comments from the students. There was a significant distinction offered in terms of where they had grown up (suburban/middle class versus lower socio-economic urban areas). In relation to the latter group, there was a recognition, that as recent immigrants with few options in terms of employment and housing, the result was a childhood that meant that the respondents and their families faced challenges, as the following quotations indicate:



*I grew up in I...[name of area] high crime rate [and] mostly Latinos and Blacks. Pretty below standard schools*

*There were a lot of Latinos and Mexicans and it was very gang infested*

*Before I lived in V....I lived in south San Francisco...and it was mostly Asian, white and Latinos. I could count the number of Blacks on one hand. It was completely different when I moved to V...It was shocking...it did seem more [of a ] ghetto. The population of Latinos was greater and there was a lot of Black people too.*

*Predominantly Latino. Lots of gangs and drugs in a low income community.*

Of those who responded to this question with additional comments, 78 commented on the nature of the community that they grew up in and almost all tended to comment on the nature of the schools (specifically the high schools) in their area, including those that they went to. Of these 78, over 80 per cent lived in communities that were dominated by Latinos, or by Latinos and Afro-Americans, and most went to schools that had significant numbers of Latinos. In many cases, they were the majority. This might be expected amongst the first generation to be born or raised in the United States. Their parents were establishing themselves in the country and would have limited housing options. Most commented on both the ethnicity of their neighbours and communities, but also on the fact that it was relatively impoverished (the most common descriptors were “poor area”, “working class”, and “low income”). What was interesting, was that nearly the only label used here (in relation to the ethnic group that dominated in a residential area or school), despite how individual respondents described themselves (see below) was “Latino”. Sometimes this was used alongside “Mexican” (see second quotation above). The common experience for nearly all of those who chose to comment on where they grew up was the fact that they were brought up in communities that had significant numbers of Latinos, if not the majority.

Most of the additional comments continue in this vein; of being raised in high density Latino communities, often in close association with Afro-Americans, in lower middle class or working class neighbourhoods. Nearly all commented on the violence, along with the presence of gangs and drugs. There was recognition of the challenges and the dangers, but equally, reference to supportive families, both intimate and extended, especially around the importance of doing well educationally (as might be expected from students at an elite university such as University of California, Berkeley). Some families had made an explicit decision to move area to make sure that educational success was enhanced.

*[My] parents wanted a better education so they moved into a more elite, white neighbourhood, but then could not afford it...so [we] ended up in a poor white area.*

*Went to a high school that was predominantly white. Moved to H....where there were more Latinos but [did not choose] to go to the two high schools that were predominantly Latino.*

In terms of background, we were also interested in the educational background of parents. This is a significant issue in terms of engagement with an American educational system, which in turn impacts on educational outcomes for the American-raised (Gozdziak, 2014). As Gozdzia (2014) goes on to point out, low educational outcomes of immigrant parents is often combined with legal vulnerability and immigrant status. Perhaps it should not be surprising that there were relatively high “non-applicable” responses here, indicating that the respondents either did not know or were not prepared to respond. This is reinforced in the open-ended questions when some simply said they did not know the details of their parent’s education. Sometimes, this was an outright “I do not know” or we would get an answer like “*don’t know [education] but father was a cook*”. In other cases, it was a bit more complicated.

*Not sure about [my mother]but my grandmother moved to the city in [Central American country] so that my mother could go to school – she is literate – and she got a certificate of some sort but educational level is low compared to US standards.*

But for both mothers and fathers, more than a quarter indicated that their parents did not have any educational qualifications and a little under a fifth (18.9 per cent for both mothers and fathers) had the equivalent of a high school diploma. A small but significant proportion of mothers had a degree (6.6 per cent), rather higher than the 3.7 per cent of fathers who either had an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. The majority of respondents were enrolled for a Bachelor’s degree (95.3 per cent) with just three students enrolled for a Masters or a PhD. Nevertheless, there is evidence of significant educational (if not social) mobility compared to parental educational background and credentials for this group of American-raised Latinos. They are upwardly mobile and given the lifelong advantages of tertiary qualifications, for the majority, there will be a range of enhanced (compared to their parents) life chance benefits.

However, the respondents were asked, in an open-ended question, about their parent’s socio-economic background and the degree to which it had changed. This question provided a sense of the background of the parents and their employment. If the descriptions about the communities they grew up in elicited a sentence or two, often

the question about their parents provided rather more (in some cases quite detailed biographies). It obviously provoked some concern (if not emotion) for the situation faced by their parents and for the sacrifices often made on behalf of their children, our respondents. In the majority of cases, the stories are of a working class origin, both in terms of communities in which they lived but also the jobs which the parents had, and for some, this had not changed.

*In the case of my father, things have not changed much. He has always done undocumented work, lots of manual labour and in the fields earlier. Now he does construction.*

*My parents are still working class...their socio-economic position has not changed much but now that my brothers and I are adults...we help them with their bills and they no longer have to support us.*

Sometimes, the response was terse and not very positive.

*Still struggle financially*

*They have been low socio-economically since arrival.*

*No, they are both working class.*

There is another story however, of upward mobility and a proud claiming of middle class status and a recognition of parental success. This echoes the findings of other research, where the locally-born "...are sympathetic to their parents' lives and the sacrifices that came with migration" (Wessendorf, 2013: 44). But there was also an important gender consideration. Migrant mothers, in many of the interviews, were important in terms of providing for children or setting ambitions about economic viability and educational success. There was sense of *la pionera*, "the immigrant woman autonomously making her way in a man's world" (Smith, 2006: 125).

