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Mapping Latino Racialization: White Attitudes Toward Latinos and Policy Preferences in  
Orange County California

By  
Celia Olivia Lacayo

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
Requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in  
Ethnic Studies  
In the  
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Of the  
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge

Professor Stephen Small, Chair

Professor Michael Omi

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## Abstract

### Mapping Latino Racialization: White Attitudes Toward Latinos and Policy Preferences in Orange County California

by

Celia Olivia Lacayo

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnic Studies

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Stephen Small, Chair

The dissertation develops our theorizing about the dynamics of racialization, and the role of race and ethnicity, in the United States, particularly in order to account for the dynamics and processes unique to Latinos. It does so by examining white attitudes towards Latinos in Orange County, California through public discourse analysis of the “Ask a Mexican” column, a survey instrument and a series of in-depth interviews to triangulate whites’ use and logic of racial stereotypes and policy preferences. Orange County is a good testing ground for contemporary Latino racialization because it is a majority minority area, which has a long history of migration from Mexico, with deep racial segregation that reflects racial inequalities between whites and Latinos. While Latinos in the United States as a whole are a heterogeneous group my data demonstrates how the current racialization of Latinos in the United States has a homogenizing effect.

Empirically my data maps racial stereotypes whites have had and continue to reference as the Latino population has increased. These include: Latinos are inherently criminal; do not value education; abuse public assistance; and do not assimilate. They further diametrically oppose what it is to be an American and from being Mexican. Whites use the illegality frame, but frequently assign characteristics to all Latinos regardless of their status and generation. The findings demonstrate how the perceptions of whites towards Latinos are used when whites make daily decisions and also form their larger policy preferences. While some supported a pathway to citizenship most of the respondents overwhelmingly held negative and frequently racist views of Latinos.

Theoretically, my work interrogates how Latinos/Mexicans have their own complex, multifaceted dynamics, including the implications of proximity to Mexico, the torrid race relations between whites and Latinos that included labor exploitation, segregation and lynching as well as the ongoing dominant discourse centered around Latinos being “illegal,” a threat, and undeserving of citizenship. My research reveals that whites often use “ethnic” terms to really mean biological, racially fixed terms. Thus, the extent to which Latinos are imagined to be a race or ethnicity among populations outside the academy have major implications. Importantly,

whites consistently express the belief that Latinos are not assimilating and consistently assert that an alleged “backward” culture is passed down from generation to generation, leading whites to believe Mexicans are an inferior group. Furthermore, my data account for context of reception, measured by white attitudes towards Latinos, that the literature does not take into account. My data also supports Ngai’s and other scholarship about Latinos treated as perpetual foreigners, but also adds how other parts of the Latino community are labeled and treated as racial minorities. Thus, my data challenges past literature that examines the Latino experience solely through an immigrant paradigm. Lastly, my findings challenge Black exceptionalism and a black/non-black color line, because it proves in fact that whites have racist sentiments towards Latinos and do not see them similar to themselves.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

“The white establishment is now the minority... You are going to see a tremendous Hispanic vote for President Obama. The demographics are changing. It’s not a traditional America anymore.”

FOX NEWS COMMENTATOR BILL O’REILLY

Arizona’s Governor Jan Brewer was asked by a reporter, “What does an illegal immigrant look like?” To which she responded, “Uh uh... I do not know what an illegal immigrant looks like. I can tell you that I think that there are people in Arizona that assume what an illegal immigrant looks like.”

These are some of the characterizations whites in power use to describe the increasing Latino<sup>1</sup> population. Both speak to the concern and fear many whites have of a “browning” nation, where many states and larger metropolitan areas have changed or are changing into majority-minority areas. These quotes also address the immigrant, undocumented as well as the native population within a very heterogeneous group. But as I will map in this dissertation, the racialization Latinos currently endure has a homogenizing effect. In other words, what we are seeing at the present moment, through the Latino experience, challenges notions of a post-racial state.<sup>2</sup>

We have widespread evidence that Latinos continue to endure racial stereotypes in the media, public discourse, and larger society (Berg 2002; Massey 2009; Rodriguez 1979; 2004; Timberlake & Williams 2012; Santa Ana 2002). These stereotypes pigeonhole Latinos and often lead to discrimination and policies that negatively affect them. These stereotypes and whites’ views of Latinos affect race relations between the groups. In the last couple of decades, this tension has been particularly centered around anti-immigrant policies that are specifically anti-Latino (De Francesco Soto 2010). Whites across the country continue to respond to an increase of not only Latino immigrants but also the native Latino population -- frequently in hostile and racist ways.

Yet, these incidents of racial turmoil are not accounted for in the Black/white binary (Edsall & Edsall 1992; Hacker 1992; Hill & Jones 1993; Sears & Savalei 2006; West 1993), which fails to take into account the unique racialization attributes Latinos endure. In the white attitudes literature, we find that it mostly account for what whites think of Blacks and how their

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this dissertation I will use the term Latino interchangeably with Mexicans, because respondents in my sample do not differentiate between these groups.

<sup>2</sup> Many people believe the United States has reached racial parity, because the nation has a Black president and many other minority elected officials, as well as an increase in intermarriage.

perceptions of Blacks can predict their stance on particular policies. Scholars such as Sears, Sidanius, Bobo (2000), and Bonilla-Silva (2006), provide a large body of work to address white racial attitudes towards Blacks and have also provided different theories that account of whites' racist perceptions of Blacks. Their work demonstrates the importance of studying white racial attitudes because such attitudes significantly shape race relations and specifically laws, politics, and policies. This body of work also captures why racial inequalities still persist, and provide strong data that challenge the idea of a post-racial state, and in fact supports our understanding of a society that is still plagued with deep-seated racism, towards Blacks.

However, there is much less literature that addresses the complexities of white racial attitudes towards Latinos. Latinos -- who experience their own unique patterns of racialization, having gone through different periods of marginalization, conditional inclusion, and strong forms of discrimination -- also have a different history from that of African-Americans (Barrera 1979; Almaguer 1994; Sanchez 1999; Molina 2006). Yet, these two groups have been the focus of extensive debates regarding their status in comparison to whites, with both of them often being seen as inferior. These include labor exploitation, deep-seated segregation, and -- at the present moment -- racial profiling and incarceration as well as educational inequalities. Latinos also face issues of immigration status, citizenship and possible deportation, which are not shared with African-Americans. Unlike, Asian immigrants and Asian Americans, Latinos are not perceived to be a model minority and are often characterized as being a societal problem. While there are distinct differences between how Blacks and Latinos experience racism, respondents in my sample indicate that they frequently think about these groups in similar ways. Moreover Latinos' racial mixture does not squarely situate them in either the white or Black category, Latinos have historically faced racialization (Acuna 2010; Barrera 1979; Camarillo and Chavez 2005; Gomez 2007; Haney-Lopez 2003; Menchaca 1995; Molina 2006;), and continue to face it today.<sup>3</sup> It is the unique processes of racialization specific to Latinos that this dissertation captures by mapping expressed white racial sentiments, as well as the policy implications that shape race relations between these two groups today.

What is also key in the relationship between these two groups is how the dominant group, whites, think about them and how they use these perceptions to make choices that have effects on Latinos. As many scholars have observed:

One problem with the classic assimilation perspective is that it 'tends to de-emphasize the kinds of power differentials that have historically been so crucial in structuring... inequality, placing a group's attempts at becoming like the majority group at the center stage to the neglect of the structural barriers that might prevent if from doing so' (O'Brien

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<sup>3</sup> The persistence of low status seems to reflect a process of racialization, by which I mean the societal assigning of undesirable characteristics to people of a particular ancestry or phenotypes (Feagin 2006), as well as the institutional consequences of this exclusion. The treatment of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in this country is rooted in racial difference and racial hierarchy and in the history of colonization and conquest (Telles 2006, 17 ).

2008, 14). In this way, the supposed success or failure of immigrant groups' integration has been placed on the group themselves, without regard for the context into which they were received. We have seen how strong an impact racializing institutions, racial discourses, and interpersonal prejudices have on individuals' access to precious resources, sense of self-identity, and sense of group position or worth. The onus not merely upon immigrant groups but upon American society to admit newcomers to the national community and change the outdated image of an Anglo-Saxon Protestant nation so as to accurately reflect the existing racial, ethnic, and nation-origin diversity (Vasquez 2011, 238).

My study is unique in its kind because -- unlike most of the literature on Latino discrimination -- it actually asks whites themselves what they think about this group and how that affects the choices they make. For example, the classic assimilation model frequently measures equal integration by solely looking at Latinos' acculturation process and seldom takes into account the context of reception, specifically how whites' perceptions and choices affect Latino's equal integration. By studying white racial attitudes towards Latinos we are able to understand the barriers Latinos face as well as the rationale behind whites beliefs about Latinos. While in academia we have longstanding discussions about the concepts of race and ethnicity, this is not necessarily how people on the ground think or talk about them. My research reveals that whites often use "ethnic" terms to really mean racially fixed terms. *Thus, I argue that mapping white attitudes towards Latinos demonstrates that Latinos continue to face racialization in ways that can obstruct their equal integration into the larger society.*

### **Theoretical Framework:**

The scholarly debate concerning whether Latinos are a race or an ethnicity is an important one. If and how Latinos are constructed as a group is an important question because it determines the level and conditions of inclusion into the larger society. If Latinos are perceived within the construct of an ethnic model, it follows that the assimilation model of upward mobility by the subsequent generation will hold (Gans 1979; Gordon 1964; Park & Burgess 1921). However, if Latinos are perceived and or treated as a racial group, their exclusion is fixed regardless of time or subsequent generations because they are thought to be inferior and excluded from full citizenship.

Many scholars have addressed the differences, similarities and relational factors of these concepts as well as how they have played out in American history. Grosfoguel (2004), like other scholars, has attempted to remedy the rigid academic definitions that, "In the literature, ethnicity is frequently assumed to be the cultural identity of a group within a nation state while race is assumed to be the biological and/or cultural essentializing/naturalization of a group based on a hierarchy or superiority and inferiority related to the biological constitution of their bodies". But as Grosfoguel shows with the Puerto Rican experience in the United States, these categories are not so easily defined outside the academy (Grosfoguel 2004). Other scholars such as Victoria Hattam (2007) further argue, "Considering race and ethnicity together is critical because ethnic identification has long been used as a counterpoint to race -- a counterpoint that establishes the boundaries and meaning of race." Thus, for Hattam, a historical comparison between the racialization process of Jews and Mexicans leads her to demarcate the differences between race and ethnicity. In the case of Jews -- who were once marked by racist perceptions

but were able to acquire white privilege in ways Mexicans still have not today -- she argues this to be the case because the negative characteristics assigned to Mexicans, in contrast to Jews, are permanent. The conflicting definitions and applications of these categories have also led to a scholars debate which is best suited to describe the experience of Latinos.

There are three major positions scholars take on whether Latinos best fit into a race or an ethnicity category. Mario Barrera (2008) argues Latinos best fit into the category of ethnicity, "Since there exists now a scholarly consensus that 'races' in the biological sense of so-called scientific racism do not exist, it follows that Latinos cannot be a racial minority. I would argue that Latinos are for the most part not a 'racialized' minority either, because prevailing discourse about Latinos in American society are not about 'race' in the above sense." Barrera further argues that the difference between race and ethnicity is that the core attributes of racialization are not phenotype but that mental and moral qualities are seen as innate or inherent. Contrastingly, in Linda Martin Alcoff's (2000) article entitled: "Is Latino/a Identity a Racial Identity" states, "I will ultimately argue that the 'ethnic option' is not fully adequate to the contemporary social realities we face, and may inhibit the development of useful political strategies for our diverse communities," because "we have become a racialized population and need a self-understanding that will accurately assess our portrayal here". Yet, Alcoff posits a intermediary position, "Ethnorace might have the advantage of bringing into play the elements of both human agency and subjectivity involved in ethnicity -- that is, an identity that is the product of self-creation -- at the same time that it acknowledges the uncontrolled racializing aspects associated with the visible body".

Both Barrera and Alcoff are reconciling a racialized historical past and a contemporary reality that include many different types of experiences. Furthermore, they suggest that race is best suited to describe the experience of African-Americans, and thus it is best to label Latinos as an ethnicity because their experience is more so centered around immigrant issues. By defining racialization as synonymous with the African American experience, Alcoff and Barrera and other Black exceptionalists<sup>4</sup> (Lee & Bean 2010; Sears & Savalei 2006; Yancey 2003) miss the possibility that other groups have also suffered ongoing racism and racialization that might be more similar to the African American experience than not. Alcoff, unlike Barrera, makes it clear that it is important to acknowledge that Latinos are continued to be racialized. Yet, both find utility in Latinos also identifying as an ethnic group. My research speaks more to how Latinos are racialized in public discourse rather than how they do or should identify themselves.

Moreover, Hattam disagrees with Barrera and Alcoff and thus argues, "My research makes clear the high price we will pay for shifting from a discourse of race to ethnicity -- namely, the elision of the persistent group inequalities in the United States." Barrera, Alcoff and others fail to address how continuous and heightened racialization does not match with the ethnicity category, considering Mexican-Americans have been here for over five generations. Hattam's theoretical advances are important because they suggest Latino racialization, yet they do not provide contemporary data to show the continuity of the racial past and present between whites and Latinos. Thus, my data on white attitudes towards Latinos is timely and significant

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<sup>4</sup> Sears, argues Black exceptionalism to be that the new immigrant groups are increasingly likely to assimilate politically into the broader society in future generations, whereas a rather strict color line will continue to restrict Blacks and maintain their distinctiveness (Sears 2006).

in order to address the current Latino experience, which has been and continues to be shaped by processes of racialization. I would also argue there has been intensification of Latino racialization in response to recent waves of immigration. Thus, whether whites categorize Latinos as a racial rather than ethnic group is critical because it determines whether Latinos fit and can conform to the classic assimilation model and also has implications for their equal integration into the larger society.

## **Literature Review**

### Immigrant Incorporation/Assimilation Model

The assimilation model is embedded in the American culture where the nation touts itself to be a country built by immigrants, which goes hand in hand with the of belief in the American dream. Many authors continue to debate the relevancy of the assimilation model, compare groups against the assimilation model, and resurrect the model, while others seek to complicate the model by including discussions of race. The assimilation model can best be described as, “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (Park & Burgess 1921). Its other major component is what Gans (1992) has labeled straight-line assimilation where the subsequent generation will do better than their parents and be incorporated into mainstream America by the third generation. There is much at stake in understanding the pressure to assimilate because as Rogers Smith states, “to best understand how the evolution of national identity in American political development has often depended on both exclusion and inclusion, that is identifying a group of exclusion and inclusion, that is identifying a group for exclusion from rights and privileges of full citizenship” (Fraga & Segura 2006). The assimilation model mandates a process in which immigrants are integrated into the larger society and thereby gain the same rights as U.S.-born citizens, enabling them to acquire economic and social mobility. While the United States has been built on the principle of democracy, race has plagued this promise from its beginning. Thus scholars have studied how race and national origin have affected the integration of immigrants. Most noticeably, Park and Burgess (1921) apply their Race Cycles Model to assimilation in order to account for how race and discrimination affect the assimilation of racialized immigrants.<sup>5</sup> Many scholars such as Gordon, Glazer, and Moynihan have critiqued the assimilation model because it has ignored the experience of African Americans.<sup>6</sup>

The traditional assimilation model holds that newcomers to the United States are assimilating to a very specific culture that Gordon explains, “If there is anything in American

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<sup>5</sup> Park and Burgess (1921) Race Cycles Model includes four steps: contact, competition, accommodation and assimilation.

<sup>6</sup> In Nathan Glazer’s (1993) famous article “Is Assimilation Dead?” he argues that, “The failure of assimilation to work its effects on blacks as on immigrants, owing to the strength of American discriminatory and prejudiced attitudes and behavior towards blacks, has been responsible for throwing the entire assimilatory ideal and program into disrepute”.

culture which serves as a reference point for immigrants and their children, it can best be described, it seems to us, as the middle class cultural patterns of, largely, white Protestant, Anglo-Saxon origins” (Gordon 1964). While many scholars such as Alba and Nee and others argue that the requirement is no longer to assimilate to WASP culture, my respondents express that assimilation still should be into a WASP mainstream.

Gordon’s main argument is that immigrants become part of the larger society through communal life that includes seven dimensions of assimilation: cultural/acculturation, structural, marital, identificational, attitude receptional, behavior receptional, and civic assimilation. Scholars now measure immigrant’s incorporation through factors such as language acquisition, intermarriage, and residential integration. Alba and Nee and many other scholars argue that these measures determine how race relations have improved overtime and reflect less racism in the United States due to the civil rights movement. There is no doubt that over time, immigrants and especially the children of immigrants learn English, have lower levels of residential segregation than immigrants, and intermarry at rates higher than their immigrant counterparts. However, I would argue that these measures show some incorporation or assimilation but miss the fact that second- and third generation Mexican Americans are still not equal on a number of measures to their white counterparts. Therefore, it most certainly does not negate ongoing institutionalized racism and social practices of discrimination. Often times using these measures hides the complexity of race, racism and assimilation.

Even though Gordon took into account the difficulties African Americans experienced due to discrimination and segregation and thus, argued structural assimilation was very important, I would argue that just because there is an increase in interaction among groups in communal life does not necessarily mean there still cannot be a racial hierarchy. Furthermore, while Gordon’s Assimilation in American Life has important contributions to the assimilation literature he is not critical of Anglo-conformity as the normative goal in assimilation nor does he theorize how immigrants of color have been affected by discrimination. Thus, he fails to understand how Latino immigrants have been racialized through their experience of discrimination and segregation thus, affecting the nature of their assimilation process.

While most data show that the children of immigrants are learning to speak English and acquiring the American culture, their political, economic and social incorporation may be lagging behind due to discrimination (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Post-1965 immigrants who have mostly come from “third world” countries in Asia and Latin America have further challenged the assimilation model that has been based on European immigrants to the United States. This is because unlike European immigrants, those from “third world” countries have not experienced the same reception.

While Gordon’s assimilation model has dominated, Shibutani and Kwan (1965) -- who were writing at about the same time -- argued that social distance was the cause of structural assimilation and thus disagreed with Gordon’s argument about social distance. They argued that discrimination and obstacles to assimilation by immigrants of color was not about spatial distance but about institutionalized power that categorized groups in a hierarchical manner. By taking into account racism and discrimination when examining the assimilation process for non-European immigrants we can understand how social and economic barriers may persist for non-European migrants. Thus, Gans (1992) is the first to acknowledge the possibility of “second-generation decline” which he describes as, “the future of the children of the post-1965

immigrants, the possibility is proposed that significant number of the children of poor immigrants, especially dark-skinned ones, might not obtain jobs in the mainstream economy. In 1993, Portes and Zhou further theorized downward mobility and coined the term *segmented assimilation*. This can be characterized as,

Instead of a relatively uniform mainstream whose mores and prejudice dictate a common path of integration, we observe today several distinct forms of adaptation. One of them replicates the time-honored portrayal of growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle-class; a second leads straight in the opposite direction to permanent poverty and assimilation into the underclass; still a third associates rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity (Portes & Zhou 1993).

While social capital and ethnic enclaves can be a way of survival and upward mobility, often times they are still not enough to produce equal life chances for immigrants relative to whites. Thus, it is the downward assimilation that most challenges the idea of assimilation. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) further provide empirical data of, "how a mode of incorporation marked by a hostile governmental and societal reception yields negative outcomes both for immigrant adults and children. In particular, Mexican immigrants who have low skills not only face job niches with few prospects for upward mobility, but discrimination as well, which leads them to downward assimilation. Many immigrants in this situation who live in the inner city also acquire a counter-culture association in response to their marginalization. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) point out the four main characteristics that prevent Mexicans from upward mobility: disproportionate poverty, group size, historical depth, and racist stereotypes. Furthermore their data show how education has failed Mexicans and other minorities.

Therefore, by taking into account discrimination and education, segmented assimilation is a major paradigm shift because the idea that the second generation is doing worse than the first makes it almost impossible that the by the third generation theory will be fully incorporated. Portes and Rumbaut also argue that a second generation that experiences downward assimilation can lead to a permanent underclass and never reach full integration. This is a major finding with deep consequences because it shakes the fundamentals of the assimilation model: full and equal integration over time and as an inevitability. My data very much speaks to this in the sense that by accounting for whites' attitudes towards Latinos as a way to measure context of reception, can begin to possibly account for some of the segmented and specifically downward assimilation many Latinos face. Yet, differently from what Portes and Zhou account for the downward assimilation in terms of acquiring an oppositional identity from African-Americans through contact. My work centered in a county with an insignificant Black population with most Latinos living in predominately Latino areas, shows that their downward assimilation is not due to proximity to Blacks, but I would argue from institutional barriers that have stemmed from whites who have negative sentiments towards Latinos.

Another more recent shift in the assimilation model has been in the area of cultural assimilation in which Heisler (2000) argues, "Gordon's model did not consider the possibility that entire groups may be moving or that ethnic boundaries themselves may be shifting over time". Alba and Nee call this shifting of boundaries a *composite culture* in which immigrants are no longer expected to assimilate to a WASP culture but instead they actually help to transform the very culture with which they interact. Alba and Nee (2003) define composite culture as, "the

mixed, hybrid character of the ensemble of cultural practices and beliefs that has evolved in the United States since the colonial period”. Alba and Nee assume that all cultures are seen and treated as equal, and thus they have equal influence in some overall all American composite culture. This is also problematic because although people are allowed to practice their culture, there are different consequences for different groups based on where they are in the racial hierarchy. Gans (1979) demonstrates this with his concept of symbolic ethnicity that he describes as, “a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for and a pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behavior”. Yet, the stakes for Europeans to practice their culture is not the same as for immigrants of color (Telles & Ortiz 2008). For example, Huntington criticized Mexicans for dreaming in Spanish but says nothing when Irish people attend an Irish parade. Thus, there is a lack of power analysis in Alba and Nee’s concept of composite culture. I would argue immigrants still feel the pressure to assimilate into a WASP culture, and this pressure as seen through my data frequently comes from whites. Alba and Nee’s concept of composite culture seems reflective more of a normative goal rather than reality on the ground, and fails to account how racial barriers for Latinos may affect their equal incorporation into the society.

Telles and Ortiz overall agree that Alba and Nee fail to acknowledge the uniqueness of the Mexican American experience, based upon segregation, unequal educational opportunities, racial discrimination, and labor market inequality -- which has consequently led to Mexican American youth (second generation) having a difficult time becoming upwardly mobile (Portes & Rumbaut 2001). Telles and Ortiz (2008) also argue the Mexican American case is unique due to the geo-political concerns of the United States and Mexico who share a 2,000 mile border, the legacy and the Mexican-American War, and the relatively large numbers of undocumented immigrants. Alba & Nee and Telles & Ortiz caution that Portes & Zhou’s (1993) segmented assimilation essentialized Latinos and Blacks as part of an underclass because they fail to look at examples such as East Asians who once were highly excluded and have now experienced high levels of assimilation, as well as Mexicans and Latinos who have also experienced varying degrees of inclusion based upon skin color and class. Furthermore, for Telles and Ortiz (2008) the dichotomy of either assimilating to the WASP culture and norms or adopting a Black counterculture as Portes and Rumbaut argue, neglect the uniqueness of Mexican immigration that has been plagued by conquest and racism. Thus, Mexican Americans are not “acting Black” when they adopt an oppositional culture but reflecting patterns, ideals and behaviors that are rooted in the historical relationship between Mexican Americans and the dominant WASP culture in the United States. My data supports this to be the case, because again Latinos in Orange County do not have much Black contact to base acquire an oppositional identity.

Telles & Ortiz (2008) take the view that generations of Mexicans Americans have faced unique barriers and exclusion within the context of the United States. As a result, while Mexican Americans are “assimilated” in terms of adapting the cultural norms of the United States, they remain unequal due to the experience of discrimination. Thus, Telles and Ortiz advance the possibility that a substantial segment of the Mexican-American population is becoming an underclass. Their empirical data is based on a longitudinal and intergenerational study of five generations of Mexican Americans in Los Angeles and San Antonio. Their research methods include surveys and in-depth interviews from respondents in those two cities that span up to five generations. Their major findings are that the assimilation model advanced by classical theorists and contemporary theorists like Alba and Nee fails to account for their experience and that the

linchpin for Mexican-American lack of upward mobility is education (Telles & Ortiz). They show that most Mexicans are not seen as or treated as whites and further, “The problem is not the unwillingness of Mexican Americans to adopt American values and cultures but the failure of societal institutions, particularly public schools, to successfully integrate them as they did the descendants of European immigrants” (Telles & Ortiz 2008). Contrastingly, Alba and Nee argue, that assimilation will occur for Mexican-Americans with the caveat that it may take longer than the conventional three generations<sup>7</sup>. Telles and Ortiz thus ask “ If assimilation happens slowly and direction is often uncertain, can we even call it assimilation.”

Many scholars have come to agree with the importance of disentangling the various elements of assimilation, by measuring two separate things, one being what the immigrants do to acculturate and the other being how the group is or is not being equally integrated into society (Golash-Boza 2006; Vasquez 2010). By all accounts, studies show that Latinos are in fact acculturating to the American culture, yet they continue to face racism and discrimination that hinders their mobility and greater acceptance into the larger society. Thus, context of reception and accounting for the barriers Latinos face is critical to assess and address. It is here my work speaks to the assimilation literature to address how white attitudes affect Latinos’ integration to the larger society. Similar to my work, Vasquez’s work describes how even middle-class Latinos are restricted by how others perceive them. She argues, “Racialization despite assimilation, is an innovative approach to think about the way race informs integration trajectories and also to demonstrate that to be racialized and to be assimilated are not exclusive and opposite states of being.” This racialization has a long legacy that needs to be understood to better capture contemporary Latino racialization.

### Historical Latino Racialization

My goal in this section is to bridge the gap between race scholars -- who often only focus on African Americans -- and the assimilation literature that often does not include how racial barriers for Latinos may affect their incorporation. While the Critical Race Theory (CRT) literature and other bodies of work have accounted for how Latinos and other groups do not fit into the Black/White Binary, nonetheless Latinos have experienced discrimination and exclusion. Yet scholars have not mapped out and traced what these experiences mean for Latinos in the present day. While the Black/White binary fails to capture the experience of Latinos, past and present, the Black/White Binary is an important and useful point of reference and departure. Melissa Nobles and Tukufu Zuberi illustrate that Whites/Europeans deeming Blacks to be inferior led to slavery, colonialism, and -- later on -- segregation and racial discrimination in schools, housing, the workplace, etc. (Nobles 2000; Zuberi 2001). Zuberi also states that the obsession with whites wanting to count the U.S. population -- whether through the census or by other tracking devices -- was a means to “clarify citizenship.” Clarify who would be included and excluded. In other words, where someone is located on the racial hierarchy, establishes their rights and access to political representation and economic mobility. Blacks were relegated to the bottom of the racial hierarchy on the basis of their phenotype, and were considered biologically inferior.

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<sup>7</sup> More specifically, Alba and Nee have compared Italian immigrants to Mexican.

Similarly, Mexicans were defined in the 1930 census as “a racial group,” “laborers,” and “of a racial mixture” (Haney-Lopez 2003). This was the first census in which Mexican was assigned as a racial category. Emphasizing their racial mixture made Mexicans distinctly non-white. While this was the first and last time Mexicans were racially classified in the census, discussion as to how to demarcate Hispanics as different continued through the 20<sup>th</sup> century and today. For example, counting and classifying Mexicans either with the INS or Census Bureau by using Spanish surnames and the mother tongue of Hispanic foreign populations as well as those U.S.-born (Hattam 2007). This counting and management of Hispanics illustrates how they were not perceived to be an ethnic group who would assimilate into the American fabric, but actually demarcated and emphasized their differences more like a racial versus ethnic category. Furthermore, if one juxtaposes this categorization of Mexicans to the debates around mulattos -- who were, in the end, counted and treated as Blacks because of the one-drop rule (established by *Plessey v Ferguson*) -- we can begin to understand how Mexicans historically were seen in ways closer to Blacks than whites. Mexican as a category seems to also indicate how whites saw them more as a racial group versus an ethnic group.

