Born in the USA: The Identities of American-Born Latinos
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Abstract
This report provides data from a survey on how the identities of U.S.-born Latinos, both personal and public, are evolving. Part of the focus is on the naming and ethnic identification of these Latinos, the influence of national origins and identity, and the way in which a Latino identity is understood and practiced. Family and community associations are explored for their influence on, for example, Spanish language transmission and use. Attitudes towards religious affiliations, homosexuality, and dating are also examined as key indicators of the social beliefs of those Latinos born in the USA. This is further explored by the nature of political engagement and attitudes towards popular culture. The report concludes that while there is considerable variability in the nature of Latino-ness, there are also important communalities (Spanish language use) as well as tensions (homeland versus U.S. loyalty).

Introduction
In preliminary research in 2008 and 2009, we were intrigued by 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 the American-born engaged with shared public cultures—via social or other media and 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. We wanted to explore the identities and experiences of American-born Latinos with a select group of high-performing students, most of whom were studying at the University of California, Berkeley. We reasoned that, by virtue of their educational training as much as by other characteristics and experiences, they would be likely to be among those who would be future leaders of Latino communities in the United States. They would also be opinion-makers as they further developed their cultural identity in both the private and public domains. They would, we thought, be likely candidates to contribute to the evolving identities of American-born or raised Latinos, and they would be likely brokers between Latino and other communities, to be political leaders (in the broadest sense of providing leadership in a range of settings, not simply as elected officials), and to be speakers on behalf and about Latinos in the context of the United States of the 21st century. So,

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having chosen this group, we then conducted a survey on how they saw the world and what was changing—or staying the same—within it.

**Conceptual Approach and Literature Review**

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-born Latinos. One of the first questions we faced was what label to use to describe these Latinos. We asked them, but we also needed a label that could serve the purposes of a report like this and function in relation to research more broadly.

The question of how to describe the American-born Latino is problematic in various ways. First, there is the question of whether they should be given a pan-ethnic label, particularly one that reflects their American context. The most obvious of these are Chicano, Latino, and Hispanic (see Arreola, 2004). Rodriguez, Sáenz, and Menjívar (2008:5-7) note that commonly used terms vary depending on where in the United States you are. 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 note, is the fuzziness of the Latino ethnic identity boundary. We would add that being Latino, which is the usage we adopt here, is a function of migration and the subsequent politics of ethnic identity in the destination society. The term “Latino” functions as both a self-described ethnicity as well as an imposed label (which inevitably means that the label and what it means is highly situationally defined).

Secondly, and as we discovered when we conducted the survey that provides the empirical data for this report, many respondents continued to attach national origin labels to their current American situation. In particular, many indicated that they were “Mexican,” “Mexican-American,” or even “Mexican-Latino” (or “Latino-Mexican”). This preference is possibly a function of the recentness of migration and the significance of origin amongst Latinos for whom origin homelands are important in distinguishing amongst migrants, especially when there are so many other “Latinos” around them. But the point is that homelands are used alongside a pan-ethnic label such as Latino to indicate the differences within Latino identity.

The literature tends to adopt labels such as Latino as a pan-ethnic identity, but for those involved, it might be too crude and not representative of how they feel, as well as inappropriate in particular contexts. Being Mexican in the United States might be as important, if not more so, than being Latino. 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, Latinos born and raised in the United States are products of migrant parents but equally of the communities and the country in which they grew up. They are hardly migrants, much less second-generation 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-born” (or occasionally
the “1.5 generation” to indicate those who were born elsewhere but have grown up in the United States) alongside the term Latino.³

We considered the question of what these American-born 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 particular connotations. Identity claiming 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. So we have asked the respondents about how they prefer to label themselves and what factors are important in their choice. We also asked what ethnic labeling means to them in terms of positioning themselves in relation to other Latinos and to ethnic politics, both in intimate settings (are there aspects of what your parents do in the United States that are embarrassing?) as well as in relation to broader issues of recognition and respect.

The issue of ethnic labeling raised a further question that we were interested in pursuing in relation to being Latino in the United States, or in this case, in California. 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. The question assumes, at times, that Latinos are essentially passive and are not agents who can operate in their own interests. So the consequent question, again only partially answered, is whether Latinos, especially the American-born, are contesting such “otherness” if they encounter it?

To sum up, we are keen to approach the questions surrounding label choice as empirical questions. Our preference as a second-order concept that is needed for this report is to adopt the label of “American-born Latinos” to indicate that those raised in the United States are not migrants; they are products of an American context and an engagement with key institutions such as the education system. American-born Latinos are actively exploring what their U.S. upbringing means in terms of identity and how it makes them different from their immigrant parents on the one hand and non-Latino communities on the other.

