

Article

# ***Imposed Hispanicity: How the Imposition of Racialized and Gendered Identities in Texas Affects Mexican Women in Romantic Relationships with White Men***

Jennifer C. Guillén

Department of Sociology, Human Services and Criminal Justice, Henderson State University, Arkadelphia, AR 71999, USA; E-Mail: jennifer.guillen@gmail.com; Tel.: +1-870-230-5414

Academic Editors: Silvia Dominguez and Cid Martinez

Received: 16 September 2015 / Accepted: 11 November 2015 / Published: 17 November 2015

---

**Abstract:** Intimate, romantic spaces are important sites for the examination of self-identification and perceived identification, especially with regard to gender and racial power. In this article I examine how white men in romantic relationships or marriages with Mexican women and residing in Texas, impose “Hispanic” as a racial identity as a discursive tactic that reinforces the hegemonic power of being white and being a man in order to define the situation, impose ideals that distance Mexican partners from being “too ethnic” or “threatening” in order to achieve closer proximity to “honorary whiteness” and acceptability of racial others, and creates a romantic space that is coercive instead of loving and safe. This study thus finds that white men used their hegemony to not only employ *imposed Hispanicity*, which I define as an institutionally created but culturally and institutionally imposed label, and an action based on the use of direct and indirect coercion and force by others, in this case, white romantic partners, for the purpose of establishing power and determining the situation in which racial definitions are made. Therefore, “Hispanic” becomes an identity that is chosen by others and while participants of Mexican descent do employ agency, the socially imposed conditions and expectations associated with “Hispanic” serve to police the identities, bodies, lives, and actions of people of Latin American descent.

**Keywords:** identity; Latin@s; interracial/interethnic romantic relationships; imposed identities; power

---

## 1. Introduction

As Latin@s<sup>1</sup> become an increasingly growing population in the United States, significant attention, particularly from government agencies and academics, has been given to issues of racial formation and identification among this population [1,6–11]. The influence of government forms on racial identification, the confluence of race and ethnicity, and the lumping of people with a shared history of colonization under a panethnic umbrella term while simultaneously negating the preferred identities of this particular group of people are issues routinely faced by Latin@s in the U.S. Throughout my conversations with couples composed of one partner of Mexican<sup>2</sup> descent and one partner who is white<sup>3</sup>, the discord between racial self-identification and how their partners identified them was a common theme. Participants, particularly Mexican women, questioned, explicitly and implicitly, why white partners would use racial and ethnic labels that they themselves had not chosen for themselves. These debates, laden with strong emotions and audible resistance, caused tension in these romantic relationships while simultaneously showing the gendered and racialized power dynamics present in these relationships. Often, the reasons for partners mis-identifying their significant others' racial identities involved racialized notions of “good” *versus* “bad” people of Latin American descent where the use of “Hispanic” signified good and desirable while “Mexican” indicated bad and undesirable. Many partners, in particular white men, associated “Hispanic” with good, desirable and less threatening individuals worthy of their partnership, while attaching racialized notions of bad and threatening to “Mexican”.

Extensive research exists discussing racial formation and identity development among individuals [12–15], Latin@s [8,9,16–18], black-white, multiracials [19–26], and Asian-white couples [27–33]. Despite this burgeoning scholarship and attempts at comprehending Latin@ identity formation, there is significantly less research on the effects of out-group<sup>4</sup> influences on identity processes. Thus, this article examines how Mexican women, located in four areas of Texas, navigate their racial and ethnic identities, as well as how white men, and these women's romantic partners perceive them racially and ethnically in a highly stratified society. Specifically, I explore identity and the inequalities

---

<sup>1</sup> Similar to Delgado [1], I use “Latin@” as a panethnic label used for a group of people whose descent, whether current or in past generations, is wholly or partially geographically-based in Latin America and which implies a racial/ethnic identity [2]; and, I specifically use the “@” symbol to “degender the use of Latino or Latina so it can be read as either/neither form (Espinal 2007)” [1]. More specifically, I use “Latin@” to signify the colonial relationship between Latin America and the United States rather than Latin America and Spain [3,4]. Furthermore, I use “Latin@” instead of “Hispanic” (any mentions of “Hispanic” are analyzed based on its use by respondents) because “Hispanic” is a term historically imposed on people of Latin American descent, particularly after the implementation of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act by the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [5].

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this research I refer to individuals as “Mexican” to include people of Mexican descent broadly while encompassing varying racial and ethnic identities, including, but not limited to Mexican, Mexican American, Tejan@, Hispanic, Latin@, *etc.*

<sup>3</sup> “White” is used to identify individuals of Anglo, Caucasian and European descent, both citizens and non-citizen immigrants, who are not Black, Native American/American Indian, or, of Latin American descent.

<sup>4</sup> I use “out-group” to refer to interracial and/or interethnic relationships with the acknowledgment that in romantic relationships where one partner is of Mexican descent and the other is of non-Spanish, European white descent, partners of Mexican descent may choose their racial identity from a variety of options and whether relationships are considered interracial and/or solely interethnic will vary by couple.

associated with identity by examining how potential social inequalities regarding identity are manifested in intimate spaces, particularly romantic relationships and marriages where one partner is white and the other is Mexican. I argue that in certain contexts, Mexican partners, especially women, will be encouraged, if not coerced, by their white partners, into self-monitoring their identity in ways that are unequal to others—in other words, the racial and ethnic identity formation of Mexicans is more socially constrained than others, particularly whites.

I use *imposed Hispanicity* to refer to the imposition of “Hispanic” as a racial and/or ethnic identity that serves as a discursive tactic that polices the behavior, appearance, attitudes, and general demeanor of people of Latin American descent, while simultaneously framing them as an “other” who has been elevated to a status closer to whiteness relative to those identified as foreign, dark-skinned, Latin American nationals (those often seen as immigrants). *Imposed Hispanicity* also explains the self-identification of people of Latin American descent as “Hispanic” in that it is a term implemented and imposed by Spain as a unifier among colonies (*hispano* is rooted in the Latin word “Hispania”, which was the name of Spain during Roman times) and it serves to distinguish those who have been elevated to be considered more “civilized” or are racially mixed (*mestizos*) in contrast to indigenous populations who rejected Spanish colonialization. Furthermore, the introduction of “Hispanic” as an identity by Directive 15 from OMB in the 1970s coerces those of “Spanish culture[al]” subgroups to choose their racial identity on binary classifications of “white” or “black”, but primarily within the “white” category [5]. In doing so, experiences of racial oppression and discrimination (past and current) are absorbed into whiteness rather than acknowledging the variation in experiences among people of Latin American descent based off of cultural and phenotypic characteristics<sup>5</sup>. In other words, the imposition of “Hispanic” by OMB absorbs people of Latin American descent into a partial whiteness [9,36] that assumes that “Hispanics” have “yet to fully assimilate into the mainstream status enjoyed by members of that group” [5] (p. 53). Moreover, the legacy of decades of “Hispanic” imposition has also functioned to solidify and internalize the use of this term among Latin@s residing in the United States, legitimizing the use and acceptance of this term within and outside of this group, and neglecting the self-identification of those who do not identify as “Hispanic”. Indeed, more recent findings from the 2000 and 2010 Census data show that with the added option of writing in racial identification, increasingly more people who self-identified as “Hispanic” chose “some other race” when describing their racial identity. For example, a report from the 2010 Census data [37] shows that among the 47.4 million people who ethnically self-identified as “Hispanic”, approximately 44.3% wrote in a variation of Mexican, Mexican American or Mexico and while Latin@s are not the only ones to use the write-in option, they are most likely to do so [38].

## 2. Background

In 1903, W.E.B. DuBois [39] developed the idea of “double consciousness” in *The Souls of Black Folks* to describe the tensions felt by many African Americans in the U.S. He argued that African Americans had to remember and enact cultural behaviors and norms from two cultures—their own and

---

<sup>5</sup> I refer to phenotypic characteristics because although research [34,35] has shown that race is a social construction, those constructions are based on perceived phenotypical characteristics such as skin color, hair color and texture, *etc.* Therefore, we cannot separate socially constructed ideas from phenotypical differences and variation.

that of the “mainstream” (*i.e.*, whites)—acting differently in each culture. This was often a painful process that left African Americans feeling fractured. This same struggle exists among people of Mexican descent who navigate spaces where they must follow the cultural behaviors and norms of their culture as well as that of the “mainstream” (e.g., whites). By examining the romantic relationships between Mexicans and whites in Texas, an area historically embedded in a deep racial history of Spanish and white, American colonization, the imposition of “Hispanic” as a racial and ethnic identity serves the purpose of coercively creating distinctions between whites and people of Latin American descent which simultaneously and forcefully makes the double consciousness evident. Thus, for people of Latin American descent, crossing, or even muddling, the color line becomes impossible, making it unfeasible for “Hispanics” to be considered white despite legal codifications of “Hispanic” as racially white [36], making them more likely to be considered “off-white” [9] or “honorary white” [40]. Mexicans in romantic relationships with whites then must navigate the differences between their own cultural backgrounds and their cultural lives among non-Mexicans, in this particular case, whites. This “two-ness” is more than just an identity struggle—it exposes the continual interaction that reproduces race and gender in unequal ways in everyday life.

In this article, I argue that in certain contexts, some people will be encouraged, if not coerced, into self-monitoring in ways that are unequal to others. To do so, the boundaries of imposed identities must be interrogated. That is, that some people are more socially constrained than others in developing particular identities. For example, Michelle Lamont [41], examines the cultural categories through which upper-middle class French and American men defined the culture they valued, taking into consideration the boundaries drawn by people in order to categorize themselves and others. Ultimately, she found three types of boundaries: moral, cultural and socioeconomic [41]. Furthermore, Lamont’s [41] work discusses the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of people within a group and concludes that boundary work is an important component of the process of “constituting the self and developing a sense of group membership” (p. 11). Thus, the process of distinction, where boundaries are created to differentiate and recognize the self, generates a level of satisfaction in which the desire to be recognized as unique is met. In this way, group membership is established, defining qualifications for inclusion or exclusion into that particular group, as well as how to interact with non-members of lower status [41].