Latinos and Blacks have been discriminated against in many similar ways, which include segregation and unequal schooling. But there are also key differences. For example, Mexicans in the Southwest had the unique position of being deemed white by the Treaty of Guadalupe, but shortly thereafter, most of the land ended in the hand of “real” whites while most Mexicans lived in segregated areas with substandard services (Camarillo & Chavez 1995). I agree with Hattam (2007) who argues, “Thus, the United States had to negotiate the contradictory consequences inherent in the twin policies of racial exclusion and territorial expansion.” I would further argue that the territorial expansion under (Gomez 2007; Takaki 2000) was a racialized movement and while the Treaty of Guadalupe stated Mexicans would be considered white and thus gain citizenship, this proved not to be the case. While Hispanic is no longer a racial but ethnic category in the census, the debate both at the state level and within scientific circles continues as to whether Latinos should be thought of as a racial group. The United States has always had a hard time placing groups of mixed blood -- for example, the Jewish community. But unlike Jews, most Latinos access to whiteness was limited and proved on the ground to be highly contested and where Mexicans endured labor exploitation and residential and educational segregation (Camarillo & Chavez 2005). For Latinos the emphasis has always been that they have indigenous and Black blood. In this way, Latinos are racialized different from other immigrant and ethnic groups. We can see how Mexicans were thought of as a racial problem rather than an immigrant/ethnic problem. Hence, the “Mexican Problem” narrative parallels that of the “Negro Problem” narrative. Senator Albert Johnson reflects the designation of Mexicans as a problem during a 1930 congressional hearing,

It is a major immigration problem which America faces in the growing Mexican immigration. Consider the southwestern part of the United States, and we find that in area more than one fourth of our whole country was formerly part of Mexico. This was acquired by the annexation of Texas, and by cession in 1845, 1848, 1853. Into this newly acquired territory there was a migration of fine American pioneers, who took possession of the country, colonizing it and setting up law and order. During the last 10 years the racial problem has become acute in the Southwest. Here there have been established, as the demand for cheap labor increased, a great many Mexican immigrants who seem to be driving out the Americans. How will this situation ultimately work out? The Mexican

peon, of course, as we know him, is of Mixed racial descent -- principally Indian and Spanish, with occasionally a little mixture of black blood. The Mexican comes in freely because there is not quota against him, and during the last few years he has come here in such increasing numbers as almost to reverse the essential consequences of the Mexican War. The recent Mexican immigrants are making a reconquest of the Southwest (Hattam 2007).

So although Mexicans were not physically excluded from entering the United States at this time they were certainly racialized and perceived to be a problem and not an ethnic group who would eventually assimilate and be seen equal to white Americans. I will later show how this sentiment from above still holds today in many white racial attitudes towards Latinos. This passage also indicates how cheap labor was intertwined with the racial perceptions of Latinos.

Many Chicano historians have established, "There is a history of statutory discrimination against people of Mexican origin in Texas and California, the many ways in which Mexicans and Mexican Americans have always been part of an exploited class of laborers in agriculture... and the complex way that immigration and racialization have always reinforced one another to deny opportunities to Mexican and Mexican Americans in sections of the Southwest." (Fraga & Segura 2006). In this sense it becomes impossible to disentangle the variables of class and race, because historically, race determines your occupation and thus your class. As Justin Akers Chacon and Mike Davis (2006) observe, "Although favored as laborers, Mexicans have never been fully welcomed as citizens or good candidates for social integration." Mexicans are seen as good for menial labor and are also assumed to not be smart and therefore cannot "handle" jobs that warrant intelligence. Thus, stereotypes produce labor market segmentation that relegates Mexicans to low-wage labor. Further, these stereotypes discourage institutions from developing the human capital (e.g., investment in education) of Mexicans such that they can enter into other parts of labor market.

The experience of Mexican immigrants in the United States, as compared with other groups, is unique due to the particular colonial relations with Mexico historically, and a "shared 2,000 mile land borderland and stark contrasting levels of development" (Telles & Ortiz 2008, 11). This is further compounded by De Genova's (2005) interpretation that the Naturalization Act of 1790 established an "intrinsic link between whiteness and access to the U.S. citizenship." Moreover, with the ideology of Manifest Destiny, "the newborn republic was already steeped in a distinctly white nationalism, so also was it constituted by an imperial confidence about its explicit and unquestioned mission of expansion and colonization." This is significant in understanding the origins of tensions between whites and Mexicans. While the Treaty of Guadalupe deemed Mexicans white, their experience was plagued with segregation, labor exploitation and discrimination, which often paralleled the African-American experience. The taking of the Southwest was epitomized by what Senator Lewis Cass expressed, "We do not want the people of Mexico, either as citizens or subjects. All we want is a portion of territory, which they nominally hold..." (De Genova 2005). From the onset, the citizenship of Mexicans was elusive and often times contested. Mexicans were not treated as whites or given full rights because they were thought to be of mixed and "impure" blood so much so that in the 1930 census Mexicans were deemed a separate racial category. The ways Mexicans were constructed as a race and how they were treated also permeated specific labor segmentation as well and nativist views which advocated for restrictive Mexican immigration. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>

century, Mexican labor was used to establish the Southwest agricultural economy and also laid the railroad tracks. Mexican laborers were critical in building the Southwest but in terms of citizenship they were considered “undesirable aliens.” Ngai (2004) best captures the racialization, class and citizenship intersection of Mexicans,

Immigration law and practices were central in shaping the modern political economy of the Southwest, one based on commercial agriculture, migratory farm labor, and the exclusion of Mexican migrant and Mexican Americans from the mainstream of American society. In particular, immigration policies helped create a Mexican migratory agricultural proletariat, a racialized, transnational workforce comprising various legal status categories across the U.S-Mexico boundary -- Mexican Americans, legal immigrants, undocumented migrants, and imported contract workers (braceros) -- but, which as a whole, remained external to conventional definitions of the American working class and national body. I argue that this transnational Mexican labor force, and especially its bracero and ‘wetback’ constituents, constituted a kind of ‘imported colonialism’ that was a legacy of the nineteenth-century American conquest of Mexico’s northern territories.

Mexican-Americans by the 20<sup>th</sup> century were still seen as solely good for cheap labor and with the establishment of the border patrol in 1924 also continued to be treated as foreigners unworthy of U.S. citizenship. The Bracero Program (1942-1964) was the epitome of the U.S. need for Mexican cheap labor. Unlike other programs, this was a bilateral agreement between the United States and Mexico. Nonetheless, the program operated as a very oppressive regime, where Mexican male labor was given work but not citizenship. Furthermore, to date, many participants have not been fully paid and many others have cancer because of the chemicals used at the time. During the Bracero Program, Operation Wetback was also implemented in 1954 as a response to the huge number of Mexicans migrating to the United States “illegally.” Ngai argues, “The construction of the ‘wetback’ as a dangerous and criminal social pathogen fed the general racial stereotype of Mexican ... The Mexican ‘wetback’ stood opposite the European immigrant in a binary construct that defined desirability in conflated terms of race, politics, and legal status” (Ngai 2004). Ngai’s construction of Mexicans seen as a permanent illegal-alien class advances the idea that immigration policy, whether deemed “expansive” or “restrictionist,” still casts Mexicans as criminals and unwanted immigrants. These sentiments usually spread to second- and third-generation Mexicans whose status as “worthy” citizens is constantly being questioned. Thus, the assimilation process for Mexican immigrants is hindered due to perceptions of being illegal, criminal, and only good for cheap labor.

Mexicans and cheap labor continue to be conflated. Many people are unaware of the ongoing aggressive tactics that agriculture recruiters currently employ. Fred Krissman (2000) studies Mexican immigrant labor recruitment and his studies find large informal networks enable U.S. agribusiness to recruit cheap Mexican labor. While this is illegal, it is a common practice, because -- as Krissman argues, “The agricultural sector has always required a large seasonal and migrant workforce that has few options but to accept the low wages, inadequate annual earnings and arduous conditions characteristic of the nation’s farm labor markets ... The ability of growers to obtain Mexican immigrant workers has led to the creation of both the world’s most profitable agricultural sector and the most disadvantaged class fraction of America’s working poor”. Not

only does this lock these workers in a specific industry niche, but one in which full citizenship is negated. This has also been the case with day laborers that have recently been physically attacked for simply standing on the corner waiting to be picked up for work. Day laborers are paid poorly, suffer employer abuse as well as injuries, and are unfairly targeted by merchants and police --yet their work is in demand and contributes to those local economies (Theodore, Valenzuela, Melendez & Gonzalez 2006). With the threat of deportation all undocumented workers are treated as disposable labor since they do not have access to rights to protect them from labor exploitation. This is the torrid, racial southwest history that Orange County inherits.

### **Case Study: Orange County, California**

Why study the racial attitudes of whites in Orange County? Orange County California has a long history as an established gateway where Mexicans have migrated to since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and now comprise 34 % of the population. Understanding how Orange County's landscape, filled with gated communities and lavish wealth, is reflective of white flight from Los Angeles, is part of analyzing the larger historical relationship between whites and Latinos. One major characteristic of the landscape in Orange County is how Santa Ana (where a large portion of the Latinos population reside) and its surrounding largely white, affluent cities, shows that both extreme segregation and inequalities persist. The inequalities can be attested by the 2000 Rockefeller Report that deemed Santa Ana (predominantly a Latino city) the city with the highest misery index<sup>8</sup>.

Thus, the actual spatial relationships inscribe white racial attitudes onto the physical landscape. Segregation is not unique to Orange County in fact most of the country remains significantly racially segregated. Furthermore, Orange County like many suburbs has a history of whites leaving an urban space (Los Angeles) and distancing themselves from immigrants and minorities in exchange for gated communities (McGirr 2001). Orange County, like in many parts of the country, is facing conflict between whites and Latinos particularly around issues of immigration and racial profiling. Moreover, Orange County has become a dream landscape for Hollywood's production of "reality television" to profit by producing shows that highlight the lives of wealthy whites and almost completely ignore the lives of the Latino population that has the highest misery index in the country.<sup>9</sup>

Beginning with the hit drama series show *The OC*, which chronicles the lives of wealthy rich white kids that frolic by the beach by day and party by night, we then had a series of "reality shows" that sought to argue the "fantasy" of young rich Republican blondes in Orange County was the "reality." Consequently, MTV decided to create reality shows based on the lives of these white rich privileged teenagers entitled *Newport Harbor: The Real Orange County* and *Laguna Beach: The Real Orange County*. The BRAVO Network -- not to be out done by MTV -- then created the hit reality TV series, *The Real Housewives of Orange County*. That series follows the lives of five wealthy white women who indulge in conspicuous consumption while their Mexican maids, gardeners and nannies are all but

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<sup>8</sup> The index included 6 factors: unemployment, dependency, education, income level, crowded housing, and poverty.

<sup>9</sup> In 2000 Santa Ana was deemed the city with the highest hardship index in the country (Montiel 2000).

invisible except for the occasional background shot. Several other reality shows now are based in Orange County with images propelled to the rest of the world, marketing that county as a desirable place to live and a model for the truly American way of life. This representation of Orange County mirrors the conservative white flight chronicled in the development of Orange County in Eric Avila's (2006) Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight Fear and Fantasy In Suburban Los Angeles. What is missing in all of the shows and public discussion of Orange County is the significant Latino population that is overwhelmingly poor, marginalized and exploited and -- most importantly -- how negative white attitudes continue to reinforce these cleavages. This absence perpetuates a notion that race is no longer a central a problem in our society and that perhaps Latinos are ethnics awaiting assimilation.

Spatial segregation has been a part of the suburbanization process of Orange County since the beginning and as shown above has racial implications. One of the main physical constructs that symbolize whites' fear of Latinos is Disneyland. Disneyland embodies Orange County not only because it physically occupies a large space in Orange County, but also because its vision of perfection contrasts itself to everything perceived as undesirable. White flight from Los Angeles to the suburbs of Orange County is highly interconnected with the rise of the "magic kingdom" of Disneyland, a literal castle of white supremacy guarding the gateway to Orange County from Black and brown invaders. They are interconnected because Walt Disney's vision was heavily based on an idealized image small town Middle America, clean, white, safe and homogenous (Lipsitz 1993) -- all things that big dense cities were not. Furthermore, the landscape of Disneyland of endless acres and few tall buildings was similar to the residential tracts of Orange County. Walt Disney was said to preside over all major decisions, because he wanted his imagination to lead the projects, he was also re-imagining the city and space that could be created to preach the ideals of privatization, exclusivity and whiteness. Avila (2006) captures the symbolic and real affects of Disneyland when he states,

Disneyland nonetheless encapsulated the values built into the design of postwar suburban communities, and it anticipated the burgeoning political culture of suburban whiteness that overcame Southern California during the 1960s and 1970s. Extolling the virtues of consumerism, patriarchy, patriotism, and small-town Midwestern whiteness, Disneyland issued a set of cultural motifs that emphasized a retreat from the public culture... In Reagan Country, Disney found a physical and cultural environment that accommodated his determination to reassert more traditional notions of an American Way that conformed to popular idealizations of suburban respectability in the age of white flight.

As described by McGirr (2001), Orange County's desire for a white suburban landscape did not happen by accident, but deliberately since they moved from diverse cities to establish white enclaves. Whites' choice to move from Los Angeles to Orange County had much to do with their perceptions of the city and those who inhabited it. Their perceptions were tied to the negative characteristics they had ascribed to Latinos, in order to rationalize moving out of Los Angeles, and create a pristine suburb area that was void Mexicans" (Maher 2004). Orange County has deep-seated history of segregation between whites and Latinos that continues to negatively affect Latinos today.

Furthermore, while Orange County whites tend to be very conservative, their profile of post-suburbia could be an indicator of what is to come in other U.S. suburban and post-suburban areas -- in a county that has undergone major demographic shifts similar to many places across the United States. Moreover, Orange County was once predominately white and is now considered to have a majority-minority population, like many other regions of the country.

### Orange Country History

Orange County, like many suburbs, has a history of whites leaving the big city (Los Angeles) and distancing themselves from immigrants and minorities in exchange for gated communities (McGirr 2001). In Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right, Lisa McGirr covers the history of Orange County and illustrates how the racial tensions between whites and Latinos have manifested themselves. For example Orange County whites,

[P]referred to forgo federal government subsidies that would have required them to open their developments to poorer residents, and they did not incorporate open-housing provisions into their master plan. The peculiar form of mixed-market anarchy and corporate planning that shaped and built the landscape also created an exceptional degree of economic and racial homogeneity, which further contributed to favorable setting for the Right. The county's lack of racial diversity was hardly a historical accident. Restrictive housing covenants and institutional redlining made it extremely difficult for minorities to obtain housing and jobs. (McGirr 2001).

Thus, the mix of restrictive covenants, carefully drawn boundaries, exclusive communities and staunch opposition to busing, all created a system of first *de jure* and later *de facto* segregation between Latinos and whites in Orange County. I would argue that the system and persistence of segregation challenges traditional notions of assimilation, these being that the subsequent generation will do better than the previous one (Park & Burgess 1921). Segregation limits Latinos' access to upward mobility thus they are not a white ethnic group in waiting for assimilation, but a racialized group that is considered unworthy of integration and equality.

In contrast to whites fleeing urban areas for a homogenous city, most Mexicans who came between 1900 and 1930 came to work in the citrus fields, and lived in Mexican villages that later turned into urban barrios (Gonzalez 1994). Gonzalez explains that while Mexicans were an indispensable workforce, they lived in segregated *colonias* and were socially ostracized. They received substandard wages and substandard housing (Gonzalez 1994). Gonzalez also argues that upward mobility in the citrus industry was minimal compared to those who worked in industrial centers in Los Angeles. Thus, children of farmworkers tended to become farmworkers, too. Overall, education and employment was limited for Mexican farmworkers and their children. Though Orange County is no longer an agricultural community, this pattern has not changed much. Mexicans in Orange County are still simultaneously exploited and segregated, and continue to be an indispensable labor force to maintain the affluent lavish lifestyles of whites in Orange County. The fact that Mexicans before worked in the fields and now are the nannies and gardeners, shows the continuity of whites perceptions of Mexicans, which is that they are good for cheap labor and little else.

One area of profound limitations due to segregation has been in the fact that while school segregation has been ruled illegal it is still the case. While reading Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation by Gilbert G. Gonzalez (1990), reveals provides convincing evidence that one of the main reasons Latinos continue to face limited job opportunities and upward mobility is because the schools they attend are segregated and neglected (Gonzalez 1990). Gonzalez takes on a more historical perspective of the desegregating of schools and how “Mexican schools” have been outlawed. The famous Mendez et al v Westminster School case took place in Orange County in 1947 which challenged school segregation and preceded the Brown v. Board of Education case that ruled separate but equal unconstitutional. Five Mexican families challenged the several school districts in Orange County, because thousands of Mexican children were put in “Mexican school,” with substandard teaching, resources, and classrooms. Whites argued that white and Mexican children should remain separate because they claimed, “ the Mexican American children possessed contagious diseases, had poor habits, were inferior in their personal hygiene, spoke only Spanish and lacked English speaking skills.” (Regua 2007, 1), In the end the Mexican families were victorious in court. While Mexicans no longer experience de jure segregation they do in fact experience de facto segregation.

For example, currently the Santa Ana Unified School District is 91% Latino. Gonzalez assessment still holds true today in Santa Ana, “The practice of segregation and its programs insured that the political and economic relationship between the Mexican and Anglo community would not only remain, but it would also gain strength”. Furthermore it is important to note that many whites have complained about Latinos not assimilating, yet this is very difficult to do when they continue to not integrate schools and residential neighborhoods. Gonzalez’s assessment regarding the immobility of Latinos due to segregation still holds true today in Orange County, “The practice of segregation and its programs insured that the political and economic relationship between the Mexican and Anglo community would not only remain, but it would also gain strength” (Gonzalez 1990). So again we see how segregation leads to inequities in school and the labor sector.

### Contemporary Orange County

Segregation and its consequences have ill-affected not only Latinos in Orange County, but also Latinos across the country, even today. The “America’s Newcomers” report shows that race and ethnicity matter more than immigration status in determining levels of racial segregation (Shin 2003). The report concludes that Black and Latinos live in more segregated areas than whites and Asians.

Gated communities are an example of how whites intentionally create segregated neighborhoods and continue to maintain them today. Orange County is known to have a large number of and some of the most extensive gated communities. A gated community can be defined as:

a residential development surrounded by walls, fences, or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs with a secured entrance. In some cases, protection is provided by inaccessible land such as a nature reserve and in few cases by a guarded bridge. These barriers physically enclose the houses, streets, sidewalks, and other amenities, and entrance gates are operated by a guard or opened with a key or electronic identity card.

Inside the development there is often a neighborhood watch organization or professional security personnel who patrol on foot or by automobile. Gated communities restrict access not just to residents' homes, but also to the use of public spaces -- roads, parks, facilities and open space -- contained within the enclosure (Low 2004).

In Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States, Blackely and Snyder (1999) show that the number of gated communities sharply increased in the 1980s due to fear of violent crime and because of conspicuous consumption. According to Low (2004), gated communities represent, "a strategy of regulating and patrolling an urban poor comprised predominantly of Latino and Black minorities living in ghettos and other deteriorating residential areas. People whom most likely live in the suburbs and gated communities value having an exclusively white community.

For example, race restrictive covenants were in play for over thirty years, between 1917 and 1948, which effectively kept non-whites out of predominantly white neighborhoods. This had long lasting effects because it forced many people of color, regardless of class, to be pigeonholed in their "barrio." Even after -- while race restrictive covenants were ruled unconstitutional -- developers, real estate agents and homeowner associations continued to keep their communities gated and separate from people of color (McKenzie 1994).

In Postsuburban California: The Transformation of Orange County Since WWII, Kling et al. (1991) argue that Orange County is more of a cosmopolitan space versus a bedroom community due to a high-tech industrial base and entry into the international economy. They discuss how Orange County is the tenth largest economy in the United States and, "...many of the residential and commercial patterns structures are implicitly designed to emphasize private domesticity and material consumption. As in many suburbs, the single-family homes open onto private patios rather than onto streets". They go on to show how the culture in Orange County is dominated by consumerism and how enclosed shopping malls dominate the landscape. Orange County's spatial sprawl means low density, segregation, and little prospect for meaningful interaction.

In her article "Borders and Social Distinction in the Global Suburb," Kristen Hill Maher (2004) says, "Orange County has become a suburban counterpart to the global city, a 'global suburb' if you will". Given this spatial context, Santa Ana seems rare in some sense, but as Maher explains, "Orange County has become another place where yuppies and poor migrant workers depend upon each other living in proximity and yet separately." This is very important because Latinos may work in other parts of Orange County, but many cannot live and are not welcomed to reside in the white affluent areas they work in. Orange County has a long history of being a gated community to maintain its exclusivity and, as Maher uncovers, to keep "riffraff" out. Whites many times identify the "riffraff" as Latinos, even though there is very little crime in their area. The fears of crime are not only unwarranted but also racialized.

Maher's article captures how white, affluent communities in Irvine (a city adjacent to Santa Ana) distance themselves from Latinos by creating physical and social barriers. For example, in her in-depth interviews, a resident from the gated community Ridgewood said, "They're coming in from Santa Ana. In the last two years I haven't seen it but I hear it from

other people, that the gangs are coming down this way...It's something to think about. But you know they're going to be everywhere" (Maher 2004). Thus, being from the city of Santa Ana was conflated with being undesirable Mexicans. Many other respondents had similar comments and one of them stated that residents in Santa Ana were not to be trusted because they come from "different" backgrounds. Many also expressed that the reason they left Los Angeles was because, "LA got worse and worse...There was this invasion of Latinos and the Blacks I don't think have increased in numbers, but unfortunately, acting out in senseless violence. As I drove from my office in Los Angeles away from Los Angeles, the closer I got to Irvine, I felt safer and safer" (Maher 2004). Thus, whites left Los Angeles because they connected the increase in Black population and post-1965 immigration with gangs and crime.

Contemporary segregation in Orange County is in part about cities such as Irvine where residents work hard to maintain their property values by using their homeowner's associations to successfully keep Latinos out. Thus, frequently Latinos' choices of where they live are limited. One way homeowner's groups do this is by restricting the number of people per household, through zoning laws. Since the homes in Orange County are very expensive it becomes difficult for many Latinos to afford to buy without having multiple nuclear families – or larger, extended families -- under the same roof. For example, Ridgewood's Codes, Covenants, and Regulations prohibit street vendors, basketball courts and other restrictions that are racially coded. This is the point where race meets class. Latinos are closely policed while other more desirable immigrant groups are given more space. Thus, as Maher (2004) illustrates, white residents did not have the same animosity towards their Asian neighbors, "these residents did not identify Asian neighbors as a problem for property values or a sign of a neighborhood decline... In contrast, much anxiety centered on the presence of 'darker' people in the neighborhood, presumably Latinos and African Americans". Whites have a favorable outlook towards Asians, even though their population has increased 60.7% between 1990 and 2005 (Yu 2003). This is a case of racial differentiation, where white residents in this neighborhood find Blacks and Latinos more similar than Latinos and Asians regardless of immigrant status and population growth.

Historical segregation has caused disparities between the Anglo cities and Santa Ana (predominantly Mexican) in education, housing and employment. The data that follows proves that separate is not equal, and that the issue is not so much about integration but more so about equality. Santa Ana has undergone a rapid transition to become the most "Mexican city" in the United States (Arredondo 2000). The Latino population grew tremendously in Orange County but still experienced high levels of segregation. Conditions in Santa Ana are not only unequal but also quite dire in comparison to the wealthy white communities for whom the residents of Santa Ana work for as cooks, fast food workers, gardeners, housekeepers and other mostly low-wage service jobs. In 2000, Santa Ana was deemed the city with the highest hardship index in the country (Montiel 2000).<sup>2</sup> One of the key factors was crowded housing. For example, Santa Ana has an average of 4.6 people per household compared to 2.1 for Newport Beach an adjacent, overwhelmingly white city. Overcrowded housing in Santa Ana is pervasive, because many families have to put several adult incomes together to pay rent. These differences are apparent when one looks at income figures. The median household income in Santa Ana is \$43,412 in comparison to Newport Beach, which is \$83,455. This is especially stark since many households in Santa Ana, on average, have more than two income earners in order to earn less than half of what Newport Beach residents bring home with fewer working adults in the household. A *Los Angeles Times* article commenting

on the Rockefeller Institute Report stated that Santa Ana housing officials say it is very common for rooms to be rented out to 6-10 people (Anton & Mena 2004). Furthermore, one of the major and relatively new factors being used in the Rockefeller report to measure poverty is crowded housing based on how many people live in one house and this is astoundingly high throughout Santa Ana. A major problem for many who live under these circumstances is that since the house is divided by so many adult earners, the house is not a convertible asset for anyone. In other words, although many Latinos own their homes in Santa Ana, home ownership does not yield the same resources for Latinos as it does for whites. These disparities do not just manifest themselves in housing and income.

Education is a significant structural barrier for Latinos in Santa Ana. For example, only 43.2% of Latino adults in Santa Ana have a high school diploma. This is not just a product of being immigrants who had little access to education in Mexico, but a growing problem among the first- and second-generation children. The high school drop-out rate for Latinos in Santa Ana is about 39%, compared to Newport Unified with a 1.15 % high school drop-out rate (CA Department of Education 2005). These disparities are mostly due to the landscape of Orange County that is infamous for gated communities that establish and maintain extreme segregation. Thus, what is at issue is that segregation continues to mark inequality and whites regularly create and maintain physical and structural barriers that impede Latino's upward mobility based on their perceptions. There is in fact a strong population of middle-class Mexicans in Orange County, defined as college educated, middle-class income, white collar or business ownership, along with homeowner. Yet, Agius-Vallejo (2012) finds that they too face racial obstacles in Orange County.

We can see recent examples of racial obstacles through politics in Orange County. An instance of this was the congressional district election in 1996 when Democrat Loretta Sanchez beat Republican incumbent Bob Dornan. This was a huge upset, and the very next day the Republican Party launched an investigation saying, they believed the only way a Latino/a could win was if "illegal aliens" had voted. In national interviews, Dornan proclaimed illegal immigrants had defeated him. Voting in the election was divided along racial lines. Loretta Sanchez has commented that Orange County has always been difficult for Latinos, because most positions of power were occupied by whites that ignored the concerns of the Latino community (Almada 2006). In fact, Congressman Dornan was known as "B-1 (as in B1 Bomber) Bob" for his strident conservative politics that included anti-civil rights and anti-immigrant positions on issues. Sanchez further explains that Latinos have and continue to face discrimination in part because Orange County is the most Republican county in the country, but that she has more hope now that there are more Latinos in the country and they are voting (Almada 2006).

Another example of current racialization of Latinos in Orange County occurred in 1993, where white teenage kids and Mexican teenagers were fighting and began to throw things from their cars at one another. In a freak accident, a paint roller thrown by one of the Mexican teenagers went through the window into the brain of 17-year-old Steve Woods. He later died. This launched a huge outcry in the white community and the Mexican teenagers were labeled "street terrorists" and six were indicted. Two who were underage, were tried as adults. After they were convicted, the Santa Ana police department, which was predominantly white at the time, launched the largest criminal taskforce in local history (Davis 2000). The police rounded anybody they thought was gang related and, "The Santa Ana Police Officers Association enraged

residents with an election mailer that juxtaposed portraits of Mexican toddlers holding rifles taller than themselves with photographs of armed teenage gang member. The caption: “When their baby pictures look like these, this is how they grow up”. We can see from these incidents how this is not a case of being foreign born or poor, but of being perceived as racially inferior. These types of racial tensions are played out every day and they reinforce the need to understand how Latinos are racialized.

