SEVEN

Race, Racialization, and Latino Populations in the United States

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The racial and ethnic landscape of the United States has been rapidly transformed in the twenty-five years since the initial publication in 1986 of Michael Omi and Howard Winant's *Racial Formation in the United States*.[1] Since that time scholars have built upon Omi and Winant's powerful theoretical approach in order to perceptively remap how the long-standing "black-white" binary in this country has been rapidly transformed. Some have argued that this framework has morphed into a "nonwhite-white" binary, while others have argued that our racial and ethnic landscape has taken a decidedly "Latin Americanization" form in recent years.[2] In both cases, overpowering demographic trends and formidable structural factors have moved the United States away from a two-tiered racial hierarchy to a more complex and variegated, multitiered structure.

The chapter explores some of these recent demographic and structural changes, with a specific focus on the Latino population. My goal is to assess the impact that the precipitous increase in the Latino population in the United States has had on this racial topography in two specific ways. First, I explore the vexing conundrums that Latinos have posed for how we think about race and ethnicity in this country. The accelerated growth of an increasingly diverse Latino population has profoundly complicated Latinos' placement in both the evolving racial hierarchy and the popular imagination in the United States. Second, I assess the troubling ways that Latinos have increasingly come to racialize one another and that could not have predicted twenty-five years ago. Briefly stated, Latinos have taken the way that racial lines were drawn and given meaning both in the Spanish colonial world and in the United States to reracialize one another in disturbing ways. Recent ethnographic studies have perceptively documented this process and provide valuable insights into this unexplored aspect of the racial formation process. I explore both of these nettlesome issues in turn and, in so doing, draw on a variety of primary and secondary sources to support the analysis.

THE RACIALIZATION OF LATINOS IN THE UNITED STATES

The Latino population has historically occupied a unique position in the racial and ethnic hierarchy of the United States. It is important to assess how Latinos have been racialized over time and the various ways that they have complicated how we think about race. When *Racial Formation in the United States* was published in 1986, the federal government's standards for defining racial and ethnic groups had recently been reformulated. In 1977 the Office of Management and Budget's Statistical Policy Division and Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs issued "Directive 15: Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and

Administrative Reporting." That decree standardized the governmental collection and use of "racial" and "ethnic" statistics in the United States. It provided new operational definitions for the OMB's racial/ethnic cartography of the United States. Directive 15 clearly specified the codification of four major "races"— "American Indian or Alaska Native," "Asian or Pacific Islander," "Black," and "White"—and the delineation of two "ethnic" groups—"Hispanic origin" and "not of Hispanic origin." According to Ruben Rumbaut, "Since that time, in keeping with the logic of this classification system, census data on Hispanics have been officially reported with a footnote indicating that 'Hispanics may be of any race'" (Rumbaut 2009, 24).

These race and ethnic standards were revised in 1977 in response to mounting criticisms of the way these categories were deployed in implementing Directive 15. In that year, the federal government adopted a new set of standards for defining racial/ethnic categories, which led to the formalization of five "racial" groups rather than four. In essence, the "Pacific Islander" population was disaggregated from the "Asian American" population and placed in a separate racial category. Census 2000 offered respondents for the first time the option of selecting more than one racial designation and reworded the two existing "ethnic" categories as "Hispanic or Latino" and "not Hispanic or Latino." In so doing, the census formally defined an individual of "Hispanic or Latino" background as "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origins, regardless of race."

The revisions to Directive 15 in 1977 were the product of intense political contestations and vociferous criticisms from various quarters. In this regard, as Rumbaut discovered, the announcement reporting these changes in the *Federal Register* candidly noted: "The categories in this classification are social-political constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature. … The standards have been developed to provide a common language for uniformity and comparability in the collection and use of data on race and ethnicity by Federal agencies" (Rumbaut 2009, 25). In his perceptive assessment of these OMB changes, Rumbaut concludes: "The classification of 'Hispanic' or 'Latino' itself is new, an instance of a panethnic category created by law decades ago. But the groups subsumed under that label—Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Peruvians, Ecuadorians, and the other dozen nationalities from Latin American and even Spain itself—were not 'Hispanics' or 'Latinos' in their countries of origin; rather, they only became so in the United States. That catchall label has a particular meaning only in the U.S. context in which it was constructed and is applied, and where its meaning continues to evolve" (16–17).

Yet many Latinos continue to base their racial identities on the way that the various nationalities were racialized in their country of origin when it was part of the Spanish colonial empire.[3] However, this highly variegated and nuanced racial system clashes with the way racial categories are more starkly drawn and defined in the United States. It appears that Latino immigrants are racialized in one particular way in the Spanish colonial context and then reracialized under the cultural logic of another racial order when they come to this country.