*Three phases for mom. She was the youngest of 12 and grew up on a farm in...[country in Central America]. When she came to the US, she moved in with an older sister and then worked her way up. Today [she] would be considered middle class.*

*[They]...worked a lot and very hard, and they would now be considered middle class. They make what a college graduate would make.*

*When they arrived, they were undocumented and worked in fast food, janitorial and factory jobs. They lived in a small apartment. Now they are citizens and have permanent residence, have managerial positions and own homes.*

The majority of respondents had been born in the late 1980s (69 per cent had been born between 1985 and 1989) with a smaller, but still significant group (20 per cent)

born in the period 1990-1994. The next biggest group (6.6 per cent) had been born in the early 1980s. Nearly all were then in the twenties when we interviewed them.

#### 4. Ethnic Identification

A key element in this research is to explore the extent and nature of pan-ethnicity as opposed to more defined categories of Latino-ness, specifically how significant are origin countries/regions as an ongoing identifier for American-raised Latinos in contrast to pan-ethnic claims on an American setting. As Gutiérrez (2013: 32) notes:

How operative and decisive is Latino identity in the lives of people who claim it or are denominated by it?

Pew Research Centre (Taylor et al., 2012) survey material on Latinos indicates a spectrum of self-labelling/identification with about half (51 per cent) identifying with a familial country or place of origin, a quarter (24 per cent) as “Latino” or “Hispanic” and 21 per cent as American. Their data indicates that the latter proportion increase to 40 per cent for those born in the USA (Taylor et al., 2012). Was this true for this sample?

Some of the most interesting material from the survey was provided by questions about ethnic and national identification. We asked this of the respondents but we also asked them to indicate how their parents identified their ethnicity. It needs to be borne in mind that we have asked the children how their parents would respond, not the parents themselves. There might be some slippage as the answers indicate the children’s understanding. Nevertheless, there are some interesting comparison points and a spectrum of responses as those answering the questionnaire both self-claim certain identities and labels and they also respond to how they are classified by others, both directly in intimate encounters and as part of public discussion and the way ethnicity is officially defined in the United States.

When it came to parental ethnic identity, the respondents were most likely to answer with a national origin identity, which then translated into an ethnic identity in the United States. For example, 59.4 per cent identified their mother as “Mexican” while the figure for their father was 66 per cent (bearing in mind that the equivalent figures for birthplace were 79 per cent and 78 per cent). Those indicating parental ethnicity as being Salvadorian were 8.5 and 7.5 per cent (again, the actual birthplaces

were 10.4 per cent and 9.4 per cent). There was limited use of the terms Latino/Hispanic/Hispanic American when the question of parental ethnicity was asked. The most popular label was actually the hyphenated “Hispanic-American” (6.6 per cent and 3.8 per cent) with “Hispanic/Latino” used in 4.7 per cent of the cases for both mother and father. The overall conclusion is that parental ethnicity is largely (for this sample) defined by birthplace, and this birthplace becomes an ethnic identity in the US context.

In terms of the respondents own ethnic identity label, there was a significant degree of variance. The most popular ethnic label was still one that included national origin (“Mexican”, 24.5 per cent with another 22.6 per cent saying “Mexican-American”), but the use of “Latino” (18.9 per cent) and “Chicana” (14 per cent) now gained in popularity. Only 1.9 per cent said “American” although another 2.8 per cent declined to answer this question<sup>8</sup>. Two things are apparent from these answers. One is that parental birthplace becomes an ethnic category for parents (about two-thirds of the cases) and this remains an important label for almost half of those (American-raised) responding to the same question. But we also see the growth in the use of Latino/Hispanic/Chicana labels, indicating a more generic or pan ethnic identity. These quotations indicate something of the dynamics of self-claimed ethnicity.

*I rarely say I am American and for the most part, I say I am Mexican. My parents are Mexican.*

*I feel American but will always be tied to Mexico because my parents were born there. And it is how Americans categorise me.*

Were these identities important for respondents? The answer is unequivocal in most cases. Two-thirds said it was “very important” and another 15 per cent said it was “somewhat important”. Another 9 per cent said it varied, indicating that ethnic labeling was situationally dependent and varied from circumstance to circumstance. It might be important in some contexts; less so, or not all in other contexts. But a total of 81 per cent saw these identities as important in terms of who they are. These responses were emphasised upon by the material from the open-ended answers (including the material in the next section).

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8 This both reflects survey material from the Pew Research Center and differs from it. For those answering the Pew Research Center question: “What Term Do You Use Most Often To Describe Yourself”, 43 per cent of what they term second generation used a country of origin which is broadly similar. But only 18 per cent said Hispanic/Latino while 35 per cent said “American” (Taylor et al., 2012).

We also asked about the situations that encouraged one form of ethnic/national identification as opposed to another. One situation that stood out was when Latino cultures/identities were attacked in some way, which reinforces the point made by Gutiérrez (2013) above. Then, respondents felt as though they were either being excluded or felt compelled to be more assertive about their identity as a statement of who they were.

*When racist things come up, I don't feel particularly American. I assume I am [personally] being attacked.*

A second factor was the nature of their background and their association in various forms with other Latinos. The engagement with Latino communities encouraged a sense of Latino-ness, in contrast to their American-ness.