Just as the self is embedded in culture and context, it is racialized, gendered and influenced by class status, among other factors. Therefore, given the hierarchical ranking present in these factors, some identity projects are more privileged than others. Stryker [42] finds that it is important to examine the roles of freedom and constraint in identity development given that some people experience more freedom while others experience greater constraint, which ultimately influences identity projects. Thus, freedom and constraint function as ways of limiting access to identity projects which are not mainstream leading people to accept the imposed identities linked to racialized and gendered categories. For example, in a dichotomous and racialized society, like that of the U.S., individuals do not necessarily *choose* to be black in America—instead, they are born into it as an ascribed category generally imposed on a person based on skin color and historical oppression. As a result, individuals do not initially choose their racial classification but rather it is an imposed identity based on physical characteristics. The boundaries of what it means to be “black” and what it means to *not* be white in the social structure of the U.S. are then established and in general function to privilege white people.

For people of Latin American descent, the boundaries are different, but often they are placed in separate “honorary white” [36,40] or “off-white” [9] categories while still giving them the ability to move in and out of blackness and rarely into whiteness.

Furthermore, institutions force identities on people by placing significant pressure on people to adopt a sense of self based on components linked to the dominant characteristics valued within that institution. Thus, people from underrepresented groups are forced to make a choice either to accept those characteristics of the self to help them navigate the institution; to avoid the institutionally imposed characteristics and be punished or unrecognized; or, to leave the institution all together. Moreover, individuals not only seek to control situational meanings of their own self [43,44], they also control the meaning of the situation for others by creating meaning around identities of others and, thus, imposing an identity on them.

Additionally, Alicia D. Cast’s [45] research on recently married couples and the effect of power, based on each partner’s relative position in the marriage’s power structure, shows that individuals define the situation in three ways; (1) they control meanings in the situation by acting consistent with their identity; (2) they control meanings by imposing identities on others; and, (3) they control meanings by resisting identities that are imposed on them by others. Moreover, Cast [45] takes into consideration the relative power of both partners in the marriage that affects their ability to control and define the situation. She concludes that social context must be taken into consideration when researching the self and other processes related to the self, including defining the self and others, and that “those with power are able to assert themselves and impose their own definitions of the situation on others, thus potentially reproducing and maintaining the structural arrangements that privilege them” [45] (p. 198). Thus, in examining the relative power of individuals in romantic relationships, particularly among couples who differ in their racial and ethnic self-identification and who are already positioned in the racial hierarchy, we must also interrogate the mechanisms through which relative power is established, exercised, and reproduced.

Similarly, dominant groups in the racial hierarchy (*i.e.*, non-Latin@ whites) force those in subordinate groups (e.g., people of color) to consent to the racial-power hierarchy in existence that continues to subjugate people of color while continuing to elevate whites to top positions with access to social capital and material resources. In the case of Latin@s, this is done through the imposition of pan-ethnic/pan-racial terms such as “Hispanic” and “Latin@”, which force a group of individuals with similar cultural, historical, and language characteristics into a category that makes them seem homogenous<sup>6</sup>. Thus, I discuss how those in the dominant racial and gender group (white men) control the power to give meaning to a situation [45] (e.g., determine what identities to use to identify their romantic partners, women of Mexican descent). Furthermore, I also examine the ways in which Mexican women reject and declare alternative identities [51], while also determining that intimate, romantic spaces, generally considered the safest and most innocuous, are in actuality one of the most coercive racial spaces that also give way to the creation of spaces of resistance against white hegemony and supremacy.

---

<sup>6</sup> Much has been written about the heterogeneity of Latin@s, including [46–51] among others.

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Sampling and Recruitment

Data for this article is drawn from two stages of data collection (2009–2010 and 2012–2013) across four locations in Texas (Brazos County, Austin, Houston, and San Antonio). Texas was particularly chosen for this study because of the rich history of social interaction between Mexicans and whites [52–62] since the 1700s.

To examine the complexities of racial and ethnic self-identification and perceptions of partner's identification, I conducted intensive, semi-structured interviews with 50 heterosexual couples (90 interviews total—80 individual interviews and 10 joint interviews) where one partner is of Mexican descent and the other is European white (not of Spanish or Portuguese descent). Interviews were conducted with individuals rather than couples to enable comfort among respondents, as well as to guarantee the absence of the partner's influence through their presence. However, ten couples (two in San Antonio, four in Austin, and four in Houston) were interviewed together either because of time constraints or at the request of the couple. The data from these 10 couples was not discarded nor considered invalid, but rather was included and particular attention was paid to physical expressions, gestures, couple interactions and non-verbal cues of these respondents to account for discomfort, control, policing of responses, *etc.*

Table 1 below shows some demographic characteristics of participants overall and by location they were interviewed in. Overall, 58% of interviewed couples were married and 42% were in a committed romantic relationship; the average length of the romantic relationship was 12.7 years for married couples and 4.9 years for romantic relationships; the average age for participants at the time of the interview was 35.6 years old; 64% of participants had at least a college education; and, based off of education, occupation, and household and individual income (including those of their parents), 78% of participants were upper or lower middle class.

Respondents were located through snowball sampling and the electronic (via email, telephone, and the use of online forums) and physical distribution of recruitment materials to a variety of organizations, universities, businesses, and religious institutions across all four locations. Interviews generally lasted 45–180 min and took place in public, neutral locations, usually coffee shops, chosen by the respondent. Ten of the respondents declined audio recording during the interview and in those instances extensive notes were taken. The majority of the interviews were conducted in English, however, some respondents preferred, or felt more comfortable, speaking Spanish or mixing the two languages, which as a bilingual person I was able to accommodate.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information.

	<i>San Antonio</i>	<i>Austin</i>	<i>Houston</i>	<i>Brazos County</i>	<i>Aggregate</i>
<b><i>Marital Status</i></b>					
% Married	70	70	50	50	58
% In Relationship	30	30	50	50	42
<b><i>Length of relationship by marital status</i></b>					
Average length of relationship, married couples (years)	11.4	13.6	10.2	14.1	12.7
Average length of relationship, non-married couples (years)	4	4.7	6	4.6	4.9
<b><i>Age (%)</i></b>					
<20	0	0	5	0	1
20–30	50	40	15	45	39
30–40	20	25	30	32.5	28
40–50	20	25	45	10	22
50–60	10	10	5	2.5	6
60+	0	0	0	10	4
Average	34.1	37.8	35.3	35.6	35.6
<b><i>Education (%)</i></b>					
<High School	0	0	5	2.5	2
High School	15	15	40	22.5	23
Some College	15	10	10	10	11
College	40	35	35	50	42
Grad/Professional	30	40	10	15	22
<b><i>Socioeconomic Status (%)</i></b>					
Upper class	0	0	0	0	0
Upper middle class	45	50	35	20	34
Lower middle class	40	35	35	55	44
Working Class	15	10	25	17.5	17
Underclass	0	5	5	7.5	5
	<i>N</i> = 20	<i>N</i> = 20	<i>N</i> = 20	<i>N</i> = 40	<i>N</i> = 100

### 3.2. Interview Structure

The interviews were organized with questions set in increasing order of sensitivity in order to establish rapport with the respondent. The first section discusses family, upbringing, ancestry, and family stories, gathering information on family of origin, not only gaining rapport through childhood stories, but also as a way of gaining insight into what the respondents' family life was like in the past, and how influential it has been in the respondent's understanding and development of their identity, as well as its effects on their current relationship. The second section sought more in-depth information on the respondents' conceptualizations of what race and ethnicity meant to them, how they have developed their own racial and ethnic identification, how they perceive race and ethnicity-related incidents, including prejudice, discrimination, racialization, privilege and proximity to a variety of groups. The third section explicitly asked respondents about their first impressions or thoughts on

specific racial and ethnic groups, including how they believe others, including their partners, perceive them racially and ethnically, as well as their feelings and reactions about these perceptions. Questions on self-identification and the perceived identification of partners found in these sections were open-ended and pre-set categories were not presented for participants to choose from. Lastly, I collected basic demographic information about individual participants, including age, where they were born, educational background (including that of their parents), occupation (including that of their parents), and racial and ethnic identification. Demographic questions about race and ethnicity (of individual and their parents) were also open-ended without a set of descriptors to choose from.

### *3.3. Analytic Procedure*

Interviews were manually analyzed with the help of two undergraduate research assistants (two Latinas, both of whom are former students of mine) utilizing a coding scheme developed from themes identified inductively from the data. Qualitative coding followed Charmaz's [63] grounded theory specific coding structure as well as the Straussian [64–66] school of thought that stresses the importance of induction from qualitative data, gathering codes from statements and actions associated with the topics under study. The codes, closely defined by the data, indicate action, events, context, viewpoints, discourse, emotions, and, because I employ grounded theory, the codes come directly from the interpretation of data rather than seeking how the data fits a particular framework. Grounded theory coding then is the analytic foundation of this project and the actions and processes exemplified in the data created theory.

### *3.4. Coding Process*

As such, coding for this project consisted of several stages completed with the assistance of the two research assistants with the purpose of triangulation [67], inter-coder reliability [68], and generating as many codes and data interpretations as possible. Pretests in coding yielded an inter-rater agreement of 88.9% covering the coding of four different incidents in one interview and the creation of 27 overall codes across these incidents. No raters were detected as outliers.

The remaining coding analysis was comprised of two stages of coding. Stage I, comprised of open coding, asking, "What is this data a study of?" [69] (p. 57); what does the data suggest or pronounce? From whose point of view is this? [63] (p. 47); and, what category does this data suggest? [69]. Open coding firstly recognizes, categorizes, and groups into categories related with that which is being studied. Therefore, initial coding looks at the direct action taking place rather than attaching preexisting categories to the data. These codes then let data directly speak by being temporary, fluid, comparative, and grounded directly in the data. The emphasis in learning throughout the process is particularly shown in this project through a team research approach for triangulation, reliability and interpretation, where "data are independently coded and the codings compared for agreement" [68] (p. 597) during Stage II, or focused coding.

Stage II of coding was comprised of focused coding in order to "synthesize and explain larger segments of data" [63] (p. 57). All three coders met face to face and each incident was combed through collectively to find the most significant and/or frequent codes to determine the adequacy of the larger data set. Doing so allows researchers to compare the experiences, actions, and interpretations found in

multiple interviews or observations, as well as supporting the collective creation of coding categories. Within Stage II, axial coding was conducted to organize the open codes into a “coding paradigm,” a framework that makes connections between categories and subcategories [63]. That is, the purpose in grounded theory is not the establishment of a set of thematic codes by which the data is classified, but rather to define the underlying narrative found in the relationships connecting the categories [70]. The purpose of axial coding is to convert text into concept and creating frameworks that extend the overall picture of the data. This was a crucial part of team coding—after individual open coding, we met as a research team and discussed codes incident by incident and collectively developed concepts and frameworks. Once concepts were determined, the research team reconvened to isolate the codes that exemplified each concept and framework. This project, however, did not employ axial coding directly following Strauss and Corbin’s [66] procedure (an explicit frame did not guide analytic constructions during the coding process), but rather developed subcategories and showed the links between them with particular focus on the questions posited above by Strauss and Corbin [66].