This generational difference brings us to our next broad survey question: what is transmitted from the migrant generation to those born and raised in the United States? 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.

³ For simplicity, we use the term “American-born Latinos,” but as the responses indicate, there are quite a few who were born in another country. We checked to make sure that the majority of their upbringing, including their schooling, was carried out in the United States. In essence, the threshold for being considered 1.5 generation is that they spent the bulk of their primary schooling and all of their secondary schooling in the United States. Given the fact that they are American-raised in this way, we have tended to include them as part of the “American-born” grouping, even though they were not technically born in the United States. The material that we report below tends to confirm that there are significant similarities between the American-born and the 1.5 generation as we define them here.
Morality was one area that we explored, especially in relation to religious values but also with regard to issues such as homosexuality and dating. These questions were prompted in part by some of the students 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) of “las encerradas” (the shut-ins) to refer to the way in which parents seek to “protect” teenagers, especially females, from the “dangers” of American society, however that was manifested. They discuss the lock-down after school that limits the possibilities for these teenagers as a way of trying to ensure that traditional values are preserved. This “protection,” 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 and the preservation of certain moral values and practices—especially in relation to American-born Latino females—with regard to issues such as homosexuality and dating. We also wanted to know how American-born children relate to their migrant parents. What elements, if any, are valued in an American setting, and what might be the cause of embarrassment? Here, we returned to issues such as maturation, sexually and in terms of an adult identity, and responsibility. We noted Wessendorf’s (2013:42) comments and wondered 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. We have explored the degree to which Spanish as a language has been maintained between the migrant and the American-born generations and what this means for Latino identity and the respondents’ level of competency. As Suárez-Orozco and Gaytan (2009:xviii) note, Spanish “continues to be a dominant identity marker for millions of Latinos....” Was this true for the American-born—and what did they see as important in terms of language transmission and as an identity marker for the next generation, the children of the American-born Latinos?

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

Throughout, 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 socio-economic and social marginalization 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 do they exercise agency of whatever sort, and what are the implications for an understanding of what it means to be American-born Latino?
Ultimately, we are interested in describing the third spaces that are emerging for the American-born Latino as part of “cultural and linguistic mixing” (Hall, 2010:28). 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. At the same time, 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; American-born Latinos have not entirely abandoned the cultural elements and practices of their migrant parents, nor do they fully adopt those of America. (We would want to problematize what “American culture” might mean, quite apart from what it is in the everyday context of particular communities). But in addition to what they borrow and reproduce from either their migrant background or their U.S. 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 Haitian-ness.” Surely, they also create new forms of “American-ness,” or perhaps more accurately, “Latino-American-ness.”

But as we discuss the answers that we received from our survey, we would not want to essentialize or homogenize Latino identity/ies either. As the material here demonstrates, there is considerable variation in terms of identity construction and experiences in relation to being a Latino in San Francisco. Canclini (see Mabardi, 2010:252) argues that the Latino hybrid is a product of social systems that tend to give it a “determinacy” and that “regulate the fragmentation” of Latino identities. We would agree with Canclini 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 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) and the content within those borders/boundaries, the result is neither static nor 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:

…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 identities and ethnic label claiming that vary significantly, so that the label “Latino” is used quite differently, even amongst the group to which it is applied (and self-used). We would acknowledge that we are surveying a group of American-born Latinos at a particular point in their lives, even if it is a particularly influential one, and that their preferences will likely change as they age and their circumstances change. But within this complexity, we also expect to be able to indicate common as well as variable usage and the

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4 Hall (see Vertovoc, 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 from the ethnic identities of their parents) we would accept, but the extent to which these reconfigured identities represent formed and shared [ethnic] identities with their own cultural content remains an empirical question for us, one that prompted this research.
reasons for the variability. Further, we are interested in how third-space cultures are emerging as key influences in the production of new cultural practices and identities. These issues provide a key focus for what follows.

Methodology

In classes on Latino identities held at the University of California, Berkeley in 2008 and 2009, questions emerged 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. These classroom discussions provided an initial set of research questions that we refined through a search of the literature.