*Because of the way I was raised. My older relatives referred to everyone as Mexican. It was not until later that I began to think of myself as American.*

*My parents are Mexican and my ideas and background are who make me.*

*I have strong ties to my Mexican side and I feel more tied to that side. I just live here.*

*I am first generation here and I have a lot of family still in Mexico and when I go there, I am centred on the culture and traditions. Here we do things [that reflect our Mexican-ness] but not on the same scale.*

This might depend on context though, so that an ethnic identity is more important on some occasions, while in others being an American was the pre-eminent identity.

*I consider myself a Peruvian American because I share many cultural aspects with Peruvians, festivals and so on. But I have an American sense of liberal values when it comes to the laws or the constitution.*

*It depends on whether I am with friends and family [who are Latino]. My ethnic background is more salient depending on where I am and who I am with. It is important with family but I am more American when I am at the workplace.*

*I boast I am a full Latina born here, except when I am out of the country. If I am in Mexico or Costa Rica, I hide the fact that I am from the US. I only speak Spanish and try not to offend those who do not like the US. I completely understand why that is.*

*I consider myself more American when I am around family members who were not born in the US. But I consider myself Mexican when I am with everyone else.*



As a response to other questions, there are those who feel that being American is the more important factor in who they are.

*I am embedded in this country so when I talk about Obama, I talk about “our president” and the United States is mine ...”the English came to our country”.*

*I am more aware of my American identity just because of school (learning the history, speaking the language).*

Sport was one area where being American or identifying with another country was important as the following quotes illustrate.

*If I am at a Dodgers game and they are playing the national anthem, I feel very patriotic. Soccer is when I feel particularly Mexican.*

The material from this section confirms the degree to which ethnic affiliation is often context dependent. Some aspects of being in the United States – or being elsewhere – promote very strong feelings of belonging and pride, including how others feel and act, being part of an education system that stresses the importance of being American or taking part in public activities such as sports. Situations tend to reinforce a sense of being part of one community or another, especially for those Latinos for whom their background (both in the United States but also in terms of their parents and where they came from) reinforces and contributes to a sense of being part of a particular ethnic community – in contrast to being American. But to return to one of our core questions, how “operative and decisive” (Gutiérrez, 2013: 32) is pan-ethnic identification compared to either more specific origin-identities (country/region specific) or to an American identity? In this select group, the origin identity was the most important self-claimed label even though those participating were American-raised. About a third used pan-ethnic labels (Latino and Chicana) but very few self-identified as “American”. And these origin country/region labels were described as “very important” which indicates an identity that remains important for those who are a generation on from their immigrant parents – and who are still reluctant to commit to pan-ethnic identity politics. As Gutiérrez (2013) points out, language politics (being a Spanish speaker) helps unify Latinos, as do the experiences of being marginalized and part of an underclass. All of these elements were important to those interviewed here – working class backgrounds and experience, a commitment to Spanish language competence and use, a sense of not being accepted by an American mainstream but these common experiences and politics did not displace origin identities and encourage more pan-ethnicity, specifically in terms of self-described

identity. Being of Mexican origin was more important than the commonalities of being Latino.

## 5. Citizenship and National Identity

Given that most of the respondents had been born in the United States, it is not surprising that the bulk (70.8 per cent) were American citizens by birth with another 2.8 per cent who had become US citizens by naturalization. Another group enjoyed both American citizenship and the citizenship of another country (7.5 per cent), so that a total of 81.4 per cent were American citizens. But there was another rather different group – the 17 respondents (16 per cent) who were not US citizens. These might have chosen not to take out American citizenship – or they were not eligible as undocumented immigrants or the children of undocumented immigrants (see Voss and Bloemraad, 2011).

We were interested in how the respondents felt about their ethnic and national identities. We asked whether they were “proud” of their reported ethnic or national identity (bearing in mind that some answered the ethnic question by indicating that there were “American”), and 89.6 per cent said they were proud. But we also asked whether they were proud to be American to see how the answers compared with the responses concerning ethnic identity. Just over half (50.9 per cent) said they were “proud to be an American” but 13 per cent said “no” and another 22.6 per cent said they were either “indifferent” or that it only mattered (i.e. they felt proud) “sometimes”. This suggests both a degree of ambivalence and a spectrum of “Americanness” in terms of loyalty and nationality. We asked a further question that tried to get respondents to put a value on their pride in being American (in a rating system from 1 to 10). Sixty-two respondents rated what this meant for them, and the ratings tended to be grouped in terms of the following ascribed values: 5 (11.3 per cent), 6 (8.4 per cent), 7 (12.3 per cent) 8 (11.3 per cent) and 9 (6.6 per cent) with 3.8 per cent providing a 10 out of 10 in terms of being proud of being an American. This indicates that those who opted for mid-range to high evaluations (7 to 10) represented about one in five respondents (21.7 per cent). An equally significant group are those who rate their ethnic identity as more important.

The results indicate that an ethnic affiliation was their prior and more important identity for many, and that about half ranked their current national identity (being



American) as being on par with their ethnic identity. For almost thirty per cent, ethnic identity trumped national (American) identity.