While these coding processes apply to all data, the discord between racial self-identification among Mexican partners and how their white partners perceived them racially became evident during the first phase of data collection and analysis in 2009–2010, particularly as Mexican partners expressed their outrage over experiencing the imposition of “Hispanic”. This unchosen identity, which I label *imposed Hispanicity*, involves launching socially constructed phenotypic and cultural understandings of what it means to be a Latin@ in a highly racially stratified society, regardless of how that person or group of people choose to identify themselves. Thus, *imposed Hispanicity* is operationalized as an identity purposefully used to delineate between “good” or “non-threatening” Latin@s, and those deemed to be “bad” or “threatening” with the primary purpose of intentionally elevating those deemed worthy of the identity of “Hispanic” as a coded word for “honorary white” [40], ultimately causing divisions among Latin@s. In other words, *imposed Hispanicity* becomes a tool in the continuous othering of Latin@s and in the maintenance of white supremacy by extending some, but not all, of the easily revocable privileges of whiteness through coded language.

### 3.5. Inter-Rater Agreement for Imposed Hispanicity

Following the completion of coding and memo writing for all 90 interviews, the research assistants and myself revisited the interviews to discuss the organization of the codes, their relevance to the project, and focused on categorizing each code thematically to gain a broader view of the most discussed themes. The overall inter-rater agreement of the entire project was not calculated given the extensive amount of data available (90 interviews ranging from 45–180 min with hundreds of coded incidents), however, the inter-rater agreements of incidents coded involving (a) *imposed Hispanicity* in general; (b) white men employing *imposed Hispanicity*; and, (c) white women employing *imposed Hispanicity*, were calculated. Of the 90 interviews conducted, 54 incidents were coded as general *imposed Hispanicity* and inter-rater agreement was of 90.8% among the three coders. Of the 54 *imposed Hispanicity* incidents, 41 were said by white men in relationships or marriages with Mexican women, and these yielded an inter-rater agreement of 90.3%. Lastly, 13 of the 54 incidents were found in interviews with white women in relationships or marriages with Mexican men with a 92.3% inter-rater agreement.

### 3.6. Researcher Positionality

Similar to the discussion presented by Wingfield [71] about the effects of racial and gender positionality of the interviewer, I find that my particular background as a light-skinned, half Mexican, half white, bilingual person who was raised in Mexico, allowed me to navigate space with both white and Mexican respondents in ways that allowed me to not be perceived as threatening to either group during data collection. It is worth noting, however, that while for the most part I was perceived as non-threatening, during heated moments in some interviews, particularly as I asked white men questions about race and ethnicity, I did encounter comments such as “Why does everything always have to be about race?” as well as several gestures and bodily indications of discomfort, resentment and anger. There were also instances where respondents were hesitant to answer questions in detail, in which case I asked follow-up questions or reworded the original question.

## 4. Results

Columns on the left of Table 2 below show how white partners perceive the racial and ethnic identities of their Mexican partners (in percentages, by city of interview and in general), and the right column shows what the actual self-identification of those partners is. It is important to place these findings side by side to show the discrepancies between self-identification among Mexican partners and how white partners racially identify them, especially as these vary by location. Table 3 shows in more detail the percentage of whites, by gender, imposing<sup>7</sup> “Hispanic” on their partners. In other words, Table 3 shows that overwhelmingly white partners across all locations imposed “Hispanic” on partners who identified as anything other than “Hispanic”, especially white men.

Findings in Table 3 show that overall 26 of the 50 couples (52%) had a white partner who employed *imposed Hispanicity* and 18 of those 26 couples (69.2%) were composed of white men and Mexican women, with variations by location. In contrast, eight of the 21 (38.1%) white women in relationships or marriages with Mexican men imposed “Hispanic” on their partner.

**Table 2.** White Perceptions of Mexican Partner’s Racial and Ethnic Identities.

	<i>San Antonio</i>		<i>Austin</i>		<i>Houston</i>		<i>Brazos County</i>		<i>Total</i>	
<i>Race</i>										
Hispanic	90%	<b>50%</b>	70%	<b>0%</b>	90%	<b>20%</b>	75%	<b>60%</b>	80%	<b>38%</b>
White	10%	<b>10%</b>	0%	<b>20%</b>	10%	<b>20%</b>	5%	<b>0%</b>	6%	<b>10%</b>
Mexican	0%	<b>10%</b>	10%	<b>40%</b>	0%	<b>50%</b>	10%	<b>20%</b>	6%	<b>28%</b>
Latin@/Hispanic	0%	<b>0%</b>	10%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	2%	<b>0%</b>
Latin@	0%	<b>20%</b>	10%	<b>20%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	5%	<b>5%</b>	4%	<b>10%</b>
Mexican American	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>20%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	5%	<b>15%</b>	2%	<b>10%</b>
Hispanic & Mexican American	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>10%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>2%</b>
None	0%	<b>10%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>2%</b>

<sup>7</sup> By “imposing” an identity I mean that the label used to racially or ethnically identify romantic partners does not align with that partner’s racial self-identification, thus there is a discord between the Mexican partner’s self-identification and how the white partner identifies them. Additionally, although Mexican partners also imposed identities with regards to ethnicity onto their white partners, this occurred less frequently (9 out of 50 partners; 18%).

Table 2. Cont.

	San Antonio		Austin		Houston		Brazos County		Total	
<i>Ethnicity</i>										
Mexican	50%	<b>70%</b>	90%	<b>100%</b>	80%	<b>80%</b>	55%	<b>90%</b>	66%	<b>86%</b>
Hispanic	40%	<b>20%</b>	10%	<b>0%</b>	10%	<b>10%</b>	40%	<b>5%</b>	28%	<b>8%</b>
Mexican American	10%	<b>10%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	2%	<b>2%</b>
Chican@	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	5%	<b>0%</b>	2%	<b>0%</b>
White	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	10%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	2%	<b>0%</b>
Mexican Indigenous	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>5%</b>	0%	<b>2%</b>
More than one	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>10%</b>	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%	<b>2%</b>
	N = 10	<b>N = 10</b>	N = 10	<b>N = 10</b>	N = 10	<b>N = 10</b>	N = 20	<b>N = 20</b>	N = 50	<b>N = 50</b>

Numbers not bolded in the left columns are the percentage of the white respondents' perceptions of their Mexican partners' racial and ethnic identities (that is, what they perceive the identities of their partners to be); Numbers in bold (right columns) are the percentages of the Mexican respondents' self-identification.

**Table 3.** Number of White Partners by Race and Gender and their use of *Imposed Hispanicity* \*.

	San Antonio	Austin	Houston	Brazos County	Aggregate
<i>White men in relationships/marriages with Mexican women</i>	5 (50%)	7 (70%)	5 (50%)	12 (60%)	29 (58%)
<i>White women in relationships/marriages with Mexican men</i>	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)	8 (40%)	21 (42%)
<i>Number of White Partners by Location</i>	10	10	10	20	50
<i>White men employing Imposed Hispanicity on Mexican partners</i>	3/5 (60%)	4/7 (80%)	3/5 (60%)	8/12 (40%)	18/29 (62.1%)
<i>White women employing Imposed Hispanicity on Mexican partners</i>	2/5 (40%)	3/3 (100%)	3/5 (60%)	0/8 (0%)	8/21 (38.1%)

\* By imposing I mean that the Mexican partner identifies as something other than “Hispanic” but is identified by their white partner as “Hispanic” regardless of this.

Mexican partners often described two types of tensions surrounding the use of “Hispanic” to describe their experiences. First, was a tension between their own identification and how others in general perceived them racially and ethnically in social interactions; Second, Mexican partners noted an intimate tension with their partners that generated a wide range of feelings toward them, including anger, resentment, resistance and outrage. This second tension is also linked to gendered, racialized expectations where “Hispanic” draws the line of perception of the “good” *versus* adopting a national origin identity, which represents the “bad”. These “double consciousnesses” often led the Mexican partners, in particular the women, who felt like “Hispanic” was imposed on them, to feel like they needed to alter their behaviors, manner of speaking, way of dressing, *etc.* Although a significant number of couples, especially those composed of white men and Mexican women, discussed experiences of *imposed Hispanicity*, I focus primarily on two interviews (Angelica/Brad and Paul/Miriam) that best exemplified the processes under analysis. However, I also include a few excerpts from other couples to support and highlight these interpretations.

Angelica, a 37-year-old Mexican woman originally from Bryan, Texas (Brazos County), residing in Austin, who is married to Brad, a 38-year-old, white man, (also from Bryan and who identifies Angelica as “Hispanic” even though she identifies as “Mexican”), narrates the following about the tensions between her and Brad:

**Angelica:** Brad thinks it’s cute to call me “Hispanic”, he’s just so wrong for it. He doesn’t get it... he, he just thinks it’s a word that he can call anyone that is brown. He’s just... he’s so white and he just doesn’t get it. When we used to party I would wear a cute top and he would always say to me, “Are you going to wear THAT? I can see too much of your boobs.” It made me uncomfortable and angry that he would say that. Ugh, it gets me mad just thinking about it. He had no complaints about shirts like that when we were first dating, but we get married and it becomes unacceptable for me to wear them. He... he has made some comments like, “Are you going to be one of *those* Mexican women that lets it all hang out like that?” It’s so convenient, when I’m wearing “slutty” clothes I’m Mexican, but when I’m his goody good wife that covers them up, I’m “Hispanic.” We fight about that all the time, I never complain about the ugly ass white socks he wears with everything, but I wear shirts that show cleavage and I’m the worst person on earth.

**Interviewer:** So, when he makes these comments, what do you do?

**Angelica:** Change my shirt... I do... for the most part... I mean, it pisses me off so much that even if I do change my shirt and we stop fighting about it, he, he... although I change my shirt, I’m angry, I resent him for making me feel slutty when I don’t wear them to cheat on him or something like that. I wear them cuz I like how I look in them...

