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Much has been written by social scientists about ethnic identity. From a theoretical point of view, Castells (1997) has argued that changes in the social structure stemming from economic globalization has reinforced the power of local identities among some classes of people even as these changes have created new composite global identities among others. Other scholars have argued that the resurgence of international migration in the context of a globalization will create a new set of "transnational identities" that span two or more cultural settings (Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992,), thus weakening the monopoly of the nation state on cultural maintenance and identity formation (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton 1994; Sassen 1996). Others argue that the consolidation of transnational solidarities influences states from the outside. Even as transnational networks contribute to the formation of spatially dispersed communities, they also appear to be indispensable for negotiating with nation states (Kastoriano 2002). Whereas some celebrate this new hybridization of identities and cultures (Ong 1999), others find it threatening and alarming (Huntington 2004).

Particular scholarly attention has focused on immigration as an agent of change in national identity (Fitzgerald 1996; Akhtar 1999; Kostakopoulou 2001). Researchers argue about the prevalence of transnational identities in an age of widespread

immigration, and whether such identities, if they indeed exist, will prove long-lasting or simply a transient stage in a broader process of adaptation and incorporation. One thing that has been missing from this debate, however, is input from the migrants themselves. For the most part, identity is either discussed theoretically on an abstract plane far removed from the daily lives of most immigrants, or is constructed empirically by researchers from answers to specific questions asked in surveys and fieldwork.

Ultimately, however, identities are not readily observable: they are constructed in the thoughts of individual migrants who struggle to make sense of the circumstances in which they find themselves. What is needed is a means of gaining access to the perceptions of migrants without the intervening filter of researchers, who inevitably bring their own biases and preconceptions to the task. In earlier work, Durand and Massey (1995) attempted to circumvent this hurdle by examining the votive paintings left at religious shrines by Mexican migrants and their families. Their analysis of these paintings depicted the process of international migration from the migrant's point of view, revealing the particular problems and worries that people faced in crossing the border and living and working in the United States. They documented the human dimensions of international migration that are not always evident in "objective" statistics and suggested new avenues of research, such as an analysis of the social process of border crossing (see Singer and Massey 1998).

Here we adopt an alternative qualitative methodology to study the conceptualization of "Latino" versus "American" identities among Latin American migrants in the United States. Our work grows out of a larger study of transnational identity that is, in turn, a sub-project of multinational data collection effort. The Latin

American Migration Project and the Mexican Migration Project were funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to compile detailed quantitative datasets on documented and undocumented migration to the United States (see Durand and Massey 2004; Massey and Sana 2004). To date, these investigations have compiled data on emigrants from nine countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Peru (data are publicly available from the project websites at www.opr.mmp.princeton.edu and at www.opr.lamp.princeton.edu).

In order to study the process of transnational identity formation as part of this larger project, the Russell Sage Foundation provided funding for a supplementary set of qualitative interviews, which yielded in-depth narratives gathered from 160 first and second generation immigrant youths located in New York, Philadelphia, and their New Jersey suburbs. These interviews have been transcribed and are in the process of being analyzed to study the construction and reconstruction of transnational identities among Latin American migrants to the United States.1

Although the interviews were structured only by an interview guide of openended questions and were flexible and free-flowing, we were concerned that our own preconceptions and expectations might arbitrarily constrain the nature of the data we collected. We therefore undertook a supplementary pilot study that, in theory, would allow a sub-sample of the qualitative interviewees to show us what the concepts “Latino” and “American” meant to them. Specifically, we gave disposable cameras to a sample of respondents and asked them to take pictures of people, things, and objects that, to them, seemed “American” and “Latino.” After the cameras were returned to us, we developed

the film and then examined them to discern the content of these two identities. Although this qualitative photographic approach may allows us to get an intimate view of Latino and American identities perceived by immigrants, we realize that it only offers one small window on the construction of identity by Latinos in American society. Nonetheless, the contrast between perceptions of Latin and American identity provides important clues about how migrants perceive the host society and their place within it.