*I always think of myself as Mexican, never American. This is where my life is but I do not believe in American ideals, so I am very nationalistic and very proud of being Mexican.*

*I consider myself Mexican-American. I tell people I am Mexican. There is no doubt that I am American because I am born here.*

*I think of myself as Mexican. If I were to travel to a different country, I might say I am American. But here I am Mexican.*

*I feel Americanised but I don't feel American.*

*Here in the United States, being Latino is part of being American. It does not feel as though there is a concrete separation. But when people make fun of your accent, you should not be ashamed of it because diversity is part of being American.*

*I am Mexican raised in America.*

*I am American because I am privileged through my citizenship but I do not feel American in relation to the narrative of a white America.*

For some, the question of labeling is very confusing. Here is one of the longer answers.

*I never describe myself as American, partly because in Spanish, the white people are Americanos. This description leaves me out. So I tend to identify as Hispanic for the most part. But Mom corrected her and emphasized that I am Hispanic-American so I began to describe myself as Hispanic-American. My difficult is that most of the time when I was growing up, I was surrounded my Hispanics and I did not understand how Hispanics could be a minority. But when I came to Berkeley I began to understand. But when I travel outside the country, outsiders see me as white. But when I travelled to Spain with a friend, the locals did not think of her as American because she [the friend] was not white. It is confusing.*

Inter-cultural situations and encounters encourage a different sense of self and identity association/claiming and provide a political space/place “to speak from”, (Wulfhorst, 2014: 285). There is a strategic construction of self and community.

One particular objection to labels such as “American” was that it tended to claim the whole of the Americas, and there were a number of respondents who wanted to dispute the way in which “America” was claimed by those in the United States.

*I hate the term “American” because it is wrong. Everyone from Canada to the tip of Chile is American, not just US citizens.*

*I do not like the term “American” because it excludes all the other countries of the continent.*

These answers indicate that complex identity questions and orientations are in play. Once the answers to the previous questions are included, it is obvious that ethnicity is often defined for both parents and the American-raised, by the origin country of the parents, but that with the American-raised there is a growing tendency to use pan-ethnic and American-specific labels, especially Latino. In terms of whether the respondents see themselves as more or less American, and more or less Latino, the latter holds a very powerful place in the repertoire of self-identity, and the identity of fellow Latinos. There are some specific and powerfully expressed concerns about whether being American allows for Latino identity (and for some, that was a reason why they chose to prioritise their Latino or origin country identity), while others saw their background and current identity as defined by the Latino-ness. It remains a significant way of identifying who they are, even if this is alongside their status as an American. For them, it was a hyphenated identity but one in which the order was Latino followed by their American-ness. What was the extent of their connections with their parental homelands?

## 6. Transnationalism Among American-Raised

An interesting dimension of those born or raised in the United States is the degree to which they see themselves as connected to an ancestral (parental) homeland and the nature of their links with that homeland – especially given the tendency of many to use origin nationality as an ethnic identifier.

We asked whether they travelled to a parental homeland and how many trips this entailed. A little over a fifth (21.7 per cent) had never been but the remainder had, with 36.8 per cent travelling 1 to 5 times, 14 per cent having travelled there 6 to 10 times, 6.6 per cent having been 11-19 times, and 15 per cent having been more than 20 times. These are high levels of engagement with various Central (and sometimes South) American homelands. Further, 15 per cent had been to live in that homeland for six months or more, thereby experiencing a homeland culture and an intimate connection with those communities and family members who continue to live in an origin country. But that said, two-thirds (67 per cent) said that the United States felt like “home” to them and only 3.8 per cent said that their parent’s country of origin felt like “home”. What was interesting was another group (17 per cent), who responded that they felt “equally at home” in both countries, and 5.7 per cent who

did not feel at home in either. Thus, the bulk are Americans in terms of where they feel most “at home” (despite, or in contrast to some of the comments about their ethnic identification), but the remainder are split between a divided loyalty (easily the largest group) followed by those who either do not feel at home in either or who feel at home in the parental country of origin. But there was also confirmation of the split between being Latino and being American.

*I do not consider myself American. I do not feel that the term “American” applies to me and my ethnic identity, or my experiences here. I use the term Chicano and Mexican. But I definitely do not identify as American.*

*Just a Mexican living in an American society.*

This inevitably tends to provide a degree of ambivalence in terms of personal identification.

*I am not fully accepted in America because I am brown but I am not accepted in Mexico either because I was born in America. I am not American or Mexican.*

*I identify as a mixture. I usually say I am half Mexican, half Salvadorian and born in the US.*

If these answers are compared with some of those given to questions about pride in being American and ethnic identity, then there is a clear connection with an origin country (trips to that country), and a sense that while being proud of ethnic identity is not necessarily equaled by pride in being an American, most accept that the United States is where they are most likely to feel at home. Still, there remains a group – about one in six – who obviously feel as though they are transnational citizens with divided loyalties. For some, it is a degree of ambivalence while for others, they see benefits of maintaining divided connections and loyalties. What we did not get a sense of from most participants, was what Wessendorf (2013: 59) has referred to as an “authenticity dilemma”, or a sense of alienation on visits to a parental homeland and a skepticism about certain cultural values or practices. There were important exceptions.