Angelica’s experience with her husband, Brad, speaks of the hypersexualization of Latin@s that depicts Latinas as voluptuous, sexually promiscuous, sexpots and Latinos as the “Latin lover” archetype [72–76]. Additionally, Angelica keenly picks up on how Brad changes the label he uses to refer to her—when she is sexualized through her “revealing” clothing, she is “Mexican”, and, as Angelica highlights, this causes a distinction in “goodness” between “Mexican” women and “Hispanic” women. Furthermore, from Angelica’s reaction to whether she changes any behaviors or how she dresses given Brad’s response to her clothing, she hesitates to fully admit that she rejects how he sees and perceives certain behaviors, in this case, her way of dressing to go out. She later admits that she does, begrudgingly, change her shirt to accommodate Brad’s beliefs about “Mexican” sexuality as improper and promiscuous, and, therefore, an undesirable set of characteristics for the wife Brad envisions for himself. In comparison, Angelica implies that Brad perceives “Hispanic” sexuality to be modest and demure, characteristics representative of wholesomeness and family-oriented women, which are “ideal” characteristics of a wife. Although Angelica’s narrative does not show outright, overt coercion, it is part of the underlying focus of her experience. Brad’s way of shaming Angelica for wearing a particular item of clothing, coupled with the use of “Mexican” to make the distinction and his disapproval clear (because if she is “Mexican”, she is not the good “Hispanic” woman he expects her to be), is a form of coercion used by those who have the power to define the situation [40]. In this case, Brad uses his power in the racial hierarchy as a white male to name which behavioral characteristics and fashion choices are acceptable for his partner and which are not. In doing so, he distinguishes between the expectation he has for his wife, a good “Hispanic” woman, and those of

other, unattractive and immoral women, the bad “Mexican” women. This coercion speaks to the structural power of whiteness as it functions at an individual level, where racial power is utilized to shame people of color with the ultimate goal of “convincing” them to modify their “unacceptable” cultural behaviors in order to adopt “acceptable” behaviors such as those used by whites.

When asked about his thoughts on “Hispanic” women, Brad, Angelica’s husband, reveals a similar distinction between good, “Hispanic” women and bad, “Mexican” women:

**Interviewer:** So, you previously identified Angelica as “Hispanic”, why is that?

**Brad:** Hispanic women are thoughtful, they look after their homes, their families, their children, everyone. They know what they’re doing in the kitchen, how to clean the house, how to be supportive and how to behave themselves in public and in private. They are demure, modest, but still *muy caliente* in the bedroom, you know, they still know how to spice things up and keep their man. I think Angelica is like that. I see her as very kind, reliable, thoughtful, family-oriented, loyal and loving unlike some other Mexican women who are just out there showing it all to the world, wearing the skimpiest clothing and not giving a fuck about anyone but themselves. Angelica is not all about herself like THOSE women.

**Interviewer:** And, by those women who do you mean?

**Brad:** Mexican women. They’re a whole different ballpark. I like Hispanic women.

**Interviewer:** What else do you think is the difference between “Hispanic” and “Mexican”?

**Brad:** Really just that. I mean, I guess... I... I usually see “Mexican” women as fresh off the boat, you know, they just got here, they came here to have a ton of children and take money away from Americans. They drain the U.S. of all of its beauty and then when they don’t get what they want they go and cry that they are being discriminated against and that they should get rights that are not theirs to have.

Brad’s perceptions of “Mexican” are those that he considers unacceptable and unattractive, they represent morally reprehensible characteristics and behaviors whereas the women he describes as “Hispanic”, including his wife, Angelica, are those he finds morally, physically, and behaviorally attractive and acceptable to be his partner. Moreover, Brad’s description of “Hispanic” women also exemplifies the racialized and gendered expectations, in particular those related to household and family labor, such as being a family-oriented, good wife who takes care of the children, preparing and serving food, and who maintains a home in ways that reflect well on him. Additionally, Brad indirectly defines “Hispanic” as those who are assimilated and not of a recent migration experience, thus, inscribing an earned legal status into the definition of “Hispanic”. For Brad, “Mexican” implies that the person is a recent immigrant who is exploiting the U.S. (and, thus, in his mind, is a criminal), is promiscuous, and is seeking permanence in the U.S. via the birth of many U.S.-born children (what the news media and anti-immigrant groups usually refer to as “anchor babies” [77]). Therefore, to identify as a “Mexican” is un-American, threatening, exploitative of the American way, and should be eliminated.

Tony, a 36-year-old white man from Galveston, Texas, who is married to Lupe, a 29-year-old Mexican woman from Victoria, Texas, and who reside in Houston, were interviewed jointly. When asked how he identified Lupe racially, he said, “Hispanic, even though she always corrects me on that

because she identifies as Mexican.” When asked why he continues to identify her as “Hispanic” despite his acknowledgment that this does not correspond with her identification, he says:

**Tony:** It’s based on experience for me, I used to see these Mexican women who were submissive around me and other teachers, but would come to school to pick up their kids yelling and screaming at them. They would have, you know, a lot of kids, fathers weren’t always part of the picture. I don’t even know if they are from the same father either... they often wear, well, you know, really short shorts and other inappropriate clothing... Part of me wants to help them out, to educate their children and help them out so that they have better lives... and, you know, Lupe has never acted or dressed like that, and neither has her family—they’re very, um, conservative in what they wear. I-I just don’t see Lupe like I see the Mexican women at the school... I guess, I don’t know, I don’t know how to explain it.

Tony makes a very explicit distinction in how his wife, Lupe, is not like the Mexican women who he encounters every day at the school he teaches at. Rather, because she and her family are more “conservative” relative to Mexican women he encounters regularly, he has elevated Lupe to “Hispanic”, or “honorary white”/“off-white” to ensure that she and by extension, himself, are not classified or seen as related to the “immoral” Mexican women who despite showing submissiveness to teachers and school authorities are assumed to be sexually immoral based off of the assumption that they have multiple sexual partners and have birthed multiple children from these relationships. In this way, employing *imposed Hispanicity* is about distancing from undesirable “others”, the understood assumption of “Hispanicity” as close to whiteness, the underlying belief of whiteness as a comparative and “superior” group, coupled with Tony’s claim to the role of white savior for both the students he teaches and his wife, Lupe. Thus, for Tony, the use of *imposed Hispanicity* in the context of his marriage is about saving face, exerting power and control as a reflection of his hegemony, as well as serving as an agent of social control to ensure that Lupe does not cross over from “Hispanic” to “Mexican.”

Similarly, Alan, a 35-year-old white man, originally from California, who currently residing in San Antonio, identifies his partner, Sandra, a 32-year-old woman originally from Reynosa, Tamaulipa, Mexico, as “Hispanic” despite her self-identification as both “Latina” and “Mexican.” Alan, much like Brad, notes that his use of “Hispanic” is rooted in her immigration and assimilation status as well as institutionally imposed understandings of racial categories:

**Interviewer:** What would you say is Sandra’s race or racial identity?

**Alan:** Hispanic

**Interviewer:** Why?

**Alan:** Because she’s Mexican, but she was born in Mexico and immigrated here when she was a little kid, so she’s Hispanic.

**Interviewer:** What in particular makes her Hispanic?

**Alan:** That she immigrated here when she was a child. She basically grew up here. So, I wouldn’t say that she’s Mexican... there’s no other classification for people like Sandra. She’s not white, she’s not black, she’s not Asian, I mean, she’s closer to Native American, but not entirely, so Hispanic, for me, is where she fits.

Additionally, awareness of these discursive tactics is also present in Mexican partners' understanding of the use of *imposed Hispanicity*. For example, Erica, a thirty-five year old woman, originally from Zacatecas, Mexico, and currently residing in Bryan, Texas, with her sixty-five year old partner, John, said the following about her understanding of his use of "Hispanic" to identify her racially:

**Erica:** I'm Mexican, we don't have different categories in Mexico like they do here. You are either Mexican or you are a foreigner... I don't know what "Hispanic" means. I don't know if it's a good thing or if it's a bad thing... John calls me Hispanic... there are too many categories here.

**Interviewer:** Why do you think John calls you Hispanic?

**Erica:** I don't know... I guess that it's because that's what he's comfortable with. It makes me feel different when he calls me that, because I don't know what it really means... Maybe he just wants to put me into that category because that's what is "appropriate" here in the United States.

Erica's narrative not only demonstrates contextual understandings of racial identity development for both her own self-identification and her partner's perceptions of racial others. While she does not entirely comprehend what "Hispanic" means, she understands that her partner, John, strategically and intentionally uses "Hispanic" with disregard for her feelings and opinions, to ensure that he presents himself as using appropriate terminology as a reflection of his character and protect how he is viewed by others. Erica is cognizant that John employs his power to define the situation, exert racial and gender hegemony, and that he prioritizes his feelings and how he is viewed by others over her feelings and sense of identity.

These experiences are overt narratives of how and why *imposed Hispanicity* occurs in that familiarity with the term comes from institutional understandings (Census surveys, government forms, *etc.*) that occur both at institutional and individual levels. White partners then use the language of imposition to differentiate between non-threatening and acceptable partners and those deemed "undesirable", "other", or "too ethnic/racial". Other participants spoke about these same issues of "Hispanic" as good and "Mexican" as bad in more covert ways and was particularly evident from their reactions and defensiveness, as well their facial expressions, gestures, stutters, and other behaviors annotated during interviews, that revealed that white partners understood how *imposed Hispanicity* functioned in their relationship and that the imposition of this identity was never about their partner, but about finding "acceptable" and "appropriate" partners that were simultaneously "different" or "exotic" in comparison to previous partners or the partners of friends and family members (e.g., dating people of color because they are a "new" and "taboo" partnership, while still keeping within acceptable margins of non-blackness). Below, Miriam, a 44-year-old woman from San Antonio, Texas, and Paul, a 47-year-old, white man from Oceanside, California, who were interviewed jointly in Austin, Texas, where they reside, said the following during my interview with them:

**Interviewer:** Please tell me more about meeting, dating, *etc.*

**Paul:** Well... you know... I... I had... n-n-never dated anyone that, you know wasn't white (Paul starts rubbing his arms and is looking back and forth at his arms and those of Miriam, who is visibly darker-skinned)... I-I mean, I know people who are Hispanic and Asian and Afr-bl-black [Paul stuttered through finding what he thought would be the most

politically-correct label to use for black people, hesitating and looking at my facial expressions for validation of his “progressiveness”] and Native American and, you know, even... (whispers) even... even Middle Easterners (Paul’s facial and body expressions during this portion of the interview were very expressive. His chest puffed up, beaming with pride about his knowledge of people of different races, except when mentioning Middle Easterners, during which he leaned forward, looked around him and then made eye contact before hesitating to say “Middle Easterners”)...