While Orange County is unique in many ways, it shares many other characteristics with other areas that experience hostile White-Brown relations. The “Ask a Mexican” column brought these disparaging perceptions of whites about Latinos into public discourse. My responsibility as a social scientist was to explore the extent to which such views were representative only of a small group of whites or if in fact they were more representative of many whites. In order to test that hypothesis I created a 300-respondent survey and 40 in-depth interviews that revealed most whites in fact had similar views to the racist whites across the country that wrote into the “Ask a Mexican” column.

## **Data and Methodology**

This research undertaken for this study is multi-method and interdisciplinary. I have borrowed the insights from the understanding of Catherine Ceniza Choy (2006) in which a triangulation of methods will allow me to capture multiple perspectives of race relations in Orange County that will be richer in depth and in breadth. Thus, the three methods I have integrated in terms of both their value and limitations are survey data, in-depth interviews and public discourse. I have examined white racial attitudes toward Mexican Americans and test stereotypes using the Orange County Social Survey (2007), of which I am co-principal investigator. The survey involved a telephone survey of 300 white Orange County residents. I have also carried out a content/discourse analysis of a column entitled “Ask a Mexican” in the *OC Weekly*, to explore how stereotypes are reflected in the public discourse. Equally, I recognize that in studying race and ethnicity in the United States -- and in particular the Latino experience -- I have borrowed from many disciplines, in order to better understand its historical legacy as well as its contemporary implications.

### Content Analysis on the “Ask a Mexican” Column

My unit of analysis is the questions posed in the “Ask a Mexican” column. I was granted access to the archive of “Ask a Mexican” by Gustavo Arellano. The archive includes over 1,000 questions submitted between 2004 and 2010. Up to 2010 Arellano had answered over 600 questions in the newspaper. In his book *Ask a Mexican* (2007), Arellano answered an additional 200 questions. While Arellano has answered about 800 questions, his archive of over 1,000 questions included more 200 unanswered questions. None of the questions in the archive have been altered in any way. This column is nationally syndicated, with over 2 million daily readers. The questions come in from people around the country not only Orange County. The column revealed the most common racial stereotypes whites held about Latinos.

Many scholars have traced how Latino stereotypes in particular have come to be constructed and represented in film, television and news. Beginning with film, Rodriguez explains, “From its beginnings, Hollywood film has served as a mirror and recorder of the times” (Rodriguez 2004). Films have employed Latino actors but the characters they play were usually

one-dimensional and embodied stereotypes that were a historical and the plot line rarely contextualized the Latino character. Moreover, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Latino representation in films was greatly influenced by the eugenic debates (Noriega 1992). Thus, Mexican culture was seen as primitive and threatening and the stereotypes reflected these ideas (Delgado & Stefanic 1998). Some of the most prevalent Latino stereotypes include el bandito, the half-bred harlot, the male buffoon, the female clown, the Latin lover, the dark lady, and lazy shiftless Mexican -- to name a few (Berg 2002). These stereotypes mark Latinos as different and in stark contrast to the values and perceived virtues of whiteness. These particular stereotypes cement Mexicans/Latinos as a racialized group. While the bandito has transformed from the greaser movies, to Western movies, and now gangster movies -- the message is still the same; Mexican people are inherently criminals.

Interestingly, some of the first “reality shows” include *COPS* and *America’s Most Wanted*, which are about crime and mostly show people of color. These shows continue to portray Latinos overwhelmingly as criminals. Moreover, reality TV shows like the *Real Housewives of Orange County*, *Laguna Beach*, and the fictional show *The OC* focus on beautiful wealthy white people, conspicuous consumption and morality tales of being attractive, partying and growing up; but all in the shadow of the American dream. The one shadow that is rarely seen involves the lives of the Mexican servants, working behind the scenes in the lavish homes of the white protagonists. In fact, Latinos in these venues are either absent or denigrated. This is the same in what we know as “hard news.”

The final site of mass media I will engage with is news. The importance of this site is reflected in its supposed “objective” nature and thus many people are more prone to believe everything coming from their news source. Beginning in the 1970s, news coverage of crime increased tremendously and exploited many of the Latino stereotypes (Rodriguez 1997). Again a strong stereotype that seems to transcend time and medium is the Latino as a criminal. This is very much tied to Latinos being marked as different and inferior. Despite the fact that we currently see more news anchors than ever before, this has still not decreased the negative representation of Latinos. The crime story is prevalent more than ever and has been increasing since immigration and “illegal” immigrants have been hot topics (Santa Ana 2002). The racialized “other” has now found a new form in the “illegal alien.” This is a powerful narrative/frame because we see this particular stereotype throughout film, television and news coverage.

I understood that in mapping white attitudes towards Latinos public discourse is a critical area to examine because it is the vessel that carries and reinforces these racial stereotypes. This sheds light on how public discourse can have influence on the dominant images and narratives of Latinos.

#### 2007 Orange County Social Survey

The telephone survey is of 300 Orange County whites that measure their perceptions of Latinos and policy preferences. The survey reveals whites believe Latino pose a threat to “American culture,” through notions of illegality, criminality, bilingualism, cultural traits, and reverse discrimination. The survey also shows how these perceptions affect whites’ policy preferences. The survey data shows strong support for negative stereotypes of Mexicans by whites. Many of the racial markers that express prejudice

towards Blacks also work very well when used for Mexicans in Orange County. Furthermore, the survey data show that the different manifestations of white racism explain opposition to immigration reform, access to education, affirmative action and health care reform.

Eduardo Bonilla Silva (2006) has noted that the problems with traditional surveys are twofold: a) the questions can be worded in ways that allow interviewees to easily avoid admitting their prejudice, and b) the actual interpretation of the data has also, often been flawed. Moreover, sociologist Lawrence Bobo takes it one step further and uses survey work to measure not only white racial attitudes but also group position theory, i.e., “The sense of group position is most readily revealed and becomes consequential insofar as dominant group members believe that subordinate group members are encroaching on their rightful prerogatives” (Bobo & Tuan 2006). In my research, the Orange County survey has questions that get at the heart of white racial attitudes of Latinos and group position in Orange County. I am also not using traditional and limited frameworks to interpret the data. Furthermore, survey work accounts for representational samples that can be generalized. Thus, by doing survey analysis and ethnography work in tandem can support and enrich the research. By taking it one step further and also looking at the “Ask a Mexican” column in the *OC Weekly* to help understand how Latinos are represented and stereotyped we can also get a barometer of race relations in Orange County. The racist letters that come into “Ask a Mexican” column are direct evidence of behavior, since writing a letter involves someone who is moved to say something in public and to express ideas, rather than people passively surveyed at home. Here again my triangulation of methods (survey, interviews and discourse analysis) allows my research to be make strides in arguing for the racialization of Latinos today.

#### Forty In-Depth Interviews

I am employed a public relations agency with a broad and diverse database of whites in Orange County. The women recruiter was simply asked to recruit whites who were going to be asked general questions about their political views and local issues they believed were important. The respondents were mostly professionals with a college degree. The interviews reveal how and why whites perceive Mexicans as inherently criminal, culturally deficient, and racially inferior across immigration status and generation because they believe Mexicans to be un-American, due to the perception that they do not contribute to the larger society and also abuse public resources. Furthermore, these negative perceptions affect whites’ behavior and, in particular, lead to opposition of policies that benefit Latinos. Moreover, the questionnaire was also not traditional. I would argue that like survey data, if you continue to ask the same questions in the same manner you do not get any new answers, and that does not advance the academic scholarship about Latinos. The questions were straightforward and did not prompt or prime the respondents for any particular answer; they allowed them to speak freely and honestly about their opinions of the Latino community as well as different related policies.

These respondents were candid because they felt comfortable with their white interviewers (McDermott 2010). Evidence from other surveys of racial attitudes make it clear that had I, as a Latina, administered the questionnaire, then the white respondents would have been more guarded and far less willing to be as candid or to fully explain their answers. Thus, it was imperative to hire two white interviewers who would ease the respondents into the questions and help them provide candid responses – much as they would have with members of their own

group. I was very lucky to find two highly skilled white graduate students who administered the interviews.

Empirically, my data bridges the gap between race studies that too often center on African Americans -- and which sometimes negate the racial experiences of other groups -- as well as the immigration literature that too often negates the centrality of race and racism that helps define the Latino experience. Theoretically my data serves to challenge the idea that the assimilation model adequately captures the Latino experience because whites do not see them as an ethnic group but rather a racial group, not capable or worthy of full citizenship.

## **Chapter Summaries**

In chapter one, I address the public discourse in the larger society that is plagued with the use of many racial stereotypes. I specifically use the “Ask a Mexican” archive to illustrate how whites write into Gustavo Arellano and pose questions filled with explicit racially charged language. One of the major findings is that the racial stereotypes commonly evoked by whites in their questions to their column, are entirely consistent with similar racial stereotypes that have been expressed towards Mexicans in the United States for more than one-hundred years. Here, I connect some of the racialization Latinos have experienced in the past to mark the continuity and persistence of these stereotypes. The fact that these racial stereotypes have an audience of over two million people, because of the newspapers’ circulation, account for the ways Latinos are currently negatively represented. The column also illustrates everyday racism by documenting how whites so easily engage in racial stereotypes. Each of the major racial stereotypes points to how whites actually think of Latinos as a racial other. This connects to the larger theoretical argument that whites think of this group as different and problematic by using cultural stereotypes, but ultimately categorize this group as racially inferior.

In chapter two, I use both the survey and in-depth interviews to map white attitudes of Latinos. The in-depth interviews allowed me to capture five racial frames that accounted for whites’ logic and complex racial ideology specifically toward Latinos. They include Criminal Threat, Cultural/Values Deficiency, Intergenerational Difference, Racial Resentment/Reverse Discrimination and Old/Biological Racism. These stereotypes included being criminally deviant and not valuing education as well as many others. Another key finding revealed in this chapter concerns some of the ways in which whites fail to differentiate Latinos by status or generation. In other words, whites in the sample passed on characterizations of Mexicans onto the next generation and conflated race and ethnicity to strongly suggest that Mexicans were incapable of assimilating. In this way, whites diametrically opposed what it was to be white American and to be Mexican. The racial frames also revealed that whites perceived Latinos as a threat and racially resented them because they disagreed with the racial entitlements that were afforded to them. Whites often spoke and described being Mexican in biological-fixed terms that again reinforced the notion that they conflated race with ethnicity and really thought of this group as a racial group.

In chapter three, I again use the in-depth interviews and survey to examine how expressed attitudes towards Mexicans activate whites’ everyday choices as well as their policy preferences. The findings reveal that most respondents disapproved of an increase in

immigration from Latin America, welfare services and group based programs. They also expressed that the reasons they opposed these types of policies, was the concern in the increase of Latinos and their potential power. In other words, whites made conscious choices that negatively affected Latinos as a way to maintain power and dominance. Moreover, my data also reveal that whites continue to actively chose to reside and send their children to school in predominately white areas. They used gated communities and local ordinances to maintain the “racial order,” and deepen racial segregation in Orange County. Another important findings concerns the deep ambivalence many whites feel about what they perceive to be a largely undocumented Latino population. While about half of the whites did not support a pathway to citizenship, many others did support a pathway to citizenship. Those who supported a pathway to citizenship argued that this would increase the tax base and contribute to the social services they use. They also argued about a need for cheap labor, the benefits of low prices for certain goods, and how Mexicans could fulfill that particular labor market. Thus, both those who opposed and supported a pathway to citizenship held similar racial stereotypes of Mexicans. This chapter ultimately demonstrates how these attitudes are not simply perceptions but are also a means to maintain racial order and shows how whites explicitly make choices based on the notion that Mexicans are inferior to whites.

In the final chapter – the conclusion - I provide a summary of some of the main issues in the dissertation; I connect the empirical findings with the theoretical framework and describe some current national trends and policies; and I address some implications for future research and a series of policy recommendations. Overall I account for the unique racialization Latinos are currently enduring and the implications for Latino incorporation and the US racial order.

## CHAPTER 2

### ASK A MEXICAN?! RACIALIZATION IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

#### Introduction

Dear Mexican: Mexico is a truly an amazing, beautiful country! Huge oil reserves, mineral deposits second to none, tourist potential unparalleled! God gave Mexico every possible advantage. And yet the Mexicans, in all their wisdom and intellect, have turned it into a backwater, underdeveloped narco-ruled Third World cesspool of corruption and poverty. How were you able to achieve such an accomplishment? Are you and other Mexicans just that stupid? I mean really! How could you take such potential and turn it into a steaming pile of dung? Mexico should have a GDP rivaling any civilized country, but it remains a shithole on a level rarely seen outside impoverished Africa. It seems to that, like locusts, you ruined your own country and are now moving onto our fertile ground with nothing more to offer than knocked up teenagers, gangbangers, illiterate generations, drug warfare, killings and kidnappings, with a generous dose of arrogance. First, how can a people totally piss away such potential? Second: With that track record, why should Americans expect you to achieve anything greater here in the States? Someone Who Sees you for What You Are -- Failures!

These questions, were posed to Gustavo Arellano in the “Ask a Mexican” column for the *OC Weekly* newspaper. The column is nationally syndicated and appears in about forty newspapers, with a weekly circulation of more than two million. The questions printed in the column reflect many of the types of inquiries repeatedly made to Arellano by whites across the country. They evoke common, known stereotypes of Mexicans as inherently criminal, stupid, lazy, over breeders who threaten American values and culture.

Stereotypes of Mexicans are widespread in the news media, film, and television and have become part of the common public discourse (Berg 2002; Noriega 1992; Rodriguez 1997). Recent scholarship has begun to examine how immigration narratives, debates, and policy are racialized (Chavez 2008; Santa Ana 2002). Other scholars have shown that white attitudes toward Latinos negatively affect their views on immigration (Ayers et al. 2009; Brader et al. 2008; Fiske et al. 2002; Timberlake et al. 2012). Thus, examining how Mexican Americans have and continue to be racialized is important, because it has implications for both policymaking and Mexican Americans’ incorporation.

Yet, the tendency in sociology is to view Mexican Americans through a focus on the immigrant experience and characterize Latino immigrants as a “new immigrant group.” This literature tends to base that approach upon the significant immigration of Latinos post-1965, when the door was opened to more immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America due to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Bean & Lee 2007; Perlman & Waldinger 1997; Sears & Savalei 2006). On the other hand, Chicano/a and Ethnic Studies scholars have diligently researched and mapped how Mexican Americans have historically been racialized in the United States (Barrera 1979; Camarillo & Chavez 2005; Gomez 2007; Haney-Lopez 2003, Menchaca 1995; Montejano 1987). It is important to note that the process of racialization has not ended for

Mexican Americans. Much of the literature across disciplines fails to account for the continuity of racialized stereotypes and its affect on Mexican immigrant and Mexicans alike, in present day.

The quote above references Mexico as a “backward” and “third world country,” and thus reflects how Mexicans are perceived as inferior to whites. Furthermore, the reference to “illiterate generations,” shows that this perception is not solely for Mexican immigrants or “illegals,” but all Mexicans. By many assimilationist and new assimilationist scholars’ accounts, Mexican Americans should have been absorbed into the larger society, like other immigrant groups before them (Alba & Nee 2003; Gans 1973). In contrast, Hattam (2007) argues Mexicans, unlike Jews, have not experienced equal incorporation into the larger society because the negative characteristics assigned to Mexican Americans are permanent and innate. Similar to the quote above, Hattam argues the badges of inferiority assigned to Mexicans living in the United States do not disappear as the generations become more of a part of the American landscape. Thus, racial stereotypes of Mexicans have been recurrent and demonstrate that the legacy of their racialization is still with us today.

In this chapter, I build on scholars who have documented the racism Mexicans have experienced in the past, and I contend that Mexican Americans are continuing to experience racialization. Telles (2006) defines “racialization” as “The societal assigning of undesirable characteristics to people of a particular ancestry or phenotype, as well as the institutional consequences of this exclusion.” He argues, “The treatment of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in this country is rooted in racial difference and racial hierarchy and in the history of colonization and conquest”. That is to say, this process is a historical one. My research offers a contemporary account of what racialization means for Mexicans today. I further posit, that the specific way racialization manifests itself is through the White Racial Frame that Feagin (2010) defines as, “racial stereotypes, racial narratives and interpretations, racial images, racialized emotions, and inclinations to discriminatory action.” He argues that this frame is embedded in the United States’ long history and that it accounts for, “the country’s dominant ‘frame of mind’ and ‘frame of reference,’ when it comes to racial matters”. Thus, the questions posed to the column is a reflection of America’s “frame of mind,” and “frame of reference,” when it comes to perceptions of Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

I find evidence of Mexican racialization in the recurrence and durability of the stereotypes expressed in the questions posed by whites to the “Ask a Mexican” column. In analyzing the questions posed to this popular column, I argue that whites’ entrenched stereotypes about Mexicans constitute a racial ideology that is reproduced in public discourse, which seeks -- still, today -- to rationalize “inherent” difference between whites and Mexicans.

## **Racial Stereotypes and Public Discourse**

Stereotypes are “any cliché, reductive, negative or demeaning representation of a group of people on the basis of that group’s purported national origins, or ethnic, racial, class, gender and sexual appearances of qualities” (Allatson 2007). The process of stereotyping includes three factors: category making combined with ethnocentrism and prejudice (Berg 2002). “A stereotype is the result of this process,” Berg explains, “and can be defined as a negative generalization used by an in-group (Us) about an out-group (Them).” Furthermore, Berg contends that stereotyping is not simply about neutral category making but includes discriminatory practices that often hold the “other” as inherently inferior. An important function that allows the stereotype to become

“common sense” is its repetition through the mass media. There is a significant impact when stereotypes become images that are constructed and produced by the mass media.

Stereotypical images carry meaning at the racial, national, narrative, behavioral, psychological, moral and ideological levels (Berg 2002). In a sense, stereotypes help define and determine how groups should be perceived and what rung they occupy on the racial hierarchy. They become a central part of culture through their repetition in the mass media -- television, film, and news reporting—which repeats the images associated with these stereotypes to produce a racialized “other.” Mass media should be understood not merely as a static set of venues for entertainment and information, but as a process whereby messages are produced, circulated, distributed, reproduced, and consumed as a complex structure in dominance (Hall 1997). Moreover, Hall connects this idea to Foucault’s (1980) approach to representation, in which power and knowledge are constructed to validate the dominant group and define the “other”. Similarly, the apparatus of mass media also is a part of Gramsci’s (1971) concept of “hegemony,” in which it functions to carry out an ideology based on stereotypical images as a way to reflect dominant values and oppress others.

Stereotypes often travel through and are reinforced in public discourse that Santa Ana (2002) identifies as “the components of connected expressions of language, both verbal and written.” He explains, “As such, the communication events of everyday life that are studied under discourse analysis include, among many others, conversation; newspaper genres such as news reports, editorials and so on; legislative debating; novels; advertising; scientific expression in journals and textbooks; and film”. Santa Ana (2004) further argues that, “Insofar as discourse is power, contemporary U.S. public discourse on minority communities is oppressive”. Mass media has played a critical role in presenting strong images and narratives to produce and reinforce stereotypes of Latinos to construct an us/them dichotomy (Berg 2002). These stereotypes have been used to justify violence and policies that target Latinos, resulting in real boundaries that demarcate between first- and second-class citizens along racial lines. As Lipsitz (1998) explains, whites have a possessive investment in whiteness because it benefits them. While stereotypes are fluid and change with time, they continue to marginalize and oppress Mexicans. Thus, the questions posed to the “Ask a Mexican” column reveal many whites’ ease using racialized stereotypes to describe Mexicans. The newspaper format offers these racialized sentiments to be normalized and part of everyday discourse.

Consequently, public discourse analysis and media representation of Latino has been an increasing area of focus in academia (Chavez, Chavez, McConnel & Rivas-Rodriguez; Santa Ana, Ono & Sloopz). In 2012, the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center released a data report quantifying hate speech specifically from three politically conservative talk radio programs (The Lou Dobbs Show: Mr. Independent, The Savage Nation, and The John and Ken Show), by measuring unsubstantiated claims, divisive language, and indexical terms (code words) related to political nativism. The reason the researchers decided to examine conservative talk radio is because, “...it accounts for 91 percent of total weekday talk radio programming. In addition, radio has the greatest penetration of any media outlet (print, broadcast, or digital), reaching 90 percent of Americans each week and the news-talk format is the predominant radio format in terms of dedicated stations nationwide (over 1700).” Furthermore, they found that of the 222 instances of a “call for action” against vulnerable groups, most focused on Latinos and immigration (Epstein 2011). The findings, similar to ones in my research showed, “Through this rhetorical pattern, vulnerable groups were defined as antithetical to core American values... There were 20 instances of indexical terms (code words) to identify certain groups as

‘other’ to the nation. Terms such as illegal alien, gangbanger, killers, anarchists, calamity, and domestic terrorism indexed Latinos, undocumented immigrants, and immigrant rights advocates, thereby associating these groups with crime, terror, and a foreign enemy.” Moreover with the recent 2010 census reflecting an increase in Latino population through new and old gateways, negative sentiments towards Latinos and Latino immigrants is on the rise, and media analysis is a way to measure racial tensions between whites and Latinos.

Many scholars, have also argued that media is a vessel to construct and circulate how to think of and treat Mexicans. While there has been a long history of this -- all along Latinos challenging these claims -- we continue to see the dominant discourse around Latinos, including them being inferior, the perpetual foreigner, and a threat. These images have strongly affected policy and in particular immigration policy. These are issues Santa Ana (2004) takes up in his book *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*, where he analyzes submissions to the Los Angeles Times that use metaphors to disguise how people feel about Mexicans and offer their rationalization to support anti-Latino policy such as Proposition 187. Similarly, Ono and Sloop (2002) in *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration and California’s Proposition 187* state, “The rhetoric of Proposition 187, as we argue throughout the book, will have long-standing effects not only on what kinds of things get said in the media but also on perceptions of immigrants and immigration in the United States, as well as race relations”. Thus, it becomes clear why it is critical to study public discourse regarding the dominant discourse of Latinos constructed by whites.

More recently the Latino Studies journal produced a special edition about Latinos in the media, where scholars contributed their research to support the importance of studying Latino representation. For example, Eileen Diaz McConnell (2011), examines how a local newspaper in Atlanta reported the significant demographic changes happening in Atlanta, but primarily targeted Latinos. McConnell observes that while Atlanta was also receiving large numbers of Blacks, whites and Asians into the city, the newspapers focused on Latinos and portrayed them in very negative ways, particular around themes of crime. McConnell in her article argues, “That reporters were unlikely to provide comprehensive or balanced coverage about local racial/ethnic change. Instead, journalists provided far more statistics about Latinos and Asians than either Whites or Blacks and linked non-White population growth with negative issues. These practices suggest how members of the media continue to participate in discourse that sustains and disguises the racialized hierarchy in the United States”. McConnell offers concrete evidence that Latinos continue to be racialized and how the media serves to both participate in this racialization and also widely disseminate negative views of Latinos.

The level and rise of negative representation of Latinos has also propelled Latino activists to fight against particular news anchors and pundits like Lou Dobbs and Pat Buchanan. One of the major incidents surrounded Dobbs’ unwillingness to retract a statement that no one could find support for. His statement explicitly stated that an increase in Mexican immigration was problematic and cause for great concern because they brought in diseases -- specifically leprosy. Dobbs, was the focus of a campaign organized by a Latino organization entitled *Presente.org* called the “Basta Dobbs” campaign. The campaign urged people to send e-mails to CNN demanding they fire Dobbs for presenting misinformation about Latinos and Latino immigrants. Not only was this campaign innovative, but it was successful, since Doubs has since left CNN. A similar case has been made for Pat Buchanan an MSNBC contributor, due to his negative opinions on Latinos and African Americans. Even more recently, many Latinos have launched a campaign directed specifically at the media to discontinue to us the worked “illegals,” when

addressing undocumented immigrants based on the reasoning that no human is illegal. They also argue that by continuing to use the term “illegals,” the term becomes part of the dominant discourse and creates tensions toward undocumented immigrants and Latinos in general. They also contend that it may lead to an even more difficult time in pursuing immigration reform in the form of amnesty. Latino representation in the media and its discontents reflect how negative views of Latinos are constructed and challenged because they are implicitly and explicitly racist.

The media and other forms of public discourse both reflect and influence public opinion and dominant narratives about groups. In particular, news sources, -- whether television broadcasts or newspapers -- are understood to be legitimate sources of information that many people use to make daily decisions. However, these sources are often plagued with stereotypes and distortions about Mexicans. The letters sent to the “Ask a Mexican” column are public representations of how these stereotypes get deployed.

### **Genesis of the “Ask a Mexican” Column**

The origins of the “Ask a Mexican” column are important to understand because they help explain Latino contemporary racialization. Gustavo Arellano, who responds to the questions from the column, is the son of Mexican migrant parents and was born and raised in Orange County. He has long followed the politics, history, and culture of Orange County and just recently was promoted to editor of the *OC Weekly* newspaper. Arellano to date has published three books centered on Orange County. These include *Ask a Mexican* (2007), *Orange County: A personal history* (2010), and *Taco Nation* (2010). There has also been interest in taking this column and converting it into a Broadway play.

In many interviews Arellano has expressed that Orange County, “still a white man’s world ... just sees us as servants basically cheap labor” (Romero 2007). Arellano has a great grasp of Orange County’s history and also has a finger on the pulse of race relations in Orange County. Moreover, Arellano explained to me that being a Latino journalist and having to prove himself in the industry has always been a struggle, but one from which he has learned a lot. He recounts how the “Ask a Mexican” column came to be, which started with a back-and-forth with his then white editor about the lack of Latino representation in print media in Orange County.

The history of the column. It started in November of 2004. It was only supposed to appear one time...He thought of the ‘Ask a Mexican’ idea...He didn't know who Piolin was, and I said, ‘You should know what's going on in your own community. He's huge, and he's an Orange County story, but you don't know who he is. That's pretty stupid of you.’ And he said, ‘You know, there's a lot of people who are ignorant like me about Mexicans. So we should do a column that ridicules those people; that ridicules the stupid questions that people have.’

Arellano’s story about how the column came about addresses how even in a county with a significant Latino population (34%), the print media heavily favors the white audience and ignores Latino issues and does not sufficiently cover news that affect Latinos. This reflects the power dynamics in Orange County between whites and Latinos. Furthermore, this is not unique to Orange County, but reflects the rest of the nation in terms of Latino representation in the media (Santa Ana 2012). The fact that the editor of *OC Weekly*, an educated man had no idea who Piolin was and his role and influence in the Latino community, further reflects how Latinos are excluded from the American imagination and are not adequately being serviced and in this

case accounted for in the print media. The editor even agrees that he and other whites like him are ignorant about Latino issues. In the next quote Arellano specifically addresses the first issue of the column.

For our Cinco de Mayo issue for May 2004, we decided to do a Why We Hate Mexicans issue.... But it was a serious issue. Our cover story was about the murder of Francisco Torrez, the guy who was strung up by all the good white men in Santa Ana back in 1893 right here in downtown.... We were only supposed to do it one time. But there was such a huge reaction. And what blew me away even more was that people were sending questions immediately.... By noon, I already had about 50 questions. People just went nuts.

Arellano from the beginning shows that the column was an attempt to improve race relations between whites and Latinos in Orange County by educating the entire community about Orange County's racial past. Moreover, even he was surprised by how many people were writing in about why they hate Mexicans. Arellano had established the forum and opportunity for people to write in and express their prejudiced views of Mexicans. The fact that there was an alarming amount of people who did reflects that these were views and stereotypes that whites have of Mexicans -- so much so they felt compelled to write in about them. Below Arellano addresses the relevance of the column being nationally syndicated and his opinion of what the column represents.

So I go back to my editor at the time and I tell him, 'People are sending me questions; what do I do?' He said, well -- we had the conversation, and this is true of journalism. If you hit a nerve, you know to poke that nerve again and again and again. So he said, 'Let's just do this column until there's no more questions to be asked.' Well, here I am. So to answer your question, even though it started in Orange County, it started getting syndicated Spring of 2006...I do make the pronouncement that the existence of the column is an indictment of the role that Mexicans currently inhabit in American life. That's the column's ultimate contribution is indicting America for never truly knowing what to do with Mexicans. But does that necessarily indict us as a racist country? A little bit...I now know that America is a racist country.