*We can't really relate to people like our parents who grew up in Mexico. When we were there, we stood out and here we are not fully American. We are kind of between both worlds.*

*When I go to Mexico and see how different I am from them. But here, it is the other way round.*

*Americans see you as Mexican and Mexicans think of you as American. I feel that being "American" means being white so I tend to see myself as Mexican.*

*I consider myself American, especially since I lived in Mexico for a year and realized that I am not a true Mexican.*

## 7. Parental Culture and Relationships

One of the key factors in terms of cultural reproduction and pride is the role of parents and their influence in terms of intergenerational transmission. For us the question was, how did these American-raised view their parent's culture, both in terms of maintaining an ethnic identity but also in relation to public behavior and values more generally in an American context. This speaks to the generational consonance/dissonance debates (see Zhou, 1997), and whether there is a degree of consonance between immigrant parents and their children in terms of acculturation to an American setting (in this case), or the lack of acculturation. Conversely, "generational dissonance occurs when children neither correspond to levels of parental acculturation nor reversal", and thereby "intensified parent-child conflicts" (Zhou, 1997: 995). We began by asking about the circumstances of their family background, specifically the nature of the household/family unit before then proceeding to ask about those areas of pride and transmission as well as any matters that might be the cause of embarrassment. What sort of issues were a source of pride or embarrassment? Or did it depend on the situation and perhaps the age of the respondents? The answers did not necessarily speak directly to acculturation but they did signal areas of consonance or dissonance. The open-ended question on this issue elicited a lot of information from respondents.

We began by asking about the nature of the household unit when they were growing up. The closed responses (which were given as "parents and siblings only", "parents siblings and grandparents" or "grandparents only") were not particularly helpful with a large number (43 per cent) not answering the question and of those who did, most (34 per cent) grew up in what appears to be a nuclear household of parents plus siblings. (The percentages for the other major response categories were 12.3 per cent for those who had "parents, siblings and grandparents" and 2.8 per cent for "grandparents only"). But as with a number of other questions, the open-ended

responses tended to indicate a much more complex set of circumstances. For example, there were often temporary members of the household, typically members of the extended family.

*Six kids [in our household] so 8 people with my parents. Sometimes immigrants would come and stay with the family. On one occasion, an uncle came and stayed for 3 months and then went back to Mexico; and aunt did the same thing as did grandparents. So there was not one single configuration.*

*There was one bedroom for myself, my mother and my sister and another for a female cousin, her husband and son. Throughout our time, family members would come from [Central American country] and would stay- uncles, cousins etc.*

Or the households were temporary in the sense that the respondent would move between different households, depending on what was happening in the home or in relation to schooling and/or work (of the parents).

*I lived between my grandparents and parents homes while I grew up.*

In other cases, it was family circumstances that dictated who was in the household or which household the respondent lived in.

*My mother had me at 16 and I never met my father, so we lived with my grandparents.*

These comments indicate that the household and family background of the respondents was a lot more complex than the closed answer responses indicated, with a range of influences and participants, including those from an extended family and those who would come at regular intervals from a homeland, thereby reinforcing transnational links and influences. What we were then interested in, was the way in which various issues were understood and dealt with in these family contexts, both in the private spheres of the family unit but also when the family interacted with public institutions (the education system is an obvious one) and the dynamics of these situations. We deliberately (and after much discussion) asked for those situations or issues that were a matter of pride or embarrassment for the respondents. This produced a lot of detailed material in the open ended comments, much more than we can deal with here. We have tried to pick common themes or illustrative examples.

We began by asking the respondents about their parent's position on social and moral issues and we included examples such as homosexuality, dating or religion. Many of the respondents did discuss these issues in particular (given that we had

prompted them), but we did not anticipate the way in which these might be described, nor the additional elements that were often included.

### a) *Religion*

This issue produced a spectrum of responses, ranging from outright disagreement between the respondents and their parents (dissonance), through to qualified agreement (a degree of consonance) to a shared view of the importance of religion.

*I consider myself Catholic but I am not very active. I don't know the rules or the prayers. As we got older and as our family moved, we stopped going to church. I still believe in God and in las virgenes.*

*Being within the Mexican culture, I grew up being Catholic. My parents are not big in practicing it and going to church was a social gathering rather than part of religious practice. I do not believe in organized religion or having to go to a certain place to pray.*

One respondent noted (in answer to the question about religion):

*El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz*

The most common response was to say that compared to their parents (who were often described as “conservative” on religious matters), they (the respondents) were liberal, both in terms of how they practiced their religious faith, but also in relation to whether they believed or practiced at all.

In a separate question, the respondents were asked about their religious affiliation. Of the 46 who indicated that they had a religious affiliation, all but four said they were Catholics. One indicated that they were Baptist and the others simply said Christian. However, some indicated that the Catholicism that they practiced was more liberal than their parents, it was often nominal and only special events involved religious symbolism or participation. Most indicated that they were the same religious affiliation (i.e. Catholic) as their parents.

### b) *Homosexuality*

This was often related to other issues such as marriage and morality. For example:

*I'm okay if people are homosexual but I do not believe in marriage...but [homosexuality] was not accepted in my house. I am in favour of civil marriage because they get the same rights as everyone else.*

*My Dad is very homophobic so when I was growing up, he would always say “watch out – this guy is gay”. He made a big deal over a TV show where a gay guy came out, and that was one of the times that I felt it was really irrational.*

Beliefs (often religious in origin) and practice did differ between respondents and their parents (mild to major intergenerational dissonance), in some cases because those answering the questionnaire were themselves gay.