SAMPLE AND DATA

The list of 160 subjects interviewed in our qualitative study of transnationalism served as the sampling frame for the photographic study of Latino and American identities. We selected a 10% systematic sample and gave two disposable cameras to every tenth person on the list. A total of 16 people were given the cameras, each of which contained 27 exposures. One of the cameras had "Latino" written on it, and the other was labeled "American." The subjects were then asked to take pictures of whatever they saw in their daily lives that, to them, seemed to be "Latino" or "American." They were told to take as many pictures as they wished up to the maximum number of exposures on the camera. No further instructions were given.

Of the 16 respondents selected to participate in the photographic study, ten returned cameras to us for a response rate of 62.5%. Table 1 shows selected characteristics of the final sample of ten photographers compared with the full ethnographic sample of 160 respondents. Compared with subjects on the sampling frame, those in the photographic sub-sample were disproportionately of the second generation (60% versus 31%) and Caribbean respondents are entirely absent, with their share being made up by Mexicans. Females are slightly over-represented (58%

compared with 40% on the sampling frame) but the distribution of photographers by place roughly parallels that on the frame (allowing for small departures owing to small numbers). What the resulting photographs yield, therefore, are the perceptions of a non random sample of first and second generation Mexicans and Central-South American living in the New York-to-Philadelphia urban corridor.

Wereas ten respondents returned the Latino camera, however, only seven turned in American cameras, suggesting that subjects found it more difficult to conceptualize an American than a Latino identity. The three people who did not return American cameras included a second generation Colombian from New York, a second generation Mexican from New Jersey, and a first generation Ecuadorian from New Jersey. Only one respondent used all of the exposures available, and even this person wasted several shots that could not be used because of over or under-exposure or blurriness. In total, the ten Latino cameras provided 134 usable, unique images and the seven American cameras provided 115 images.

The photographs were scanned, digitized, and shrunk to a size where each subject's American or Latino photographs fit on a single page for easy viewing and comparison (photos for the one person who shot out both rolls were contained on two pages). Looking over the pictures, it quickly became apparent that a salient feature of their composition was the extent to which they focused on people versus things. We went through the images and coded them according to whether, in our judgment, the primary subject was people. Thus a street scene that contained people but did not focus on any particular person or identifiable individuals was coded as focusing on the place rather than the people. However, we also noted which images contained any versus no

human beings whatsoever.

We then carefully examined the Latino and American images separately to discern key themes and salient motifs. Prominent among the Latino images were pictures of Latin American businesses, places of work, homes, and cars, with some references to gang symbols, Latin cultural products, and schools. The leading categories of content that emerged from the American images were marriage to an American, monumental architecture, street scenes, cars, and American icons, with less frequent references to schools, American products, commercial displays, and waste or abandonment.

THE CONTENT OF LATINO IDENTITY

Table 2 offers a content analysis of Latino identity as discerned from repeated inspections of the 134 Latino images in the final data set. The top panel shows the breakdown of images by whether the subject of the photo was a person or people versus places or objects. In conceptualizing Latino identity, our subjects were clearly more people-focused: 62% of the images had human beings as their primary subject matter. Latino identity thus appears to be viewed something that is constructed through interrelationships with people. The fact that 7.5% of the images consist of a facial closeup suggests that the interpersonal construction of identity is often personal and intimate. Only 38% of the images focused on places or objects, most of which (a total of 31%) contained no discernable person anywhere in the photo.

The most frequent image taken, comprising 26% of the total was of the interior of some business oriented toward Latin American consumers or products, such as a store specializing in Latin music, a supermarket selling Latin American food products, or a Mexican restaurant. Indeed, one subject took all of his Latino pictures in the Ecuadorian

restaurant where he worked and another shot many within a Latin music store where he was employed. Two examples of this genre are shown in Figure 1. In the top photo, a group of high school cheerleaders, all apparently Latino, pose in an Ecuadorian restaurant while waiting for their food (their drinks have already been served, all Coca Colas). In the bottom photo, four Latinos pose inside of a Camden store specializing in Mexican cultural products (note the sombreros, cowboy boots, and piñata in the background).