The questionnaire we developed to investigate our questions 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, arrival in the United States, and ethnic identity
- Interests and identity, especially how the respondents saw their own identity and whether this was situationally dependent, and pride in being American
- Media interests (type of music or TV programs liked)
- Involvement in Latino organizations
- Transnational and homeland linkages
- Agreement/disagreement with parents
- Language use and competency

The questionnaire included the opportunity for both open-ended and limited option responses and, as is often the case, the open-ended responses provided some extremely interesting and varied material. Perhaps one of the most interesting outcomes is how much variability there was in terms of the language and orientations of those interviewed. It is a timely reminder that while, as researchers, we would like to generalize and to draw firm conclusions, there is often a spectrum of experiences and views that make it difficult to draw hard and generalizable conclusions. 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. Before any work was undertaken, ethical approval was required from the University of California, Berkeley. The university takes the protection of participants in research very seriously, and we had to go through an extremely rigorous process to ensure that the highest standards of research were preserved. The detail required was frustrating at times, but we are still pleased to have been given approval for what follows.
The various Latino organizations on the University of California, Berkeley campus were approached for help in recruiting participants. Leaflets were distributed around the university, and personal contacts were also used in a snowball technique to attract respondents. Those participating were given an assurance of anonymity, and the number of 100 was chosen as a sample target. In the end, 106 people participated.

The material was entered onto SurveyMonkey and then 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.

We trust that we have met the ethical requirements of the University of California and, above all else, that we have been true to those who participated in the research. This is their story.

The Background of Respondents and Their Parents

Our survey focuses on the American-born, but they are influenced and defined by their migrant parents. This initial section describes the background of both in order to provide context.

The majority of parents, both mother and father, were Mexican-born, as might be expected given the overall demographics of California’s Latino population. In the case of mothers, 79% were born in Mexico with El Salvador (10%) and Guatemala (2.8%) providing the second and third most common places of birth. For fathers, the figures were Mexico (78%) and El Salvador (9.4%) 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% for mothers and 74% for fathers. What was surprising was the percentage of parents who had arrived in the 1990s—11% and 12% respectively for mothers and fathers in comparison to the most likely decade of arrival, the 1980s (45% and 35%, again respectively).

The respondents were asked about their birthplace. We were keen to talk to the American-born but did not necessarily want to exclude those who constituted a 1.5 generation (born elsewhere but who had spent most of their life in the United States, including their formative years at school). Most (80.2%) were born in the United States (nearly all in California) while 17% were born in Mexico and another 2.8% were born in Central American countries. We wanted to make sure that they had grown up in the United States, and so two further questions were asked: 1) In which country did you grow up? and 2) Where in the United States? The first question was not clearly answered; 59% said they grew up in the United States but another 37% 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 response pattern then affected the subsequent questions about the nature of the community in which they were raised. Bearing in mind that between 42% and 47% indicated that subsequent questions were not applicable, most indicated that they had grown up in urban or suburban areas of the United States (a smaller group of about 10% grew up in rural areas) while about 21% identified the area as a medium socio-economic area and more than a third (35%) a lower socio-economic area. These results must be taken as broadly indicative rather than definitive given the level of “non-applicable” responses.
Particularly interesting were the open-ended comments from the students. There was a significant differentiation among respondents based on where they had grown up (suburban/middle class versus lower socio-economic urban areas). In the latter group, there was a recognition that, as recent immigrants with few options in terms of employment and housing, their families faced significant challenges, as the following quotations indicate:

*I grew up in *… [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 remarked 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% lived in communities that were dominated by Latinos or by Latinos and Afro-Americans, and most went to schools that had a significant number of Latinos. In many cases, Latinos were the majority. This might be expected amongst the first generation to be born 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 neighbors and communities but also on the fact that it was relatively impoverished (the most used 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). Only very occasionally was the label “Hispanic” used. 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 a significant number of Latinos.

Most of the additional comments continued 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 neighborhoods. Nearly all commented on the violence, along with the presence of gangs and drugs. There was recognition of the challenges and the dangers of their environment, but equally, reference to supportive families, both intimate and extended, especially with regard to the importance of doing well educationally. 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 neighborhood, 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. There were relatively high “non-applicable” responses here, indicating that the respondents either did not know or were not prepared to answer. In the open-ended questions, 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 U.S. standards.

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% 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%), rather higher than the 3.7% of fathers who had either an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. The majority of respondents were pursuing a Bachelor’s degree (95.3%) with just three students in a Masters or Ph.D. program. Nevertheless, there is evidence of significant educational (if not social) mobility compared to parental educational background for this group of American-born 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.

In addition, the respondents were asked, in an open-ended question, about their parent’s socio-economic background and the degree to which it had changed. It was the question that provided a sense of the background of the parents and their employment, mostly in the United States but also sometimes in their country of origin. 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 the communities in which they lived and the jobs their parents held, 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 labor 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 American-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 U.S., 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 were born in the late 1980s (69% were born between 1985 and 1989) with a smaller, but still significant group (20%) born in the period 1990–1994. The next biggest group (6.6%) was born in the early 1980s. Nearly all were in their twenties when we interviewed them.