*I have a few homosexual friends and they [parents] are pretty accepting of it. They accept my friends but they have made it clear that they would not accept us [respondent plus siblings] so openly if we were homosexual. This is because “God did not want it that way”.*

*My mother does not look down on people who aren't heterosexual – but her family as a whole does not talk about the subject. I have a gay uncle and he does bring a significant other around.*

### c) *Dating*

This was often translated into very particular issues, specifically inter-ethnic dating (here typically described as inter-racial dating). Parents might be tolerant on certain issues but there was often some doubt when it came to boyfriends/girlfriends from other ethnic groups. In one case, a parent who was described as liberal on questions of morality had rather less tolerance of inter-ethnic dating:

*My sister has an African-American boyfriend and Mom does not approve. It may be to do with the fact that he does not have a job.*

And there was parental concern expressed in other answers as well.

*My parents raised me to believe that I should marry a woman of the same background but within American culture [inter-racial dating] is accepted. I think it is good.*

And there were, at times, surprised switches on how parents viewed issues.

*My parents are conservative on issues such as homosexuality and religion but much more liberal on dating.*

The answers to all these questions were complicated by the fact that parents themselves differed in their views. Sometimes, these parental differences got a little complicated.



*Dad is extremely conservative socially and fiscally. Mom is conservative on social issues but liberal on economic issues.*

This gender split gets repeated in a lot of the answers.

*My Dad is extremely conservative and my Mom is more liberal.*

*Mom is definitely not an overprotective parent. She gave a lot of liberty to us [her daughters] but also let us know that with anything, there were consequences, sometimes good and sometimes bad. Not sure where Mom is on other issues but she is tolerant of other people.*

In the answers to questions about parental views, the most commonly used word to describe their parent's view was "conservative". It was used in almost two-thirds of the answers and even if one parent was less conservative than the other, both were described as being conservative in comparison to the respondent, both in a general sense and in relation to specific issues. This tends to suggest that the American-raised are becoming more tolerant on many issues of public morality and there is evidence of generational dissonance although this needs to be qualified by two considerations: one is the age of the respondents (they are at a very liberal moment in their lives so that the answers might reflect generational differences and life stage), and the second is that the sample is of university students who are already (mostly) more educated than their parents and are currently immersed in an environment (a liberal university) that would tend to encourage, if not support, a more liberal attitude on many issues of public and private morality. This is further underlined by the "softer" religious affiliation of the respondents. It would be going too far to suggest that the material provided here indicates a growing secularization, but there are some indications that the American-raised are more nominally religious (in this case, Catholic) than their parents. However, this is complicated by the fact that the parents themselves varied significantly in relation to how they stood on various issues (relatively liberal on some issues, more conservative on others). There were also often gender differences, both between parents or in relation to the gender of the children.<sup>9</sup>

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9 Smith (2006: 125) refers to the question of whether second generation women remain subservient to their husbands on matters such as child rearing and domestic housework, even though they might be told not to be *rancheros*. His answer is that they are. In terms of the sample we interviewed, and their particular life stage (few were married or in long term relations), we are not so sure. Given that they are at university and are upwardly mobile, it might be expected that they might be less amenable to traditional and gendered divisions of labour. But a significant number were brought up in sole parent (almost exclusively female) households, or their mothers were particularly influential in terms of



d) *Language*

Gutiérrez (2013) point outs that pan-ethnic identities are often, in the case of US Latinos, a function of language politics; the shared experience of being Spanish speakers has an important influence on shared identity. The earlier material from this research indicates that pan-ethnic identity is subservient to country/regional identity for this group of American-raised Latinos. But how does this self-claimed identity map on to Spanish language competency? Is Gutiérrez correct to assert that language politics are influential? There is little doubt that the bulk of the respondents saw the maintenance of Spanish language ability as important to their identity and as part of maintaining contact and intimacy with their parents. But the limited English competency of parents was an issue for them in public spaces.

*I sometimes felt embarrassed that my Mom could not speak English properly and I would have to translate. Looking back now, I feel embarrassed for having felt that way.*

*When I was younger, I was very gung-ho American. Very fourth of July and flag waving. It was part of the fact that my parents were studying to take their citizenship text and since I knew English, I helped them with it. The fact that my parents could not speak English in public made me kinda ashamed because I was a 6 or 7 year old kid translating for my parents. And then my Dad would sometimes try to speak English in public and that would also embarrass me because he didn't know how to speak English.*

School events and meetings were the most likely to be identified as providing difficulties, especially in front of teachers and principals, and with parents who both did not fully understand the culture of the school system or who could not speak English in front of authority or influential figures such as teachers.

*When there were school conferences and most of my teachers did not speak Spanish, I always felt uncomfortable translating for my parents.*

*When there were school open houses, I would have to go with them [parents] because they would not be able to understand by themselves. This even happens in college. I am not embarrassed but it is difficult.*

What was interesting were the comments that having been embarrassed at one stage, the respondents were now proud to have helped and no longer felt so embarrassed by their parent's lack of English competency.

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academic ambitions for their children or in determining the direction the family should take post-arrival.

*There are things you can be embarrassed about but you can also be proud. At this stage in life, I learned to embrace it and not be embarrassed.*

*The language barrier was difficult in middle school because they could not understand. I am more accepting now because I have grown up and have managed to get into college.*

For others, it has never been an issue.

*I usually have to translate for my Mom if she wants to pay the bills or go to any place which would not have a Spanish-speaking person. I don't feel embarrassed or uncomfortable because I know we are Mexican.*

As these comments indicate, if there was a moment when having immigrant parents was an issue, it was most likely to have involved language competency, in this case, an ability to speak English, which then meant that that the son or daughter was needed to act as a language broker. Often being relatively young and having to perform this role in front of authority figures such as teachers was likely to cause embarrassment at some point. That said, Spanish language use was important for various reasons.