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The images in Figure 1 would seem represent food as a salient characteristic of Latino identity. This emphasis was indeed highlighted by our interviewees. As one second generation Mexican from New York said when we asked what made him feel Latino:

Hmmm… my family, and the food I eat everyday.

And as a second generation Colombian from New York put it:

Yes, traditions, music, food. All that is what makes me identified, so, as Latino

A second, somewhat overlapping category focused on places of work in the United States, which included a parking garage, a market, and various stores and restaurants. This content category comprised 23% of the images, with 6% focusing on a specific person working or posing at their job. The top photo in Figure 2, for example, shows the interior of a parking garage in Manhattan where one subject worked as a valet, and the bottom shows a Latin American female migrant working as a dishwasher in a New Jersey restaurant.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Work-related images emerged as one of the most important and significant

themes in our interviews as well. As a principal attraction for Latin American migrants, work---getting a head economically---constitutes a core feature of their identity in the United States. When we asked a first generation Colombian migrant to Philadelphia what his ideals and dreams were in coming to the United States, he replied:

> *To work. [At home] I was working as a manager of a regional enterprise that started to have economic problems. Cell phone companies began to lower salaries and to cut personnel.*

Likewise, a first generation Mexican migrant from New Jersey said:

> *Well, I wanted to do a lot of things but it was not possible! (Interviewer: Like what?) Like having a job for myself that would give me enough work so that I wouldn't have to leave here. But no, that never happens. And when the interviewer asked "so you said your motivation for coming here was basically to work?" he elaborated: Yes. For the Opportunity. Also I came here for the adventure because, well, you never know if you will be able to get back. You only live once. I told him [the boss at home] that there was not enough work that paid well and that I had to leave to get ahead, to see whether I could get ahead in the United Status because there were neither opportunities nor resources [at home].*

Likewise, when asked whether he identified himself as a Latino, another second generation Mexican from New Jersey responded:

> *What makes me feel Latino, I think, is the way in which I speak and think. And I always think, ah, I know that they [migrants] all think about what they have to do. But there are those who think that if they have good goals, even though there are negatives, I say that all Hispanics who come here their goals is to get ahead.*

Another related category, making up 14% of the total images, is Latin American storefronts: pictures taken from the street or sidewalk of businesses that advertise Latin American products or contain signs marketing to Spanish-speakers. Nearly all of the Latino photos taken by one respondent were of this type. A good example is shown in the top of Figure 3. It depicts a store recently opened in South Philadelphia's "Italian Market" called "La Tienda Mexicana Lupita" ("Lupita's Mexican Market"), which features a replica of the Mexican flag in the above right corner. The bottom image shows

the offices of an income tax office where all of the signs are in English (suggesting a predominantly Anglo clientele) but which has a prominent yellow sign on the front reading “Hispanic Yellow Pages” (which suggests some effort at marketing to Latin Americans).

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Cars frequently appear in the Latino pictures (some 20% of cases), though mostly they are in the background of posed shots or are incidental objects (parked or moving) within larger landscapes. With one exception (where a subject took a photo of his own car), they do not appear to be the primary focus of attention. Very few pictures (just 4%) were taken from the window of a car, a shot that was more common among the American photos. A relatively small number of photos were taken in school settings; and just a few pictures showed Latin American cultural objects or products, such as Goya-brand canned goods on a market shelf, plantains in a bin, a Peruvian embroidery depicting a llama, or a man playing a Spanish guitar.

Recent research on the formation of immigrant identities suggests the possibility of “segmented assimilation” (Portes and Zhou 1993). Rather than constituting a linear process whereby immigrants and their children gradually adopt the language, values, and behaviors of mainstream American society, assimilation is conceptualized as segmented, being channeled in distinct directions and toward divergent outcomes by circumstances (Portes and Rumbaut 1990, 2001). Some immigrant children may retain an immigrant identity, others may blend into the mainstream of middle class America, and still others may become part of the urban underclass by adopting an “oppositional” identity hostile to both immigrant and mainstream society.