This difficulty in unambiguously racializing the Latino population has a long and complex

history in this country that dates back to at least the middle of the nineteenth century when the United States seized control of the American Southwest through the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846–48. For example, it was principally as a result of the annexation of the Southwest that the Mexican population was formally granted U.S. citizenship and, in effect, deemed an "honorary white" population. The nearly 110,000 Mexicanos who remained in the territory ceded by Mexico one year after the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) became U.S. citizens with formally recognized claims to the prerogatives and privileges of whiteness. (Whether they were ever fully or meaningfully extended in the various territories and eventual states is quite another matter altogether).[4]

Clear codification of the racial status of the Mexican population can be seen in the 1850 decennial U.S. census; when the newly conquered Mexican population in the American Southwest was enumerated as "White," as it remained until 1930. In that year, they were summarily removed from the white category and placed in a separate racial designation as "Mexican." By the Great Depression, the number of Mexican people in the United States had grown to more than 1.5 million and had become the source of intense anti-immigrant xenophobia.

By 1940, however, the Mexican population was once again redefined as part of the "white" population and marked as speaking the "Spanish mother tongue." In that year, the federal census classified "persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not defined as Indian or some other nonwhite race … as white." The federal censuses of 1950 and 1960 continued to enumerate Mexicans as "white persons of Spanish surname."[5]

When one spoke of the Latino/Hispanic population in the late 1960s, before the publication of *Racial Formation in the United States*, one still referred primarily to Mexicans. This was at a time before widespread and sustained Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Central American immigration to the United States. After 1960, however, things changed dramatically and quickly. The explosive rise in Latino immigration after 1965 led to the exponential increase in the pan-Latino population in the United States, one not only far larger but also more racially diverse than it had been in prior years.

In 1970 the federal census relied on the category "Hispanic" to capture the tremendous internal diversity of the various Latino nationalities in the United States. It underscored their common "Hispanic" (i.e., Spanish) ethnicity and former status as part of the Spanish colonial world. Having a "common culture" rooted in the Spanish language and Catholic religion was the key ethnic signifier that bound these diverse nationalities into one category.[6] This shared ethnic background is something that none of the other racialized populations have in common that are placed in the discrete racial categories deployed in the United States. None of the groups racialized as "White," "Black," "Asian," Hawaiian/Pacific Islander," or "American Indian" share a common culture solidly anchored in one particular language or religious background. Latinos are thus a unique population in this regard.

By 1970 there were more than 10 million "Hispanics" in the United States. Mexicans were still the largest Latino population, numbering 4.5 million and accounting for nearly 45 percent of Hispanics in the United States at the time. In that year there were also 1.5 million Puerto

Ricans; 550,000 Cubans; 1.5 million Central and South Americans; and another million designated as some "Other Spanish" population.

By 1990, a mere twenty years later, the Hispanic population had more than doubled to nearly 22 million. By the time Census 2000 was taken, the Hispanic/Latino population had dramatically risen to 35.2 million and accounted for nearly 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population. Mexicans still remained the largest Latino nationality, comprising 60 percent of the Latino population in that year. They were followed by Puerto Ricans (9.7%), Central Americans (3.5%), South Americans (4.0%), Dominicans (2.3%), and the "Other Hispanic" category (15.7%).

By the time Census 2000 was taken, Latinos had actually surpassed African Americans as the largest racial-ethnic group in the United States. Each accounted for 35 million individuals that year, or approximately 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population. However, by 2007 the number of Latinos in the United States had dramatically swelled to nearly 45 million, or 15 percent of the total population. In the fifty-year period from 1950 to 2000, the Latino population had dramatically increased from approximately 4 million to over 35 million individuals. Census 2010 data has documented that the Latino population grew from 35.3 million in 2000 to over 50 million in 2010 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010). Current population trends suggest that by the year 2050 Latinos will have increased in number to an estimated 128 million people, or 29 percent of the total U.S. population. Demographers predict that they will significantly exceed the total number of all other racial/ethnic groups combined. African Americans, for example, are projected to continue to account for only 13 percent of the national total; while Asian Americas will account for another 9 percent of the U.S. population in 2050 (Rumbaut 2009, 17).