Arellano explains how he has and continues to be bombarded with questions for him to address in the "Ask a Mexican" column. Eight years later and the column has only become more popular and viewed by a larger audience across the country. This ever-increasing syndication means that these racial stereotypes will continue to gain traction and can become part of the "common sense," way we think about Latinos. (The fact that Arellano gets similar letters and questions from around the country speaks to the increasing "common sense" about Latinos that these stereotypes have come to represent).

Arellano has received heavy criticism from many Latinos and non-Latinos, who express their belief that the column only promotes racism by providing a space for those racial stereotypes to gain legitimacy. Arellano's response has been that this column gives a voice to how people think of Mexicans and "indicts this country of being racist." He believes he answers the questions in a way that ridicules the stereotypes in the hope of challenging them. In essence, he argues that humor is a tool to combat racism, by first making it visible and secondly subverting it with his responses. For the purposes of my research, the letters submitted by whites

to the column, specifically the language and stereotype whites use to describe Mexicans, serve as an indicator of Latino racialization and challenge notions of a post-racial society.

I would argue that Arellano's "Ask a Mexican" column reflects the continuity of race relations between whites and Latinos that still plagues us today. Arellano himself notes that this continuity in some ways is unique to Orange County but in many ways reflective of the entire Southwest because, "The Mexicans have always been at the bottom of the totem pole. We've done the menial work, we've been segregated. So of course white people are going to hate Mexicans more than any group.... But you also mix that in with the historical antagonism. But here in Orange County, it's Southwest. You do have that legacy of hate just because that's how it's been for centuries." During our conversation Arellano spoke at length about how whites are very unhappy about the continuous flow of immigration from Latin America. So I asked him if closing the borders would improve white and Latino relations, and he answered, "But even if you stopped immigration, those stereotypes will still persist because it's such a fabric of the American experience and it's such fabric of the American Southwest to hate the greaser and bandito. It's just part of who we are." This is key because, in part, what Arellano is explaining is that the negative sentiments whites have of Mexicans is not solely about immigration but their construction of Mexicans as a racially inferior group.

## **Main Findings**

Three main themes about how whites that wrote in to the column, think about Mexicans, emerged: the perception that Mexicans engage in deviant behavior, that they do not assimilate, and that the Mexican culture is backward and ultimately inferior. There were specific racial stereotypes that mapped onto to each of the three themes. These three overarching categories also indicate the ways that whites who wrote in, rationalize their stereotypes and in doing so also rationalize racial prejudice against Mexicans. In other words, these whites do not see the stereotypes as problematic, because they blame Mexicans for their own misfortunes due to their deviant behavior, their backward culture, and their lack of assimilation. These whites are then able to maintain racist views toward Mexicans and feel justified in expressing them in a public forum. Moreover, the racial stereotypes that were evoked in the "Ask a Mexican" column harken back from more than a century ago. Thus, the "Ask a Mexican," column provides concrete evidence of a continuity of racial stereotypes towards Mexicans and how in recent times those stereotypes have become part of the public discourse -- as if they were true.

### **"DEVIANT" BEHAVIOR**

Whites asked about behaviors that they found troubling and counter to "normal" behavior. They used White Anglo Saxon Protestant (WASP) morals and behavior as the standard by which they measure Mexicans. There were three major stereotypes in the deviant category that included criminal behavior, sexual behavior, and welfare dependency.

#### **Crime**

An overwhelming number of questions posed by whites addressed Mexicans and crime. The stereotype of Mexicans as criminals was frequently embedded in the questions. Whites used personal experience to justify their assumptions about Mexicans being inherently criminal and drew on "statistics," such as the assertion that prisons are mostly populated by Blacks and Mexicans, to make claims about Mexicans and crime.

This example is typical: “Why do Mexicans commit so many crimes? I’ve noticed police pursuits on the news, and the chase always turns up a Latino male. What is up with Mexicans shooting off guns in my neighborhood?!? Mexicans live all around us and my gringo neighborhood is freaking out at what a shooting range we are becoming.” In these questions we also see how local news reinforces the stereotypes of Mexicans and crime by circulating images of crime scenes that many times may involve Latinos, but without contextualizing the cases. Whites’ questions made clear distinctions between Latinos being the culprit and cause of crime while whites were just the victims who had to contend with the violence around them. The fact that whites assumed that non-whites committed any and all crime, illustrates their assertion that Latinos are somehow inherently criminal.

Moreover, the stereotype of the “gangbanger” was also one that many whites asked about: “Why are so many young Mexicans in gangs? And why do they love to graffiti everything, even their own ghetto apartment building? I see too damn much of this in the Los Angeles area, que pasa? Why are all the Mexicans in prison, and for that matter on the outside, always trying to kill each other?” Again, whites did not question whether these stereotypes are true, but rather asked why it is that Mexicans are involved in so much crime. The person asking naturalizes Mexicans killing each other, as if it is the norm in all Mexican neighborhoods. Such questions indicate they believe there is something natural and inherent in the Mexican culture that transmits criminal behavior.

Other whites suggested that crossing the border “illegally” is the beginning of Mexicans’ criminal activity/record. They spoke about the second and subsequent generations, or “young” Mexicans, as being in gangs. While, most of the crime stereotypes were gendered, as they mostly associated violent crime with Latino men, they ascribed that all Mexicans -- men and women -- crossed the border “illegally,” and in that sense believed the group thought of themselves as above the law. Thus, the illegal activities Mexicans engage in are perceived to be intergenerational and permanent. This shows that whites think of Mexicans as having fixed characteristics, and in this sense are bounded by them.

Whites often employed an understanding where they could point to a racial stereotype and then claim their Mexican inferiority sometimes more explicit than other times. For example a person who wrote in stating, “Why do Mexicans love to write on walls? (And is it true that Mexican babies are born with the graffiti-gene -- as evidenced by the aerosol spray can that is attached to their placentas at birth?). This person uses the example of graffiti to claim that they perceive to be such a wide-spread problem and particular to Mexican that it must be that, “Mexican babies are born with the graffiti gene.” The writer clearly grasps the humorous and satirical nature of the column, but uses it to then make a comment suggesting inherent inferiority of Mexicans. The writer is not simply talking about the act or behavior to engage in graffiti but that Mexicans actually have a gene and predisposition to break the law and therefore are intrinsically criminal. This is a concrete example of how whites conclude that Mexicans are biological inferior not simply culturally different.

#### Sexual Deviancy

The next “deviant” behavior whites had many question about was sexual deviancy. One questioner asked: “Why is Dirty Sanchez called a Dirty Sanchez and not, say, a Filthy Hobsbawm or a Grimy Kierkegaard? Is it because Mexicans invented it? My friend told me that Latinas believe in being virgins until marriage, so if they decide to have sex before... they take it up the ass. He said this is common practice and quite a pleasurable one if you’re a back-door man.” Here, the questions imply that being sexually “dirty” is something that Mexicans have

“invented,” and thus it must be more inherent to their culture. He draws on a personal experience -- something his friend has told him -- as “evidence” to back up his inquiry. It is also worth noting the references to Hobsbawm and Kierkegaard demonstrate the person is clearly educated but willing to offer extremely demeaning stereotypes backed by little evidence. He disrespects Mexican women and fails to challenge any of the inherently sexist and racist notions of the stereotype. In other letters, whites felt justified in being vulgar when they talked about Latina women and asked questions that tarnished their privacy and honor by assuming they enjoy anal sex. Furthermore, whites differentiated between Mexicans and whites to further their point that sexual deviance innate to Latinos and that whites were too “civilized,” to engage in such lewd sexual acts.

Others wrote in about how they believe the Mexican male “want[s] to kill his father and fuck his mother.” Such questions convey an image of Mexicans as disgusting and immoral and possessed with an unhealthy attachment to their mothers and hatred of their fathers that becomes a full-blown Oedipus Complex. Moreover one also asked, “Why do so many Mexican men go around making babies with many different Mexican women and then disappear without taking responsibility for their offspring? And why do the Mexican women have children by so many Mexican men who don’t marry them and disappear to them fending for themselves and their *bebes*?” These quotes reflect long-established stereotypes of Mexicans as being “too fertile” and too “sexual” (Gutierrez 2008). They paint a picture of Mexicans as over sexualized and careless about pregnancy and “overpopulation.” There were numerous questions that addressed white fears and concerns with Latinos “over breeding” and changing the demographics of the United States. Most of them characterized this as inevitable with a “doomsday” perspective, in which Latinos would take over the United States. They also make it clear that this behavior is problematic and not in accordance with American standards and values. Thus, the questions not only reveal that whites hold stereotypes of Mexicans, but also that they mark the difference as a form of deviance, and thus inferior.

## Welfare Abuse

Many whites wrote in about their feelings regarding Mexicans abusing the welfare system. In this instance, “deviance” means Mexicans’ deviating from American values of self-sufficiency and individualism. Here is one example: “In the not so distant future when the Mexicans are running the entire show what will they do with our lame ass ‘Public Assistance’ programs? Where people get checks for sitting on their asses, having more kids in fatherless homes, expecting food stamps for watching TV, subsidized housing that they treat like shit, etc....? Why don’t Mexicans get green cards and come into the United States legally.” This set of questions promotes several stereotypes of Mexicans and ties them together in efforts to make a case for perceiving Mexicans as dependent welfare abusers. The questions allude to three concrete stereotypes: Mexicans as lazy, Mexicans having too many kids, and Mexicans abusing public assistance programs. The first and third stereotypes date to the early twentieth century and suggest that Mexicans lack the “American” ethic of hard work (Fox 2012). Put all together, whites paint a grim picture that Latinos are changing the United States because there are too many of them who simply come and abuse welfare and many other public services. They contend that Mexicans are simply a drain on U.S. society.

Similarly, in the question “Why are the majority of the Mexican women on welfare?” the person is also engaging with the stereotype that Mexicans break the law by crossing the border

illegally and then “taking advantage of U.S. social welfare systems.” Mexican women in particular are singled out; Molina (2006) uncovers that health officials, at the turn of the twentieth century blame Mexican women specifically for being dirty, because they perceive the women to be responsible for the household. These questions illustrate that many whites still believe that most Mexicans abuse the welfare system on purpose, and they find this behavior to be endemic in Mexican culture.

## ASSIMILATION

Many of the questions submitted by whites spoke at length about their dissatisfaction with the level of Mexican acculturation, focusing in particular on language. These questioners reasoned that Mexicans were inferior because they simply did not have the capacity and intelligence to acculturate to the superior WASP culture. These “concerns,” were again consistent with Huntington’s (2004) claim that, “The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves -- from Los Angeles to Miami -- and rejecting the Anglo Protestant values that built the American dream. The United States ignores this challenge at its peril”. Many sentiments whites expressed when they wrote into the “Ask a Mexican,” column echoed the same sentiments from Huntington; these whites were truly angered and feared that Mexicans would take over and bring division and corruption.

### Unwillingness to Learn English

Many questioners expressed the idea that “Hispanics expect us to learn Spanish instead of learning English.” They complained, that they are “assaulted by listening to anything in Spanish on phone menus,” as well as on forms. Whites expressed that they felt that Latinos not only chose not to learn English but that they were indignant about the matter, since they have translators and other services available to them that do not force them to learn to speak English. One questioner compared Mexican acquaintances unfavorably to people of other nationalities who had learned English:

When I met them some five years ago, Maria was a waitress and Pedro worked for the Korean vegetable stand on the corner. They were married, from Puebla and spoke precious little English. Flash forward five years to the present: Pedro and Maria now have two children, with a third on the way. Maria can’t work anymore, and Pedro is still working for the Koreans. Both speak English about as well as they did five years ago (which is to say: not at all). I have lived amongst FOB Polish, Koreans and Russians over the last 20 years in NYC, and I still maintain contact with these friends from the old neighborhoods. All of my other friends have made significant progress both with the English language and in their working lives...Nothing seems to make a difference with Pedro and Maria. Una pregunta: Why is that?

Here, the questioner implies that Pedro and Maria are unreasonably resistant to acculturation, or perhaps incapable of it. Whites wrote in upset because they not only perceived Mexicans failing to acquire English language skills but also saw so many programs set in place for Mexicans in

Spanish -- which make it easier for English acquisition to be delayed. Such questions made explicit comparisons between Mexicans and other groups, always pointing out that other immigrant groups were successful in assimilating to the “American” culture, but that Mexicans continue to fail to do so. Again this goes to some of my larger points, in terms of how the questions posed by whites about Latinos illustrated the unique and contemporary dynamic of Latino racialization. In that, the racial stereotypes attributed to them were distinct not only from other immigrant groups but other minority groups as well. In this sense, whites really targeted Latinos as the distinctive problem in society.

### Lack of Acculturation

Whites repeatedly wrote in asking why Mexicans would not assimilate into the “American” culture. A typical question would state, “Why do Mexicans seek to cause trouble in America, rather than assimilating, where most people would stop caring about them, if they could (or is that WOULD?) just learn English ...To twist an old aphorism, ‘If you can’t say something in English, say nothing’? It makes Americans nervous to hear something we can’t understand most of us can’t afford to hire an entourage of translators... And splitting the already overwhelmed educational system into English and Spanish sides is a severely pound-foolish idea.” Many whites wrote in to express similar ideas, upset that in many places, translation services or bilingual programs were offered to Latinos. They argued that these types of services catered to them instead of making them acculturate like immigrants in the past to the WASP culture. Instead of seeing being bilingual as a benefit, they saw it as a drain on society and just simply Un-American.

Some of these correspondents wrote in upset about Mexican Americans waving Mexican versus American flags. They questioned Mexicans’ loyalties, giving as an example Mexicans cheering for the Mexican versus the American team. This infuriated whites because they felt that Mexicans were intentionally disobeying the unwritten rules of acculturation to the United States. Moreover, they used these types of examples to argue that since Latinos chose not to be part of the American society they should not be welcomed to it. White correspondents did not feel that the problem with acculturation was solely an issue with recent Mexican migrants but also with subsequent generations. Such questions tell us that whites do not differentiate between “illegal” immigrants, first-generation Mexicans, and second- and subsequent-generation Mexicans with regard to the stereotypes. The stereotypes they hold of Mexicans encompass all generations as equally inferior. Whites who wrote in made it clear it is not just the “illegal” they have a problem with. When it comes to Mexicans, they see the whole group as problematic.

### Asians versus Mexicans

Many of the entries compared Mexicans to other groups in order to argue that it was specifically Latinos, unlike other recent and past immigrants, that did not acculturate. Most of the entries particularly compared Latinos to Asians in order to argue that Mexicans were different, inferior, and unwilling to assimilate. Thus, while other literature examines “recent” immigrant to mean post-65 Asian and Latino immigrants to experience similar modes of incorporation into the United States, here whites make a clear distinction between Asians who they deem the model minority and Latinos, which they label as problematic. Thus, the questioners bought into the “model minority” stereotype of Asians, justifying their negative

perceptions of Mexicans by positing that Asians, while different, were not inferior and did a better job of assimilating.

I live in a tiny, gated neighborhood that I would describe as solidly middle to upper middle class. On each side of me live Vietnamese small business owners whose kids attend prestigious universities; across the street is a Filipino medical technologist and 4 doors down is the Korean engineer. On the next block over is the Sikh Indian family and a family from Nigeria. They are all recent immigrants and except for the Indians, none of them speaks English fluently. What is conspicuously missing is even one single Mexican immigrant family... How come immigrants from south of the border stay stuck on the bottom rungs of the proverbial ladder of success for generations. By contrast, other recent immigrant groups, particularly Asians, are kicking whitey's ass, economically speaking, by the second generation.

This person looks at his neighborhood and sees immigrants from other countries but none from Mexico -- and thus concludes that Mexicans are not doing well compared to many of these Asian groups. He argues that Mexicans' perceived lack of economic mobility is not solely limited to the first generation, moreover: "I see lots of Mexican Americans struggling in grade school and high school. Many Mexican American activists claim it's because they don't speak English at home or the schools don't teach them well. But I see lots of Asian Americans in the same schools who do really well. Many of them also don't speak English at home. The last time I went to a hospital, it seemed like Asians were 30% of all the doctors. I didn't see a single Latino one. Why is it that one group consistently does better than the other? I don't understand." The questioner again uses his personal experience and observations to back up his conclusion that Mexicans do not value education and thus are to blame for their own lack of upward mobility. Here whites also employ racial stereotypes about Asians. While the racial stereotypes of Asians are overwhelmingly positive, they attribute most of the racial stereotypes about Latinos to be negative. Again the perception is that Latinos are to blame for many issues in society, while other immigrant groups, like Asians are rewarded for their efforts. The comparison between Asians and Latinos also reflects how whites differentiate between groups and find fault not in new immigrants in general but specifically Mexicans.

## BACKWARD CULTURE

Most whites had questions regarding what they perceived as parenting methods, traditions, and practices that were "backward." Indeed, most of the questions fell into this category. Whites did not simply criticize Mexican culture but in many ways condemned it explicitly, alluding to "third-world" behavior, for example. For example, many of the whites who wrote in mentioned Mexicans having chickens and roosters in the front and backyard -- as well as littering and pissing in public -- as examples of Mexican culture being backward. Similar to the introduction quote, whites connected these behaviors because this group was coming from a "third world" country whose culture was not modern and civilized like that of the United States. Furthermore, they used slurs in questions like, "Why are Mexicans greasers? Is it because they spread rancid lard from their dirty kitchens all over themselves after bathing instead of baby oil or cologne the way clean, civilized Anglos do?" Such a question isn't simply about Mexicans' hair, but rather an instance of whites making a distinction between civilized Anglos

and uncivilized Mexicans. Whites consistently drew distinctions between whites and Latinos and not that they were simply culturally different but that they were racially inferior.

### “Cultural” Practices

One of the questions stated: “I am an American who is married to a Mexican. We get lots of invites to parties for people’s kids, birthdays, baptisms, quincenaras, etc., ... I always bring a nice gift for the child. First off, there is always a lot, I mean a lot of alcohol at these parties, now I am not saying I do not drink, however, in America you do not see coolers or rubber trash cans full of beer at a 5 year old’s birthday party here it is unacceptable. They come to these people’s kids parties and eat and drink all the free stuff and then don’t bring a gift, yet no one ever says anything almost as if this is expected. Can you please shed some light on why this is acceptable?” Such questions take issue with “inappropriate” behavior at children’s birthday parties and attribute it to cultural difference. Interestingly, this man, like many other whites who were married to Mexicans, accepted and repeated the stereotypes via his limited observations and made value judgments about differences in practices. This phenomenon in many ways challenges the literature on intermarriage as a sign of racial progress. In many of the cases, being married to a Mexican did not preclude the questioners from displaying prejudice; in many cases intermarriage seems to have reinforced the stereotypes they had, since whites now felt they had personal experience to support their perception of Mexicans. Many whites expressed resentment of Mexicans for being different and not adhering to “American” norms. In many cases Mexican behavior was measured against white American norms to determine what is normal and appropriate, and since they deem Mexicans as not conforming to “normal” behavior as defined by them. Mexican American behavior is therefore inferior.

Similarly, another white person writes in to ask, “I have been living in sin with a Zacatecan ranchero for three years. We’ve worked through our many cultural differences ...the main problem in our relationship seems to be that he has no concept of time. I’ve dated other Latinos, and this seems to be a cultural phenomenon. Is the inability to keep to a schedule a genetic problem? I love my beaner, but I can’t stand being late! I notice that his beaner friends are also unlikely to call their wives to say they’ll be late. I’ve spoken with girlfriends who are also dating or married to Mexicans -- same problem.” Such a question illustrates the ease in which whites engage many stereotypes about Mexicans without finding them problematic. She complains about her lover and all Mexicans as being late, and even explicitly asks, “Is the inability to keep to a schedule a genetic problem?” This question clearly ascribes lateness to Mexicans as a permanent characteristic. This person further believes all these racial stereotypes must in fact be true since her girlfriend who also is dating a Latino male has the “same problem.” Again whites frequently characterized Mexicans simply as a problem. The author tries to also show her command and closeness to the culture by using a term – “beaner” -- to describe her boyfriend, a term that is okay for use by an insider but is considered a slur when used by an outsider. Perceptions of deficiency are also present in other representations of Mexican family life.

### Parenting

Many of the white correspondents expressed their feeling that Mexicans were unfit parents because they did not keep a close enough eye on their children. Someone wrote in

stating, “Recently, a little boy was killed in a hit-and-run caught on tape. The video shows the parents with their kids walking across the street, then a few more seconds later, their young boy darts across the street only to meet up with the head lights of a car driving 45 in a 30mph zone. When in public places, why don’t Mexican parents keep a more watchful eye on their young kids? Especially when crossing the street, walking around fairgrounds, in public parks, on sidewalks, at the swap meet,.....basically everywhere!” The question implicitly blames the parents for the death of their child and generalizes from there to all Mexicans’ failure to take care of their kids in public -- thus blaming Mexicans and their culture for the misfortune, rather than the speeding driver. These types of responses were endemic to whites’ rationale that societal problems are not structural but the fault of the Mexican group for failing to properly adhere, in this case, to laws and “common sense.” Like this person, many whites were unsympathetic and insensitive to trials and tribulations many Mexicans endured. More so, they tended to blame them for their misfortunes.

Whites also wrote into to ask, “Why do a lot of Hispanics let their toddlers stay on the baby bottle longer than most kiddos? I work at a surgery center that specializes in children’s dental surgery and most of the patients are Hispanic kids getting their teeth fixed from just such scenarios. I’ve also personally known Hispanic mothers whose children’s mouths were completely ‘blinged’ out with dental work. Any insight on why the Mexican *bambinos* stay on the bottle so long?” Again, this question measures by white standards of appropriateness. Children who stay on the bottle “too long” or have “too much” gold dental work seem evidence to condemn Mexican parenting. They mark particular “dysfunctional” parenting exclusive to Latinos. In the last sentence, the person calls Mexican children “Mexican *bambinos*,” which reflects the casual use of using racial slurs and again reflects how whites perceive them as racially different.

#### Unintelligent/ Do not Value Education

Many of the questions suggested that whites believe Mexicans do not value education and are thus unintelligent. For example they would ask, “Why don’t people of Mexican ancestry seem to care more about education? We all know that they have to get up early to go to work (I can only imagine how slowly they must do this given how much they dislike it), but why not go to night school? At the very least they could take a Spanish class where they are sure to earn, if not an ‘A’, then a ‘B’?” Such questions imply that Mexicans are unintelligent and just good at working menial jobs. When the questioner asks, “but why not go to night school?” he reveals the belief that Mexicans are doing nothing improve themselves. Whites further expressed that there were many opportunities that Mexicans had available to them to become more educated and gain upward mobility, but whites believed that Mexicans consciously chose not to improve themselves because they were simply not capable.

Even more disturbing are the quotes from teachers who hold many of these stereotypes and racist views: “I am a teacher at what would be considered an inner city high school. My question is why do Mexican parents who come to the states wanting a better life for themselves and their familia pull their kids out of school to baby sit? It hurts their grades and graduation status. Also, why do Mexican parents refuse to let their children go away to college? The degree they will earn will bring more success and support to the family then keeping the kid at home and wasting their chance.” Here, a seemingly liberal and concerned white teacher wrote in to address the achievement gap between Mexicans and other students. Yet the teacher still engages

and reinforces stereotypes about Mexicans' not valuing education, using personal experiences to make broader arguments about Mexicans as whole. Such comments made by the teachers are alarming, since these are people who are considered to be leaders that should be helping young Latinos advance educationally. But we can begin to see how teachers who hold stereotypes do more harm than good, because they are operating with an assumption that Mexicans simply do not want to learn or are not capable of doing so. And it is not just teachers, but politicians, business people, and others who have great political influence whose prejudicial views of Latinos will persuade them to discriminate against Latinos. The teacher never considers that a lack of resources or safe places for a child to go mean that families may call on older siblings to babysit when their child care situation becomes unstable. Many of these parents do not also have employers that allow them to miss work when they have a childcare emergency. Also, the teacher fails to account for the increasing costs of higher education and the difficulty many poor people have understanding and navigating the financial aid system. Structural problems related to poverty, lack of knowledge, and precarious childcare situations are dismissed for failures of personal behavior.

Furthermore, the reasoning below illustrates, how whites conflate culture and race, assigning racial/biological differences by pointing out cultural differences they deem inferior.

What's the deal with Mexicans and pinatas?!....I'm convinced that the reason that Mexicans are always so poor and uneducated stems from your childhood experience with those stupid things. At every piñata party that I have been to I have seen lots of children's skulls bashed after the blind-folded kid with the baseball bat keeps on swinging as a frenzy of little ones sprawl and wrestle for the dropped candy. This early brain damage is the cause for Mexicans low test scores and high dropout rates.

Many of the quotes had this 'logic,' which was that they presented a stereotype of an example to show that Mexicans are biologically and inherently different and inferior. This person makes a case that piñatas, which is a cultural tradition in many Mexican households, can explain how, "Mexicans are always so poor and uneducated," and thus leads to, "low test scores and high dropout rates." In other words, whites use race and culture interchangeably in the sense that they make biological claims about Mexicans through cultural practices they deem backwards, and believe to be inferior to whites.

## **Conclusion**

To summarize, the questions submitted by whites, to the "Ask a Mexican" column reveal that many whites continue to believe in negative and often racist stereotypes of Mexicans, construct them as a racially inferior group, and have concerns about their "refusal" to subscribe to "American" values. These sentiments are not new, but are rooted in the historical racialization process Mexicans underwent and continue to face today. For example, the Senator Johnson comments (from the introductory chapter) while almost 100 years apart, share the same "frame of reference," of Mexicans in that they are thought to be racially inferior to whites. Similarly, the questions posed about welfare dependency harken back to what scholar Fox (2012) examines in her historical and comparative account of social workers' stereotypes of Mexicans as welfare dependent. Furthermore, the questions that addressed the stereotypes of Mexicans having backward culture connect all the way back to Molina's (2006) research on how public health

officials perceived Mexicans as dirty and unsanitary. The enduring stereotypes and their continuity imply that whites' characterizations of Mexicans are fixed and challenge the notion that they can improve over time, as they did with other immigrant groups. This has major implications in terms of whether the assimilation model accurately reflects the Mexican American experience.

Equally, while Huntington's (2004) argument and data have been discredited in academia, his ideas have considerable popular appeal, as reflected in the questions posed by whites. Many whites argue that Mexicans are not like past immigrants, Mexicans are not assimilating, and Mexicans have an inferior culture and hold anti-American values. Furthermore, they view continuous immigration from Latin America as negative and express fear of the growing non-white population. Many of the sentiments about Mexicans shared with Huntington challenge "new assimilationists," who argue that Mexican Americans will gain equal incorporation into the larger society – all the while, their research looks solely at "new immigrants," versus the experiences of Mexicans through time. They see current practices of racialization as a mere bump in the road, rather than a consistent pattern that started before the twentieth century.

Furthermore, the archive shows that whites are not only concerned about and fearful of an increasing Mexican American population, but also that they feel Mexicans do not resemble "true" Americans, who once were immigrants and some of whom also experienced racism at the beginning. Over time, these earlier immigrants became "good" Americans -- not because they "pulled themselves up by the bootstraps" but because they were able to access whiteness due to their European ancestry. Mexicans' racial mixture continues to prevent them from being seen and treated as whites. Whites here draw a clear line between not only American and un-American behavior but superior and inferior behavior, and this has consequences. This inability to access whiteness is in contrast to scholars who argue that only Blacks experience racial exclusion (Sears & Savalei 2006). While the questions posed to the "Ask a Mexican" column account more for the attitudes whites have of Mexicans, we can see how they may affect their voting behavior and policy preferences.