## 8. Language Competencies and Use

The vast majority of the respondents – 98 per cent – speak Spanish with 94.3 per cent saying they speak it “well” or “very well”, 91.5 per cent saying the same of their ability to understand Spanish, 87.7 per cent in their ability to read Spanish and then falling back to 71.6 per cent in terms of their ability to write Spanish. As those born and raised in the United States, the levels of Spanish use and competency of these university students are very high; there has been a significant level of language transmission, obviously helped by the fact that in private (family, community) spheres, Spanish is widely used and this then extends to other settings, including that of a Californian university.

This is reinforced by questions about language use in a variety of settings. Firstly, a third said that they learnt Spanish as a first language (sometimes simultaneously with English), while many continued to speak Spanish with their parents. For more than a third of respondents (35 per cent), they only speak Spanish to their parents while another 27.4 per cent mostly speak Spanish and another 20 per cent speak a mix of Spanish and English. Family, in this case the interaction with parents, is a major factor in Spanish language maintenance. This was reinforced when we asked

about whether the respondents translated for parents. Nearly a third (32 per cent) said “yes, a lot” while another 47.2 per cent said “yes, sometimes”. Not only is language use important in order to interact with parents, the respondents are helping act as language brokers in situations where competence in both English and Spanish is required, thus reinforcing the ongoing need to have Spanish fluency in order to help parents as much as to communicate with them.

For those who have a spouse, the use of Spanish language drops off, with just 9 per cent speaking only Spanish and 32 per cent speaking a mixture of Spanish and English (and about the same proportion speaking only English). With their children, two-thirds speak a mixture of Spanish and English (63.6 per cent), although the numbers with children (11 respondents) are small. It will be interesting to see how committed this generation is to language maintenance, especially within a family context. Inter-ethnic marriage or partnerships makes this more difficult but not impossible. Finally, we asked about the use of Spanish language with co-workers (the bulk spoke either “only English” – 38.7 per cent – or “mostly English” – 24.7 per cent) while with fellow university students, there were much higher levels of Spanish language use. A quarter (25.5 per cent) said “frequently” while another 56.6 per cent said “sometimes”. Only a minority of 3.8 per cent said “all the time”. It appears that family and fellow students provide the most opportunity to use Spanish while this fades with spouses and children, and is much less the case in a work situation. For a minority, the fact that they cannot speak Spanish means that they tend to exclude themselves from being defined as Latino; they lack the basis for claiming authenticity.

*I cannot speak the language so I always see myself as American, because I feel more comfortable speaking in English.*

And there are spaces where Spanish speakers are made to feel uncomfortable.

*In our band, it is mostly white space. The other band members think of me as Mexican-American but I feel pressure not to speak Spanish as much, even around the other Latinos in the band. I am made to feel out of place speaking Spanish. It has been a real culture shock.*

This material indicates that Spanish language use is one of the most important markers of Latino identity and there are two questions that are relevant: how important is language maintenance but also whether language use will continue to play such a key role in ethnic identity, in this case for Latinos, in a US setting. When asked about the languages in which they would raise their children, the majority (82 per cent) said that they would seek to use both Spanish and English with another 8.5 per

cent saying Spanish is the prime language. It does indicate a commitment to Spanish language maintenance into a second American-raised generation but whether this continues with future generations will depend on family circumstances (whether the spouse/partner speaks Spanish – and their views on Spanish language use) and ongoing ethnic identification (the role of Spanish in such identification).

## 9. Political Engagement

We were interested in the degree of engagement as well as the nature of the respondents' views. This was used to indicate the degree to which respondents were involved politically in some way, both in terms of their political views and membership in what might be called mainstream politics (the politics of California and the United States) but also in terms of engagement in Latino organisations.

A little over 40 per cent (41.5 per cent) were registered voters while of these, 39.6 per cent actually voted. Given that this is a relatively well-educated group of students at what might well be described as an activist university, these seems to be quite low levels of formal political engagement. However, it must be remembered that other polls show that those in their twenties, as these respondents are, currently feel disengaged generally from the formal political system, both in the United States and elsewhere in the OECD, and that overall rates of engagement of younger generations are quite low. This sample seems to reinforce this point.

We then asked about their political views. Here the numbers who described themselves as “slightly left” (24.5 per cent) or “very left” (17 per cent) dominated, with a small proportion (2.8 per cent) self-describing as “conservative”. This might well indicate a generational or stage of life effect; those at university are most likely to identify with liberal and left of centre politics. It reinforces some of the points made previously about the liberal views held more generally by this sample, especially in relation to parents.

One other test of ethnic affiliation and political engagement came from the question concerning whether the respondent belonged to a Latino organization. The majority (62.3 per cent) indicated that they did, which signals an engagement in Latino life, in this case Latino-specific organisations, and is also a kind of political statement – belonging (and belonging to explicitly Latino organisations) is important. This signals a form of ethnic solidarity and a willingness to contribute to shared

cultural practices and belonging. Again, there was a significant minority (28.3 per cent) who did not, reinforcing the variability of ethnic engagement – strong for some, not so relevant or not at all relevant for others.