This monumental population increase has been accompanied by a number of profound structural changes that have powerfully impacted our perceptions of race and race relations in the United States. Among these changes worth noting here have been the momentous change in U.S. immigration policy in 1965 (which shifted the focus away from Western Europe and toward Latin America and Asia), the hard-won victories of the Civil Rights Movement (which arguably extended meaningful, first-class citizenship rights to African Americans and other people of color), and the overturning of anti-miscegenation laws, through *Loving v. Commonwealth of Virginia*. That 1967 Supreme Court decision put an end to more than three hundred years of legal prohibitions on interracial marriages in the United States and directly contributed to the recent rise of a growing "multiracial" population. This mixed-race population grew by nearly 30 percent in the from 2000 to 2010 and now comprises approximately 3 percent of the total U.S. population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2010). If one were to combine this "multiracial" population with the Latino population, approximately 18 percent of the total U.S. population is arguably mixed-race. This is clearly a very recent historical development that has had profound implications for how we understand the meaning of race and for the changing nature of race relations in the contemporary United States.

THE CONUNDRUMS OF RACIAL IDENTITY AMONG THE LATINO POPULATION

We know from the way that Latinos responded to both the race and ethnic questions in Census 2000 that many had difficulty placing themselves in the discrete racial categories used in the federal census. It appears that many Latinos resorted to constructions of racial categories and identities drawn from the Spanish colonial world or simply used their nationality as the basis of their racial identity. In 2000, more than half (52.3%) of the pan-Latino population racially defined themselves as "White." Despite the central role that the Indigenous and African populations played in the Spanish racial regime, it is surprising that so very few Latinos actually identify as either Indian or black. Less than 1 percent defined themselves in 2000 as "American Indian" or "Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander." Only 1.4 percent of Latinos racially defined themselves as "Black," while another 3.9 percent claimed to be of "two or more races" (Candelario 2007a, 345). It is significant that less than 2 percent of the total U.S. population indicated that they were of more than one race. But of those who did, Hispanics were more than three times as likely to report being of "two or more races" than non-Hispanics (Rumbaut 2009, 26–27).

In Census 2000 a person who ethnically identified as "Hispanic" or "Latino" was, in essence, separated from the other five racial categories and then asked to racially define him- or herself based on the OMB's newly reformulated racial categories. Nearly half of the Latino populations when asked to give their racial identity in Census 2000 provided answers that led to their being placed in the "some other race" category. Many Latinos simply used their nationality as a proxy for race by indicating that they were "Chicano," "Cuban," "Puerto Rican," "Dominican," or some another Latino nationality. Others invoked the nuanced racial categories or skin-color designations used in their countries of origin to racially identify themselves.

What is significant here is the large number of Latinos who do not see themselves as falling into any of the discrete racial categories deployed on the federal census. Over 40 percent (41.2%) of Latinos opted to define themselves as belonging to "some other race." For many of these individual, intermediate racial categories such as "mestizo" and "*mulato*" or color designations such as "*trigueño*" or "*moreno*" were written into the space provided.[7]

There are, of course, significant differences among the pan-Latino population in how the different nationalities racially identify themselves. The vast majority of people from Cuba, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile see themselves as white (75–88%). Panamanians claim the highest percentage of individuals who self-define as black (40.1%), followed by Dominicans, Costa Ricans, and Hondurans (9.4%, 7.2%, and 5.3%, respectively) (Candelario 2007a, 345).

People from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Guatemala are among the most likely to define themselves as being of "some other race." Dominicans, on the other hand, often racially self-identify by invoking the intermediate categories "Indio blanco" and "Indio oscuro," which are among the core racial designations in the Dominican Republic. In Haiti, only the Francophone immigrant population is seen as being black.[8]

Given the prerogatives and entitlements of whiteness extended to both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans as a result of U.S. colonial conquest (the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and the Jones Act in 1917), it is not surprising that both of the two largest Latino groups generally see

themselves as a white population.[9] In 2000, approximately 47 percent of both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans racially defined themselves as white.

"Some other race" was the second-largest category enumerated by Mexicans (45.4%) and Puerto Ricans (38.4%) when they were asked to racially identify themselves. Another 10.7 percent of Mexicans and 14.3 percent of Puerto Ricans did not answer the race question. Once again, only a very small number of Mexicans define themselves as "Black" (0.7%). Despite the growing number of indigenous people from Mexico now in the United States, only about 1 percent of Mexicans racially self-define as "Indian." A smaller number of Puerto Ricans identified themselves as "Indian" (0.5%), while a significant number (5.8%) racially defined themselves as "Black." Both groups made significant use of the "two or more races" category. However, given their mixed-raced ancestry, it is surprising that only 5.2 percent of Mexicans and 7.8 percent of Puerto Ricans claimed more than one racial background.[10]

THE RERACIALIZATION OF LATINO POPULATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

While this ambiguity in how Latinos racially identify themselves is understandable given that they have straddled two very different racial regimes, they apparently have far less trouble racializing one another. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the ways that the two largest Latino populations have increasingly come into conflict in ways that can be traced to how each group racializes the other. In other words, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans have increasingly come to racially define each other through the lens and logic of the Spanish racial regime that previously ensnared them. They apparently rely on this cultural logic after immigrating to the United States.