**Interviewer:** What drew you to Miriam?

**Paul:** Honestly, her skin color and how beautiful it made her. I had never really seen anyone’s skin that color that close to me. I found it so beautiful and radiant and... you know... she seemed so fascinating and when she spoke of growing up in Texas, that was it. I wanted to know everything about her... it’s all so different from anything I know.

**Miriam:** He loved everything about what I told him, it was sick at first, I didn’t even know if I was going to go on a second date with him because he seemed almost obsessed. The next thing I know, I run into him in L.A. when I’m out with some friends and he’s out with his military buddies. It seemed so weird and I guess, I guess we couldn’t let that coincidence slide.

**Paul:** And, after dating for a while, she met my parents, and I was pretty worried about their reaction. I come from a long line of good ol’ American military families and well, you know, I didn’t... I didn’t really know how my parents were going to react to me dating a Hispanic woman. And, honestly (voice lowers, Paul leans in), my first thought was, “Well, at least she isn’t black, it shouldn’t be too bad.” I have nothing against bl-black people... I-I... you know, I just didn’t think that my parents would approve of me dating a black woman. They’re from a different generation, you know? I’m-I’m not prejudiced, and neither are they-I’ve never seen them do or say anything against black people... I-I just think they wouldn’t approve of it really.

Paul’s response to not only his initial attraction to Miriam but how deeply interconnected his romantic life is to his family life shows that his experiences dating outside of his own race and ethnicity are influenced by an exotification and fetishization of Miriam as an “other” who he has no experience with but who he finds fascinating because of the marked differences between them. Additionally, the influence of how his family would perceive his interracial dating was a major factor in his decision to date Miriam, who becomes an “acceptable” mate for him, given that she is not black. Later in the interview, Paul continues to talk about Miriam’s suitability for him and his family. He mentions similar comments as those made by Brad about “Hispanic” women being more family-oriented, subservient, catering to their husbands, and not promiscuous. Moreover, Paul includes a narrative about Miriam’s career as an also racialized and imposed identity. Below he speaks of Hispanics lacking professionalism and Miriam being the exception:

**Paul:** You know, the more I got to know Miriam, the more I realized she was the exception. She is an incredibly intelligent woman... And, I just can’t believe how much she has done in life and where she is at. She’s a very knowledgeable CPA (Certified Public Accountant), she is damn good at her job, and she amazes me every day... when we first got married, my parents, they-like I said, they’re from a different generation, they’re not

prejudiced-they, um, they didn't think that she was a good accountant or CPA, they even thought she was the waitress the first time they met her. Now... they won't trust anyone but her to help them out with their taxes. That's a huge accomplishment, you know, they-they don't just trust anyone with their money.

**Interviewer:** Could you tell me more about your parents' reaction to Miriam?

**Paul:** ... (starts laughing and shaking head) they totally thought she was our waitress the first time they met her even though she was wearing a suit and immediately greeted them and shook their hands... you know, very professional, very put together... but, but, I guess that didn't matter, they just thought she was the waitress and started asking her questions about the menu.

**Miriam:** Well, he's also stupid and didn't tell them beforehand that I was Mexican so it was a total surprise and shock to them. They probably didn't think that I was Mexican because my name sounds both white and Mexican...

Meeting Paul's parents speaks to the racialization that Miriam experienced both from Paul and his parents—first, in that Paul is impressed by Miriam's education, knowledge, and professionalism, explicitly stating that she is an exception to the rule, which alludes to stereotypes of people of Latin American descent as working in service sectors, not having professionalism or not being able to “pull themselves up from the bootstraps” in the same ways that whites do (while simultaneously ignoring social structural barriers for people of color, including access to education, limited financial and occupational upward mobility, *etc.*). Miriam, like many other participants who experienced *imposed Hispanicity* from their partners, were the exception to the rule among white participant responses. Their lack of engagement in criminal activities, including gangs, drugs, and “illegal” smuggling rings (some of the themes that emerged when white participants were asked about how partners were exceptional), sexual promiscuity, “illegal”<sup>8</sup> status, and perceived lower class status, including low paying employment, make them exceptions to the stereotypes usually held by white respondents, in particular those imposing “Hispanic” as a socio-racial distinction from national origin groups such as “Mexican”.

Second, Paul's parents' initial reaction in which they used their racialized framework about people of Latin American descent to assume that Miriam was the waitress at the restaurant where they were supposed to meet their son's partner relies on the assumption that Latin@s and whites do not occupy the same socioeconomic statuses and spaces as whites. Thus, Latin@s are suspected of lower class status due to their racial phenotype. Even the good “Hispanics” fall under white scrutiny as occupying these lower socio-racial rungs, despite working in “professional” settings—although Miriam is dressed in professional attire, acted politely and respectfully, and had a well-mannered demeanor, these were insufficient to elevate her to a socio-racial status of acceptance from Paul's parents. It is not until Paul takes that first formal initiative to introduce Miriam to his parents and let them process their son's choice of partner, that they modify their behavior and start slowly welcoming her (the length of that

---

<sup>8</sup> I use “illegal” instead of “undocumented” or “unauthorized” to emphasize how participants employed a racialized discourse of “Mexican” as foreign, therefore, “criminal” and “bad” while “Hispanic” referred to people assumed to be “lawful”, “law-abiding” and “good” Americans, both of which are part of a common trope of constructing “citizens” and “others” [78].

process is unknown by their narrative, given that both Paul and Miriam skirted around that issue in later portions of the interview). Miriam, who understands the complexity of racial dynamics, highlights the importance of racial phenotype in interactions with whites by jokingly calling Paul “stupid” for not telling his parents that she was not just from San Antonio, Texas, but that she was Mexican.

Additionally, Paul’s narrative is also defensive, he very cautiously makes sure to mention that his parents are so impressed with Miriam’s expertise as a CPA that they do not trust anybody else with their money or tax information, suggesting that they could never be racist or discriminatory against her because she has “proven” herself and her extensive knowledge in her professional field. Furthermore, he immediately defends his parents’ behavior by justifying their racist behaviors as “not prejudiced” and “from a different generation”. These defensive strategies function to not only defined whites and whiteness as they operate in privileging whites to not think about the experiences of people of color (or to universalize the white experience to everyone’s experience), but further pushes towards colorblind racism in which “color” is irrelevant (even though it is obviously relevant in the interactions between Miriam and Paul’s parents).

Indeed, this excerpt also reveals Paul’s feelings about Miriam’s expertise—his shock that someone like Miriam, who did not grow up with the same privileges and luxuries as he did, was able to become not just successful, but more successful than he is (Miriam is actually more educated, has a much more valued occupation, and makes a significantly larger amount of money than Paul does), speaks of the racialized and gendered expectations he has for someone of Miriam’s background. Because she is of Mexican descent, Paul expects people like Miriam to fulfill the stereotypically raced and gendered roles that include Mexicans being lazy, not working hard enough to get an education or better their lives, and having extremely large families. Additionally, because Miriam is exceptional and a “Hispanic” woman rather than a “Mexican” woman, she fulfills all of Paul’s requirements for an adequate and acceptable partner—intelligence, drive, motivation, upward mobility, family-oriented, *etc.*—characteristics and behaviors that the racial hierarchy (and the whites who are at the top), generally attribute to other whites but often not to people of color. Paul continues to allude to Miriam’s exceptionalism throughout their interview because she, unlike other Latin@s, has managed to do as white people have in the past and “pulled herself up from the bootstraps”.

Many of the other white men revealed similar understandings of the distinctions between “Mexican” and “Hispanic”. Arthur, a 25-year-old white man in a relationship with Victoria, also 25, who both reside in Bryan, Texas, finds that both “Hispanic” men and women “work hard, take care of business, and aren’t here for handouts”. In contrast, for Arthur, “Mexican” people “take jobs away... ask for help from everyone... use my taxes... and are unemployed.” Similarly, Chris, a 43-year-old white man married to Vanessa, a 39-year-old Mexican American woman, who resides in College Station, Texas made the point of noting that when he met Vanessa he was pleasantly surprised that she was contemplating pursuing a doctoral degree in education (an educational level he currently holds). Vanessa, who self-identifies as Mexican American, but is identified as “Hispanic” by Chris, is a middle school teacher, and Chris is a school principal. When asked why he was surprised at Vanessa’s educational interests, Chris said, “I didn’t know of many Mexican women having those types of interests. When I was in grad school I don’t think anyone in my program was Mexican. I guess I never thought about it until I met her and was surprised—surprised that she would do something so uncommon.” While Chris’s comment is brief, it reflects similar beliefs to those of Arthur and Paul, whereby their Mexican

partners are exceptional, impressive, passionate, and highly achieving people who in their mind, defy commonly held racialized understandings of their particular groups.

The strategic use of *imposed Hispanicity* functions to remove the threat of the racial other from romantic partners. By labeling her “Hispanic”, Paul, Arthur, and Chris justify their relationships to women of color as benign and unthreatening—their professionalism, work ethic, education, occupation and success situate them under “Hispanic” because they are a “good” person of Mexican descent who does not pose racial threat to whites by being “too Mexican”, “too ethnic” or “too racial”. Under this perceived model of Hispanicity, Mexican women, in their partners’ view, are closer to whiteness than they are to Latinidad, because they do not “appear” to be “Mexican” like others—they do not speak Spanish, do not celebrate “Mexican” holidays or act in the stereotypical “Mexican” ways that white men attribute to be of “bad Mexicans” (gang activity, criminality, *cholas*<sup>9</sup>, extensive families, *etc.*). Instead, for these white men, their Mexican partners are “exceptional Hispanics” whose interests are much more aligned with whites and whiteness, characteristics that will help him retain his racial clout without losing status among his white peers.