Ethnic Identification

Some of the most interesting material from the survey is provided by questions about ethnic and national identification. We asked respondents to indicate how both they and 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, and the answers indicate the children’s understanding. Nevertheless, there are some interesting comparison points and a spectrum of responses. Those answering the questionnaire both self-claim certain identities and labels and respond to how they are classified by others in intimate encounters, as part of public discussion, and in 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% identified their mother as “Mexican” while the figure for their father was 66% (bearing in mind that the equivalent figures for birthplace were 79% and 78%). Those indicating parental ethnicity as Salvadorian were 8.5% and 7.5% (again, the actual birthplaces were 10.4% and 9.4%). 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% and 3.8%) with “Hispanic/Latino” used in 4.7% 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 U.S. 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% with another 22.6% saying “Mexican-American”), but the use of “Hispanic/Latino” (18.9%) and “Chicana” (14%) gained in popularity. Only 1.9% said “American” although another 2.8% declined to answer this question. 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 their American-born children responding to the same question. But we also see growth in the use of Chicana/Latino/Hispanic 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, 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 categorize me.

Were these identities important for respondents? The answer is unequivocal in most cases. Two-thirds said their ethnic or national identity was “very important,” and 15% said it was “somewhat important.” Another 9% 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% of respondents saw these identities as important in terms of who they are. The importance of ethnic identity was underscored by the material from the open-ended answers (including the material in the next section).

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. 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 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 centered 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. An ethnic identity is more important on some occasions, while on others being an American is the pre-eminent identity.

\begin{quote}
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.
\end{quote}

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.

\begin{quote}
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 U.S. I only speak Spanish and try not to offend those who do not like the U.S. I completely understand why that is.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
I consider myself more American when I am around family members who were not born in the U.S. But I consider myself Mexican when I am with everyone else.
\end{quote}

At the same time, there are those who feel that being American is the more important factor in who they are.

\begin{quote}
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.”
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
I am more aware of my American identity just because of school (learning the history, speaking the language).
\end{quote}

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

\begin{quote}
If I am at a Dodgers game and they are playing the national anthem, I feel very patriotic.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Soccer is when I feel particularly Mexican.
\end{quote}

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 whose 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.

\section*{Citizenship and National Identity}

Given that most respondents had been born in the United States, it is not surprising that the bulk (70.8\%) were American citizens by birth and that another 2.8\% had become U.S. citizens by naturalization. Another group enjoyed both American citizenship and the citizenship of another country (7.5\%), so that a total of 81.4\% were American citizens. But there was another rather
different group—the 17 respondents (16%) who were not U.S. citizens. They might have chosen not to take out American citizenship, or they may have been undocumented immigrants.

We were interested in how the respondents felt about their ethnic and national identities and found that 89.6% reported being proud of their ethnic identity (although it should be borne in mind that some answered the ethnic question by indicating that they were “American.”) 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%) said they were “proud to be an American,” but 13% said “no,” and another 22.6% said they were either “indifferent” or that it only mattered “sometimes.” 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%), 6 (8.4%), 7 (12.3%) 8 (11.3%) and 9 (6.6%) with 3.8% responding with a 10. This indicates that those who opted for mid-range to high evaluations (7 to 10) represented about a third of respondents (34%). In short, a much larger proportion felt pride in their ethnic identity than in being American.

The results indicate that an ethnic affiliation was the 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 30%, 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 Americanized 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 Americans. This description leaves me out. So I tend to identify as Hispanic for the most part. But Mom corrected me and emphasized that I am Hispanic-American so I began to describe myself as Hispanic-American. My difficulty is that most of the time when I was growing up, I was surrounded by 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.

One particular objection to labels such as “American” was that they tend 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 U.S. citizens.*

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

These answers indicate that a lot of 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-born, by the parents’ country of origin. However, with the American-born 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, or more or less Latino, the latter holds a very powerful place in the repertoire of self-identity, and in 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 prioritize their Latino or origin country identity). It remains a significant way of identifying who they are, even if it exists alongside their status as Americans. For them, it was a hyphenated identity but one in which the order was Latino followed by American.

**Transnationalism**

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 had ever travelled to a parental homeland and how many trips this entailed. A little over a fifth (21.7%) had never been, but the remainder had, with 36.8% travelling one to five times, 14% having travelled there six to 10 times, 6.6% having been 11 to 19 times, and 15% having been more than 20 times. These are high levels of engagement with parental homelands. Further, 15% had been to live in that homeland for six months or more, thereby experiencing an intimate connection with those communities and the family members who continue to live in the origin country. That said, two-thirds (67%) said that the United States felt like “home” to them and only 3.8% said that their parent’s country of origin felt like “home.” What was interesting was that another group (17%) responded that they felt “equally at home” in both countries, and 5.7% said they did not feel at home in either. Thus, the majority are Americans in terms of where they feel most “at home” (despite or in contrast to some of their comments about ethnic identification above). But for a significant minority, there was a 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 U.S.