Growing evidence of this pattern can be seen in a number of recent ethnographic studies that have explored the often contentious relationship between the two Latino populations. Let us now explore the curious way that this reracialization unfolds and how it complicates the forging of a pan-Latino identity among the various Latino nationalities in the United States.

Some of the most interesting, and troubling, research in Latino studies has produced superb ethnographic studies of multiple Latino populations in areas where they have converged in recent years. Nicolas De Genova and Ana Ramos-Zayas' *Latino Crossings* (2003), De Genova's *Working the Boundaries* (2005), Gina Perez's *The Near Northwest Side Story* (2004), Arlene Davila's *Barrio Dreams* (2004), and Robert Smith's *Mexican New York* (2006) are a few examples of this sophisticated ethnographic research. While each of these scholars addresses a distinct set of issues, all have in the process also documented the increasing tensions between recent Mexican immigrants and Puerto Rican migrants in Chicago and New York City.

De Genova and Ramos-Zayas's powerful book *Latino Crossings* offers the following troubling summary of this contentious intergroup conflict:

> What emerge are competing visions of each group's "civilized" or "modern" qualities in juxtaposition to the other's purported "rudeness" or "backwardness." … Mexican immigrants often generalized from the allegation that Puerto Ricans were "lazy" to posit variously they were like-wise untrustworthy, deceptive, willing to cheat, disagreeable,

> nervous, rude, aggressive, violent, dangerous, and criminal. In constructing these racialized images of the character of Puerto Ricans as a group, Mexicans were implicitly celebrating themselves as educated, well-mannered, and civilized. In contrast, Puerto Ricans frequently elaborated further upon their perceptions of Mexicans as uninitiated into the workings of the sociopolitical system in the United States and inclined to sacrifice their dignity in a desperate quest for work. Puerto Ricans commonly coupled these judgments with allegations that Mexicans, as a group, were submissive, obliging, gullible, naïve, rustic, out-moded, folksy, backward, and predominantly "cultural," in contrast to a vision of themselves as political, principled, sophisticated, stylish, dynamic, urban, and modern. Remarkably, these parallel discourses on the parts of both groups served to sustain their own divergent claims of civility or modernity, in ways that implied their differential worthiness for the entitlements of citizenship. (De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 2003, 83)

While there is considerable merit in De Genova and Ramos-Zayas's characterization of this ethnic tension, I suspect that there is something far more fundamental taking place here than a cultural conflict between two Latino populations. At the core of these tensions are the different ways that each group constructs the meaning of race in its country of origin and how each group reracializes the other in the United States. It is the distinct constructions of race in the Spanish and U.S. colonial contexts that leads to each group viewing the other through the eyes of the two colonial regimes that have largely structured their historical experiences. In other words, Mexicans appear to view Puerto Ricans principally through the lens of how "blackness" is constructed in both Mexico and in the United States. Puerto Ricans, on the other hand, essentially come to view Mexicans through the lens of how "Indianness" is given meaning in Puerto Rico and in the United States. While notions of "civilization" and "modernity" undeniably play a role in these racialized constructions, they do so through the way that blackness and Indianness have been infused with racialized cultural meaning in their distinct historical experiences.

These racialized constructions are the product of the ways that each group has internalized its Spanish colonial world's view of the African and Indigenous populations subjugated in Mexico and Puerto Rico. Added to that foundation, these groups then reracialize each other under the discursive logic that structures the meaning of race in the United States. Mexicans take what they learned from their Spanish colonizers and fuse that with what they quickly learn about the meaning of race in the white supremacist United States. The negative constructions of blackness that Mexican immigrants bring with them from Mexico are exacerbated by the way in which African Americans and black Latinos are racially constructed by the white population in the United States. Puerto Ricans, and also many African Americans, tend to immediately mark and position Mexicans as a largely backward population that they view as fundamentally "Indian."

MEXICAN VIEWS OF RACE IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES

Racial categorization and self-identity among ethnic Mexicans in the United States generally crystallizes along lines of racial difference that position them within a skin-color hierarchy, or pigmentocracy. Those at the very top are usually the most fair-complexioned and light-skinned Mexicans who can claim some Spanish ancestry. This status is generally marked by use of terms such as *guero* and *guera* (light-skinned) or *blanco* and *blanca* (white). This has been, and remains, a privileged racial status with a profound impact on the life chances and mobility

opportunities of the Mexican population.