Paul’s limited experience with Latin@s prior to and during his partnership with Miriam is also laden with colorblind racism. First, his fetishization of Miriam because of her different skin color inscribes that there is a marked difference between them, which Paul acknowledges, but then pulls back from, reiterating that he is not prejudiced and that neither he nor his parents would ever maliciously do anything against anyone. However, we see from Miriam’s and Paul’s accounts of their first interactions that Paul was clearly obsessive and fetishistic about his new experience with a woman of color, to a point that Miriam eventually finds his behavior to seem harassing until her serendipitous encounter in L.A. Second, Paul’s omission of Miriam being Mexican is a clear indicator of colorblindness, to which Paul responds: “I just didn’t think it would be relevant to tell them that she was Mexican. I don’t see how that is a factor in anything.” His response exemplifies how consciously the racial hierarchy permits whites to not think about how perceived racial phenotype is significant in interactions between people, in particular between people of color and whites. In this case, in the first portion of my conversation with Paul and Miriam, Paul acknowledges that Miriam being “Hispanic” obviously affects the family relationship, even though he feels alleviated that she will not be chastised because she is not black. However, he later contradicts himself by stating that Miriam being “Hispanic” should not be an issue. The contradictions of colorblind racism are clearly delineated in Paul and Miriam’s relationship, emphasizing the decentering of racial factors while also highlighting racial difference in particular as it distances from blackness.

---

<sup>9</sup> Calderón-Douglass [79] defines chola as a slang word used for a group of Mexican American or Chicana women who developed a particular aesthetic characterized by Dickies and heavy makeup. However, Calderón-Douglass [79] finds that “The chola aesthetic was first forged by the marginalized Mexican American youths of Southern California. It embodies the remarkable strength and creative independence it takes to survive in a society where your social mobility has been thwarted by racism. The chola identity was conceived by a culture that dealt with gang warfare, violence, and poverty on top of conservative gender roles. The clothes these women wore were more than a fashion statement—they were signifiers of their struggle and hard-won identity... It’s an identity forged out of struggle to assert culture and history, a struggle that continues” [79]. However, to those not part of the chol@ subculture, the chol@ identity is merely seen as criminality and gang activity, rather than a subculture built out of resistance.

Further into the interview, I asked both Paul and Miriam to racially and ethnically self-identify, as well as discuss how they perceive their partner's identities. Miriam racially self-identified as "Mexican American" while Paul identified her as "Hispanic". When I asked Paul why he identified her this way, Miriam sighed heavily, rolled her eyes, crossed her arms across her chest, leaned back into her seat and muttered, "Here we go". Paul, feeling his partner's tension, leaned forward, looked around him, and said:

**Paul:** Well, you know, because... because when you're asked what you are, the choices are always white, black, Asian, Native American, and she's none of those. So, she's Hispanic, right?

**Interviewer:** So, you know she's Hispanic because that's what you've seen on different forms?

**Paul:** Yeah, I mean, that's what's there right?

**Miriam:** But you know perfectly well that I don't feel that way. I don't like to be called "Hispanic" and you know that. You know that growing up my mom was hit in school for speaking Spanish and that she was called "dirty beaner" and "manic Hispanic". It's very hurtful and you know how I feel about it but you still feel the need to call me "Hispanic".

**Interviewer:** Is there any reason why you do identify Miriam as "Hispanic" even though she has voiced that she hates it?

**Paul:** Yeah-well-you know, um, I-I never meant it maliciously... I-I-that's just kind of, you know, what I've known for people, people like Miriam and, well, it's-it's hard to break old habits. I just always thought that was what people preferred to be called. I-I never mean to be offensive... I-I just don't always, you know, it's hard to remember what everyone prefers to be called. I try to be PC (politically correct) and I get yelled at, if I say "beaner", "spic", "wetback" or anything else I get yelled at. I can never win.

Paul's reaction to Miriam's outburst is apologetic because of Miriam's explanation of her family's collective memory involving the pain and hurt experienced by her mother in Texas and the racial literacy [80] passed down through generations about the exclusion, abuse, and racial punishment of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Southwest of the United States. However, despite this, Paul remains unapologetic about his continued use of "Hispanic" regarding Miriam—instead, he once again becomes defensive and justifies this behavior as never knowing what people prefer to be called and that all his attempts to be "racially accommodating" to non-whites backfire on him and he is punished. While Miriam tries explaining to Paul the importance of her identity to her sense of self, Paul manages to play into white victimhood, what Tim Wise [81] calls "whine merchants", in this case, white people claiming victimhood in an attempt to make sense "if one has so imbibed a mentality of entitlement that one actually believes whites *earned* all that extra stuff, that we *earned* our better health, or the relative wealth status we merely inherited from our families (which inherited it from theirs), or preferential treatment from cops". Again, the use of "Hispanic" is not for the benefit of partners of Latin American descent, but rather for whites to feel better about using the "right" or "proper" nomenclature and enacting impression management [82] about not being perceived as racist. Imposing "Hispanic" then functions as a self-serving strategy for whites to not be perceived as racist, but rather as "good whites"

who are victims of continuous racial attacks while simultaneously invalidating and ignoring the voices of people of color when it comes to matters of their own experiences and preferences.

Furthermore, making the conscious choice to impose Hispanicity to a partner because she does not exemplify racial stereotypes also speaks to the racial power in naming and defining the situation [40], despite the onset of conflicts with the non-white partner. This racial power allows whites to make decisions as to who is acceptable and who is not and what characteristics must be met in order to be the exceptional racial other. Thus, *imposed Hispanicity* is a tool of racial power that allows whites to appear non-racist, manage their reputations with whites and people of color, and to determine worthiness of intimate partners. The use of this racial power creates tensions in intimate spaces that force and coerce partners of color to reluctantly accept their partners' perceptions and impositions despite conflicts and tensions surrounding these tactics. Although Miriam responds to Paul's mislabeling with verbal and physical protest, she has to make the choice of continuing to fight over what Paul perceives to be a difference of opinion, including accepting the continued microaggressions, emotional labor, and racial fatigue that are part of that interaction, or just letting Paul continue to perceive her as "Hispanic". These choices are often difficult and complex—later in the interview, Miriam said, "I have to choose, I have to just let it go or keep hammering him with it and I just don't have the energy anymore. I can't. I'll make comments and say something to him about it, but eventually I let it go. It's draining."

Here, Miriam acknowledges the emotional wear and racial fatigue that conversations about race and ethnicity have on her, not in a way that victimizes her, unlike Paul's strategy of claiming white victimhood, but rather in a way that clues us into how depleted she is of energy surrounding this topic and how she has to strategize for her own mental well-being by letting go of that particular subject so as to minimize tension and conflict. Although never directly indicating feeling coerced or forced into ending the arguments about racial and ethnic identity, it is clear from Miriam's account that emotionally she is not only coerced into accepting that Paul will not change his opinion or take her experiences as a woman of color into consideration, but that she has to make a conscious choice of ending the tensions or conflict surrounding the subject, even when Paul never ceases to talk about it with her, their children and family members or friends. By continuing to speak of Hispanicity and Miriam's exceptionalism, Paul claims racial power, names the situation, perpetuates racial stereotypes and the racial hierarchy, and establishes himself in hypermasculinized verbal ways as the ultimate voice, authority, and opinion on the matter while silencing his partner and her experiences.

### *White Women Using Imposed Hispanicity on Mexican Partners*

It is no surprise that white women also imposed "Hispanic" onto their partners of Mexican descent, however, it is worth noting that the percentage of white women imposing Hispanicity is less than the percentage of white men who do so. Additionally, many of the same reasons discussed in the previous section about white men imposing "Hispanic" onto their female partners of Mexican descent stand true among white women. However, the gendered dynamics of *imposed Hispanicity* were also prevalent among this group—namely, racialized and gendered assumptions about male Latinidad including hypersexualization, attributing certain skills (including dancing ability), and assumptions about their partners being *machistas* (a hypermasculine extension of gender roles specific to Latin American

culture [83–86]). A common racialized conception of Mexicanness among white women was that of Mexican men as sexually threatening, with an increased need to protect sexual purity and whiteness, while “Hispanic” men were viewed as “good,” polite, and respectful. Furthermore, “Hispanic” men were also characterized as suave, god-like, Latin lovers who were perceived to be more romantic than men of other races. Courtney, a 30-year-old white woman from Alaska, who is in a relationship with Diego, a 35-year-old man from Houston, Texas (where they both reside), mentioned the following about why she was attracted to Diego and her racialized notions about his culture:

**Courtney:** He’s got that look, that long, black-hair, the dark skin, and, he’s very romantic. He always brings me flowers, chocolates, little gifts, he tells me that he loves me and how much he appreciates me all the time. He’s the sweetest and I never expected that from him. I thought he was going to be this really rough, very masculine, very angry man who would not show any emotion or affection. I was so surprised. I tell all of my friends that they need to date a Hispanic man because they will be treated and feel like queens... You know, he’s a very loving and adoring and very sexual guy. He’s like, well, um, he’s charming and flirtatious but he’s just the sweetest ever and I’ve never been treated better. I never expected that from him when he told me he was Mexican.

Several things can be highlighted from Courtney’s description of Diego. First, her impression that physically he does not fit the racial stereotypes of what “Mexican” men look like, in particular the lightness of his skin and resemblance to men of European-white descent, are characteristics that make Diego physically attractive to Courtney given the Eurocentric views of whites regarding physical characteristics and the elevation of that which is European as superior to that which is non-European. Her surprise in later finding out his background, primarily that he is of Mexican descent and grew up in an impoverished and underprivileged area of Houston, supports every preconceived notion that she has had about “Mexican” men, but Diego’s ability to provide, be the man, and still act in loving, romantic ways contradicts her understandings of Mexicanness and thus her use of *imposed Hispanicity* is intentional and strategic. Like the white male participants who expressed surprise at how exceptional their partners of Mexican descent were, Courtney and other white women elevate their partners to “Hispanic” as a way of distancing themselves and their significant other from negative attributions of criminality, “illegality”, violence, and morally reprehensible behaviors (“Mexican” men were often framed as cholos, gangbangers, disrespectful, loud, and sexually and physically threatening). For these white women, “Hispanic” means having steady employment, legal status in the U.S., being a man who sweeps them off their feet in fairytale fashion, and a man who is a passionate Latin lover as shown by his flirtatiousness, charisma, and exceptionality in both physical and verbal affection.