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

Parental Culture and Relationships

One of the key factors in terms of cultural transmission and pride is the role of parents and their influence. But the situation is made complicated by the fact that, in various public settings, the culture of the parents is not the same as that understood or practiced by Latinos in the United States. For us, the question was: how did the American-born 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? We began by asking about the circumstances of their family background, specifically the nature of the household/family unit before proceeding to ask about those areas of pride and transmission as well as any matters that might be the cause of embarrassment. What issues were sources of pride or embarrassment? Or did it depend on the situation and perhaps the age of the respondents? 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. A large number (43%) of respondents did not answer the question, and of those who did, most (34%) 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% for those who had “parents, siblings, and grandparents” and 2.8% 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.

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; an 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 were a lot more complex than the closed answer responses indicated. There were a range of participants, including those from an extended family and those who would come at regular intervals from a homeland, thereby reinforcing the transnational links and influences of those involved. 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 sphere 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 and 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, and religion. Many of the respondents did discuss these issues in particular, but we did not anticipate the way in which these might be described or the additional elements that were often included.
Religion
The questions on religion produced a spectrum of responses, ranging from outright disagreement between the respondents and their parents to qualified agreement and a similar 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 how they practiced their religious faith and in 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 Catholic. One indicated that s/he was a Baptist, and the others simply said Christian. However, some indicated that the Catholicism that they practiced was more liberal than that of their parents. The respondents’ Catholicism 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.

Homosexuality
Respondents’ views on homosexuality were often related to their feelings on 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 favor 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 practices did differ between respondents and their parents, 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.

Dating
This was often translated into very particular issues, specifically inter-ethnic (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 quite 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 parents’ views was “conservative.” It was used in about two-thirds of the answers. Even if one parent was less conservative than the other, both were described as being conservative in comparison to the respondent, both generally and in relation to specific issues. This result tends to suggest that the American-born are becoming more tolerant on many issues of public morality. However, this interpretation needs to be qualified by two considerations: 1) the respondents are young and at a very liberal moment in their lives, so their answers might reflect generational differences, and 2) the sample is of university students who, for the most part, are more educated than their parents and are currently immersed in the environment of a liberal university that would tend to sponsor, if not indirectly support, a more liberal attitude on issues of public and private morality. The liberal approach to social issues is further underlined by the “softer” religious affiliation of the respondents. It would be going too far to suggest that the
material indicates a growing secularization, but there are some indications that the American-born are more nominally religious (in this case, Catholic) than their parents. However, this interpretation is complicated by the fact that the parents themselves varied significantly in how they stood on various issues (relatively liberal on some issues, more conservative on others) and the fact that there were often gender differences, both between parents and in relation to the gender of the children.5

Language
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 it was also the case that 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 test 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 most frequently identified as causing difficulties. Respondents felt uncomfortable translating for parents who did not fully understand English or the culture of the school in front of authority figures such as teachers and principals.

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.

Particularly interesting were the comments indicating that, while respondents had been embarrassed at one stage, they were now proud to have helped and no longer felt so embarrassed by their parent’s lack of English competency.

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.

5 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 these wives might tell their husbands not to be rancheros. His answer is that they do. 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 would be less amenable to traditional and gendered divisions of labor. But a significant number were brought up in sole parent (almost exclusively female) households, or their mothers were particularly influential in terms of academic ambitions for their children or in determining the direction the family should take post-arrival.
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, which then meant that that the son or daughter was needed to act as a language broker. In front of key people such as teachers, this was often an issue. However, it was seen as more of an issue when the respondents were younger. And it was likely for many to cause embarrassment at some point. That said, Spanish language use was important to respondents for various reasons.

**Language Competencies and Use**

The vast majority of the respondents—98%—speak Spanish with 94.3% saying they speak it “well” or “very well,” 91.5% saying the same of their ability to understand Spanish, and 87.7% reporting an ability to read Spanish. The numbers fall to 71.6% when it comes to their ability to write Spanish. For these university students, the levels of Spanish use and competency are very high. There has been a significant amount of language transmission, which has been helped by the fact that Spanish is widely used in private (family, community) spheres as well as in other settings, including at the university.

Spanish is used in a variety of settings but is particularly important in relation to family. Firstly, a third said that they learned Spanish as a first language (sometimes simultaneously with English) while many continue to speak Spanish with their parents. More than a third of respondents (35%) only speak Spanish to their parents while another 27.4% speak mostly Spanish at home and another 20% speak a mix of Spanish and English. Family and the interaction with parents is a major factor in Spanish language maintenance. In addition, the respondents continue to act as language brokers in situations where competence in both English and Spanish is required. When asked whether they translated for their parents, nearly a third (32%) of respondents said “yes, a lot” while another 47.2% said “yes, sometimes.” Spanish skills are thus reinforced by the need to help parents as well as by the desire to communicate with them.