My findings reveal that Mexican racialization is alive and well. This can be seen with the continuity of stereotypes that whites still hold today of Mexicans. While stereotypes have changed and evolved, whites still hold negative sentiments about Mexicans, with the bottom line being that Mexicans and Mexican Americans are perceived to be inferior to white Americans. While an extensive literature captures white racial attitudes towards Blacks, there is considerably less on white attitudes toward Latinos. This is an important gap in the literature that my findings address. The questions posed by whites to the "Ask a Mexican" column become a way to measure what is seen to be common and acceptable to say about Mexicans in the present day. In reference to Feagin's concept of white racial frame; what is the "frame of mind," and "frame of reference," about Mexicans.

My findings also address the importance of examining public discourse, and in this case the questions posed to the "Ask a Mexican" column are evidence that whites' perceptions of Mexicans have changed little from the past. Thus, the questions posed by whites also have major implications for Latinos in terms of how they are integrated into the larger society. The stereotypes expressed by whites in these questions are not new; they reflect a historical continuity in the negative manner that whites still see Mexicans today. This builds on Telles and Ortiz's (2008) findings that Mexicans experience generations of exclusion -- and I would add, generations of racialization that continue to rationalize Mexicans' place in the racial and social hierarchy in the United States. In other words, Mexicans' equal integration into the larger society is prevented by whites' perceptions of them as inferior and un-American.

This chapter examined the ways in which stereotypes have been constructed and circulated by exploring the questions posed to the “Ask a Mexican,” column in the *OC Weekly*. It has also connected these stereotypes to a larger apparatus of a racial ideology that constructs Latinos as racially inferior. My theoretical framework incorporated the importance of tracing the historical process and relevance of Latino racialization (Telles 2006), and how the discourse on Mexicans reflects a white racial frame, where society’s collective memory of Mexicans continues to reinforce racialized stereotypes (Feagin 2010). The “Ask a Mexican” archive offers hundreds of examples of public discourse centered on how whites think of Mexican, and it helps us understand contemporary views of Latinos. The images, stereotypes, and dominant narratives that are conveyed through mass media perpetuate very negative perceptions of Mexicans. The larger discourse itself tells us a clear story: Mexicans/Latinos continue to be thought of as inferior and as a threat to American ideals and values. This discourse has implications for Mexican integration into the larger society, as well as for the possibilities of upward mobility.

Understanding how the dominant group (whites) perceive, construct, and treat Mexicans is important to understanding race relations, white racial ideology, and more specifically where Latinos fit into the racial hierarchy. There is a need for more research to measure discrimination against Mexicans, explore its real effects on the greater Mexican community, and assess how policy and Mexican’s integration is affected by negative and often racist public discourse toward Mexicans. However, this chapter provides us a view into the critical themes that shape the discourse around Mexican racialization. Stereotypes that mark Mexican Americans as social and cultural deviants who are either unwilling or incapable of assimilation over generations are not the hallmark of a group awaiting assimilation, but of a group that is being racialized and marked for continued existence as an underclass in the American context. Thus, sociological studies of Mexican migration and assimilation must take into account the historically based scholarship in Chicano Studies that demonstrate a more than century-long pattern of similar stereotypes that govern whites’ placement of Mexican immigrants and subsequent generations within the U.S. racial hierarchy.

## CHAPTER 3

### ASK AN ANGLO: Racial Frames and Racial Ideology

#### Introduction:

The questions written in to Gustavo Arellano in the “Ask a Mexican” weekly column in the preceding chapter often rise to the level of racism. The column and questions are important unto themselves, because they convey that racial stereotypes are alive and well and reproduced in the dominant discourse. In order to test if these views represent whites in Orange County, I measured the frequency of these attitudes, by employing a survey as well as forty in-depth interviews. This allows me to have a more representative sample in order to capture specific themes; narrative and stereotypes whites have of Latinos. This chapter and the next are organized thematically (this one about racial frames and the subsequent chapter about how these frames affect whites’ policy preferences) based upon the common themes that emerged from the survey data and in-depth interviews. The crux of this chapter are the in-depth interviews because they captured the narratives and racial stereotypes white respondents utilized to describe Latinos. The interviews serve as a means to understand their reasoning for arriving at their conclusions about Latinos and race. In following their answers we see reasoning, justification, and how the respondents connect issues together in ways that help us determine if the stereotypes in “Ask A Mexican” are prevalent but also in a way that allows us to decipher the meanings of more opaque survey responses. The survey data provide key significant findings, which are consistent with the in-depth interview responses and allow me to make more generalizable claims. The analysis of the survey responses are driven by the understandings gleaned from the in-depth interviews.

More specifically, the in-depth interviews are a way to measure context of reception. The classic assimilation model contends that how new groups are incorporated by the larger society is contingent upon not only how immigrants themselves acculturate but also how the host society itself receives them (context of reception). Much of the immigration literature has been partial to measuring different immigrant groups’ acculturation and there has been research as to how context of reception affects groups’ equal integration into the larger society. I contend one major part of context of reception for Latino immigrants and Latinos in general is how whites perceive them and how that affects their behavior towards Latinos and their support for policies that effect Latinos. The findings in this chapter point to an overwhelmingly negative context of reception from whites that negatively affects Latinos incorporation and can impede upward mobility. Thus in this chapter, I argue white racial attitudes towards Latinos become racial ideologies that impede Latinos from being seen and treated as equal and or as American.

As addressed in the introduction chapter, scholarship examining racial ideology tends to be dominated by relations between African Americans and whites. While the respondents in this study often lumped African Americans with Latinos -- in particular around crime, abuse of welfare, and education -- they had unique frames about Latinos, specifically around issues of culture, illegality, and language. Throughout history different groups have experienced racialization, and it’s this racial differentialization that continues to plague the Latino community in unique ways, where my data shows a strong continuity between past and present racialization.

Thus my data, unlike scholarship before it, posits a different way of understanding context of reception and the larger Latino experience, with racism and its implications at the forefront.

The in-depth interviews are most compelling because different racial frames emerged that accounted for how whites rationalized what they perceived to be problems with Latinos. I borrow Eduardo Bonilla Silva's (2006) definition of a racial frame to be, "set paths for interpreting information, misrepresent the world, and hide the fact of dominance." These frames then compose a comprehensive racial ideology defined as, "racially based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify the racial status quo."

From these, I have identified five major frames that emerged from the interviews that are also evident in my survey sample. These include the Criminal Threat, Cultural/Values Deficiency, Intergenerational Inferiority, Reverse Discrimination/Racial Resentment/Group Conflict, and Old/Biological Racism frames. I define the Criminal Threat Frame as whites' perceptions of Latinos as inherently criminal and a threat to American ideals. Furthermore, whites expressed that imagery such as invasion, illegally crossing the border, and gangs and drug activity as being in Latinos' nature. These views are based on the perception that the Latino culture is inherently incapable of producing law-abiding people. For these respondents Latino law breaking begins with the decision to cross the border "illegally," and continues with their children's involvement with gangs, the drug trade, and violent crimes. Many of their comments centered on daily ways Latinos acted like they were above the law and thus could never conform to U.S. social or legal norms. The respondents also attached Latinos' predisposition for crime and violence as connected to the perception of Mexico as a "third world" county. Whites perceive Mexico as a society where lawlessness prevails and therefore expressed fear that Mexicans will not ever respect the laws of the United States.

The second frame, Cultural/Values Deficiency describes how the white respondents ascribe particular characteristics to Latinos that are mostly negative and culminating in a sense that their culture is inferior to that of white Americans. Here respondents tended to explain that Latinos lack of success and mobility was due to not valuing what white Americans value such as education, entrepreneurial skills, individualism, and thrift. They repeatedly juxtaposed perceived white values in contrast to perceived Mexican values. Even more damaging, whites frequently expressed they believed Mexicans had no desire or possibility to assimilate to the "American" culture. They often connected what they labeled as Mexican's bad behavior couched in not teaching their children any moral values. The white respondents also discussed at length that Mexicans' labor was exploited because they were willing to work for less and do not desire upward mobility. Thus, the reason they believed Mexicans were not doing well in the country had little to nothing to do with discrimination or poverty but rather their backwards culture and lack of desire for a better life. Respondents explained that the deficiencies in their culture decreased the standard of living in the United States because Mexicans are not self-sufficient and abuse public services, rather than contribute to the society.

The third frame, Intergenerational Inferiority takes the same perceptions above and applies them to second, third, and so on generations of Latinos. Some scholars argue that all first-generation immigrants face discrimination and challenges that by the second and third generations the barriers will erode. Yet, what was incredible in the data was how when the white respondents' were pressed if they were solely talking about "illegal" immigrants and or first-generation immigrants they regularly said no, because since they believed the first generation did not desire to assimilate and passed on the same deficient culture and values to their children, these negative characteristics and sentiments were ascribed to the group as whole regardless of

generational cohort. This is significant because most literature addressing concerns with Latino exclusion is limited to first generation. As the quotes will reflect, the respondents lumped all Latinos in one group and had negative sentiments about them regardless of immigration status and generation. This challenges the straight-line assimilation model because it is contingent upon the idea of positivism, in which the subsequent generation will do better, but if the group is assigned fixed characteristics not mutable through time, then the straight line assimilation model cannot account for the Mexican experience.

The fourth frame is Reverse Discrimination/Racial Resentment, which is addressed more with the African American literature. The respondents expressed their outrage as they felt that Mexicans got “everything on a silver platter.” This includes not having to pay taxes, free healthcare, welfare, and free education for their kids. They also specifically spoke about Affirmative Action and other policies they felt favored Latinos over whites despite the existence of Proposition 209 in California outlawing affirmative action. Moreover, the respondents explained that they were angered and appalled by having to “push 1” for English, and thus they argued Latinos had already gained more power than whites, who now felt like the minority. They expressed explicit feelings of resentment and anger towards a group they perceived did not have anything too meaningful to contribute and were a drain on the society.

The fifth frame, Old/Biological Racism, which only represented some respondents but where respondents expressed explicit racism towards Latinos and sought to naturalize the racial hierarchy in ways that suggested the current order was inherent, just, and unlikely to change. Many of these quotes were centered on how Latino culture was simply inferior to white American culture, particularly around ideas of relative intelligence. Consequently, whites also used very old ways of thinking about racial groups such as defining race as biological and describing Latino behavior as backwards. They explained their desires to decrease Latino immigrants and Latinos because they were invading and contaminating the WASP American culture. They also expressed great concern about what they perceived as the browning of America as the end of what is good about the United States. The respondents repeatedly constructed Latinos as a racial “other” who are undeserving and taking advantage of social services. When asked how they defined race, they would often conflate it with culture. And while in the academic world we draw distinctions between these two ways of thinking, this was not the case with the respondents. This is very important because the survey findings show that whites felt they had little to nothing in common with Latinos. The in-depth interviews revealed that while whites were using the language of culture, they conflated culture with race. This occurred because respondents often did not believe that the negative characteristics they ascribed to Latinos were mutable. Whites expressed that, in fact, groups were perhaps biologically different, and that Latinos specifically were not compatible with American culture and values; that they did not see that changing even with the second, third or fourth generation. This once again illustrates how whites construct, perceive, and treat Latinos more as a racial rather than ethnic group.

## **Criminal Threat**

As mentioned before, whites had a strong opinion on Latinos and crime. Throughout the interviews most of the respondents expressed Latinos and criminal behavior as synonymous. The quotes below exemplify how they perceived a criminal nature inherent in Latinos that manifested itself in many ways -- from illegally crossing the border, to second-generation street

and drug gangs, and daily infractions of the law. This culminated in their perceptions that Latinos were simply not capable of and or willing to abide by the laws. While respondents' explanations for Latinos being prone to violence and crime connects to the cultural deficiency frame, the specific connection between Latinos and crime was so pervasive that it established its own racial frame.

Furthermore, it was common for the respondents to connect crime with Latinos in very matter of fact ways -- as if it was just "natural." Respondents often cited statistics or information they had received through the media to rationalize their opinions. Below are typical responses when asked about the root cause of crime.

#### MATT

There is a percentage of the population that is in poverty. There is a percentage of the population that is Catholic, too – where they have a different belief system. But you know, also too, with Mexico itself, there is a lot of crime. It's just the way it is down there, just a lot of crime. It's sort of a way of life. Third world country.

#### BOBBY

People just don't have any heart, no morals, don't care about other people...Like, there was this thing in Santa Ana not too long ago, like Filipino and Mexicans were going at it and they were going crazy and didn't stop, got shot down in the street. Some people want to blame the white cop for being racist; I think the cop did the right thing. I would've shot the person, too. I think it's more history, you don't see white people as much going shooting. It's like more Mexicans are in gangs, more blacks are in gangs. You don't see as many white gangs. It's more primary, that's the way they do things. That's how they live their life; they don't know any other lifestyle.

Matt and Bobby explain that the real cause of crime is not related to poverty, as a lot of the literature suggests. These respondents construct Latinos as not having the morals and control to keep from committing crime. Respondents reject the premise that poverty causes people to engage in crime. Rather they argue that Latinos' willingness to break the law is inherently part of their culture and way of life; part of their "third world" mentality. Respondents differentiated between race and class by stating that crime is best explained by which group commits crime, not their class status. Furthermore, other respondents stated that Latinos are, "acting like primitive animals," as a way of arguing the inability to constrain oneself from criminal acts as sub-human and innate. Initially, Matt begins by explaining crime with poverty and religion, but he concludes that the real reasons Latinos are more involved with crime is that it is "a way of life" in Mexico, implying that it is inherent in their culture. Matt's response is consistent with a lot of other data that suggests that whites are worried California and the United States will become "third world." This fear also reflects how whites perceive Latinos to be inferior. Further, they rejected drug laws might potentially unfairly target people of color. On the contrary, respondents expressed that Latinos committed crime because they perceived the Latino culture to be lacking moral values and inherently deficient.

Furthermore, respondents like Bobby admit racial profiling and racist cops exist, yet they condone it because they perceive the real problem to be Latinos and their gang- and crime-infested communities that they fear will spread into their area. It is this mentality of reaching

“justice” through any means necessary that could explain why many whites in Arizona did not see the problem with racial profiling as part of SB 1070 (Murray 2010). These quotes are also useful in understanding that whites do perceive Latinos to be inherently criminal but most important how they rationalize such a racist view. Respondents also drew clear distinctions between crime committed by whites and non-whites.

#### CHRISSY

The neighborhoods they’ve grown up in—the same as blacks. It does seem like there’s more blacks and Hispanics that do steal and do the crime. Yeah I guess you would say more likely they would be more likely to do it than some white trash.

#### HOWARD

Look at the statistics. The numbers ...I guess in California, there’s more Hispanics...I mean Jesus, they run California. The Mexican mafia runs California; all the gangs. Those gangs run the prison population. That’s volume. It’s not Jeffrey Dahmer. There’s not John Wayne Gacy. There’s not Charles Manson; those are the select — that’s the people you talk about in the last 30 years. I mean, there’s a few guys like that, the bulk of it is your gang bangers; that’s your blacks and Mexicans. They make up the prison population; go to any prison. Go to a jail; see what you get. You got some white guys usually drunk, an occasional killing, but it’s blacks and Mexicans; it derives from the gang their gang activity where they’ve got to kill people, or drugs or what have you; robberies.

Like many of the respondents, Chrissy and Howard point to statistics often acquired through different media outlets to make erroneous conclusions. So while it is true that there are a disproportionate amount of minorities in prison, Chrissy, Howard and others deduce that most Latinos and minorities are prone to commit crimes, without taking into account institutional racism or inequities in the criminal justice system. Howard goes onto differentiate between white and Latino criminals, and treats whites as individuals while treating Latinos as a group inherently prone to crime. Howard points out that white serial killers are few and far between, in contrast to Black and Latinos who commit crimes and specifically violent crimes excessively. He argues it is the “gang culture,” and sheer numbers that makes Blacks and Latinos the culprits for crime and the prison population in the United States.

The quotes above also indicate how the presence of Blacks and Latinos in prisons leads to their perception that African Americans and Latinos are more “wired” to commit crimes. Chrissy also makes an important distinction between “white trash” and minorities, to impress that Black and Hispanics are more prone to crime when compared to poor whites. This again shows that whites don’t believe poverty to be the root of crime but rather racial group characteristics. Here respondent’s characterization of crime as perpetuated by Blacks and Latinos indicates that the characteristics assigned to these groups as innate. These narratives support Hattam’s (2007) associative chains that explain the difference between race and ethnicity. Thus, whites construct not only Blacks but Latinos as well as a racial group.

Below Mayra explains how not just crime, in general, but specifically violent crime is inherent in Latinos.

## MAYRA

You know what's interesting, I don't think white communities necessarily have gangs like MS13 or whatever that expression is. I had a nightmare about that last night, it was really scary. I had a nightmare about MS13 that they were beating my family up...I became so powerless and this was an inevitable thing and they were going to beat up my family and I had to agree to go along so that I wouldn't be killed. It was horrible...And the white kid's gang is probably not a violence gang as much as it's a drug gang.

Mayra's comments illustrate several points. One, she shows that the moderator's questions are not obscure but -- on the contrary -- respondents are aware and perceive Latinos as problems and specifically as criminals. Moreover, the fact that Mayra is dreaming of a Latino gang invading and harming her family reflects the conscious and subconscious fear of Latinos she has as well and her believe of Latinos being inherently criminal. She also believes that while there might be white gangs, Latino gangs are significantly more violent and inherent in Latino communities. Consequently, Mayra's limited knowledge about MS 13 shows that her concerns are connected to not just crime but assigning blame specifically to Latinos.

## SURVEY

There were a couple of questions regarding crime and Latinos on the Orange County Social Survey. For example, whites were asked, "Where would you rate Latinos in general on this scale -- where 1 means 'tends not to be involved with drugs and gangs,' and 7 means 'tends to be involved with drugs and gangs?'" Sixty-five percent of white respondents said Latinos tend to be involved with drugs and gangs. Not only is this a significant finding but also it most definitely supports the whites interviewed and how they constructed Latinos as inherently criminal. Furthermore, they were then asked, "Where would you rate whites in general on this scale, where 1 means 'tends not to be involved with drugs and gangs,' and 7 means 'tends to be involved with drugs and gangs?'" Eighty percent said that whites do not tend to be involved in drugs and gangs. By comparing how whites feel about crime in relationship to whites and crime in relationship to Latinos, we see how whites really believe this is a problem unique to Latinos -- and one that does not characterize most whites. The survey data is useful here because it gives us a sense of how a larger group of whites think of Latinos, specifically around issues of crime and illegality.

As mentioned above, residents felt that Latinos were never capable of abiding the law, as if their first instinct was in fact to break their law. Respondents believed that since most Mexicans cross the border illegally they have no respect for the law, and that then carries on not only through gang and drug activity, but daily activity. For example, they would point out that Mexicans routinely stole shopping carts, threw garbage on the streets, and packed too many people in a car. Respondents connected all these illegal practices big and small to construct the criminal threat frame. Therefore, in terms of illegality as many respondents described above, they felt that a large portion of the Mexican population is illegal. Respondents were then asked, "Where would you rate Mexican immigrants in general on this scale, where 1 means 'tend to be here legally,' and 7 means 'tend to be here illegally?'" Fifty five percent of the white respondents said Mexican immigrants tend to be here illegally. Thus, the survey dovetails well with the interview in that white respondents perceive Latinos to have crossed the border illegally and, and continue to break the laws. This is consistent with the Latino Threat Narrative is a

concept (Chavez 2008; Huntington 2004) where whites perceive Latinos to be inherent criminals and a threat to U.S. society. It is this threat of an inferior group “taking over” the United States that is exhibited by respondents in the next racial frame.

### **Cultural/Values Deficiency**

This frame exposed how respondents described Mexicans’ deficiencies as a way to explain why they do not reach parity with whites. Most of the respondents assigned particularly negative characteristics to Mexicans in very derogatory and permanent ways. The interviewees’ responses illustrate how they specifically blame deficient values within the Mexican culture that preclude their equal incorporation into the larger society. The most overwhelming explanation for Mexican’s lack of upward mobility was that they did not value education. Many respondents believed Mexicans continuous neglect of education explained why Mexicans were simply less intelligent. Some other characteristics respondents assigned as culturally negative included lack of cleanliness often, over population, basic lack of morals, lack of motivation -- which they perceived culminated in the defiance to assimilate to the “American” culture. They expressed the reason being that their culture was “third world,” and “backward,” and thus threatened to contaminate the United States.

#### MEL

I think it might be a lack of motivation from their upbringing. You know, going back to my Father... he chose to do everything on his own. He left his family and left things to do what he wanted to do to go to medical school... So I think that his upbringing, But I think that the values of living in the Mexican culture, living in Mexico, being Hispanic or Latino or whatever, I think that a lot has to do with their upbringing and who their mentors are at the time.

#### NICOLE

And then I don't want this country to turn into a third-world country... But that would be a scary thing if we turned into like India or Mexico or whatever where the government is not you know keeping rules and regulations. I don't want to turn into Mexico where they have the banditos that take you to the boonies in the night and steal everything from you. I don't want it like that.

The quotes above reveal that the respondents believe that Mexicans come from a country with inferior values and practices as compared to the United States and that they then reproduce this set of values and practices in the United States and thus maintain a low status. The respondents believed that since Mexicans do not aspire to be more than menial labor jobs and suggest that they are happy with minimum wage which often means living below the poverty line. And in effect, whites are saying that Mexicans choose to be poor and stay in lower wage jobs. Interestingly, Mel like other respondents would interchangeably use Mexican, Hispanic, Latino, as to characterize them all and not take into account any heterogeneity. Mel, like others, also compared their immigrant histories in stark contrast to Mexicans, never taking into account white privilege. Furthermore, they explained that being “accustomed” to these types of jobs they

further were resistant to learning to speak English and assimilating to U.S. culture. This was what prevented Mexicans from doing well. Similarly, Nicole expressed fear about the United States turning into to a “third world,” with a culture inferior to American culture. While, the respondents had general negative responses to Mexicans being from a “third world,” they also addressed specific cultural practices that they believed hindered Mexicans from being upwardly mobile and on par with whites. I will begin with the most salient perception of Latinos as not valuing education.

#### WILBUR

Most of the Hispanic families, a lot of them don't have not in the past, have instituted their children to go to school; college; and finish school. They have not even put forth and they don't make them do their homework; they don't make them stay in school... And I don't see very many Hispanic families going to the school and accepting responsibility.

#### MARK

The biggest problem is education— there's no emphasis on education. And they don't want to learn; that's the biggest problem. I think no matter how much money and schools and everything thrown at them, they really don't want to learn. Hispanics, the blacks they don't really want — I think that there's some sort of — they don't want to be like a white person.

The respondents overwhelmingly expressed the belief that Mexican culture -- and therefore Mexicans -- did not value education. They believed that this contributed to their lack of upward mobility. They also routinely declared that Mexicans did not have a desire to improve themselves even with all the opportunities in the United States. Both Mark and Wilbur make direct comparisons between whites and Mexicans and draw distinct conclusions about each groups' tendencies around education. Similarly, respondents often would ascribe positive characteristics to white Americans and then would diametrically oppose Mexican characteristics indicating that they did not perceive Mexicans as Americans and in doing so drew boundaries of whiteness and racialized Mexicans. Respondents were often also incoherent and inconsistent. For example, respondents also employed contradicting stereotypes. For example, Mexicans were perceived to be hardworking but also lazy. Daniel and others explained why they had these perceptions.

#### DANIEL

Yes. I would say they do have a hard work ethic. But, they do not have a drive to excel; and that's a massive generalization, because there are individuals that are amazing individuals. I have some very close friends that are Hispanic, and they're so driven it's crazy; but I would say 99 — I don't even know the numbers, but I would say the majority of people that come from Mexico, they're here because the dollar value exceeds the peso, so they can do a very little amount of labor, and bring back a lot more income to their family.

The respondents themselves explain how they believe Mexicans to be hard working when it comes to menial and hard labor, but when it comes to bettering themselves and their station in

life, they simply lacked the motivation and desire to do so. What seems to be a positive attribution of hard working takes a negative turn once whites reveal “they do not have a drive to excel” and thus do not aspire for management positions or to climb the social ladder. Thus, hard work in low-wage, low-status jobs is not sufficient and actually counter-productive if not coupled with the American way of success that centers on profit and mobility. Moreover, other respondents characterized Mexican culture as “simple” and thus not astute and intelligent as the American culture. They often labeled Mexican behavior as un-American because Mexican cultural values did not measure up to American values. Thus, with the perception Mexicans did not value education and lack motivation, respondents began to paint a bleak picture of Mexicans living in the United States. They found the Mexican culture culpable as the real reason Mexicans were not successful here. Respondents addressed that they feared that Mexican immigrants and Mexicans in general were not acculturating to the white American culture like immigrants past. These fears were further heightened by their “concerns” regarding Mexican fertility as we see from the upcoming quotes.

#### PAUL

It doesn't help the fact that there's a million of them because they breed like rabbits, because the catholic church tells them don't practice birth control. They screw themselves. They shoot themselves in the foot...They're being a Caucasian person myself, and looking at the Latinos, there's a big difference. Most of the white people kind of — I don't want to say we're smarter than anybody else being a Caucasian, but when you keep breeding and having kids and you can't afford them, you breed yourself into poverty. I'm a white person; and I can't afford to have kids. I pay for all my bills and all that stuff like that, and you step up to the plate here; the Latinos, they just keep breeding, and breeding.

Respondents have very strong feelings about how they perceived a major problem within the Mexican culture about having too many kids and overpopulating the United States. This troubled them for many reasons. They felt that this was evidence Mexicans were not able to keep up with modern changes, which they perceived meant it was best to have less kids. Furthermore, they frequently talked about how they could not understand that if they were so poor they had so many children, and thus often blamed their poverty on their decision to have, in the respondent's opinion, too many kids. A very common line of thinking that followed this logic held that because Mexicans do not value education and thus are not intelligent, that they make horrible decisions such as having too many children and staying in low-paying jobs. They believed that Mexicans “shoot themselves in the foot,” meaning the respondents shifted the blame from institutions and reception to the actual behavior of the Mexicans. Below respondents expressed how Mexicans were resistant to becoming American, specifically around issues of language and common social practices.

#### ALICE

Well, because first of all, if they're not as educated; it comes from education. If they don't have a proper education, and they don't speak the language very well, how do you expect them to get a good job? And if they rebel of not knowing the language, which some of them do, they're not doing themselves a favor by not learning the language. The language of this country is English...

## SIMON

When you fly a flag from another country and pledge allegiance to another country, yet take the resources of that country you go to, it will deplete that country's nationalism; it will deplete that country's way of life...if you want to be a Mexican from Mexico, you must stay in Mexico is what I believe; and that's the only way any country works. If you either become part of a society, or stay in the one that you're part of. Don't fly a Mexican flag; don't sing Hispanic songs on the Fourth of July openly on the beaches in Spanish.

Respondents not only had opinions on what they felt about Mexicans but what should be done. They often used words like "rebel" and "resilient" when explaining how they felt Mexican did not assimilate to WASP culture. Furthermore, they blamed their "bad" English and unwillingness to change as to why they are unable to get "good jobs." Respondents repeatedly talked about how the United States made it too easy for them to come into the country in the first place and then made it easy to stay because, everything was in Spanish; understanding English and other things were not demanded of them. Many respondents like Simon also were appalled by how Mexicans defied American culture and believed that their allegiance was with Mexico not the United States. It was these types of perceptions -- that Latinos were blatantly against acculturation -- that whites pointed out as good reason to pass English Only laws, and other laws like it to force Mexicans to assimilate.

It is important to note that many of the respondents completely agreed with Samuel Huntington's (2004) Hispanic Challenge where he argues that Hispanics are significantly different from European immigrants because Latinos are unwilling and unable to assimilate to WASP culture. I would argue that this is a more wide-range perception and is accounted for in the literature. Respondents' opinions of Mexicans being un-American were also couched under other problems they perceived as deficient cultural values.