Mexicans have had long and deep investments in claiming whiteness in the United States. From the mid-nineteenth century, when they were first granted an "honorary white" status after the U.S.-Mexico War, through the mid-twentieth century, Mexicans struggled for equal rights by vigilantly claiming the rights and entitlements of whiteness. It was not until the late 1960s, at the height of the Chicano Movement, that Mexicans began to redefine themselves as a "brown" population and, in the process, explicitly claim and celebrate their Indian ancestry. In so doing, they systematically devalued any claims to European ancestry and completely denied any African ancestry.[11]

The superordinate status of "whiteness" among ethnic Mexicans is generally followed by the large intermediate racial category that the vast majority of the population occupies. The most commonly used term designating this status is *mestizo* (mixed-race; typically of Spanish and Indian ancestry) or the skin-color referent *moreno* (medium brown). It is generally acknowledged that most ethnic Mexicans have a mixed-race ancestry and are largely *mestizo* in origins.

Recent ethnographic research in Mexico has documented that in areas where Mexicans with palpable African ancestry reside, individuals often invoke skin color distinctions to distinguish them from the *blanco/a* and *moreno* populations. These shades of difference are made with reference to individuals seen as either *moreno claro/a* (light brown) or *moreno oscuro/a* (dark brown) (Sue 2009, 115). This strikingly parallels the way that Dominicans designate those mixed-race individuals of African ancestry into *Indio claro* or *Indio oscuro* categories.

There are, however, other racial categories and skin color referents invoked among ethnic Mexicans to mark other phenotypical distinctions made among them. Racial categories such as *negro* (black), *Chino* (Chinese, or Asian more generally), and *Indio* (Indian) are widely used by ethnic Mexicans to designate individuals with African, Asian, or Indian phenotypical features. It was very common in the Southern California world in which I was raised to find individuals with strong African, Asian, or Indian features who were referred to in these terms. They were generally ranked below *mestizos* (because they were less white) and placed near the bottom of the racial hierarchy. But it is very clear that the most derisive term and devalued racial category invoked was the term *Indio*. It signified the very bottom tier of the Mexican gradational racial hierarchy or pigmentocracy.

In its most common usage throughout Mexico (and much of Latin America) *Indio* is not just a neutral term for being "Indian" or "*Indigena*." Instead, it is most often used as a derogatory epithet synonymous with being "rude," "uncouth," or generally "backward." Other anthropologists suggest that the term *Indio* went hand in hand with the notion of Indians as lazy, idle, or shiftless, as in the phrase laboring "*como Indio*" (Stephen 2007).

The way in which Spanish-Indian relations in Mexico clearly elevated the white Spanish population and summarily subordinated the Indigenous population to the bottom of that racial regime has a long and sordid history. To call a fellow Mexican an *Indio* was to invoke a derisive racial epithet that connoted being ugly, dumb, and primitive. The term *Indio* was a

derisive racial slur that conveyed an image of a dark-complexioned, low-class, and ill-bred person.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that other Latino groups (such as Puerto Ricans) would paint the Mexican population—especially recent undocumented individuals with indigenous ancestry from Oaxaca or Chiapas—as essentially Indians. This is probably the most offensive thing one could possible say to a Mexican *mestizo*. It captures and reflects the negative status of the Indian population under the Spanish colonial dominion of Mexico and in the American Southwest prior to U.S. annexation.

Blackness, however, is also marked in a derisive way by recent Mexican immigrants as well as by second- and third-generation Mexican Americans and Chicanos. While it may be true that *negrito* is often used as a diminutive term of endearment, it is nonetheless an inherently problematic construction. This is clearly seen when the base term *negro* is used to describe an adult black person: *"un negrote"* (a huge, menacing black person). The diminutive construction of blackness is marked as unthreatening, while the latter construction is unambiguously marked as threatening with troubling sexual connotations.[12]

There can be little doubt that ethnic Mexicans have systematically devalued and denied the full extent of their African ancestry, while simultaneously valorizing either their Spanish or Indian ancestry. The full extent of this negrophobia is clearly seen when one considers that the Mexican national census in 1646 documented that there were slightly more people of African descent then Spaniards enumerated in that year (Menchaca 2001, 61). From this fact, it seems clear that ethnic Mexicans actually have far more African ancestry than they have been willing to acknowledge. This troubling denial and negrophobia has curiously affected the way blackness has been constructed by both native-born Mexican Americans and the recent immigrant population.