## 10. Cultural Practices and Orientations

It is always interesting to see if ethnic connections and inclinations are translated into popular cultural preferences. There is no particular reason for them to be; it is perfectly compatible to continue to practice strong ethnic traditions in one sphere and to engage – and enjoy – other (shared) cultural practices that are available in public spheres. But it is an indication both of the extent of particular cultural practices and of the influence of popular (in this case, defined as non-ethnic specific) culture. So we also asked about television, music and food.

In terms of what is watched on television, the most obvious genre is what is described as “American”. But over a quarter (27.4 per cent) watched a mix of what they described as “Spanish and American/Mainstream”. Effectively, about two-thirds watched what most others watch in the United States while about a quarter watched this “mainstream” as well as a mix of Spanish programming. This differs, though, when it comes to music. Here the “American mainstream” drops to a little of a quarter of respondents (28.3 per cent) while “Spanish primarily” now constitutes 15 per cent of the sample and those who watch a mix is 41.5 per cent. Nearly two-thirds watch, listen and enjoy mostly Spanish music (although this probably means music that is inflected by both global and American music, so that “Spanish” might well mean rap in Spanish).

Food is interesting as it represents both the public sphere – what you eat outside the home with peers and others – and the private sphere – within the home. Those who identified Mexican food as their favourite (sometimes in association with what is called “American” food) rose to 32.3 per cent of the respondents.

In the material provided on popular culture, there was evidence of code-switching (Wessendorf, 2013: 79), as the respondents called on different ethnic repertoires depending on the situation and context. For some, they continued their Latino-ness by focusing on Spanish-dominant popular culture, but the larger group were those who indicated an interest in – and allegiance to – both what was termed “American” and “Spanish” popular forms. We would conclude that in relation to popular cul-

ture at least, there is evidence of a “fragmented consciousness” and code-switching (Wessendorf, 2013: 79).

## 11. Conclusion

The material from this survey of 106 students from the University of California, Berkeley, provides evidence of how a specific sample of Latinos view their ethnic and national identity, the elements that comprise these identities, the situations under which they are most likely to express one identity or another, those facets that are being transmitted from a migrant generation to those who are American-raised, and what might be a source of both pride and consternation between migrant parents and their American-raised children. There are some elements that are common to many of the participants – a sense of pride in being Latino especially as a member of a particular origin community such as Mexican – but there are also obvious differences as for some, being brought up in America holds sway over a minority ethnic identity. Overall, their ethnic identity is, for this generation, an important identity that marks them as being both separate from other Americans and is an important part of being American in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Being Latino or a member of a nationally (non-American) defined community (such as Mexican) is a characteristic of contemporary America and ought to be seen (many respondents argued) as part of who an American is. There were some strongly held views about the need to respect Latino identity in a way that is currently not the case. This raises some interesting further questions.

One is the nature of this shared sense of identity and what it is – or ought to become. Wessendorf (2013: 51) asks, in another context, whether the “conscious construction of group collectivities [is] either a political project or a reification of a collective identity”. Or perhaps it is simply practicing culture as a lifestyle (ibid: 52). Many identify Latino-ness with their background as Mexicans, or Salvadorians, or as associated when coming from another Central or South American country. Here, there was evidence of intergenerational transmission (cf Moschion and Tabasso, 2014) in terms of a self-claimed identity – from immigrant parents to American-raised children. In terms of the question of how much American-raised Latino-ness is something that is shared, the answer would have to be that it is for the bulk of the respondents to this questionnaire. But there are also differences. Speaking Spanish is



an important marker, and one that is shared. But being from Mexico or El Salvador is important too, signaling some important intra-Latino differences. Is there a common consciousness (cf Vertovec, 2010: 268)? Yes, at least implicitly. There is a sense that being Latino is critical to most participants and many of the comments indicate similar drivers in terms of why a Latino identity is important – a sense that others see being Latino as inferior in some sense and a willingness to assert a sense of pride in an ethnic affiliation, the role of family and being from migrant parents, and the engagement with others who share the sense of a shared identity. However, it is critical to acknowledge the variability in ethnic claiming and naming.

Our research indicates that there is considerable variability in the nature of Latinity for the American-raised. Some elements (language use) are relatively uniform amongst the respondents in our survey and shared, both with parents and migrant communities, or amongst peers, while other elements (religion) are less so. In the case of Spanish language use and competency, this American-raised generation remain significant users with some skill, and this is one cultural competency that is particularly pertinent to their “parents’ social milieu” (cf Wessendorf, 2013: 79) but is also used to bond with other Latinos of the same generation and to signal a key marker compared to non-Latinos. That said, the question of what you and your community are to be called (labelled) varies considerably. There is some agreement in terms of self-naming – especially in relation to being both Latino and Mexican – but around this core are a range of other options. There is a spectrum that includes both different names (Hispanic, different origin countries) through to being an “American”. While we would want to argue that there are elements that are shared, we also want to qualify this and say there are some differences, at times significant. We agree with Wessendorf (2013: 139) when she says:

Diversities of transnational realities among the second generation are directly intertwined with continuous co-ethnic social affiliation in the local context on the one hand [Latinos] and new kinds of social attachments to people of other origins on the other [non-Latino American communities].

To return to the question asked above, is there a diasporic or ethnic consciousness (cf Vertovec, 2010: 268)? Definitely, but it can be, for some, subservient to the realities of being American, both as part of the United States (as “home”) and the power of American popular and political culture.

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