## SURVEY

The survey also captured sentiments that paralleled the cultural deficiency frame. For instance, when whites were asked, "Where would you rate whites in general on this scale, where 1 means 'prefer to be self-supporting' and 7 means 'prefer to be on welfare'," 75% responded that whites do not prefer to be on welfare. However, when asked, "Where would you rate Latinos in general on this scale, where 1 means 'prefer to be self-supporting' and 7 means 'prefer to be on welfare'," 40% of the same respondent said Latinos prefer to be on welfare. Thus, whites believe Latinos are a drain and only come to the United States to take advantage of welfare. Another example, is that over 50% of whites agreed with the statement, "It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Latinos would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites." Furthermore, whites overwhelmingly also disagreed (82%) when asked if, "Latinos share many basic values and goals with non-Latinos." Similarly, when whites were asked, "Would you say whites have a lot in common, some in common, little in common, or nothing at all in common with Latinos," again whites overwhelming (70%) stated that whites had little or nothing at all in common with Latinos. These two responses suggest that whites do not see Latinos assimilating to the "American" culture and that they really perceive this growing

group to be different, problematic, and inferior. Furthermore, the survey also shows that whites have negative views not only of “illegal” Mexican immigrants, or legal Mexican immigrants, but the entire Latino population. All of the questions above indicate that the white respondents made clear distinctions between whites and Latinos and that those differences were fundamentally about perceiving them as inferior to whites.

### **Intergenerational Inferiority**

Many respondents even in the section before expressed explicitly that they felt Latino -- not just Latino immigrants' -- culture to be deficient, and that Latinos had no desire to assimilate. In many ways the intergenerational inferiority frame is one of the most significant in my data as it poignantly challenges one of the main contentions of the classical assimilation model. That model stipulates that most immigrants will face barriers upon their arrival -- mostly based on learning a new language and culture -- but that the subsequent generations will do better and will become and be accepted as Americans. From the quotes that follow as well as some of the quotes from above, we can see that whites rarely differentiate between “illegal” and legal status, as well as first second and generations beyond. Furthermore, they are explicit in their belief that generations do not make a difference in part because Mexicans hold on to their language culture and are defiant in terms of assimilating. Contrastingly, they claim that European immigrants abided by the rules, learned to speak English and assimilated into American culture, and never problematize the issue of white privilege. Nevertheless, these quotes indicate that the way they see Latinos is more aligned with a racial group, 1) because it does not coincide with the European immigrant experience, and 2) because they more closely situate the Latino experience with the Black experience. Below, Jerry and Tom explain “cultural differences,” and also apply them to subsequent generations.

#### **TOM**

Mexicans tend to be simpler; happy with less; less demanding; more accepting of poverty. Californians, and probably Americans generally, have a huge higher expectation of things in life; and expectations of government. And Mexicans like to naturally party. They're a happier lighter life style and a happier happy going outlook on life.

Moderator: And do you think that this is true of maybe second and third generation Hispanics in California as well?

Respondent: Yes. They have their big family values of being family-oriented; more than typical American.

#### **JERRY**

I think it's, again, stems from family values for the most part. You can get into the illegal immigration family makeup, and if you can't break out of that, that mentality and that poverty and you have a broken family where you don't have a father or a mother, it's the, I call it K through 12. Those children become a product of their environment, and without a father, or maybe an addictive dad or mother, broken family, there's problems. And now those problems breed other problems, and the kids turn into that culture, and if they're not in a gang, guess what, they're going to get beaten. So that's what's happened.

Tom believes, “Mexicans tend to be simpler; happy with less; less demanding; more accepting of poverty,” and also states that this is the case with the second and third generation as well. Thus these sentiments culminate in an understanding that these respondents believed Mexicans, regardless of generation, continue to reproduce a culture that is distinct from white America and inferior. Jerry, like most respondents, attributed lack of success to the subsequent generations because they were exposed to the deficient culture of their parents and then turned to gangs, crime, and drugs. Furthermore, Jerry’s response echoes the “culture of poverty” argument, in that he assumes that environment is endemic and leads to generations of poverty with no possibility for advancement. This also coincides with remarks made below which again blame Latinos for their lack of upward mobility, and assume that Latino culture holds all Latinos back - regardless of generation.

#### HOLLY

I think we should shut it completely right now and our country should work on its issues. Unless there is an absolute reason. We should make it so difficult for a while for anyone to get in here. Because we’re overloaded. We’re falling apart. I don’t think it has anything to do with a specific area, but that’s the most predominate amount of people are coming from there. So should we do something about it? Yeah we should’ve done something about it 10 years ago, 20 years ago. The ones that are sitting on welfare doing nothing, make them go to work, or send them where their from. I don’t care if they’ve been here for 3 generations. Time America cleans itself up. From the rest of us that have worked and worked and not got welfare.

#### DANIEL

They don’t care about America; and I find it kind of sad; where you do have a second, third generation, Hispanic family, where their son is trying to go to school, and then he gets picked on and stuff like that, because he’s not joining the gang or causing trouble. So there is kind of a catch 22 where they do try and better themselves. Their own culture holds them back, which is sad, but they need to step up and control that ten percent that’s ruining it for them. And then you get — the fifth generation Hispanics that are still on welfare and food stamps, and they just don’t want to better themselves. There’s no reason for that either.

Here, like many other respondents, Holly and Daniel, believed that part of the “threat” Mexicans pose to American society is due to welfare drain. Holly is against further immigration, specifically from Latin America, since she perceives immigrants from that area to be a problem. But she goes further when she states, “The ones that are sitting on welfare doing nothing, make them go to work, or send them where they’re from. I don’t care if they’ve been here for 3 generations. Time America cleans itself up.” It is clear here that she does not solely take issue with “illegal” immigrants because she finds the group as a whole problematic. She believes that among the second and third generation Latinos, like Molly states, “that’s were you find the laziness,” and thus “they just go and apply for food stamps just because they’re Hispanic they’ll get it.” Daniel echoes this sentiment when he states, “And then you get the fifth generation Hispanics that are still on welfare and food stamps,” Daniel goes on to explain that, while “ a lot of them are good people and they do work hard,” he still quickly concludes, “Of course most of

the money they work hard for, they send out for the country, but.. But I think that a lot of them really do pose a threat.” The next quotes are respondents finding situating Latinos similarly to Blacks as a racialized minority.

#### MARK

And that’s like the whole thing that I think the Hispanics and the blacks to some degree too; they don’t have that desire to get away from what their grandparents and then their parents and then them; and I think they depend on the government to do a little bit for them which I don’t believe in. Go get a job; work. Someone else can do it, you can do it too; because I don’t believe that by birth, you don’t have the mental capacity to do it; you don’t have — you may not have the parenting; you may not have the social pressures and responsibility to succeed, but I don’t want to say it’s your own race’s fault, because but kind of it is. So there’s definitely cultural differences between races. ..Actually, I think Hispanics are harder working. I just think that going back through generations, the Hispanic culture there hasn’t been a whole lot of thing of being successful and going to school and being better than the last generation.

#### WILBUR

Well, take for example, immigrants that migrate to the country right now, first generation are some of the hardest workers for the least amount of money, and will just about do anything. And they’ll live in horrible conditions, just to be here in America. Second and third generations when you start becoming gang infested, drug ridden, and when the gangs take over, that really jeopardizes the American way of life. So there’s two different ways of looking at it. You can both be Hispanic, but one could be hard working person paying their taxes; and the other person is out gang banging.

Mark ascribes many negative stereotypes of Latinos and further aims to defend them. First, he admits that, “cultural differences between races” exist, and that Black and Latinos are similar in having deficient cultural values, and thus blames them for their poverty and misfortunes. Furthermore, in responding to the next question, he declares that Hispanics have not cared to improve themselves by, “going to school and being better than the last generation.” Again Mark, like most respondents, did perceive Hispanics to be hard working, but that for subsequent generations this did not suffice. Furthermore, he expressed a sense that the subsequent generations not only inherited the value-deficient culture but they were destined to repeat it, thus pronouncing Latinos with a fatalistic outcome. Although he initially states, “I don’t want to say it’s your own race’s fault,” he basically concludes, “but kind of it is.” As it is with Blacks.

Wilbur, like most respondents, attributed lack of success in subsequent generations to their being exposed to the deficient culture of their parents and then turned to gangs, crime and drugs. Furthermore, Jerry’s response echoes the “culture of poverty” argument, in that he assumes the “illegal immigrant family make-up,” inevitably leads to poverty and crime. Jerry, like many others, frequently assumes most Latinos are illegal and while he understands that the second-generation children are U.S. citizens, he creates other narratives to further demonize them. Wilbur’s states, “Second and third generations when you started becoming gang infested, drug ridden, and when the gangs take over, that really jeopardizes the American way of life.” This is an example of how respondents assigned characterizations to the Latino group as a whole, regardless of immigrant status and generation. Wilbur, like many respondents, talked about a

downward assimilation towards a fate where the subsequent generations are plagued by crime and gangs fits what they perceive to align itself with Black urban ghettos and hence barrios for Latinos. In other words, the white respondents categorically situated Black and Latinos as racially problematic.

In many ways this last quote sums up how many of the respondents employed multiple racial stereotypes across generations.

#### CARL

There's no particular reason to have on cable television, something like 10 or 12 (and there are by the way) Hispanic TV stations so that people can continue to listen to Hispanic soap operas and all kinds of other things, and expose their kids to it, and not expose their kids to English. And then the kids grow up and they can't speak English. And they end up with English as a 2nd language drop out of school and that kind of thing. And then they say 'oh woe is me. I'm being discriminated against' —bullshit—learn English. My father was told by his father... Polish was my father's 1st language. He was told point blank by his father, you're going to go to school next year, you need to learn English. ..And the Hispanics have been... They're going to take over California a birth at a time. So they come in and illegals come in and they sneak across the border, have their kids, call paramedics when the baby's crowning, and paramedics come, and guess what? You've got witnesses. That kid was born in the United States. Take the illegal mom to the hospital with the citizen baby, and guess what? You can't deport the mom. And there are places in Santa Ana that are set up for that. You've got a whole bunch... And by the way, they don't assimilate. Obviously there's no desire to assimilate.

Carl here shows us that the assimilation model is not just an academic tool/theory, but a narrative entrenched in American culture and how many in the United States come to understand society and people. Like many respondents, Carl makes a case -- similar to Huntington (2004) -- that Mexicans have "no desire to assimilate," because, "the kids grow up and can't speak English," and furthermore, "they are going take over California a birth at a time." Carl reflects many of the anxieties whites have about Mexicans and in the end he blames Mexicans. He does this by stating "what this country was made up," which many erroneously equate with European immigrants. He does this when he contrasts the experience of his Polish immigrant grandparents, who "did everything right," by learning the language and assimilating to the WASP culture. Carl is an educated person, and a politically influential player in Orange County who is making an argument to explain differences between whites and Mexicans across generations. The picture Carl paints of Latinos not assimilating and "taking over" echoes Huntington's (2004) characterization of them as a threat to American values.

From the quotes above we can gather than the negative characteristics that whites assign to Mexicans are permanent and explicitly last through generations. Again this challenges the traditional assimilation model because it assumes positivism, in which the subsequent generations will be accepted and integrated more. While there is data out there that emphasize outcomes and specific racial disparities by accounting for how whites think of Mexicans, we begin to see part of the problem is that whites do not differentiate Latinos by generation. Instead, they lump them all together. This has lasting and deep implications because unlike other

immigrant groups -- in particular European immigrants -- Latinos are not seen as being able to or desiring to assimilate.

The intergenerational inferiority frame teases out and provides evidence of Hattam's (2007) associative chain works in the sense that the characteristics being assigned to Mexicans follow under the racial category and that these assignments are made permanently onto Mexicans.

## SURVEY

Again, as mentioned in the last racial frame, most questions posed to whites were about Latinos in general, not just immigrants or illegal immigrants. Thus, when whites were asked, "Where would you rate Latinos in general on this scale, where 1 means 'tends to speak English well' and 7 means 'tends to speak English poorly,'" 44% of whites responded that they felt Latinos speak English poorly. This response indicates that whites perceive this group to grapple with English proficiency. As whites explained in the interviews, they interpreted this lack of English proficiency to a lack of desire to assimilate. Moreover, this also reflected how whites believed Latinos did not value education. Not only did the respondents on the survey find English proficiency among Latinos problematic, but when asked, "Latino Students who do not speak English drain resources from white children in schools," 45% agreed. This finding is important because it shows whites blame Latinos for "draining resources," this narrative is similar to Latinos not paying taxes, because again whites perceive Latinos not to be paying their way and getting away with putting a strain on public services.

These survey results once again coincide with Huntington's (2004) Hispanic Challenge as perceiving Latinos as permanently a threat. This again brings in the question of whether Latinos are perceived as a racial or ethnic group. The classic assimilation model posits that an ethnic group will, by the third generation, be equally incorporated into the larger society. Yet, when whites were asked, "I want to know how you would categorize Mexican Americans. Do you feel that Mexicans are more like African Americans or more like Irish- or Italian-Americans? The white respondents basically split their responses with 46% saying "more like African Americans" and 46% saying neither. This is consistent with many of the in-depth interviews where whites are making a distinction between white and non-white, with Latinos being perceived as non-white.who Black and Latinos. The others may not see Latinos as similar to Blacks, but they also do not see them as similar to past immigrants and this is also consistent with what many respondents expressed as Latinos not acculturating like past immigrants and being more of a problem.

### **Reverse Discrimination/Racial Resentment**

Respondents felt that Mexicans had ample opportunities and privileges because as a minority they were awarded special programs, treatment, services, and money. Moreover, whites frequently perceived Mexicans to have it "easy," because there are so many services they can access to assist them. The respondents themselves felt like the "minority," and racially resented Latinos for all their unearned success. Respondents also felt that Mexicans were not deserving of the resources of jobs "handed" to them since they did not feel they earned them.

Many of the respondents spoke about how they characterized the celebration of Latino events as reverse discrimination because they did not believe whites were allowed to do the same. What is missing from their “analysis” is how they ignore issue of whiteness and white privilege. In other words, while they were very critical of a world they perceived as favoring Mexicans and making it to easy for them, they rarely could see how being whiteness afforded them many privileges including social, economic, and political power.

#### LOLA

If I needed help, if all of a sudden I didn't have money or tried to apply for any kind of government help, they would kind of just laugh at me and go, “Your life can't be that bad.” I'm kind of screwed. But I definitely think that we should be covered in that, too. We don't really have any – I mean, yes, we do have rights, but we don't have rights specific for us. You know, Hispanics, Blacks, Asians have rights. They are kind of more specific for them where they can go. We don't have any of that. Or another thing which would probably never ever happen, but they should just get rid of the whole racial set programs altogether and just make them for people.

#### HOLLY

We give you all this happiness, but then you screw up. Can we put the little caveat in there that says if you screw up in the 1st 7 years then you get sent back and you never get to come back here? Can't do that. That's discriminative. You can have the Essence awards on TV, and you can have the Hispanic awards on TV. Can you imagine having the Caucasian awards? So who's really discriminated? I want to know. I say the white person is discriminated more than anybody else, because we can't have the Caucasian anything, now can we? My family came here; they weren't allowed to speak Italian. You were to speak English. So if you're Hispanic and you come to our country, glory be, you get it all on a silver platter. But if you come from another country, it's not so.

#### SIMON

Yet, corporations went to a huge — I have very little chance of being hired; an older white male, very little chance of being hired at a large conglomerate. White women have been allowed, but minorities a hundred percent better chance of getting hired by a company.

Lola, Holly, and Simon expressed that not only were Latinos getting unfair advantages but that it rose to the level of discriminating against whites. These sentiments reflect that respondents were aware of what they felt were pervasive programs in education, housing, and hiring that allowed Mexicans to get an unfair advantage because -- as Lola expressed -- the government only provides minorities with services and resources. Holly, like other respondents, pointed to specific examples they felt indicated reverse discrimination in terms of “Hispanic Awards.” They indicated they felt this was divisive and that if whites had similar events to promote their race it would be seen as racist. Holly goes on to, as many respondents did at some point in their

interview, starkly contrast the European immigrant experience with Mexicans, i.e., European immigrants worked hard and Mexicans were given “hand outs.” Respondents felt that this violated the spirit of American culture, and that made them very angry and resentful.

Thus, many respondents labeled minorities to be the “real” racists, since they participate in these events. Simon, like other respondents, also addressed reverse discrimination when it came specifically for college and job opportunities. Simon believes that as white man he would not have the same chances to get a corporate job versus a minority and for him that simply adds up to reverse discrimination. Similarly the quotes below indicate respondents agree with Simon, Holly, and Lola -- but also begin to racially resent Latinos.

#### MARK

In California, people want us to change the signs so they’re bilingual signs; I don’t think so. I mean, if you can’t speak the language, get the hell out. Is when I call somewhere in the United States, and it has — the answering machine has the gull to ask me; for English press one. It should default to English. And it should say, for Spanish press one. It should automatically scroll through in English. Like — we’re in America; that’s the language right? So that’s a little pet peeve of mine.

#### TODD

I definitely believe that there is opportunity and there is probably more opportunity for a white person in America. But then you think about it – I don’t know. I think things are changing over to someone who is Hispanic has more of an ability to take advantage of government programs that are in place for them. It’s a matter of taking action personally to do it. I know that it was more difficult for me to get financial aid than someone – a friend that was Hispanic, because he checked Hispanic and I checked Caucasian. Well I don’t – you know, I’m white, so I can’t get the benefits that he does.

#### MAYRA

I get really indignant, very indignant on how many times are we going to play the race card? How many times are we going to say you haven’t had the same opportunities that I have had? I know I’m probably contradicting myself, but I get very – I feel like - my friends and I say, “Well, when are we going to start the white club?” I don’t mean that we’re going to, but it’s kind of like they have a lot of affirmative action programs. I even felt like this when I was accepted into college...Have you seen any Anglo-American scholarships? I feel – I’ve often heard it said like – the biggest minority right now are the white men.

Mark cites specific programs such as bilingual services, award shows, and amnesty that they construct as “freebies” given to --not earned by -- Mexicans, which they feel directly negatively affects them. Todd and many others expressed their opinions couched in American principles such as individualism. Todd did not perceive-d racial disparities as inequality because there is opportunity in America and, “It’s a matter of taking action personally.” And, while he makes the claim initially that whites have more opportunity in America, upon further consideration he concludes that, “I am white, so I can’t get the benefits he does.” In the end Todd, like the rest, makes general arguments about groups, and implicitly and explicitly marking racial differences.

Furthermore, Mayra spoke about how scholarship and other resources were only for

minorities and while only jokingly she talked about a “white club,” this reflects racial resentment, fears, and sentiments other respondents expressed. Moreover, while Mayra was asked about discrimination and she initially said, “I really don’t know,” she went back and concluded that, “it’s just an excuse.” Thus respondents very much spoke in terms of whites versus Mexicans, constructing differences, and expressing anger toward Mexicans who they felt “pulled the race card.” Respondents like Jerry and Bobby also expressed that because Latinos “abused “ welfare, they ended up draining the system. Both were very upset that Latinos did not contribute to society.

#### JERRY

What bothers me is the ones that continue on into criminal activities and tap into these social and welfare programs, because it drains the systems. That’s why there are so many budgets upside down right now. L.A. County and city of L.A. right now are in deep trouble. They can’t support it. You get politicians like Loretta Sanchez that support that, bring them on. There’s too many liberal radicals that are in California congress right now. A lot of them are Hispanic, in my opinion, are racist, that support immigration amnesty. Yes. And so they breed their own constituents that vote for them, in my opinion.

#### BOBBY

Race is basically what your ethnicity is, what your background is, what your family is. You can’t change it; you take it for what it is. I think everyone wants to throw out the race card besides white people. Everyone Mexicans \*, or with black people, \*, and it’s like, I think they shouldn’t complain too much, and they want to throw out the race card for every little thing they could get. And you look at it, and half the jobs you have to be bilingual for now, which I don’t really agree with. Or it’s like people are \* diverse jobs, equal opportunities. I think a lot of people have to speak Spanish, because we’re in a minority, we’re not the \* race; it’s always lower income who are on welfare, it’s, if you’re on welfare, you’re going to see white people have probably the lowest percentage. We don’t get any breaks. I get annoyed by that. People want to pull out the race card and be like, you’re white; you don’t understand.

Jerry expressed that in actuality it is Mexicans who are racist and do not like whites. Many respondents talked about how the reason Mexicans self-segregated and did not assimilate was because they believed they had this deep-seated hate towards whites. These respondents also make it clear they are resentful of having to see Mexicans “celebrating their race,” and that many Hispanic politicians only represented the rights and interests of Latinos. This suggests that there are not only racial differences but that whites and Mexicans have different interests. Furthermore, these quotes reflected a common theme of blaming Mexicans for the race relations’ problems instead of being equally critical of the role of whites in discrimination.

Bobby further reflects how he narrative of the reverse discrimination/racial resentment was another place where whites would talk about Blacks and Latinos as similar, since they believed these affirmative action-like programs benefited Blacks and Latinos at the cost of whites. Respondents pegged Latinos and Blacks as problematic, complainers, and takers -- and simply a drain on the society. Not only did anger come out with the respondents but also their

desire to not support these programs, welfare benefits, and other similar public services whites perceived as unfair advantages to Latinos and disadvantages to whites.

## SURVEY

The sentiments above were echoed in the survey when whites were asked if they agreed with the statement, “Generations of discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Latinos to work their way out of the lower class,” 57% disagreed. Similarly when asked, “There has been a lot of controversy over immigrants and Latinos, including people protesting illegal immigrants and day laborers. Do you think these protests happen because these protesters are prejudiced against Latinos,” 76% said “no” Again whites do not see themselves as the perpetrators or that the reasons Latinos are not doing well has anything to do with discrimination. The narratives whites are working with are about how this particular group is not capable of abiding by the rules, taking on “American values,” and thus they resent programs such as affirmative action which they see as unfair, undeserved, and breaking with American values. This can further be seen when 47% of whites agreed that “Latinos in schools drain resources from American children.” Equally 43% agreed that, “Giving rights to Latinos tends to hurt whites,” and 42% also agreed that, “Latinos have been getting ahead at the expense of non-Latinos.” These results show that whites think of resources as being part of a zero-sum game, and that Latinos are not only draining the system but at a cost to whites. This was very much reflected in the interviews when whites spoke at length about Latinos not paying their fair share, not paying taxes, being a burden on public services that included free healthcare and free schooling for their children, and also abusing welfare. Whites used the narrative of resentment and reverse discrimination to describe Latinos taking advantage of the system and programs aimed solely at them and “punishing” whites. Whites expressed that Latinos were handed everything on a silver platter without paying for it.

## **Old/Biological Racism**

I had not anticipated this frame, particularly in a “post-racial” society. While this was the least frequented frame it was alarming how what people said resembled language used by colonizers and what can be characterized as old or explicit racism. When the respondents were asked to define race -- for the most part -- they described natural and genetic differences among the races, regularly constructing Mexicans as a race onto themselves, separate from whites, and very similar to Blacks. It was clear that these respondents still thought about race in old ways and by constructing Mexicans as an inferior race it was easy for them to not sympathize with them and label them un-American. Below are a slew of quotes that capture overt expressions of an unambiguous construction of a racial ideology that it specifically aimed at Mexicans. Many comments centered on genetic difference and in particular differentiating between whites and Mexicans in inherent ways where respondents concluded Mexicans are or are perceived to be inferior. Their views were not couched in colorblind frames and as the quotes below indicated conflated culture with biological and inherent characteristics.

#### MAYRA

You know, I used to think why do – I used to say to myself why are these slurs – you know, why do some cultures have certain sort of associations with them. Why is it perceived sometimes like the Mexican people are – I don't even know what they are perceived as, because I think they are very hard-working. I don't think of them as lazy. I used to think that it was just people being mean, hanging onto prejudice ideas that they can't shake off. As I get older and I am sort of in the world more, I see there are some truths behind some of the labels, if that makes any sense.

#### TRACY

I think that they think that they're culturally inferior. I think most whites think that Hispanics are culturally inferior. I think they see only the bad parts of the Hispanic culture; I think that's really all they see, and therefore, it makes them feel better to see somebody else in a lower position. And knowing a Mexican is okay, so long as that Mexican is cleaning your house. Not necessarily that they would want to be friends with somebody of that ethnic background.

#### KADEN

I think it's a race element. But I think, when you look at it, the immigration problem, like I said before, it's an illegal problem. It just so happens that they're Mexican, so it's one of those things where they look at people and they're different, they have a different culture, and they're less than, they're not at their social status, so they see them as inferior, so they're going to look at them and say they're a problem in society. Because I think, typically, if they're not your kind, they don't look like you, they speak differently, they don't have your social status, they don't hang out in your social circles, and I think collectively and it's been the history that we look down at Hispanics. When I say "we," I would say northern Europeans, whites, non-Hispanics.

In some ways these quotes are self-revealing and self-evident, yet it is important to unpack them. One important theme that runs through these quotes is how the respondents construct Mexicans as inferior. Thus, it is important to notate the continuity in how whites continue to perceive Mexicans. This continuity can be traced to the colonial conquest of the Americas, Manifest Destiny, the war against Mexico, and the construction of illegitimate citizens in the US. These quotes indicate that little has changed in terms of the stereotypes and assumptions made about Mexicans. As Mayra points out she is aware of the limitations of stereotypes nonetheless, she truly believes in them. And, because she has had more contact with the world, she states, "I see there are some truths behind some of the labels." Mayra is directly admitting that the some negative generalizations and labels on Mexicans are, in fact, true. Respondents frequently were candid about how they felt about different races and they did not hide the fact that, as Tracy states, "I think that they think that they're culturally inferior. I think most whites think that Hispanics are culturally inferior." Moreover, these respondents ascribed a biological sense of race even when they talked about culture because they expressed characteristics they assigned to the different races as inherent and permanent. Furthermore, while race is a social construction these respondents articulated a clear sense of racial difference and a racial hierarchy.

Like many respondents, Kaden demarcated a strong line between whites and Hispanics reflected when he states, “Because I think, typically, if they’re not your kind, they don’t look like you, they speak differently, they don’t have your social status, they don’t hang out in your social circles, and I think collectively and it’s been the history that we look down at Hispanics. When I say ‘we,’ I would say northern Europeans, whites, non-Hispanics.” Kaden’s response was also typical of other respondents who would begin by talking about societal problems in terms of illegal migrants, but would then rest on issues of -- as he calls it -- a “race element.” This reinforces how whites really take issue with the entire Latino group -- not solely because of “illegal” migration but because of the perceived racial differences that lead whites to believe this group is inferior. In terms of respondents couching Mexicans with an old racist view, the next set of quotes reveals whites’ views of Mexicans intelligence.

#### GARY

Yes, I think they are slower; I think they’re not as smart as we are, except for some. And they show themselves and we grab onto them and we put them in places of authority. Yes, I think they’re slower; I think they...I think that all the southern races as it’s been proven through history, Mark Twain wrote about it, Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote about it. All the southern people are stupider; but all the southern races, they’re not driven to survive. See, they’re not faced with the winter; with the winter that will kill you. So therefore, the Mexicans and from what I’ve been shown by the Mexicans are of lesser intelligence I believe.

#### TREY

I So a lot of the white nation is a little bit more educated so they have less children – where a lot of the Hispanics in general aren’t as educated. So they are multiplying children. So that’s why they are growing so fast. If it’s a win/win. I mean, if they can find a win/win. I mean, what can they take from their culture and incorporate here and maybe design that to support it. Okay, what’s really good about their culture and what can they bring in here and design systems to support them if they help integrate that and make our country better. Maybe they are really good at farming and they are really good at whatever – we’ll integrate that here and when you do, we’ll give you benefit for it from that perspective.