Courtney’s experience, common among the other white women in the sample, also reflects racialized beliefs of Mexican men exploiting women and engaging in other behaviors deemed to be *machistas*. Additionally, according to Lu and Wong [87] Latino men must live up to pressures and expectations of masculinity and embodying “*el hombre*” (the man) [87]. To do so, men must exemplify “bravery, respect, responsibility, strength, dignity, and nobility” [87] (p. 121) all of which may be gained by working hard, fulfilling family obligations, and helping others. Therefore, white women imposing “Hispanic” perpetuate ideas about Mexican men and pre-conceived notions of masculinity that reify

ideas of men as providers and protectors. On the other hand, “Mexican” was used to describe those who were otherized as undocumented, criminals, gangbangers and cholos, unemployed, and/or lazy.

Although white men and women share similarities in how they racialize people of Latin American descent, particularly their romantic partners, what differs are the ways in which white women talk about *imposed Hispanicity*. First, white women, while still defensive and performing white victimhood in an attempt to not being perceived as racist, stand by their impositions of “Hispanic” in much more submissive ways. Second, the perception of partner suitability from white women is rooted in gendered notions of success and potential for providing financially for them and their future families. Georgia, a 27-year-old woman from Detroit, Michigan, in a relationship with Antonio, a 28-year-old man from Mexico City, Mexico, both of whom reside in Austin, Texas, says the following about identifying Antonio and tensions following this perceived identification:

**Georgia:** It’s hard, it’s definitely very difficult to disagree on something that I know he takes so personally. I just-you know it’s just how I feel about it. And, we fight and he explains and I explain and I understand what he means and he understands, I guess, what I means, but you know, it’s one of the things we fight the most about. Antonio always gets very upset at me and I try to do the best that I can and not aggravate him anymore, not because he would do anything to me, no, no, it’s more about not liking him to be upset. So, I try not to bring it up, I try not to say “Hispanic” around him because I know how sensitive he is about it. But, I also can’t ignore what I believe and how I feel about it. My mom has told me to just go along with what he says when he brings it up, which I’ve tried doing, but he see that it’s not real, that I’m doing it to make him feel better. I can’t help it though, I want him to be happy and I know this, this makes him, you know, very upset and unhappy. So, I avoid that conversation with him at all cost.

Georgia’s narrative shows how contentious this issue is in their relationship and how it affects their behaviors not just with one another but with others, including close friends, and family. She adopts very submissive tactics to avoid engaging in this type of conversation with her partner because of his reactions, not only because she does not want to upset him, but so she does not feel like she has been a lousy or unsupportive partners, and so he does not disappoint her by embodying a Mexican *machista* who might harm her physically or emotionally. The fear then is that angering or provoking Antonio would contradict how Georgia perceives him to be under the “Hispanic” label. Her racial power to determine the situation and impose identity is thus complicated by gendered behaviors commonly used to socialize girls and women to not speak up, not challenge other people’s opinions, and to use soft and coded language that puts others’ feelings above theirs. Georgia, like many of the white women, stood by her opinion regarding labeling Antonio as “Hispanic” instead of his preferred “Mexican” but did so in ways that still attempted to cater to and appease her male partner. This is also based off of racialized understandings that “Hispanic” men could at the drop of a hat transform from “Hispanic” to embodying what it means to be a “Mexican” man. Georgia’s narrative thus shows that the racial power to name the situation functions in different ways compared to how white men use their racial power, largely due to the hegemonic raced and gendered powers available to white men. However, Georgia’s narrative also reflects that while her racial power manifested differently from that of white men because of gender

differences, she was still able to wield it to define Antonio's identity and determine the situation, despite her lack of gender power.

Georgia's vignette only shows a brief glance into the complexities of the intersection of identities and systems of power. A more detailed discussion of white women's use of *imposed Hispanicity* is forthcoming from the author.

## 5. Conclusions

This article focused on the dynamics of *imposed Hispanicity*, defined as the imposition of "Hispanic" as a racial identity onto people of Latin American descent which is institutionally bound, culturally and institutionally imposed, and an action based on the use of direct and indirect coercion and force by others, in this case, white romantic partners for the purpose of establishing power and determining the situation. Furthermore, I examined how romantic, intimate space, often considered the safest and most loving space, actually becomes the most coercive and confrontational space with regard to racial and ethnic self-identification. Moreover, I also addressed the influence of the imposer's race and gender on the

self-identification of the person whose identity is imposed on, particularly as related to power and status. More specifically, I found that white men used their hegemony to not only employ *imposed Hispanicity* but to assert power and control over discussions and situations in which racial definitions must be made. While white women held racial power, it was often limited by gendered dynamics such as submissive socialization and gendered expectations of silence and "good" partner retention.

Furthermore, these gendered and racialized dynamics speak to the larger social stratification in existence in the U.S. where social structure and institutions within the social structure are stratified by race and gender, among other factors, and which are also identities that are stratified, not because one chooses an identity that makes one "superior" or "dominant", but rather because the interaction between oneself and the social structure, institutions, and individuals, work to create these stratified identities while simultaneously reinforcing the boundaries of hegemony. This process of identity development is fluid, continuous, bidirectional, functions outside of solely individual actions and choices, and, thus, is not just individually chosen<sup>10</sup>. This un-chosen imposition of identity is based on not only the use of a label such as "Hispanic", but the meanings of *Hispanicity*, including the perceptions of what is acceptable in terms of thinking, acting, speaking, or simply being, in order to belong within social space. I contend that one's interactions with these issues of identity depend on whether a person is in a group with majority or minority power within a particular context. If one is in a minority position, with little to no power, such as in the case of the women of Mexican descent in romantic relationships with white men presented in this article, they are likely to experience a higher rate of *imposed Hispanicity*.

The interaction of race and gender is significant in the experiences of both whites and Latin@s. Women of Mexican descent experienced dichotomous pressures in their relationship—a two-ness or multiple-ness that has serious implications for their romantic experiences. These dichotomies were not

---

<sup>10</sup> That is not to say that agency to choose an identity does not exist (further analysis of this warrants a lengthier discussion that extends beyond this article; however, I hope to address this in future publications), but rather, this research shows that individual choice is constantly influenced by external social factors and macro-level forces as agency and social structure influence one another.

of their choice, but rather resulted from the interactions the women of Mexican descent had with their sense of self and how they were perceived by their white male partners who held hegemonic racial power to define situations and not modify their behavior to accommodate Mexican partners' feelings and expectations about their identities and how they affect the family.

## Acknowledgments

Data collection for this project was funded by Melbern G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research's Graduate Stipendiary Fellowship and the Department of Sociology's Graduate Student Research Grant at Texas A & M University. Analysis and writing was also supported by several grants at Texas A & M University, including the College of Liberal Arts' Vision 2020 Dissertation Enhancement Award, the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute's Graduate Student Fellowship, and the Women's and Gender Studies Graduate Dissertation Fellowship. Furthermore, I am grateful to Sarah N. Gatson, Rogelio Sáenz, Jane Sell, and Marco Portales for their feedback. Lastly, I would also like to thank Kim Villa-Brown and Mariela Flores Magón for their work, assistance, insight, and support throughout data analysis.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## References

1. Delgado, D.J. Middleclass Latin@ Identity: Building a Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. *Sociol. Compass* **2010**, *4*, 947–964.
2. Cobas, A.J.; Duany, J.; Feagin, J.R. *How the United States Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*; Paradigm: Boulder, CO, USA, 2009.
3. Grosfoguel, R.; Georas, C.S. The Racialization of Latino Caribbean Migrants in the New York Metropolitan Area. *CENTRO J. Cent. Puerto Rican Stud.* **1996**, *8*, 1–2.
4. Alcoff, L.M. Latino vs. Hispanic: The Politics of Ethnic Names. *Philos. Soc. Crit.* **2005**, *31*, 395–407.
5. Toro, L.A. Race, Identity, and “Box Checking”: The Hispanic Classification in OMB Directive. In *The Latino/a Condition*; Delgado, R., Stefancic, J., Eds.; New York University Press: New York, NY, USA, 1998; pp. 52–59.
6. Rodríguez, C.E.; Miyawaki, M.H.; Argeros, G. Latino Racial Reporting in the USA: To Be Or Not To Be. *Sociol. Compass* **2013**, *7*, 390–403.
7. Compton, E.; Bentley, M.; Ennis, S.; Rastogi, S. *2010 Census Race and Hispanic Origin Alternative Questionnaire Experiment*; USA Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, USA, 2013.
8. Rodríguez, C.E. Race, Culture, and Latino “otherness” in the 1980 Census. *Soc. Sci. Q.* **1992**, *73*, 930–937.
9. Gómez, L.E. *Manifest Destinies: The Making of Mexican American Race*; New York University Press: New York, NY, USA, 2007.
10. Feagin, J.R.; Cobas, J.A. *Latinos Facing Racism: Discrimination, Resistance and Endurance*; Paradigm Publishers: Boulder, CO, USA, 2014.