For those who have a spouse, the use of Spanish drops off, with just 9% speaking only Spanish, 32% speaking a mixture of Spanish and English, and about the same proportion speaking only English. With their children, 63.6% speak a mixture of Spanish and English, although the number with children was small (11 respondents). It will be interesting to see how committed this generation is to language maintenance, especially within a family context. Inter-ethnic marriages or partnerships make language maintenance difficult but not impossible.

Finally, we asked about the use of Spanish with co-workers and fellow students. The bulk spoke either “only English” (38.7%) or “mostly English” (24.7%) with co-workers. With fellow university students, however, there were much higher levels of Spanish language use. A quarter...
(25.5%) said they spoke Spanish “frequently” with other students while another 56.6% said “sometimes,” and a small minority (3.8%) said “all the time.” It appears that family and fellow students provide the most opportunity to use Spanish while the language is used less with spouses and children and much less in work situations. For a minority, the fact that they cannot speak Spanish means that they exclude themselves from being 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. Two questions seem especially relevant: how important is language maintenance, and will language use continue to play such a key role in ethnic identity, in this case for Latinos, in a U.S. setting? When asked about the languages in which they would raise their children, the majority (82%) said that they would seek to use both Spanish and English with another 8.5% saying Spanish would be the prime language. These results indicate a commitment to Spanish language maintenance into a second American-born generation, but whether this continues with future generations will depend on family circumstances (the language background of the spouse/partner and his/her views on Spanish language use).

**Political Engagement**

We were interested in the degree of political engagement as well as the nature of the respondents’ views. We wanted to know the degree to which respondents were involved politically in some way, whether that was in terms of their political views, in their participation in what might be called mainstream politics (the politics of California and the United States), or in terms of engagement in Latino organizations.

Among the respondents, 41.5% were registered voters while of these, 39.6% actually voted. Given that this is a relatively well-educated group of students at what might well be described as an activist university, these numbers seem to represent quite low levels of formal political engagement. However, it must be remembered that other polling shows that people in their twenties, as these respondents are, currently tend to feel disengaged from the formal political system, both in the United States and elsewhere in other countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In general, rates of engagement for younger generations are quite low. This sample seems to reinforce that point.

We then asked about their political views. Here the numbers who described themselves as “slightly left” (24.5%) or “very left” (17%) dominated, with a small proportion (2.8%) self-describing as “conservative.” This result might well indicate a generational or stage of life effect: those at university are most likely to identify with liberal and left-of-center politics. It also
reinforces some of the points made previously about the liberal views held more generally by this sample, especially in relation to their 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%) indicated that they did, which signals both an engagement in Latino life as well as a form of political statement—belonging (and belonging to explicitly Latino organizations) is important. It 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%) who did not belong to any Latino organizations, reinforcing the variability of ethnic engagement—strong for some, not so relevant or not relevant at all for others.

**Popular Culture**

Do ethnic connections and preferences translate into popular cultural preferences? There is no particular reason that they should; it is perfectly compatible to continue to practice strong ethnic traditions in one sphere and to engage in—and enjoy—other (shared) cultural practices that are available in public spheres. But to what extent are the preferences and practices an indication both of the extent of ethnically derived influences and of the influence of popular (in this case, defined as non-ethnic specific) culture? So we asked about television, music, and food.

In terms of what respondents watch on television, the most prevalent genre is what is described as “American.” But over a quarter (27.4%) 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” with a mix of Spanish programming.

The results differed, though, when it came to music. A little over a quarter of respondents (28.3%) reported listening to “American mainstream” while those listening to “Spanish primarily” constituted 15% of the sample, and 41.5% listened to a mix. Nearly two-thirds watch, listen, and enjoy mostly Spanish music (although this probably means music inflected by both global and American styles 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 what you eat within the home. Those who identified Mexican food as their favorite consisted of 32.3% 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 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 culture at least, there is evidence of a “fragmented consciousness” and code-switching (Wessendorf, 2013:79).
Conclusion

The material from this survey of 106 students from the University of California, Berkeley provides evidence of how a group of Latinos view their ethnic and national identities, 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 largely American-born, and what might be a source of both pride and consternation between migrant parents and their American-born children. There are some elements that are common to many of the participants—a sense of pride in being Latino and/or a member of a particular community—but there are also obvious differences. For some, being brought up in America holds sway over a minority ethnic identity. However, overall, ethnic identity is important for this generation. It marks them as being separate from other Americans, but they also find it to be an important part of being American in the 21st century. Being Latino 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. These feelings raise 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 (cf Wessendorf, 2013:52). Many respondents identify Latino-ness with their background as Mexicans, or Salvadorians, or as associated with coming from another Central or South American country. In terms of the question of whether American-born 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 in which being Latino is critical to most participants. 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, 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 a similar identity. However, we also want to acknowledge the variability in ethnic claiming and naming.