Respondents echoed Gary and Trey’s sentiments in terms of how they felt about Mexican’s not being able and capable enough to contribute and integrate into the larger society because “Yes, I think they are slower; I think they’re not as smart as we are, except for some... Yes, I think they’re slower; I think they...I think that all the southern races as it’s been proven through history...” This and many other comments respondents made about the intelligence capacity of Mexicans were very explicit and, as evident in other racial frames, were used as justifications for why they perceived Mexicans to be un-American and not successful. Furthermore, Trey’s response, like many others who would begin their response by saying they were “neutral” or did not have an opinion on the matter, would also initially begin talking about how it is just up to the individual. However, as they proceeded in their response they would inevitably begin making statements such as, “So a lot of the white nation is a little bit more educated so they have

less children – where a lot of the Hispanics in general aren't as educated. So they are multiplying children. So that's why they are growing so fast." And then they would deduce that they are different than whites and that those differences also indicate that they are inferior. As Trey continues to explain himself and is careful about what he is saying, he states, "Maybe they are really good at farming and they are really good at whatever –," which coincides with his view that Mexicans are just not educated and are better at labor-intensive jobs. Respondents like Trey and Gary often attempted to not play into stereotypes but in the end they frequently repeated and justified them. Unlike many scholars such as Eduardo Bonilla Silva (2006) who also studies white racial attitudes, the respondents were explicit about their views about Mexicans. This is further captured in the last set of quotes where respondents made it clear the Latinos were more like African Americans than whites.

### CHRISSEY

Hispanics, they all seem to have their own little neighborhood and they all... There's a difference... Hispanics can be dirty in certain neighborhoods and gangy as well as the blacks. The blacks can go right along with them in that aspect.

### CAMIL

Where they're from; if they're Mexican, they're Mexican. If they're black, they're African American. I guess by the color of their skin; what they look like.

Moderator: Do you think that races are naturally different in any way?

Respondent: Yes.

Moderator: How so?

Respondent: Just very different culturally; like African Americans are very family-oriented; very vocal; they have a sense of — they have a right, because of the slavery movement. They have this sense of kind of entitlement; almost like a reverse racism. Like white people wronged them. Hispanics -They just have really huge families.

Camil and Chrissy, like many other respondents as we have also seen throughout the different racial frames, regularly lumped Mexicans with Blacks in stark contrast to whites. For Chrissy, she believes that both Hispanics and Blacks are "dirty" and "gangy." Interestingly, Orange County, by social science standards, does not have a significant African American population (less than 2%), and yet respondents commonly constructed a white/non-white divide. This does not only reflect a strong negative response towards African Americans from whites in OC, but shows that whites also perceive African American issues as being comparable to those of Latinos. Camil goes on to explain that African Americans and Latinos are both family oriented, which while a "positive" stereotype still generalizes groups. Furthermore this shows that the white respondents believed that races were naturally different. While often times they couched the racial differences in terms of culture, as Camil explained, "Where they're from; if they're Mexican, they're Mexican. If they're black, they're African American. I guess by the color of their skin; what they look like," thus culture and race are used to mean the same thing. This is a major finding because respondents were very explicit in saying they believed Latinos to be different and inferior to whites because -- as another respondent put it -- "I would define it as your race is based on your genetic make up, and your cultural roots."

## SURVEY

While the survey asked indirect questions to measure racism, since the interviews were conducted after the survey, the survey questions did not mirror the explicit nature of the responses. But there were two questions that got at white racial views toward Latinos. Firstly, 82% of the white respondents agreed that, “If more Mexicans move into your neighborhood property values are likely to decrease.” This result reflected what many whites discussed at length when it came to the geography of Orange County, where -- as detailed in the introduction -- segregation has been and continues to be intentional. Thus, for whites in Orange County, the way they have managed to “deal” with unwelcomed Mexicans is to build “higher walls,” (in forms of gated communities) and create conditions implicitly and explicitly to keep white areas white. Furthermore, while only 30% agreed that, “America needs to defend itself from a Hispanic take over,” this was a more nuanced response in the interviews. Whites perceive Latinos as unlikable neighbors because -- as commented on before -- they do not see that they share the same culture and vision of America. As the Latino population continues to outgrow whites in Orange County and the rest of the country, these attitudes will be tested, and as can be seen from Arizona’s SB 1070 and other states’ anti-immigrant and anti-Latinos policies, Latinos will more likely continue to experience racialization that will affect their integration into the larger society.

## Conclusion

The survey data reflects answers to straight-forward questions whites in Orange County have of Latinos, but it is the interviews that help color and explain why they have these reactions, sentiments, and perspectives. By analyzing them side-by-side it begins to show a narrative and racial discourse toward Latinos that is very negative and embedded in centuries’ old stereotypes. These racial frames formulate a racial ideology where whites believe Latinos to be unassimilable and un-American, because they perceive them as inherently criminal, culturally deficit, racially inferior across immigration status and generations. Further, whites believe Mexicans do not contribute to the larger society and in fact drain it by abusing public resources. These narratives are in line with them as constructions of the illegal alien and perpetual foreigner, but these constructions are based on the justification that began as a colonial project principled in white supremacy. This has been carried out for centuries and in contemporary times has manifested itself as anti- Latino backlash, not only towards Latino immigrants but the entire group.

The goal of this chapter, was to highlight the nuances that emerged from the interviews and to integrate them to show a complex racial ideology whites have of Latinos. In so doing, we begin to see how these white racial attitudes create a negative context of reception toward Latinos that extends throughout the generations. Many of these sentiments converge around stereotypes that are shared with African Americans (particularly around crime, welfare abuse, and racial resentment) yet their explicit expressions of racialization was first attempted to be covered by the language of illegality. But as respondents explained their responses they were clear that the issues of Latinos integration did not have to do with structural barriers but with Latinos themselves. They reverted to several different types of cultural deficiencies in order to explain Latinos’ lack of upward mobility which included saying that they were prone to committing crime, lacked cultural values like those of the WASP community, and abused

affirmative action type programs. These deficiencies prevented Latinos from cultivating ambition, and all were attributed to the group as a whole, not solely first-generation Latino immigrants.

Furthermore, whites also expressed that they believed that Latinos were inferior and incapable of assimilating. Unlike the classic assimilation model they did not portray Latinos as assimilating but in fact more so ascribed to Huntington's (2004) view of the Hispanic Challenge, particularly in terms of contempt of culture and irreconcilable differences. Most of the white respondents echoed Huntington's sentiments that, "In this new era, the single most immediate and most serious challenge to America's traditional identity comes from the immense and continuing immigration from Latin America, especially from Mexico," because, "The persistence of Mexican immigration into the United States reduces the incentives for cultural assimilation. Mexican Americans no longer think of themselves as members of a small minority who must accommodate the dominant group and adopt its culture. As their numbers increase, they become more committed to their own ethnic identity and culture. Sustained numerical expansion promotes cultural consolidation and leads Mexican Americans not to minimize but to glory in the differences between their culture and U.S." These specific white racial attitudes about Latinos onto themselves help explain the challenging political climate Latinos still experience, but they also have dire consequences since they help determine behavior and policy preferences. While the five frames above have described how whites feel about Mexicans, the next chapter connects the racial ideology to actual policy preferences and other choices whites make, that have major implications and impact on the Latino community.

## **CHAPTER 4: EFFECTS OF WHITE RACIAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS LATINOS ON POLICY PREFERENCES**

### **Introduction**

The racial attitudes expressed through the five frames in the last chapter are in themselves important, since they morph into a complex racial ideology that many whites have towards Latinos. This ideology explains whites' negative sentiments towards Latinos. My data not only reveal how in fact whites' attitudes racialize Latinos, but in this chapter, I will connect their views of Latinos to their policy preferences and critical choices (i.e. residential and schooling choices). The literature on racial attitudes and policy preferences mostly accounts for relations between whites and Blacks, and only recently, is increasingly turning to address whites' attitudes towards Latinos (Fox 2012; Timberlake & Williams 2012). For example, in response to understanding and accounting for racism and discrimination, after Jim Crow and the Civil Rights movement, the authors (Sears, Sidanius & Bobo 2000) of *Racialized Politics: The Debate about Racism in America*, put forth different theories. These theories specifically are aimed at explaining white attitudes towards Blacks. They all agree on the importance of studying white attitudes towards Blacks, because it establishes the most frequently held views of Blacks and how that affects race relations in the United States as well as public policy.

Not only has academia continued to see race and racism within a Black/white paradigm, but so has larger media apparatus and public discourse. Even when the frame is expanded to include Latinos, we struggle to address issues of prejudice towards Latinos. For example a poll commissioned by the Associated Press (AP; 2012) found that anti-Black prejudice had increased between 2008 and 2012. Buried beneath the headline about prejudice towards blacks was the finding that anti-Hispanic prejudice among whites was actually higher than for blacks. The researchers and journalists, however, could not compare the Latino numbers because they had not asked the questions regarding Latinos in 2008. Thus, there has been a tendency to ignore the problem of anti-Latino prejudice or bury it within the implicit assumption that Latinos are ethnics en route to assimilation. Moreover, white attitudes towards Latinos not only influence policy but as Alan Jenkins, a political analyst, notes that racist attitudes towards Latinos, “[Have] very real circumstances in the way people are treated by police, the way kids are treated by teachers, the way home seekers are treated by landlords and real estate agents.” It is these national trends captured in the AP poll that is further reflected and explored in this chapter, through a case study of whites in Orange County.

Furthermore, with increasing Latino demographics and growing political influence/leverage -- as seen in the recent presidential election -- it is becoming even more imperative to examine how white attitudes toward Latinos form narratives that drive their positions on policies. This connection of prejudice to politics and policy preferences, represents not just feelings, but an ideology that often justifies inequality.

Both the survey and the in-depth interviews also captured how whites' views of Latinos affected their behavior (where they chose to live, how they voted, etc.) and more specifically where they stood on policies that directly affect the Latino community. It is important not only to gauge white attitudes but also the degree to which they drive policy preferences about issues related to Latinos. In the state of California, a traditionally democratic state that has been

historically and continually effective at passing laws that negatively affect the minorities (Martinez HoSang 2010). In the 1990's, there were several propositions in California including proposition 187 (denial of services to immigrants), 209 (anti-affirmative action), and 227 (anti-bilingual education), that targeted Latinos and minorities.

While Orange County is one of the more conservative areas in California -- with a long history of anti-immigrant sentiments and a white homogenous population, as discussed in the second chapter -- it still has a lot of power and influence that extends outside of Orange County (McGirr 2001). For example, many of the anti-immigrant groups are housed in Orange County. These groups have helped shape immigration policy in California and also have spread throughout the rest of the country. California provided the impetus behind measures like HR 4437, SB 1070 and HB2281 in Arizona, along with copycat legislation in other states that all follow the logic of Proposition 187. These draconian immigration laws explicitly target Latino immigrants, and Latinos as a group. Moreover, as Daniel Martinez HoSang (2010) argued in his book *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California*, the state historically and contemporarily practices "Blue State Racism" -- in which both political parties often reinforce white privilege or what Martinez HoSang calls "political whiteness." HoSang states,

I have used the concept of 'political whiteness' -- a formulation of political subjectivity, identity and community in which whiteness functions as an absent referent within the putatively neutral and abstract terms of liberalism... By ultimately affirming rather than dislodging political whiteness, racial liberalism failed to dislodge a normative standard of political judgment that proved quite accommodating to subsequent conservative efforts that opposed and equitable distribution of rights, resources, and recognition. The core commitments of political whiteness simply could not sustain any robustly egalitarian and democratic politics.

In other words, simply because California is a "blue" state does not preclude it from having severe racial inequalities, particularly between whites and Latinos. Furthermore, the conservative backlash of the 1990's and continuous anti-immigrant/anti-Latino sentiment -- often coded in colorblind rhetoric -- has only served to reinforce racial disparities and done little to improve race relations. In this sense, while Orange County has its unique history and political make-up, it can be in fact how the rest of the country will be trending in terms of white/Latino relations, particularly with the rise of anti-Latino/anti-immigrant legislation currently sweeping the nation.

White respondents in the survey were asked specifically about six policy areas that include: residential segregation, immigration restriction, busing, welfare, affirmative action, and immigration reform. These policy preferences also emerged in the context of the in depth interviews without specific prompts. While I did not have specific questions regarding Arizona's controversial immigration bill SB 1070, some respondents articulated strong support for SB1070.

The other major narrative that emerged specifically from the in-depth interviews and was confirmed by the survey data, was the respondents engaging in "geographic racism." Geographic racism is when whites respond to the increase in Latinos in adjacent areas (Bonnett 1997; Eake & Kobayashi 2000; Gilman 2002). Whites spoke at length about personally and how most of their friends who have Latino nannies, housekeepers, or gardeners were clear that they chose to live in gated communities or communities that were simply predominately white (Maher 2004). This was a way for them to build physical barriers to keep Latinos out and

simultaneously “in their place.” Whites expressed anger and frustration when they felt Latinos had stepped over the line/boundary and come onto their side. This was often spoken about in terms of Latinos “taking over” pristine public parks and the public coastal/beach area, that whites lay claim to. They also spoke at length about how these areas were being “contaminated” by the presence of Mexicans and their families. They further explained that they had spent a lot of money to live in these areas, and did not want to see Mexicans “ruin it.” This sentiment was further acknowledged because the white respondents had a visceral reaction to Santa Ana and its occupants, which -- as stated before -- is overwhelmingly Mexican and Mexican American. The quotes below will support whites’ policing of Latinos and for all practical purposes condoning racial segregation. Thus, we can begin to imagine how whites in other parts of the country that are undergoing demographic changes as clearly reflected in the 2010 census, build and reinforce real and figurative borders. This signals their discontent with not only population changes but also more specifically their behavior and attitudes that negatively affect Latino immigrants and Latinos in general.

Even with white respondents overwhelmingly negative sentiments of Latinos, there was substantial support for a pathway to citizenship to undocumented immigrants already here. In the last section of this chapter, I will explain how their desire to prevent Latinos from “cheating the system” encouraged some support for comprehensive immigration reform. Yet overall, whites’ views on policies and behavior show that whites’ choices about many things that affect Latinos are determined by the negative sentiments they have of them.

### **Immigration Restrictions**

The immigration debate continues to gain attention and controversy with the impasse over comprehensive immigration reform and the astronomical amounts of deportations under the Obama administration. Moreover, this debate has often characterized Latinos as an important issue that affects them. Furthermore, this debate continues to be shaped by nativist views along with the need for cheap labor. This dilemma has also been at the forefront of the Mexican American experience. How the state has dealt with Mexican American immigration has been reflective in how to obtain and maintain cheap labor but without unsettling demographics too much. Historically whites have had the power to create systems, policies, and guest worker programs that have been great benefits for the U.S. economy but have often exploited Mexican labor and treated them as second-class citizens (Barrera 1979; Montejano 1987). So much so that the idea of Mexican as “Always the Laborer and never the Citizen” emerged (Gutierrez 1999). My data reflect the continuity of how attitudes about immigration policy continue to reflect this attitude toward the Mexican American community. At the core of the debate is the fight for inclusion and rights, but many whites have created a dominant narrative that paints a grim picture of Mexicans “invading,” “taking over,” and “containing” American values (Santa Ana 2002). Similar to what whites expressed in the previous chapter, whites had very strong opinions on the failure of the immigration debate, mostly because they believed the amount of “illegal” immigrants (who they pointed out came from Mexico) was too high. The first set of quotes represents what most respondents said about immigration from Latin America.

DAVE

I’m for it on a very limited pace. It’s out of hand. We literally have a million people a year coming over the border that are freaking jumping on all of these systems that are

drained already. That's why insurance... It's why it's collapsing—it's a big part of the reason why it's collapsing. To bring people in I mean... Limited immigration...

#### TODD

As far as immigration, Hispanics – obviously there needs to be some kind of change, but it has to be very methodic. You are going to offend some people, but you can't do something because you are offending somebody. I think in general there's got to be some kind of immigration reform. There's got to be a system in place where there is just not this floodgate of people coming in...Seriously, I think the future is fucked up. There is a system in place for economic failure that they are putting together and it's only going to get worse. It's artificially popped up right now. There is going to be more crime. They will always play the race card. Whatever side you are on, man.

The white respondents were nearly unanimous in their desire to see immigration from Mexico and Latin America be significantly curtailed. Dave's comment, "It's out of hand," was a common remark when it came to Latino immigrants. The respondents voiced that immigration from Latin American was a problem because they believed that there was not enough space for more immigrants, and that most importantly they were, "jumping on all of these systems that are drained already." Respondents were clear that that the immigrants they thought were the most problematic were coming from Latin America, because they perceived them as welfare magnets.

Dave, like most others, also was aware of the need for cheap labor and so conceded immigration, "on a very limited pace," but that overall, as Todd exclaimed, "There's got to be a system in place where there is just not this floodgate of people coming in." Thus, the narrative around Latino immigration was one that there simply were too many immigrants coming from Latin America, who were a drain on the society. This prompted most of the respondents to want to impede further migration from Latin America. Furthermore, Todd also points out that immigration and Latinos are often used interchangeably, and curtailing immigration and seeing the problem of immigration was solely a Latino problem. For the most part, the respondents did not take issue with other immigrant groups but mostly blame immigrants from Latin America as the culprits behind the problems with immigration and other larger societal problems that include abusing the welfare state and involvement in crime.

Many of the respondents agreed with Samuel Huntington (2004) that Latino immigrants pose a threat to the United States because they are unwillingly and incapable of assimilating . Many respondents used this as an excuse to change policy when it came to Latino immigrants. Below Matt and Sally reflect these ideas.

#### MATT

So if you have someone that's been living here on Welfare and they're not contributing and they're not going to contribute, then they need their happy ass back to Mexico or wherever they're from. Or on the other hand if they're not learning English, why is it that's acceptable? It's not acceptable. It shouldn't be. It's costing us too much money, too much time, too much controversy.

## SALLY

I think California's the seventh if I remember or Orange County and LA have the largest strongest economy. I don't think that's going to happen, because there are too many business people here that won't let that happen; immigrants taking over California; that won't happen. We're going to keep them in Mexico somehow, and I think that they need to make stronger laws to keep them in border control; and I think they have done that in the last couple years.

Here again Sally and Matt express fear and anger toward Latino immigrants because they feel that they are, "taking over California," and hope that, "We're going to keep them in Mexico somehow." Thus, respondents would talk about immigrants but as they progressed in the conversation they would only use Mexicans in all their examples. Matt and Sally also perceive them to be a threat because, "they're not contributing," and desire, "stronger laws, "to keep them in border control." Respondents believed that immigration in particular from Latin America was out of control and that current immigration policy was doing too little to remedy this problem. Moreover, respondents' views and behavior towards immigration created an "us versus them" narrative where Latino immigrants and Latinos in general were threatening the American way of life. This not only echoes Huntington (2004) but it also goes to show that Huntington's views are reflected in the general public.

## SURVEY

Negative sentiments and policy resolution around immigration reform were further tested in the survey. For example, 75% of whites support the Minutemen, a group that has been very vocal about securing the U.S./Mexico border and explicitly about controlling immigration -- specifically from Mexico and Latin America. Whites' positive view of this group also shows that they too find immigration from Latin America a problem. This is further tested when asked, "There is currently a plan to offer financial aid and in-state tuition to children of illegal immigrants. Do you support such a plan?" Seventy three percent of whites said no. Whites overwhelmingly were against a policy that not only negatively affects undocumented Latinos but Latino citizens as well. This illustrates how whites don't differentiate between "illegal" Latino immigrants and Latino citizens. These sentiments are further reinforced when whites were asked, "There is a plan in congress to change the constitution, so that children of illegal immigrants born in the United States would not automatically be U.S. citizens. Do you support such a plan?" Again, 75% of whites responded "yes." Thus, in essence, they would be repealing significant parts of the fourteenth amendment, a cornerstone in the legacy of civil rights and racial equality in the United States. The fact that whites are willingly to change the constitution in order to negatively affect Latino immigrants and Latinos citizens shows that whites don't just take issue with "illegal aliens," but Latinos as whole. This further supports my argument that whites perceive, construct, and treat Latinos as a racial and not an ethnic group. The desire to restrict access based on race is historically reflected in the racial nature of citizenship debates in the United States, my data show how this continues to be the case, specifically for Latinos.

In summary, even though the respondents were asked about immigration in general, they inevitably talked about the problem being Mexican migration. They all asserted that there need to be more restrictive laws and more enforcement, in particular around the U.S./Mexico border. A word that was used with frequency was "border jumping" and "sneaking" across the border to

imply that they felt that immigration was out of control, and therefore the U.S. government should limit Mexican immigration. Furthermore, they were angered because they believed Mexicans had it easy since they simply had to “jump” over the border. They also explained their concerns regarding immigration in terms of “over breeding,” and a strain on government resources.

## **Welfare and Public Services**

As largely explained in the last chapter, white respondents had an overwhelming feeling that Latino immigrants and subsequent generations abuse welfare and other public services. While all the literature has actually shown that immigration is not a welfare magnet for Latino immigrants and that most often they do not have access to these types of resources (Banting & Kymlicka 2006) whites continue to believe and act on this myth.

While a considerable amount of the literature only examines Blacks and the welfare state, my data show that whites felt Latinos also drained these services and abused welfare (Fox 2012; Gilens 2000; Hancock 2004). Below Randall explains his anger towards Hispanics.

### **RANDALL**

I would explain their anger, it comes from, because we believe that they are paying for them to be here, that they are lowering their standard of living, taking their jobs, costing them money, draining our healthcare, our educational system. What it costs to educate their children when they're here illegally, doesn't it just seem kind of wrong? Are you convinced? They send money back to their country that isn't reciprocated. They drain our resources from our medical care, our educational system. There's a lack of respect for property, the destruction of our infrastructure.

Almost all of the respondents at some point in the interview expressed similar sentiments about Latinos. Randall concisely sums it up by saying, “It comes from, because we believe that they are paying for them to be here, that they are lowering their standard of living, taking their jobs, costing them money, draining our healthcare, our educational system.” Randall was explicit in his answer that whites harbored anger toward Latinos because he believed, “They drain our resources from our medical care, our educational system. There's a lack of respect for property, the destruction of our infrastructure.” Randall, like most others, felt that Latinos were being handed everything without “rightfully” earning it and thus believed the best thing to do was to cut these programs.

Randall, in his response, is also working with in a zero-sum model, where there are limited resources and more for one group means less for another. Furthermore Randall, like many of the other respondents, also felt that whites are forced to pay for all the resources that Latinos received for free. Their behavior was based on an “us versus them” mindset, where Latinos were labeled as “takers” and whites were deemed as “contributors” and deserving of being here, unlike Latinos. Here, again the white respondents, as with Huntington (2004), argue that only whites contributed to building the great nation of the United States of America.

ALBERT

Well, from what I gather, and again, this isn't picking on or targeting anybody from Mexico or any Latin American country; this happens to be a large number of them in Southern California. It appears to me, from where I sit, that they seem to be weighing heavily on government resources, such as healthcare.

TIM

It's frightening when you have a bunch of people coming in that have no jobs, and still would require services from the government that somebody else is going to have to pay for. And yet they came in illegally to begin with.

MEL

There are definitely people taking advantage of the system, you know, coming over and having a lot of children so that they can live off of child support and welfare and things like that. But then there are also people that come over that make a good living for themselves. I think that overall if you had to put like a number on it, I would say that more people are probably taking advantage of the system.

Albert, Tim, and Mel all agree that Latinos are more of a burden on society and clearly state that, "people are taking advantage of the system." This reflects a dominant narrative that Latino immigrants and Latinos in general are perceived to heavily abuse welfare and other similar programs. While whites say they don't want to target Latinos, or solely blame them for welfare abuse, they believed -- because of the increase in Latinos -- that they truly did create a burden on resources. Many respondents also specifically described how Latinos had "free healthcare," since they basically would not be refused service if they went to the hospital Emergency Room, and thus, in essence, whites were left "picking up the tab." Whites spoke at length how they felt that, "[Mexicans are] coming over and having a lot of children so that they can live off of child support and welfare and things like that," and that, "It's frightening when you have a bunch of people coming in that have no jobs, and still would require services from the government that somebody else is going to have to pay for. And yet they came in illegally to begin with." Whites blame the "broken" immigration system for not controlling the U.S./Mexico border, citing this as clearly were societal problems are stemming from. They do not see Latino immigrants as contributing members of society but quite the opposite. Whites perceive them to be a threat and more specifically a drain on the public services and welfare as a magnet for immigration.

While most of the data has challenged the notion that immigrants come to the United States to abuse the welfare system and other public services, it was clear from my interviews that these respondents still believed in the welfare magnet theory, where welfare and other programs are seen as the main cause for their migration (Borjas 1999; Frey, Liao, Xie & Carlson 1996). Respondents frequently painted a picture of easy sailing for Mexicans. They talked about how it was easy for them to simply cross the border without having to pay for a visa or apply for citizenship, how they virtually had free healthcare and first rate education for their children, and how with the help of Latino advocacy groups and other public services such as food stamps they were handed everything on a "silver platter." They often characterized this as un-American, and in contradiction to the Protestant work ethic, since they perhaps were hardworking but lacked the skills, ability, and intelligence to be "self-reliant."

## SURVEY

The survey also mirrors the interviews when it comes to issues of welfare and public services. When whites were asked, "In terms of health care, Congress has proposed a plan to provide health care insurance to most children who currently do not have coverage. Do you support such a plan?" An overwhelming 71% of whites said "yes." But when asked, "If yes do you still support the plan if the children of illegal immigrants are covered?" Whites drastically changed their minds and 72% said "no." Whites here "draw a line in the sand," so to speak, in that they do not perceive children of "illegal immigrants" to be equal, even if in fact they themselves are equal. Moreover, as discussed before, for most of the white respondents "illegal immigrant" is a proxy for Latinos (since they perceive most Latinos to be "illegal," and most "illegals" to be Latinos. Thus, the responses to these questions side by side confirms that most of the white respondents disapprove of public benefits/programs if people they perceive are "undeserving" will benefit.

### **Affirmative Action and Group Based Programs**

Affirmative Action, like welfare, has usually been studied in term of perceptions and use by Blacks, but these white respondents had strong negative feelings when it came to their views of Affirmative Action and other group/minority based programs and Latinos. As reflected above, whites perceived that welfare and other public services created a magnet for immigrants from Latin America and they expressed their concerns about Affirmative Action for second and subsequent generations. This further illustrates that whites perceive and make decisions based on notions that Latinos as whole, regardless of status or generation, are given undeserved special advantages. This was the case in 1996 where most of the white electorate voted for Proposition 209 that banned Affirmative Action in California. Mark, below, helps explain why in all likelihood he voted for Proposition 209.

MARK

Moderator: So do you think that Hispanics are taking jobs away from whites?

Respondent: The vast majority I would say no, but because of things like affirmative action and stuff like that, I would say yes.

Mark's simple and straightforward answer was one that many of the other respondents adhered to as well. Again, here is an example of how college educated respondents who knew about Affirmative Action connected it not only to preferential treatment for Blacks but for Latinos as well. But the respondents had also deep misconceptions of the programs and felt that they were damaging because it meant unqualified minorities were getting opportunities they did not deserve -- at the cost to "deserving whites." Whites were operating in a zero-sum game, where they drew the line between whites and non-whites and felt that Latinos were given advantages that threatened white's opportunities. The next respondents address why in fact they are against minority based programs.

DAVE

I'm against the affirmative action thing with the blacks and everything. That was bad. That's wrong to put people in places just because of the color... You should put them

there because they belong there. If they have the credentials and everything that's great. And they worked their way up. And they're just as equal as this? Yes. But that affirmative action is putting people that weren't suppose to be there. 90% of it. I would go through and I'd look at that. I'd see the stuff and it's like this is wrong. You can't take someone out that really belongs there and puts someone that doesn't belong just because they're black or Mexican.

#### LOLA

I don't think that there should be anything specific for them I would say. I mean, I kind of think that that would be unfair because even if you did a specific program just to help Hispanic people, then all the other minorities saying, "Well, it's not fair that they get this and we don't get this." We don't have anything specific for us. I mean, you don't really hear us going out there and saying the type of things that they are. ..So I don't really think that there should be one program designed for that ethnicity.