11. Oboler, S. *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States*; University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, USA, 1995.
12. Alba, R. *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*; Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, USA, 1990.
13. Nagel, J. Racial, Ethnic, and National Boundaries: Sexual Intersections and Symbolic Interactions. *Symb. Interact.* **2001**, *24*, 123–139.
14. Rockquemore, A.K.; Brunisma, D. *Beyond Black: Biracial Identity in America*; Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Ltd.: Lanham, MD, USA, 2008.
15. Waters, M. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*; University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, USA, 1990.
16. Murguía, E. *Chicano Intermarriage: A Theoretical and Empirical Study*; Trinity University Press: San Antonio, TX, USA, 1982.
17. Massey, D.S. Racial Formation in Theory and Practice: The Case of Mexicans in the United States. *Race Soc. Probl.* **2009**, *1*, 12–26.
18. Sáenz, R.; Aguirre, B.E. The Dynamics of Mexican Ethnic Identity. *Ethn. Groups* **1991**, *9*, 17–32.
19. Childs, E.C. *Navigating Interracial Borders: Black-White Couples and Their Social Worlds*; Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ, USA, 2005.
20. Kalmijn, M. Trends in Black/White Intermarriage. *Soc. Forces* **1993**, *72*, 119–146.
21. Orbuch, T.L.; Eyster, S.L. Division of Household Labor among Black Couples and White Couples. *Soc. Forces* **1997**, *76*, 301–332.
22. Heer, D.M. The Prevalence of Black-White Marriage in the United States, 1960 and 1970. *J. Marriage Fam.* **1974**, *36*, 246–258.
23. Rosenblatt, C.P.; Karis, T.A.; Powell, R.D. *Multiracial Couples: Black and White Voices*; Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 1995.
24. Kouri, M.K.; Lasswell, M. Black-White Marriages: Social Change and Intergenerational Mobility. *Marriage Fam. Rev.* **1993**, *19*, 241–255.
25. Sollors, W. *Interracialism: Black-White Intermarriage in American History, Literature, and Law*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 2000.
26. Lewis, R., Jr.; Yancey, G.; Bletzer, S. Racial and Non-Racial Factors that Influence Spouse Choice in Black/White Marriages. *J. Black Stud.* **1997**, *28*, 60–78.
27. Qian, Z. Breaking the Racial Barriers: Variations in Interracial Marriage between 1980 and 1990. *Demography* **1997**, *34*, 263–276.
28. Lee, S.M.; Fernandez, M. Trends in Asian American Racial/Ethnic Intermarriage: A Comparison of 1980 and 1990 Census Data. *Sociol. Perspect.* **1998**, *41*, 323–342.
29. Lee, S.M.; Yamanaka, K. Patterns of Asian American Intermarriage and Marital Assimilation. *J. Comp. Fam. Stud.* **1990**, *21*, 287–305.
30. Qian, Z.C.; Licther, D.T. Measuring Marital Assimilation: Intermarriage among Natives and Immigrants. *Soc. Sci. Res.* **2001**, *30*, 289–312.
31. Qian, Z.C.; Licther, D.T. Social Boundaries and Marital Assimilation: Interpreting Trends in Racial and Ethnic Intermarriage. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* **2007**, *72*, 68–94.
32. Lee, J.; Bean, F.D. America's Changing Color Lines: Immigration, Race/Ethnicity, and Multiracial Identification. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* **2004**, *30*, 221–242.

33. Liang, Z.; Ito, N. Intermarriage of Asian Americans in the New York City region: Contemporary Patterns and Future Prospects. *Int. Migr. Rev.* **1999**, *33*, 876–900.
34. Smedley, A.; Smedley, B.D. *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 4th ed.; Westview Press: Boulder, CO, USA, 2011.
35. Omi, M. Winant, H. *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s*; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 1994.
36. Haney-López, I. *Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Justice*; Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, USA, 2003.
37. Ríos, M.; Romero, F.; Ramírez, R. *Race Reporting Among Hispanics: 2010*; USA Census Bureau: Washington, DC, USA, 2014.
38. Lopez, M.H.; Krogstad, J.M. “Mexican,” “Hispanic,” “Latin American” Top List of Race Write-Ins on the 2010 Census; Pew Research Center: Washington, DC, USA, 2014.
39. DuBois, W.E.B. The Souls of Black Folk. Available online: [www.bartleby.com/114/](http://www.bartleby.com/114/) (accessed on 16 November 2015).
40. Bonilla-Silva, E. “We Are All Americans!”: The Latin Americanization of Racial Stratification in the USA. *Race Soc.* **2002**, *5*, 3–16.
41. Lamont, M. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class*; University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, USA, 1992.
42. Stryker, S. Freedom and Constraint in Social and Personal Life: Toward Resolving the Paradox of Self. In *Self, Collective Behavior and Society: Honoring the Contributions of Ralph H. Turner*; Platt, G.M., Gordon, C., Eds.; JAI Press: Greenwich, CT, USA, 1994; pp. 119–138.
43. Burke, P.J. Identity Processes and Social Stress. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* **1991**, *56*, 836–849.
44. Stryker, S.; Burke, P.J. The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory. *Soc. Psychol. Q.* **2000**, *63*, 284–297.
45. Cast, A. Power and the Ability to Define the Situation. *Soc. Psychol. Q.* **2003**, *66*, 185–201.
46. Nelson, C.; Tienda, M. The Structuring of Hispanic Ethnicity: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. In *Challenging Fronteras: Structuring Latina and Latino Lives in the USA*; Romero, M., Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., Ortiz, V., Eds.; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 1997; pp. 7–29.
47. Meier, K.J.; Melton, E.K. Latino Heterogeneity and the Politics of Education: The Role of Context. *Soc. Sci. Q.* **2012**, *93*, 732–749.
48. Ortego, Y.G.F. *Terms of Identity: What’s in a Name Historia Chicana/Mexican American Studies Newsletter—NACCS Tejas*; University of North Texas: Denton, TX, USA, 2014.
49. Del Pinal, J.; Singer, A. Generations of Diversity: Latinos in the United States. *Popul. Bull.* **1997**, *52*, 1–48.
50. Guarnaccia, P.J.; Pincay, I.M.; Alegría, M.; Shrout, P.E.; Lewis-Fernández, R.; Canino, A.G. Assessing Diversity Among Latinos. *Hisp. J. Behav. Sci.* **2007**, *29*, 510–534.
51. Betancur, J.J. Critical Considerations and New Challenges in Black-Latino Relations. In *Reinventing Race, Reinventing Racism*; Betancur, J.J., Herring, C., Eds.; Brill: Boston, MA, USA, 2012; pp. 23–42.
52. Haynes, R.V. *The Mississippi Territory and the Southwest Frontier, 1795–1817*; University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, KY, USA, 2010.

53. Reséndez, A. *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800–1850*; Cambridge University Press: New York, NY, USA, 2005.
54. Montejano, D. *Quixote's Soldiers: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966–1981*; University of Texas Press: Austin, TX, USA, 2010.
55. Acuña, R. *Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle toward Liberation*; Harper & Row Publishers: San Francisco, CA, USA, 1972.
56. De León, A. *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Towards Mexicans in Texas, 1821–1900*; University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, NC, USA, 1983.
57. Foley, N. Straddling the Color Line: The Legal Construction of Hispanic Identity in Texas. In *Not Just Black and White: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States*; Foner, N., Frederickson, G., Eds.; Russell Sage Foundation: New York, USA, 1997; pp. 341–357.
58. Tijerina, A. *Tejanos and Texas under the Mexican Flag, 1821–1836*; Texas A & M University Press: College Station, TX, USA, 1994.
59. Gonzales, M.G. *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*; Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, USA, 2009.
60. Gutierrez, D. *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity*; University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, USA, 1994.
61. Hardin, S.L. *Texian Iliad: A Military History of the Texas Revolution, 1835–1836*; University of Texas Press: Austin, TX, USA, 2010.
62. Carrigan, D.W.; Webb, C. The lynching of persons of Mexican origin or descent in the USA, 1848–1929. *J. Soc. Hist.* **2003**, *37*, 411–438.
63. Charmaz, K. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*; Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2006.
64. Strauss, A.L. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*; Cambridge University Press: New York, NY, USA, 1987.
65. Glaser, B.; Strauss, A.L. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*; Aldine Transaction: New Brunswick, NJ, USA, 1967.
66. Strauss, A.L.; Corbin, J. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*; Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 1998.
67. Denzin, N.K. *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*; Aldine: Chicago, IL, USA, 1970.
68. Armstrong, D.; Gosling, A.; Weinman, J.; Marteau, T. The Place of Interrater Reliability in Qualitative Research – An Empirical Study. *Sociology* **1997**, *31*, 597–606.
69. Glaser, B. *Theoretical Sensitivity*; Sociology Press: Mill Valley, CA, USA, 1978.
70. Creswell, J.W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*; Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 1998.
71. Wingfield, A.H. Crossing the Color Line: Black Professional Men's Development of Interracial Social Networks. *Societies* **2014**, *4*, 240–255.
72. Brooks, S. Hypersexualization and the Dark Body: Race and Inequality among Black and Latina Women in the Exotic Dance Industry. *Sex. Res. Soc. Policy* **2010**, *7*, 70–80.

73. Fregoso, R.L. Lupe Vélez: Queen of the B's. In *From Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Film and Culture*; Mendible, M., Ed.; University of Texas Press: Austin, TX, USA, 2007; pp. 51–68.
74. Rodríguez, C.E. *Heroes, Lovers, and Others: The Story of Latinos in Hollywood*; Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, USA, 2004.
75. Berg, C.R. *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion and Resistance*; University of Texas Press: USA, 2009.
76. Berg, C.R. Stereotyping in Films in General and of the Hispanic in Particular. *Howard J. Commun.* **1990**, 2, 286–300.
77. Ormonde, M.E. Note & Comment: Debunking the Myth of the “Anchor Baby”: Why Proposed Legislation Limiting Birthright Citizenship is not a Means of Controlling Unauthorized Immigration. *Roger Williams Univ. Law Rev.* **2012**, 17, 861.
78. Johnson, K.R. “Aliens” and the U.S. Immigration Laws: The Social and Legal Construction of Nonpersons. *Univ. Miami Inter Am. Law Rev.* **1996**, 28, 263–292.
79. Calderón-Douglass, B. The Folk Feminist Struggle behind the Chola Fashion Trend. 2015. Available online: <http://www.vice.com/read/the-history-of-the-chola-456> (accessed on 2 August 2015).
80. Twine, F.W. A White Side of Black Britain: The Concept of Racial Literacy. *Ethn. Racial Stud.* **2004**, 27, 1–30.
81. Wise, T. Whine Merchants: Privilege, Inequality, and the Persistent Myth of White Victimhood. Nashville, TN: Tim Wise: Anti-Racist Essayist, Author, and Educator. 2013. Available online: <http://www.timwise.org/2013/05/whine-merchants-privilege-inequality-and-the-persistent-myth-of-white-victimhood/> (accessed on 10 June 2014).
82. Goffman, E. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*; Anchor Book: New York, NY, USA, 1959.
83. Zinn, M.B. Chicano Men and Masculinity. *J. Ethn. Stud.* **1982**, 10, 29–44.
84. Lara-Cantú, M.A. A Sex Role Inventory with Scales for “Machismo” and “Self-Sacrificing” Women. *J. Cross Cult. Psychol.* **1989**, 20, 386–398.
85. Mirandé, A. Que Gacho es Ser Macho: It's a Drag to be a Macho Man. *Aztlán J. Chicano Stud.* **1988**, 17, 63–89.
86. Mirandé, A. *Hombresy Machos: Masculinity and Latino Culture*; Westview: Boulder, CO, USA, 1997.
87. Lu, A.; Wong, Y.J. Stressful Experiences of Masculinity among Young U.S.-Born and Immigrant Latino American Men. *Cult. Soc. Masc.* **2014**, 6, 111–128.