In the case of Chicago, for instance, De Genova has discussed how blackness carries racial significance in the Mexican immigrant's description of the African American population in that city. The most common and benign constructions were made with reference to their being dark-complexioned, such as references to them as *"Negros"* (blacks), *"Morenos"* (dark brown or dark-skinned), or *"Prietos"* (dark or swarthy). However, the most common of these terms used by Mexicans to refer to African Americans was *"morenos,"* which De Genova maintains was often used as a way of avoiding the use of the term *Negroes* or the n-word. According to him:

> What is remarkable in the ubiquitous usage of the term moreno in place of negro, however, is that many Mexicans (perhaps the majority) would have been most commonly inclined to describe themselves in Mexico (before migrating) as morenos, and—excluding diminutive uses that are always relative and highly contextual—would have tended to reserve the category negro for Mexicans considered to be of recognizable African ancestry. In the course of reracialization in the United States, however, the two were conflated as markers of Blackness, and the term moreno was displaced onto African Americans as a generic and collective (racial) category. … Thus, the fairly ambiguous, highly contextual, sweeping middle term moreno—the color category that brushes the broad mass of "brown" Mexicans within Mexico's distinct and relatively fluid racial order—is deflected altogether from Mexicans as a group in the United States and tends to be fixed unequivocally upon African Americans as a rigid generic racial category. (De Genova 2005, 196–197)

However, both recent Mexican immigrants and Chicanos or Mexican Americans find common ground in making widespread use of the same racialized term in referring to African

Americans. In this regard, *El Libro de Calo: The Dictionary of Chicano Slang* offers an insightful confirmation of this convergence in the way that both groups racialize African Americans (Polkinhorn, Velasco, and Lambert 2005). This dictionary affirms that the most commonly used term to designate blackness among ethnic Mexicans is *mayate* or *pinacate*. Both terms refer to a black beetle (a Mexican dung beetle in the first case and, in the second, a smaller black beetle commonly found in the Southwest). The term *mayuco*, which is also widely used, appears to be a variant of *mayate*. These designations foreground the blackness of these insects while also providing a sweeping, dehumanizing move in the racialization process. Other zoomorphic terms such as *changos* or *chanates* (monkeys) are also used and share disturbing commonalities with the way African Americans have been historically racialized in the United States.

Interestingly, the majority of the other terms Chicanos use to designate blackness are less inflected by these zoomorphic referents and, instead, foreground dark complexion. For example, disparaging references to African Americans as *prietos* (blackish, dark), *tintos* (dyed, stained), *oscuros* (dark), *tostados* (toasted, dark brown), *quemados* (burned, very dark), or simply *negros* (black, swarthy) all focus on their dark complexion as the key signifier in this racialization.

But the term *mayate* is clearly the most commonly used racial epithet invoked by ethnic Mexicans and is always used in a disparaging way. The term appears to have taken on particular significance in various subcultural worlds among ethnic Mexicans. It was often used in the 1940s to describe a hip African American zoot-suiter who donned the same stylized garb that the Mexican pachuco wore. Despite their shared sense of style and affinities in music and dance, it was always used as a disparaging racial slur.

Alternatively, it was also used in a more sexually explicit way by queer Latino men to describe virile, heterosexual African American men who anally penetrate sexually passive homosexual men. These black men were never stigmatized as being homosexual because they assume the active, inserter role (i.e., *"activo"* as opposed to *"pasivo"*). In this particular usage of *mayate*, the association between homosexuality and anal sex—and its simultaneous use to refer to a big black beetle that feasts on dung—does not require too much imagination to see the racialized sexualization of African Americans.[13]

PUERTO RICAN VIEWS OF RACE IN PUERTO RICO AND THE UNITED STATES

Like ethnic Mexicans, Puerto Ricans in both the United States and the island also invoke a gradational racial hierarchy to mark lines of racial difference among themselves. In his interesting analysis of racial identity among Puerto Ricans, anthropologist Jorge Duany has documented at least nineteen different ways in which Puerto Ricans have racially define themselves on the island. Among these racial categories and skin-color referents are *blanco* (white), *trigueño* (wheat-colored or brunette; usually light mulatto), *moreno* (dark-skinned; usually dark mulatto), *mulato* (mixed-race; rarely used in public); *Indio* (literally, Indian; brown skin with straight hair); *prieto* (dark-skinned; usually derogatory); *negro* (black; rarely

used as a direct term of reference); and *negrito* (literally, little black) (Duany 2002b).