Salient manifestations of this identity are references to youth gangs, and our photographs do contain a small number of images referencing gang membership. Eight of the Latino photos taken (6% of the total) were of gang images either, in the form of hand signals or graffiti. The top image of Figure 4, for example, shows the younger brother of one respondent flashing gang hand signs to the photographer, a person who himself was a former member of a gang known as the Latin Kings. The bottom panel shows gang tags sprayed onto the side of a building. Although they may comprise a small minority of the images our respondents perceived as Latino, the mere presence of gang symbols suggests that an "oppositional" identity is clearly within the realm of possible selves for the children of immigrants seeking to make sense of the United States. Significantly, perhaps, all the images of gang symbols were taken by members of the second generation.

FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

Even though gang symbols appear in the images and are made by members of the second generation, however, they cannot necessarily be interpreted as indicating an "oppositional identity." For many respondents, gang-related activities offer meaningful interpersonal relations sources of social identity, solidarity, and support. Indeed, all of respondents who referred to gang imagery in pictures or interviews were full-time students or workers, fact that suggests less of an oppositional identity than a source of social support and ethnic identity.

Consider, for example, the following interview conducted with a member of the "Latin Kings, a second generation Colombian from New York:"

Interviewer: Do you want to tell me a little about the Latin Kings?

Respondent: *Yes, for example, it is a gang that here, only in Queens, has around*

6,000 members.

Interviewer: And they are of all ages?

Respondent: *Of all ages, of all ages. There are little kids of 11 or 12 years. Ten years old, but you see ten year-olds with people who, you know, don't look like kds, who look older and like life on the street. Well, there are at least 6,000 or 7,000 members in Queens, without counting the Bronx and Manhattan, who get together every two, like I told you, every two months on the 14th to see, you know, about problems with diffent gangs and all that.*
Interviewer: Hmmm.

Respondent: *Nowadays, for example, to be a Latin King you need to be working or studying.*

Interviewer: Aha!

Respondent: *And when they are minors they have to be studying, you know. But not only that. Always if you to an older gang leader, the leader always ask you with the psychology of an older boss why you want to join the Latin Kings, what attracts you and if you say you want to join to meet more women and know more people, you won't be admitted. There has to be a reason like to feel protected, to feel backed up, to help ourselves as Latinos. Well, this is the only option for us, that we help and support one another to be all we are.*

Interviewer: And now tell me something, is there a way or a sign, you might say, that

for example helps you find jobs for one another? Is there such a thing?

Respondent: *Yes, that's it. We help each other, yes, yes, to look for work and more than anything to make contacts to get ahead, you understand me. Not, as I tell you, not everyone is like this, but the majority we help each other though there are a few who are into drugs or doing bad things. But as I already said, that depends on you. If you want to progress and advance you go to your contacts or friends and you get ahead.*
Nonetheless, respondents recognized the dangers of life in gangs. As a second generation

Mexican from New York reported:

One year I stayed in the street. I was 15. Started out at 13. Finished. Got out of gangs by the age of 16. Yes. I don't how it is, I think that each child, each young person passes through a phase where he wants to know that it is to be popular, what is it to be around a bunch of people, you know, not knowing their intensions until you actually go with them. And now I realize, you know, I think I exceeded the statistics for my age, and for my… for my kind. For my kind, specifically

speaking, and those statistics for another state, the state of California in Los Angeles primarily, kids my age, most likely have been arrested, are fathers, have kids, have bad influences… or are dead.