Our research indicates that there is considerable variability in the nature of Latino-ness for the American-born. Some elements, such as language use, are relatively uniform amongst the respondents in our survey and shared with parents, migrant communities, and peers. Other elements, such as religion, are less so. In the case of Spanish language use and competency, this American-born generation includes a large number of skilled users. While this is one cultural competency that is particularly pertinent to their “parents’ social milieu” (cf Wessendorf, 2013:79), Spanish 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 argue that there are
elements that are shared, we also want to qualify this and say there are some differences, which are 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 in terms of considering the United States to be “home” and with regard to the power of American popular and political culture.
Acknowledgements

This report came from collaborative work that was done in 2010 and 2011 on the University of California, Berkeley campus. We would like to thank Maribel Lopez and Harold Eberhart, along with Jenna Finkle, Estivaliz Castro, Rishi Targgarsi, Sandro Galindo, and Isabella Avila for all their work on this project. They made it fun, were able to relate to those interviewed in a way that we (Spoonley and Manz) could not, and showed an enthusiasm for their work that was inspiring. We would also like to acknowledge those who took part. They were, in equal parts, funny and serious, very aware and concerned about a number of personal and public issues, but at times, quite traditional in terms of their views about morality and religion. Overall, they impressed us as a bright, energetic, and committed cohort of Latinos who, in various ways, will make a difference to inter-ethnic understanding/representation and public culture in the United States in the decades ahead.

We want to thank the Department of Ethnic Studies and the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley for hosting and supporting this research; the Fulbright Foundation for funding one of us (Spoonley) to travel and work in the United States in 2010 on this project; Massey University for a return visit in 2011; Deena Seesaegnom (who was then working as a researcher for the Integration of Immigrants Programme at Massey University) for her work in analyzing the material that was collected; Maribel, Harold, Jenna, Estivaliz, Rishi, Sandra, and Isabella for all their work; and those who took part. We hope that they recognize themselves in what we have said and that they continue to play an important part in the future of Latinos in the United States, whether within their respective communities or as contributors to the civitas of a current and future America, whether in the context of peer or familial groups or in how Latinos are represented and understood more broadly in the key institutions of the United States. Carpe diem.
Appendix: Survey Questions

Respondent Name: ___________________________ Phone number: _____________________
Interviewer: ___________________________

Immigrant Identities
We are conducting a survey on the children of Latino immigrants to the USA. We are interested in issues such as language use, ethnic affiliation, and identity.

We are interested in second-generation Latino immigrants — those born in the USA but one of whose parents was born elsewhere (in central or south America).

1. What is your date of birth?
   Month   Day   Year

2. Where were you born?
   Town/City
   State
   Country

3. Where were your parents born?
   Town/City
   Country
   Mother
   Father

4. When did your parents arrive in the USA?
   Year
   Mother
   Father
5. Could you indicate your parents’ ethnic/cultural origin and nationality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic identity</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>

6. Where did you grow up? ___________________________________________________

7. What sort of community would you describe it as? Were there a lot of Latinos in the community?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

8. Was it:
   Rural/urban/suburban: _________________________________________________________
   High/medium/low socio-economic: ______________________________________________

9. Has your parent’s socio-economic position changed since they arrived in the USA?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

10. What is your parent’s highest educational qualification?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Educational Qualification</th>
<th>High School Diploma</th>
<th>Undergraduate degree</th>
<th>Postgraduate degree</th>
<th>Other (please specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
11. When you were growing up who lived in your household? (circle all that are appropriate).
   - Parents, siblings only
   - Grandparents
   - Other (Please specify)

12. Were your parents conservative or liberal on social issues (homosexuality, dating, religion)?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

13. Are you religious?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Somewhat

14. If yes, what religion are you?

______________________________________________________________________________

15. Is it the same religion as your parents?

______________________________________________________________________________

16. Where do you live now? That is, where do you stay most often (Mark ONE response only)
   a. Your parents’ home
   b. Your own place (apartment, home, etc.)
   c. Another relative’s home
   d. A friend’s home or apartment
   e. Group quarters (college dorm, fraternity, military barracks, group home, etc.)
      - What kind of group quarters are you living in?