Duany maintains that "racialized images of Indians and Africans have dominated how Puerto Ricans imagined their ethnic background" (Duany 2002b, 276). "Puerto Rican identity," he contends, "reveals the systematic overvaluation of the Hispanic element, the romanticization of Taino Indians, and the underestimation of the African-derived ingredients" (280). Like Mexicans, Puerto Ricans also have long and deep investments in their claims to whiteness. For example, in response to the Census 2000 question on race, approximately 48 percent of Puerto Ricans in the United States claimed to be "white," while another 38 percent gave responses that led to their being categorized as belonging to "some other race" (Jung and Almaguer 2004, 72). Despite the widespread racial mixing in their Spanish colonial history, very few Puerto Ricans actually claim to be either "Black" or "Indian" in any significant numbers. Only 5.8 percent of Puerto Ricans identified as "Black," and less than 1 percent as "Indian" in Census 2000 (Jung and Almaguer 2004, 72). Curiously, Duany has shown that the actual number of Puerto Ricans on the island—known as "the whitest of the Antilles"—who identify as "White" has actually grown over the years and was calibrated at over 80 percent in Census 2000 (Duany 2002b, 248).

What is so interesting about the racial classifications deployed among Puerto Ricans is the particular way in which Indianness is socially marked. The preconquest indigenous Taino population has taken on importance in the way that Puerto Ricans have come to racialize Mexicans. Being of Taino ancestry assumes certain social associations that capture the way in which Indianness is infused with racial meaning in Puerto Rico. The dominant characterizations of the Taino, according to Duany, constitute the prototype of Rousseau's "noble savage" (in which these indigenous people are seen as "docile, sedentary, indolent, tranquil, and chaste") (Duany 2002b, 268).

In terms of skin color, the most relied-upon racial descriptions of the Taino is "neither white nor black but brown or 'copper like' and that their intermediate phenotype placed them between Europeans and Africans in moral and ascetic terms" (Duany 2002b, 270). Duany contends that few "standard descriptions of the Taino Indians fail to mention their skin color, physical stature, bodily constitution, hair texture, and facial features. … For example, one third-grade textbook widely used in Puerto Rico today lists the following 'characteristics of the Taino race': medium build, copper-tone skin, black and straight hair, prominent cheekbones, slightly slanted eyes, long nose, and relatively thick lips. These features are sharply contrasted with the phenotypes of both Spaniards and Africans" (270).

In Chicago, Puerto Ricans are quick to acknowledge that Mexicans have a much closer and deeper association with Indianness than do Puerto Ricans. As one informant told De Genova and Ramos-Zayas: "Mexicans have real Indians. We (Puerto Ricans) have Indian blood in our heritage, be we are not *Indian* Indian" (2003, 192). According to sociologist Robert Smith, the racial mapping of Mexican bodies in Indian terms also occurs in New York City (R. Smith 2006).

Arlene Davila also underscores this point in her book *Barrio Dreams*. Therein she acknowledges that Herman Badillo, the Puerto Rican chairman of the board of trustees at the

City University of New York and unsuccessful candidate for mayor in 2001, articulated the commonly held view among Puerto Ricans that Mexicans " 'came from the hills,' from countries with little tradition of education, and were mostly short and straight haired Indians. These racist comments exposed stereotypes of Mexicans as less educated or unsophisticated 'newcomers,' as opposed the 'urban savviness' of Puerto Ricans" (Davila 2004, 173).

This perception that Mexicans are racially "more Indian" than Puerto Ricans occasionally finds expression in how these Latino groups explicitly racialize one another's gendered bodies. A conversation among young Puerto Rican informants in *Latino Crossings* offers an insightful example of this racialization: "You can tell if someone is Mexican or Puerto Rican by looking at their asses. … Yeah, you see, Puerto Ricans have an ass and Mexicans are flat-assed—they have an Indian ass. … Yeah, Selena was real pretty. She looked Puerto Rican, you know. She had an ass … Women who have big tits have flat asses. If you really want to know if a woman has a flat ass, you look at her chest. That's why you have a lot of Mexican women who are big on top and have no ass" (quoted in Davila 2004, 193).

This ethnographic data documents the troubling way that Latino populations previously ensnared by the Spanish colonial empire have come to view one another in the United States. This brings us back to how Puerto Ricans view the Mexican immigrant population in Chicago as essentially "Indians." It is their construction of the Taino that provides a window on how they have come to construct recent Mexican immigrants. This is, in one respect, just the other side of the way Puerto Ricans are have been constructed as "black" by the Mexican population in Chicago.