In terms of language, the use of "slang" also appears also to be an important element of self-identification among second generation Latinos youths. According to one second generation Mexican from New Jersey who has relatives on west coast:

> *Yeah a lot of it is different languages, not different languages but different slang. Like we have a difference like "este." I have a cousin and he'll be coming over here and we'd be fighting 'cause "este" not fighting, but like "hablando asi" we talk different. We talk different like saying "cool" to them" is like saying "bad" for us is like, "Yeah, let's…let's go ganging."*

THE CONTENT OF AMERICAN IDENTITY

Table 3 presents a content analysis of the "American" photos. In contrast to the Latino images, most of the American photos focus primarily on places or objects. Whereas 62% of the Latino images had people as the primary subject, only half as many (30%) of the American images did so. More than two-thirds (70%) of the American photos were focused on places or objects. Moreover, whereas 10 of the Latino images consisted of a facial close-up, none of the American images involved a close-up shot of a face. Thus, compared to the intimate and rather personalized basis for the construction of Latino identity, immigrants seemingly perceive American identity as rather impersonal and distant. Indeed, almost half of the American images (48%) were bereft of any human being whatsoever, and around 9% consisted of anonymous, empty street scenes.

The impersonality of America also emerged in our interviews. Here is what one first generation Colombian in Philadelphia had to say when asked whether he identified with Americans:

Interviewer: Do you identify with Americans?

Respondent: *No*

Interviewer: Why?

Respondent: *Well, one thing is that they are cold, eh? People in Colombia are warmer, more real. Friendships are more real there.*
Interviewer: Any others things in terms of culture?

Respondent: *Well, we have a lot of similar things, but all cultures are different. Or maybe, I don't know, they are, or perhaps we could share similarities but we are also different in many ways, in was of thinking and in forms of expression.*

Interviewer: In what sense?

Respondent: *In expressing feelings we are different, you see? We are more emotional in Colombia than they are here.*

Two examples of the impersonal nature of the imagery submitted as emblematic of American identity are shown in Figure 5. The top image shows a collection of newspaper boxes on an empty street corner in the center of Philadelphia, and the bottom one shows an empty walkway near a high-rise apartment complex within an affluent neighborhood of the city. The image of newspaper boxes organized all together is a very important symbol of technology and individualized way of newspaper information in contrast with the infinite number of kids and or persons selling news paper in the streets of Latino American metropolis. Such perceptions of the emptiness and loneliness reflect processes of transformation and change inherent to advanced 21st century societies. A characteristic of the information age is the rise of individualism in all its manifestations, a trend that is not so much cultural as associated with the material conditions of work in a postindustrial economy (Castells 2003).

FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

The most common theme among the American images was the marriage of a Mexican woman to an American man, but this frequency is deceptive since one of the

seven respondents chose to shoot all of his American pictures at this particular wedding. He basically followed the Mexican bride from home, through the ceremony, into the reception and celebration, and finished with the cutting of cake and toasts. Should we repeat this experiment in the future, we will probably instruct our subjects not to take more than two photos in any setting so as to build more diversity into the resulting visual data.

Although a relatively large number of the Latino images contained cars, we have already noted that vehicles did not seem to be a particular focus of most of the shots. In contrast, not only was the relative frequency of images containing cars larger among the American photos (32%), but the cars themselves played a more prominent role. A significant number of shots (12%) were taken from the window of a car, typically while it was in motion. Also relatively common (at 10%) were pictures of traffic in busy intersections or on highways.

The top of Figure 6 shows an example of a within-car shot of traffic on a freeway, and the bottom shows a stationary shot of traffic crowded into a busy intersection. The prevailing sense one takes from these and the other automobile-related shots is of movement and motion. For Latin American immigrants, a prevailing impression of the United States seems to be that it is a society on the move, with people rushing to and from crowded streets or busy highways, with much of life being seen through the window of a moving automobile. For our subjects, a key feature of American identity thus appears to be motion and speed, rather than time or living.

FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

Whereas motion suggests spatial impermanence—with Americans never staying

too long in one place and life a constant blur—another impression gleaned from the American photos is sheer size and scale: bigness. Some 17% of the American images focused on some example of monumental architecture, such as skyscrapers, urban canyons formed by tall buildings, a center city skyline, or a large neoclassical public building. Four examples of monumental American architecture are shown in Figure 7. In these images, clearly, the individual is reduced to insignificance in comparison to the object under scrutiny, a minimal human scale in contrast with the monumentality of the constructed environment. The photographers appear not to see themselves as users of the space. The huge edifices are monuments to observe, not buildings with functions to be utilized.

FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE

Around 12% of the images took as their subject a distinctly American symbol or icon, such as the American flag, a jack-o-lantern, a jar of peanut butter, or an image of a famous celebrity. Figure 8 presents two images from this category. The top one shows a private porch in front of a Philadelphia row house containing a display of Uncle Sam holding the American flag. The bottom picture is of a sidewalk display of mannequins in front of a store, featuring the young Elvis Presley. It is hard to conceive of two more "American" icons than the flag and Elvis.

FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE

The last two themes that emerged from the American images were those of commerce or enterprise (9%) and waste or abandonment (8%). Several of the pictures (around 9%) contained some visible indication of commercial spirit. As shown in Figure 9, for example, two subjects independently selected dollar discount stores as

emblematically American. The flip side of a market economy, of course, is “creative destruction”—the displacement and abandonment of old products and structures with new and improved products offered by the market. Eight of the images focused on some aspect waste or abandonment, two of which are shown in Figure 10. The top image shows an abandoned building that is partly collapsed, and the bottom one shows unwanted consumer products left curbside for pick-up on garbage collection day. The discarded products include a personal computer, a turntable, a tape deck, an amplifier-receiver, a kitchen cabinet, and a blue cooler. The juxtaposition of these two sets of images suggests that immigrants perceive Americans as competitive, high-level consumers but also wasteful people.

FIGURES 9 AND 10 ABOUT HERE

CONTRASTING IDENTITIES FROM THE MIGRANT’S VIEWPOINT

In this paper we sought to gain access to an unfiltered picture of Latino and American identities as perceived by first and second generation immigrants to the United States. Disposable cameras were handed out to a small set of subjects, who were simply asked to take pictures of whatever, to them, seemed American and Latino as they went through their daily lives. The resulting set of 115 American images and 134 Latino images suggest that Latin American immigrants see a great contrast in the content of the two identities.

Our subjects apparently view American identity as having to do with bigness and power (as reflected by the phallic imagery of skyscrapers and other monumental buildings). Americans are in constant motion and in a hurry (as suggested by images of and taken from moving cars); they are competitive and commercial (as suggested by photos of commercial symbols); and they are cold, distant, and impersonal (as indicated

by the predominance of photos centered on places or objects rather than people, the shots of empty streets and walkways, and the lack of a single facial close up). Although these components of American identity may produce a wealthy and powerful society, they also yield much waste (as indicated by photos of abandon consumer goods and buildings).

In contrast, subjects viewed Latino identity as focused on people (a majority of the shots taken) and composed of intimate social relationships (as indicated by the frequency of facial close-ups and the relative absence of shots devoid of human beings). The building blocks of Latino identity, according to our respondents, appear to be work (the subject of nearly a quarter of the photos), home (8%), and Latin American cultural products (as indicated by the frequency of shots of businesses selling Latin American records, foods, and cultural products as well as several shots of those products themselves). This generally warm and positive picture of a family- and culture-centered Latino identity is offset, however, by an awareness of an opposition gang identity as an alternative way to be "Latino" in the United States. Two second generation subjects included multiple shots of gang imagery in their photos, such as graffiti and hand signals. Fortunately, they comprised a small minority of the images assembled (just 6%), and we can only hope that just as small a number of second generation immigrants will take this path toward segmented assimilation.

In general, the photographic images offered by our subjects suggest the construction of Latino identity through social links and interpersonal networks experienced predominantly through face-to-face interactions with other immigrants. In contrast, they see American identity in terms of abstract symbols and material objects and view U.S. society as focused on the individual rather than the group, emphasizing personal aspirations rather than social bonds of solidarity. These perceptions reveal the

complexity of the process of identity formation among Latin American immigrants to the United States, especially those without documents who know their work responsibilities in the new society, but lack protection from exploitation and fear most American institutions, from which they experience the stigma of rejection and discrimination. We have uncovered some evidence suggesting that, without documentation and lacking the possibility for significant social mobility, young Latinos growing up in the United States might become identified with gangs, as an alternative form of sociability and ethnicity.