______________________________________________________________________________
   f. Other (please specify)

______________________________________________________________________________

17. What degree are you enrolled for?
   - Bachelors
   - Masters
   - Ph.D.
   - Other postgraduate (please specify)
18. How many years of study have you completed?
   - 1st year
   - 1 year
   - 2 years
   - 3 years
   - 4 years or more

Your Interests and Identity
We are interested in your identity and what is important to you.

19. We would like to know how you describe yourself (ethnic, national, other). What do you call yourself? Does it change depending on circumstances? Explain.

______________________________________________________________________________

20. How important is this identity to you?
   - Not important
   - Somewhat important
   - Very important
   - It varies

21. What is your citizenship status? (Mark ONE response)
   - U.S. citizen by birth
   - U.S. citizen by naturalization
   - Not a U.S. citizen
   - Dual citizenship or nationality

22. Do you think of yourself as an American sometimes and as an xxxxxxx at other times?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

23. When does this happen and why?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

24. Are you proud to be xxxxx?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Indifferent
25. Are you proud to be an American?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Indifferent/ sometimes

If yes, how proud? (Circle One)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
A little A lot Extremely

If not, why not? Or why is it indifferent or conditional to you?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Political Affiliation
If you are a citizen: We would like to ask you some questions about your political involvement and views.

26. Are you a registered voter?
   - Yes
   - No

27. Do you vote?
   - Yes
   - No

28. How would you describe your political views?
   - Very left
   - Slightly left
   - Neither left nor conservative
   - Slightly conservative
   - Very conservative

If you are not a citizen would voting in the United States be important to you? Why?
____________________________________________________________________________________
Parents’ Origin

We are interested in your parents identity/nationality and how much contact you have had with your parent’s country of origin.

29. How many times have you been back to visit your or your parent’s home country?
   
   
   Number of trips back

30. Have you gone back and lived there for longer than 6 months? (Mark one response)
   • Yes
   • No

31. Which feels most like “home” to you: the United States, or your parents’ country of origin? (Mark one)
   • The United States
   • My parents’ country of origin
   • I don’t feel at “home” in either country
   • I feel equally at “home” in both

32. Have you ever been embarrassed or felt discomfort due to your parents (behavior, linguistic or social differences, etc.) If yes, explain/expand/provide examples.
   • Yes, a lot
   • Yes, sometimes
   • Never

33. What are the most significant issues or areas of cultural or behavior disagreement with your parents? When do you most often disagree with your parents’ point?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

34. What are the most significant issues or areas of cultural or behavioral agreement with your parents? When do you most agree with your parents’ point of view?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
35. Have you ever considered moving to live in your parents’ home country?
   Yes, why?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   No, why?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

Language Use
We are interested in the languages you use and how well you can use them.

36. Do you know a language other than English?
   • Yes
   • No
   (If YES) What language is that? (the non-English language you know best)
   ____________________________________________________________

(If speaks Spanish): Which language did you learn first?
   • English
   • Spanish

37. How well do you speak, understand, read and write Spanish? (Mark the ONE response that best applies in each column)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speak</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Write</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Well</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Well</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
38. How well do you speak, understand, read and write in English? (Mark the ONE response that best applies in each column)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speak</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Write</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Little</td>
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<td>Not Well</td>
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<td>Well</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Well</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

39. In what language(s) do you speak with your parents, spouse or partner, children, friends and co-workers? (Mark the ONE response that best applies for each)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages you use to speak with:</th>
<th>Your parents</th>
<th>Your spouse or partner (if any)</th>
<th>Your children</th>
<th>Your closest friends</th>
<th>Your co-workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only English</td>
<td>(if any)</td>
<td>Future plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly English</td>
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<tr>
<td>English and Spanish about the same</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mostly Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Spanish only</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
40. Do you speak Spanish with your fellow university students?
   - Not applicable, I do not speak another language
   - All the time
   - Frequently
   - Sometimes
   - Not at all

41. Do you have to translate for your parents?
   - Yes, a lot
   - Yes, sometimes
   - No, never

42. In what language do you hope to raise your children (or the children you may have)?
   (Mark one response)
   - English
   - Spanish

43. Both about the same

44. What are your favorite TV programs?
   1. __________________________________________________
   2. __________________________________________________
   3. __________________________________________________
   4. __________________________________________________
   5. __________________________________________________

45. What type of music do you like?
   1. __________________________________________________
   2. __________________________________________________

46. What is your favorite food?
   1. __________________________________________________
   2. __________________________________________________
   3. __________________________________________________
47. Do you use technology in the home (social networking sites, internet)?
   - Yes
   - No

   How often do you use this technology? ________________________________

48. Do you belong to Latino organizations? Or Latin American organizations?
   - Yes
   - No

   If yes, please specify.
   1. ________________________________
   2. ________________________________
   3. ________________________________
   4. ________________________________
   5. ________________________________
References