This chapter explores the unique way in which the Latino population has been racialized in the United States and situated within its racial and ethnic landscape. I argue that Latinos stand alone among communities of color in the United States in that they are principally defined in ethnic—rather than racial—terms. It is fundamentally on the basis of their common culture (based on the Spanish language and Catholic religion) that they are placed in the "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" category rather than one discrete racial category. In other words, it is the cultural logic of ethnicity, rather than that of race per se, that leads to placing the multiracial Latino populations in the "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" ethnic category.

In addition to the unique way that Latinos are located within the racial and ethnic landscape of the United States, I attempt to make sense of the equally curious and troubling way that Latinos have come to racialize one another in areas where they have increasingly settled in the United States. There is mounting ethnographic evidence that Latinos have resorted to stigmatizing one another by using the ways in which racial categories were infused with meaning in the Spanish colonial world. It is in the disparaging ways that Indianness and blackness are given cultural meaning in the countries of origin that we are able to better understand the documented tensions between the two largest Latino populations in the United States. Both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, both of whom have valorized and made direct claims to the privileges and entitlements of "whiteness," resort to racializing each another by drawing on the most stigmatizing ways that race is defined in both Mexico and Puerto Rico.

Mexicans largely denigrate Puerto Ricans on the basis of their African ancestry, while Puerto Ricans denigrate Mexicans based on their putative Indianness.

The complex meaning of race and the particular way that racialization unfolds in the United States is an ever changing sociohistorical process. Nowhere are the ambiguities and vagaries of racial formation in this country more starkly evident than in the case of the Latino population. Making sense of the unique way that race and racialization has been given cultural meaning among Latinos provides yet another window on a process that has been most eloquently articulated in Michael Omi and Howard Winant's seminal work. *Racial Formation in the United States* has enabled us to clearly see that race is fundamentally a sociohistorical category at once fictional and yet also profoundly real in its profound sociological implications.

One of these implications is the particular way that the United States has given cultural meaning to racial designations and attempts to locate various populations within the logic of the racial categories deployed in the United States. It is here that the Latino populations continue to complicate the very logic of the racial formation process in this country. As I show here, there is also mounting ethnographic evidence that Latinos often resort to the way that race was given specific meaning in the Spanish colonial context to racialize one another. It is here, in the troubling convergence of two distinct racial regimes in the lives of the Latino population, that we may illuminate the conundrums and contestations inherent in the racial formation process in the United States.

NOTES

1. The second edition of the book was published in 1994 under the slightly revised title *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*.

2. See, for example, O'Brien 2008; Bonilla-Silva 2003a; Murguia and Forman 2003; and Forman, Goar, and Lewis (2002).

3. In this regard, see the canonical study by Ramón Gutiérrez on the way these racial lines were initially drawn in Spanish colonial New Mexico (Gutiérrez 1991). Also see his classic essay "Hispanic Identities in the Southwestern United States" (Gutiérrez 2009).

4. A number of scholars have explored the racialization of the Mexican population after the U.S.-Mexico War. See, for example, Menchaca 2001, 2007; Haas 1995; Almaguer 1994; Foley 1997, 2007; Montejano 1987; Guglielmo 2006; Ruiz 2004; Gómez 2007, 2009.

5. A number of scholars have written about the historical and contemporary ambiguities in the placement of Latinos in the decennial census. See, for example, Rodríguez 2000, 2009; and Tienda and Ortiz 1986.

6. See, for example, Portes 2007.

7. For example, I answered the ethnic question on both Census 2000 and Census 2010 by indicating that I was of "Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" origin (I ethnically self-identify as "Chicano"). I then indicated in response to the race question that I was "mestizo" when asked "What is this person's race?" As a result, that particular response led to my being summarily placed in the "Some other race" category.

8. See, in this regard, Candelario 2007b and Torres-Saillant 1998, 2007.

9. The scholarly literature on the claims to whiteness by both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans continues to increase over time. On the Mexican population, for example, see Almaguer 1994; Foley 1997, 2007; Guglielmo 2006; and Menchaca 2007. On Puerto Ricans, see Duany 2002a, 2003, and 2007; Loveman and Muniz 2007; Landale and Oropesa 2002; and Vidal-Ortiz 2004.

10. These figures are based on the use of U.S. Census Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMSs) for 2000 that are gathered in Jung and Almaguer 2004, 72.

11. See, for example, the compelling book on this topic by Haney-Lopez (2004).

12. See, for example, Vaughn 2005 and Lewis 2000.

13. See, for example, the discussion of the politics of active and passive sexual roles among Latino gay men in Vidal-Ortiz et

al. 2010. See also the use of the term *bugarron* among Dominicans as a parallel term for *mayate* in Padilla 2007 and among Puerto Ricans in Guzman 2005.