Although the photographic images were taken by only by an small sub-sample of our ethnographic respondents, when asked none of the larger sample of 160 interviewees admitted to feeling totally "American." Even second generation migrants who felt positively about living in the United States defined their identity as Latino-American, underscoring the paradoxical and complex nature of identity construction. These respondents appear to perceive two realities at the same time, representing the essential dilemma of the migrant: "I come from, I move to. I am here and I am there." As one second generation Mexican from Philadelphia put it when asked if she felt American:

> *Oh, I am American. It's just that I am still Mexican and I'm proud of my nationality.*

When asked if she felt Latina, she answered "yes," and when probed about what it was that made her feel Latina, she said:

> *Basically a lot of things: the way we think and the way we talk, the way we live. [The two identities] are related to one another in every single aspect of life.*

Globalization thus appears to have created, through immigration, a complex process of identity formation that transcends cultures and national boundaries. Migrants leave their countries largely for economic reasons, not because they wish to acquire a new cultural identity. Yet in the

United States they feel marginalized. They know their place economically but not socially. The undocumented, especially, do not feel a part of American society, yielding a configuration of Latino identities based on solidarity with others in the same political, historical, and cultural situation. Youth gangs offer the second generation a particularly close sense of solidarity and do not necessarily reflect an identity opposed to mainstream American society. Although gang membership may not be explicable according to traditional mechanisms of assimilation, their use by our subjects as an intermediary structure for dealing with American life suggests the complexity of identity formation in the post-industrial world. We hope that the analyses presented in this article, offer some insights into this complexity.

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Table 1. Characteristics of sample for study of visual representations of Latino and American Identity.

Characteristics	Photographer Sample	Total Ethnographic Sample
Generation		
First	40.0%	69.4
Second	60.0	30.6
National Origin		
Mexican	60.0	34.4
Caribbean 0.0 24.4		
Central/South America	40.0	41.3
Gender		
Male	50.0	41.9
Female	50.0	58.1
Place		
New York	20.0	29.4
New Jersey	40.0	36.3
Philadelphia	40.0	34.4
Total Number	10	160

Table 2.

Components of Latino identity coded from "Latino" pictures
taken by 10 respondents to a larger survey of 160 first and second generation Latino migrants in New York, Philadelphia, and New Jersey.

Content Categories	Number	Percentage
Primary Subject		
People	83	61.9
Facial Close-Up	10	7.5
Places or Objects	51	38.1
No People at All	41	30.6
Prominent Themes		
Interior of Latin Business	35	26.1
Places of Work	31	23.1
People at Work	8	6.0
Latin Store Front	19	14.2
Interior of Home	10	7.5
Display of Gang Symbols	8	6.0
Latin Products	6	4.5
Contains Cars	27	20.1
Taken from Cars	5	3.7
School Settings	7	5.2
Total Images	134	100.0

Table 3.

Components of American identity coded from "American" pictures taken by 8 respondents to a larger survey of 160 first and second generation Latino migrants in New York, Philadelphia, and New Jersey.

Content Categories	Number	Percentage
Primary Subject		
People	35	30.4
Facial Close-Up	0	0.0
Places or Objects	80	69.6
No People at All	55	47.8
Prominent Themes		
Marriage to American	23	20.0
Monumental Architecture	19	16.5
Anonymous Street Scenes	10	8.7
Contains Cars	37	32.2
Taken from Car	14	12.2
City or Highway Traffic	12	10.4
American Symbol or Icon	14	12.2
Commercial Displays	10	8.7
Waste or Abandonment	8	7.8
School Settings	2	1.7
American Products	1	0.9
Total Images	115	100.0