Lola and Dave are very explicit and candid about their thinking when it comes to minority based programs and why they see them as, "unfair" because, "That affirmative action is putting people that weren't suppose to be there. 90% of it." The respondents felt that these types of programs unfairly gave minorities an advantage and intentionally hurt whites. Furthermore, while at other times respondents were able to acknowledge racial disparity, they did not believe race based programs were an answer to alleviate these racial disparities. Moreover, the biggest problem was that the respondents were only able to see race in minorities but never questioned whiteness and white privilege. This is reflected when respondents would talk at length about how there were no such programs available for them. Many respondents conflated the most "qualified" person for the job to be whites, and rarely minorities. This is an example of how respondents were not critical of how white privilege muddied their views on who is truly "most qualified." Other respondents like Lola expressed how that since there were only programs for minorities and not whites, minorities did not have to work as hard as whites. Lola's response also suggests that minorities are not willing to work hard because they -- unlike whites -- just "complain." Furthermore, since Lola does not see minorities as "deserving," this leads to racial resentment toward Latinos.

When the respondents spoke about Affirmative Action or college scholarships they were not solely talking about Blacks, but also believed that Mexicans benefited from these policies that they labeled as racist and unfair. They believed that frequently, Mexicans were being afforded rights and resources they had not earned and that companies hired and promoted based on these types of policies instead of on merit. Respondents expressed that these policies were simply reverse discrimination and they also spoke about their resentment towards Mexicans. At the same time, they never once thought about how whiteness has historically and presently allowed them to be successful. Nonetheless, the respondents again painted a picture where Mexicans received many substantive opportunities and benefits that whites did not. In this sense, most of the white respondents constructed Mexicans as non-white and cataloged them as a racial group versus an ethnic group.

## SURVEY

The survey data also addressed white's views on Affirmative Action. When whites were asked about Affirmative Action, 27% said they are somewhat against and about 50% said they are strongly against it. These survey results illustrate that whites unequivocally perceive race-based programs to be problematic and strongly voice their opposition to them. Whites, as reflected in the responses above, did not solely associate Affirmative Action with Blacks but Latinos as well. This is further substantiated when whites were asked, "Giving rights to Latinos tends to hurt whites?" About 44% of whites agreed with that statement. These findings indicate most of the white respondents perceive these programs within a zero-sum game where they feel they are losing to Latinos who unfairly receive resources and advantages.

## Bussing

In the next set of quotes we continue to see how these issues are not solely about "illegal" immigrants but how their concerns spread to the children of immigrants and generations thereafter. I asked questions regarding the importance of desegregating schools and the value in school integration. When asked about busing as a means to uphold the importance of school integration, only one of the forty respondents was sympathetic to the idea of busing, and even then she was a bit skeptical.

## CAMIL

Moderator: So do you think that the government should continue busing? It's a program where they bus, for instance, Latino kids from Santa Ana, into schools in Newport, to guarantee more mixing of the races in schools?

Respondent: No.

Moderator: And why so?

Respondent: Why mix the two? Why not have the kids go to the closest school to their house?

Many of the respondents addressed the issue of busing as straightforward as Camil, who basically just said flat out "no, no way." Some said it was just not natural and others like Camil expressed that the reason they chose to live in homogenous gated communities was to avoid issues such as busing. While it is easy to say, "Why not have the kids go to the closest school to their house?" whites tried to appeal to the notion of why make it hard for the kids who have to be bused? However, upon closer examination, the respondents had other things to say. For example, Camil also says, "Why mix the two?" This response reflects that whites see inherent differences between these whites and Latinos, and further do not see the reason or benefits of school integration. In fact they see mixing of these two groups as problematic. This is what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2006) calls a naturalization frame, in which segregation is a natural outcome of group preferences. This is further expanded upon in the responses below.

## HOWARD

Anaheim Hills Canyon High School; they were busing Blacks and Hispanics in and it's an all white school... Are these kids tearing up the school? Have you ever seen? Watch

Lean on Me; ever seen Lean on Me with Morgan Freeman? See how those kids ripped that school apart? No. If kids want to tear a school apart, do I say perpetuate the problem and bring them into a school that's succeeding and doing well? No. I'm not going to bring those \* I'm going to kick them out, throw them on the God damn street, and they'll get arrested.

#### NICOLE

I just want the kids to be comfortable. I don't want them to feel like a Black kid or a Mexican kid goes to Harbor and feel all intimidated and weird. I just want the kid to be comfortable and be comfortable in its environment. So that might not be good you know. And it's hard for kids. You're uncomfortable at that age anyway. I was a big sweaty mess in elementary school.

#### MOLLY

My daughter went to Newport Harbor high for a while. I thought this is going to be a good school. It ended up being counterproductive for her. Both races were there. There was a 50% Hispanic, 50% white from completely different neighborhoods, they bused them in basically. I think you do better when you're raised in a culture that lifts you up, but it was so much tension and I pulled her out.

The respondents like those above often mentioned Latinos as "these kids," who "ripped the school apart." They lumped all the Latino kids together as 'trouble makers,' simultaneously categorizing all white children as "model students." Howard, Nicole, and Molly very much expressed that their opposition to busing because they categorized white and Latino children differently and often diametrically opposed to themselves. Nicole couches the issue in terms of being concerned for the Latino kids being comfortable. She states, "I don't want them to feel like a Black kid or a Mexican kid goes to Harbor and feel all intimidated and weird. I just want the kid to be comfortable and be comfortable in its environment. So that might not be good you know. And it's hard for kids." While it seems she is concerned for the well being of the kids who are bused, she is also stereotyping them as poor and different, and the white kids as good. In doing so it shows that her fears about busing stem from her belief that these groups have little in common and thus would not be a good idea to integrate.

Molly uses first-hand experience to make her case and talks about how her daughter was affected by busing in Latino students. She not only explicitly uses the term race to differentiate when she says, "Both races were there," she further states, "I think you do better when you're raised in a culture that lifts you up, but it was so much tension and I pulled her out." Molly was typical of the respondents who had experience with Latinos kids being bused to their children's school. They drew clear boundaries in the differences between the Latino students and their children. Molly also specifically discussed how cultural upbringing for Latinos and whites are not only different but that white parents parent better. While the Civil Rights Movement had worked hard to promote racial integration, Molly like others, did not desire nor see the benefits in integration. Molly, like many other whites, removes their children from schools because they perceive Latinos to be a bad influence on their children. Thus, opposing busing and removing their children illustrates how their racial attitudes towards Latinos affect their behavior.

As reflected from the responses above, whites were very opinionated about this subject and they spoke passionately that busing -- or as many called it "forced integration" -- was a bad idea. While they would initially agree school integration was an important U.S. ideal, when they were specifically asked about busing kids from Santa Ana (a predominantly Mexican city) to a city like Newport Beach (a predominantly white city), they came up with all kinds of excuses and rationales for why they felt that was a very bad idea. They argued it was just easier for kids to attend school in their areas, busing seemed so extreme, that groups naturally came together, and that social order should not be interrupted. But when the moderator asked about alternatives to busing in order to integrate students, respondents began to back-pedal from their first response regarding integration as ideal, and to talk about the negative effects Mexican children would have on white children. Respondents often told personal stories as to why "mixing" the children was a bad idea. They also discussed white privilege not in critical terms, but as "natural." For example, they would express that whites had worked hard to live in good areas with good schools and that Mexicans had simply not earned that right, and so integrating the kids would be unfair to the white kids. Again this was another example as to how they constructed Mexicans -- here categorizing Mexican children as different and inferior -- to justify opposing busing, as they have done with Blacks.

Unfortunately, there were no specific questions regarding busing on the survey. Nonetheless whites' obsession with the opposition to busing and integrating Latino and white children, from the in-depth interviews indicates that whites do not perceive these two groups to be equal, and that in fact they make conscious choices to create and stay within boundaries to decrease interaction between the two groups. The hysteria whites expressed around busing reflects their fears and beliefs about how different and unworthy Latinos are.

### **Segregation/Geographical Racism**

In the in-depth interviews I asked respondents' opinions about policies that directly affected Latinos, as well as their perceptions and choices around space and racial boundaries. I will address this in three sub-themes that include how whites made a conscious choice of residence, how they naturalized these choices, and how they further policed these spaces. Chrissy, Bobby, and Lola -- like many of the respondents -- openly addressed their sentiments about how they felt most comfortable in homogenously white areas.

#### **CHRISSY**

I think it's just what they're accustomed too. They're familiar in comfort zones. People are very cautious when they reach the boundaries of their comfort zone. I think it just goes back to lack of awareness and lack of education. I think that's what they were raised in and they say stick to your kind, stick to this, stick to that, and that just gets imbedded into their brains. And they grow up thinking that way. That's the way life has to be. Until we evolve and advance as a whole human society, I think that's going to continue. I think it's gotten better in a lot of areas, but I think it still exists. Racism still exists.

#### **BOBBY**

I would never move into a Hispanic neighborhood; I would never move into Asian, black. I live in a white neighborhood; I always lived in a more predominantly white area. That's what you're comfortable with. People live within their comfort zone. People who

are Hispanic would want to live with other Hispanics because they're more their people, they speak their language. Blacks, same way. Asians, same way. I think people feel more comfortable living with people of their own race. I don't think that'll ever change, no matter if you segregate the schools or not. People are always going to live around their race, around their ethnic groups.

#### LOLA

Again, I think it's what people are comfortable around. Obviously, I wouldn't feel comfortable living in a neighborhood that was mostly Hispanic. I would feel completely out-of-place. I would much rather live in a neighborhood that was predominantly white. I think it's just what we're comfortable with. I think naturally people are more comfortable being around people that kind of look like each other – in a way. I mean, it goes back to having the same type of background - just what we're comfortable with.

Chrissy addressed how, “People are very cautious when they reach the boundaries of their comfort zone.” This implies that the boundaries are real -- both physically and figuratively -- and that everyone knows where these boundaries lie. This reflects how many have split Orange County now between North and South Orange County and called the freeways that break North and South a “Mason-Dixon line” to illustrate that the northern part of Orange County has become more diverse and the South remains predominately white. This does not just happen; people have made intentional decisions in order to maintain this order. This is reflected by Bobby's comment when he states, “I would never move into a Hispanic neighborhood; I would never move into Asian, and black. I live in a white neighborhood; I always lived in a more predominantly white area.” Bobby, like most of the respondents, admitted they made a conscious choice to live in overwhelmingly white neighborhoods. Furthermore, he expressed they also chose to stay clear of areas like Santa Ana, which are mostly Latino. This is echoed by Lola when she states, “I wouldn't feel comfortable living in a neighborhood that was mostly Hispanic. I would feel completely out-of-place.” Lola here takes no issue with her choice and goes on to explain that she does not feel safe unless she is in an all-white area. I argue these types of candid comments shows how whites perceive Latinos to be racially different, because they actively choose to live in areas where they have minimal contact and interaction with Latinos. Thus, they create real borders to separate the two groups. This is further reflected by the responses below that naturalize segregation.

#### TRACY

In Garden Grove, and it was primarily — I look back in school yearbooks now and it's primarily white. I would say 95% white, 1% Hispanic. We had a few Asian kids, but they were mostly the Japanese kids. There was no Vietnamese at that time. I think the neighborhoods were very much segregated. Very, very, much segregated; and I think we're more segregated than we even realize...And I remember being very smug; saying we're not racist; you guys are racist. We're not racist; and then I realized that you can't be smug. You're not racist? Why do you say that? You live in such a segregated area. I think Orange County is probably one of the most segregated areas in all of California. Very, very, very much segregated, and I think that they like it that way. So in Orange County there really isn't — there's no black people in our area, unless they're educated, and unless they're professionals. Hispanics, we've got a lot of Hispanics. They're

mowing our lawns. They're not living amongst us; they're out in Santa Anna; a nice little segregated area in Santa Anna. So I think that's the reason why there's not more mixedness is because we're segregated.

#### RANDALL

I think it's probably a natural inclination for people to want to live in their own community, to live around people that have same cultural similarities.

Would they rather? Geez, I suppose not. No, they might probably rather live in a cleaner neighborhood that doesn't have the graffiti and the crime and dirt. No. But it wouldn't be the other way around. It just so happens, I guess, that there's different cultures in those communities.

#### MARK

I think it's — I don't want to say evolution, but I think it's just a natural course. It's a natural happening. I think that's a natural course of evolution; birds of a feather flock together; the whole thing. And ironically, my daughter lives out in Irvine in North Park, it's a gated community and everything, and naturally lots of the nannies housekeepers and everything are Hispanic; and I hate to say it, they just don't fit in... you see a Hispanic nanny with a culturally different kid, and they just don't seem as well behaved and they're running and screaming. They don't have the manners of the other demographic in the neighborhood. I know that when I go down — for years, I criticized beyond the boardwalk. And for some reason, the Mexicans go to the beach, and I don't know why they always swim in their clothes. That's always pondered me; but they'll walk on the sand, they'll stay on the boardwalk, and they'll stop right in the middle of the boardwalk and they'll drag their boogie board or their cooler. They have a wet dirty blanket and they'll drag it; and they'll stop on the boardwalk. They'll just stop there. And it's like get out of the way. How stupid are you? It's like you're a nuisance. Get out of here.

Tracy, like Randal and Mark, talks about segregation as a natural occurrence. Like many of the highly educated respondents, she understands the history of legal desegregation yet still believes that, "Hispanics, we've got a lot of Hispanics. They're mowing our lawns. They're not living amongst us; they're out in Santa Anna; a nice little segregated area in Santa Anna. So I think that's the reason why there's not more mixedness is because we're segregated. We don't like to think that; I don't even think people realize it, but we are." These quotes prove that the choices whites make about where they live intentionally cause racial segregation.

Randall and Mark take on a biologically/natural way of thinking of segregation. Randall believes that segregation persists because, "I think it's probably a natural inclination for people to want to live in their own community, to live around people that have same cultural similarities," and Mark thinks, "I think it's — I don't want to say evolution, but I think it's just a natural course. It's a natural happening." Both respondents don't really address issues of historical racial segregation and white flight but just believe it to be natural, thus not a problem. Respondents talked about segregation having to do with cultural differences, like when Mark addresses the issues with the public beach, "And for some reason, the Mexicans go to the beach, and I don't know why they always swim in their clothes. That's always pondered me; but they'll walk on the sand, they'll stay on the boardwalk, and they'll stop right in the middle of the

boardwalk and they'll drag their boogie board or their cooler. They have a wet dirty blanket and they'll drag it; and they'll stop on the boardwalk. They'll just stop there. And it's like get out of the way. How stupid are you? It's like you're a nuisance. Get out of here." Here Mark acknowledges that this is public space but he is very angry at how he believes Latinos misuse this area. This is a good example of how whites mentally police the area and argue that since the cultural differences are so deep that segregation "makes sense" and normatively advocate for it. This is further echoed by Mark and Paul below.

#### PAUL

And when we first bought these properties on parks, it was a neat thing to be a Caucasian on parks. It was fun to — it's very changed in the last 15 years. The illegal immigrants; Mexicans mostly. They like the open space on the parks, and they want to on the weekends come in there and rip it up and tare. No; a city community park. It's not fun. Oh boy. It used to be nice little community, neighborhood park; and the illegal immigrants came in here really changed the landscape.

Moderator: And are there any places in Orange County that you stay away from?

Respondent: Yes. I don't go to Santa Ana. If you have a large influx of illegal immigrants in an area, I don't go there.

#### MARK

I've seen the Newport Beach police pull over more Mexicans in Newport than whites, but when you're driving around and nine people in a car with three kids standing on the floor in the front seat, no seat belts; no car seat, what do you think? Of course you're going to get pulled over. And I don't want to say that they don't belong there, but it's obviously if you're down in Newport beach peninsula, of course you want to go to the beach. But, you're driving the wrong way down a one-way street; and you're double parked. It's like — you draw attention to yourself.

#### BOBBY

Well, like I said, you're driving down in Newport — I sit in a restaurant/bar, and I go look at this? Look at this cop just pulled this guy over here? I go look at how many Hispanics/Mexicans just got out of their car? Like 12 people would get out of a car with five seat belts. And they had the grandmother, this and that; they had a cooler full of beer in the trunk. There's like three kids in the front seat standing on the floor in between the parents' legs with no seat belts on. I go — you can't be that dumb. And then how the hell can you complain when you get pulled over? That's not discrimination; that's stupidity.. In California, people want us to change the signs so they're bilingual signs; I don't think so.

Paul takes issue with Mexicans "invading" a community park that -- while public -- he has deemed only whites are worthy of using it. Paul also makes it clear that not only are Mexicans not welcomed in his area but that he does not go to where Mexicans live. Similarly, Mark admits and justifies racial profiling when he recounts the story, Mark further goes on to explain an incident where police in the white beach areas pull over Latinos, but Mark says, "That's not

discrimination, that is stupidity.” Mark and Paul and others made it clear that they did not want Latinos in “their space,” because they find them to be different and inferior.

While, segregation is no longer legal it is still the reality for most Latinos, because many whites make a choice to not live with non-whites. These quotes give insight as to how and why residential segregation continues to be maintained. While many respondents try to excuse segregation by simply stating that most groups feel more comfortable with “their own,” as they begin telling stories to illustrate their point they inevitably spoke about how and why they chose and prefer to live amongst whites. These stories also distinctly pointed out that they did not want to live near Latinos and Blacks and that they disapproved when Latinos encroached upon their space. Many of the white respondents that defended segregation were marking clear differences among groups and most importantly assigning them a place on the racial hierarchy with Latinos at the bottom and themselves at the top. Many respondents said that where people live is a natural process, by all other accounts this process is quite intentional and racially motivated. Moreover, many respondents like Mark and Bobby expressed antagonism towards the idea of living in an integrated residential area and were very put off by having to share space they felt they had earned and secured to live in. Unlike policy preferences, whites’ decisions on where to live have major implications for them as well as Latinos. The conscious choice to challenge residential and educational integration suggests they do not care if separate is not equal, because their main concern is maintaining their areas as white. Thus, these actions further limit possibilities and opportunities for Latinos. Furthermore, whites were not only angered by what they perceived as Latinos taking over in terms of population and space but also in terms of public services -- which only gave many white respondents more reason to want to continue to segregate.

## SURVEY

The survey also reflected whites’ views on segregation and different views on different cities in Orange County. For example, whites had very negative feelings about Santa Ana and very positive feelings for Newport Beach, the difference being that Santa Ana is predominately Mexican and Newport predominately white. Again whites constructed hard racial divides between Latinos and whites both symbolically and physically. Whites preference for racial segregation was also captured by a survey question talked about in the previous chapter when whites were asked if their property values would decrease if Latinos moved in and a staggering 80% said yes.

While most of my data can be characterized as dreary and pessimistic, there was some “good” news. While whites have very negative views about immigration from Latin America and Latinos in general, they were open to different possibilities around comprehensive immigration and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. I turn to this now.

### **Support for a Pathway to Citizenship**

While most respondents admitted to being against more immigration from Latin America, when they were asked about the possibility and implications of comprehensive immigration reform many of those interviewed made an argument for a pathway to citizenship for immigrants already here who could fulfill specific conditions. These conditions included such things as having no criminal record, paying a fine, getting a taxpayer ID number, and demonstrating they

can speak English. While this may seem contradictory from the views represented of them in the last two chapters, the respondents that agreed with some form of pathway to citizenship argued that if they became citizens they would “pull their own weight” by paying taxes. For respondents, paying taxes would mean a bigger tax base to pay for public services they felt Mexican overused. This is based on the incorrect assumption that the undocumented currently pay no taxes and thus do not pay for services they utilize. Below are some of the comments regarding immigration reform.

#### TRACY

I just know what it says on the statue of liberty. It didn't say give me your educated and your wealthy people and all that; and if they came over the wrong way — because I think there's more illegal immigration coming from Europe than there is from the south of the border. But we don't see them. They're not — they blend; whereas a poor Hispanic doesn't blend so much. And so that's a tough — I don't know that amnesty is the best way to do it, but I think that they should be given the opportunity to become citizens, absolutely.

#### WILBUR

Well, you know what, our whole founding fathers were immigrants at one time. My family was an immigrant in 1604; and I think everyone deserves the chance to be an immigrant. However, you can't indulge a country and you can't overrun a country with millions of people as we have been in the last two decades, and to absorb the cost financial. It's costing I believe — I believe it's costing the government billions of dollars to support welfare, food stamps, a lot of activities, and putting a strain on our infrastructure. Schools, medical, and so forth. I believe everyone should get a chance. Our country is founded on immigration. We've forever had from the mid 1800's when Irish came over in droves, and then the Italians came over in droves; and they were all immigrants at one time. And then, the people from \* and England, they were Immigrants at one time; now it's Hispanics that are immigrants. But if you overrun a country, and you strip the wealth out of the country as far as their natural resources as far as money to take care of their own people, I don't think that's good.

Tracy and Wilbur provide a complex answer that reflects even their internal debates regarding amnesty, but in the end they believe some Latinos should be warranted a chance to obtain citizenship. This is an important concept and reality whites understand. Wilbur is still concerned about, “absorbing the costs” but understands that immigrants built the country and were extended a form of amnesty. However, finding a way to alleviate “the costs,” is one potential angle to get whites to support comprehensive immigration reform. Rafael and Molly explain how granting legal citizenship to undocumented immigrants would lead to immigrants paying taxes and thus being less of a burden. In this sense white respondents believed Latinos would be forced to contribute like everyone else.

#### RAFAEL

Respondent: Yes. If they choose to do that, because then if they become a citizen, then they're basically going to have the opportunities to basically to work here then also to pay taxes here. There are a lot of illegal immigrants here that are working here that aren't

paying taxes here. So they're basically not contributing to the benefit of the country, but they're looking for benefits to take out of the country.

#### MOLLY

No. I think it goes back to amnesty is great if they've been here for a certain amount of time. Do I think they need to be shipped back home? I've got an issue because we open that door. We let them. They've been here. We're giving them benefits. They go to our hospitals. We've got an issue. I'm kind of touchy with that. Especially if they have kids that are born here. Sending them back—if they're hard working and they're the ones—doing picking the tomatoes... No. I don't want to pick tomatoes. I really don't. I've got an issue.

#### COURTNEY

I think probably take advantage at this point since we don't have the amnesty set up and so they're not — they're getting paid mostly under the table; not paying taxes.

Rafael, Molly, and Courtney are torn, but understand that with amnesty comes a bigger tax base that will lessen the burden on them. Furthermore, while the respondents overall want to curtail immigration from Latin American they are willing to provide amnesty for immigrants already here. Many, like Molly, acknowledged that Latinos take up jobs, particularly in the fields no one else would work, and that it would make sense if they were taxed and afforded amnesty. Rafael and Molly, like many of the respondents, assumed that most Latinos are “illegal,” and most “illegals,” are Latinos. Thus, they assumed that Latinos more often took advantage of rather than contributed to the society. They also expressed that this could be alleviated if they became citizens and were then forced to contribute by paying taxes.

These exact sentiments were mirrored in a statewide survey in Arizona, conducted by the Morrison Institute for Public Policy, where they found that 78% of Arizonans said they support legislation for those undocumented immigrant to become citizens. This included 69% of Republicans. Yet, 70% said they would still SB 1070, which gives more power to the police to detain and arrest those who they assume are “illegal,” which has led to an increase in racial profiling. Many advocacy groups have become very alarmed also with the possibility of this law essentially condoning racial profiling. So how do we reconcile that whites want an increase in policing against “illegals,” as well as a pathway to citizenship. Pollster Bruce Merrill best explains this by stating that this is a complex issue and that, “They make a clear difference between being tough on the border, not just for illegal immigration but for terrorists and gunrunners...and what to do with people who have been here for a long time,” (Fischer 2011).

#### SURVEY

This was further echoed in the survey. When whites were asked, “what should be done with ‘illegal’ immigrants currently residing in the United States, only about 7% said to grant amnesty. Almost 46% said to allow illegal immigrants to remain in the United States, with some type of pathway to citizenship. Thus -- taken collectively -- 53%, the majority of whites surveyed, would support comprehensive immigration reform that would allow undocumented immigrants to have a pathway to citizenship and not be deported. This tells us that whites

understand the economic and labor need for Latino immigrants and believe that if they acquire citizenship they would be forced to pay taxes and not burden the system as much. Again this pathway to citizenship does not mean it would not be plagued with the possibilities of problems, but at least there is an opportunity for talks between groups to get closer to comprehensive immigration reform. This also explains the President's policy on immigration enforcement as a pathway to comprehensive reform. For many of these individuals if one could stop the flow of immigrants, legalizing those already in the country would receive greater support.

There were definitely many other respondents who were strongly against immigration reform, in part because they felt that it rewarded bad behavior and mostly because they assumed most undocumented immigrants to be Mexican they wanted to curtail the Mexican population in the United States. However, if we take the response from above we begin to see some hope and possibility for comprehensive immigration reform that would include amnesty.

### **Policy Recommendation**

The question beckons, under what conditions would whites be sympathetic and vote for a policy that would greatly benefit undocumented immigrants. The answer is, when they feel interdependent with that group and believe it will equally benefit them. Thus, in the case of amnesty, where Mexicans would get full citizenship rights they would also be expected to take on the responsibility of paying taxes. This may be a possible opening and an important point of convergence. Taking a page from George Lakoff in terms of the importance of framing, part of how to pass an amnesty like policy is to frame the issue where everyone perceived they will benefit regardless of their race or political party association. So for example, while the left emphasizes immigrant rights, the right emphasizes responsibility and "paying your own way," Thus, amnesty can seemingly reconcile these two claims, where Latinos could gain full citizenship and have rights and responsibilities. This is an example of framing and public discourse becoming very important in how to get different groups to support comprehensive immigration reform. Thus, this is also a perfect example of how acquiring a good sense of the problem can lead to possible solutions -- in this case, white racial attitudes and their policy preferences, and more specifically to tap into whites' rationale to provide relief for many undocumented immigrants in great need of equal rights.

### **Conclusion**

There is very little contemporary literature on Latino racialization, in part because some scholars simply assume it to be the case while others completely dismisses the possibility of Latinos being constructed and treated as a racial group. Thus, my research and data become very important and timely because it not only tests if Latino racialization exists, but most importantly how it operates and the implications of whites continuing to believe Mexicans to be inferior and how that affects their policy preferences and behavior. As the data from above demonstrate, whites have a consistent racial ideology to dismiss and justify racial disparities between whites and Mexicans. Furthermore, the interviews, unlike the survey data, allowed respondents to really explain themselves and their frankness amounted to data that supports a belief that old racist ways are still with us today. While many respondents quoted or used media shows to inform and base their opinions on, it was clear that these were ideas that had been passed on generation to generation and that the media outlets they rely on simply give them ammunition to

defend their position. I have traced the continuity of whites thoughts regarding Mexicans -- and of course things have changed and evolved -- but two striking things remain the same: that whites still perceive Mexicans as inferior and that they blame them for the problems within the United States in terms of over population and the welfare state. Moreover, while “recent” immigration and continuous migration from Mexico is one factor that alarms whites it is clearly not the only one. This was clear when respondents made sweeping generalizations of Mexicans regardless of immigration status or generation. Consequently, the perceptions whites have of Mexicans also prove to play a major role in most of their decision making -- from where they live, who they hire, the schools their children attend, and how they vote on certain policies. This chapter focused on these behaviors and proved that the negative perceptions whites have of Latinos lead them to oppose policy that is friendly to Latinos and many other decisions that affect the Latino community. The connection between racial attitudes and policy preferences and behavior is clear: whites construct Latinos as inferior and are less likely to be sympathetic.

These interviews directly also challenge the “new assimilationists,” who continue to argue that Mexicans simply need more time and that they too will be equally incorporated into the larger society as other ethnic immigrants who came before them. This argument presupposes that Mexicans are a new group, and while there are new Mexicans migrating to the United States, whites’ perceptions of them is anchored by a history between whites and Latinos that includes: colonialism, conquest, segregation, labor exploitation, and discrimination. While these are no longer legal, that has not changed how whites perceive and treat Mexicans. In a time where comprehensive immigration is being fought for different types by different groups, it is important to figure out exactly why is it whites are not sympathetic to policies that benefit Mexicans and in general Americans. When you have a strong understanding of the problem you can create better, longer-lasting solutions, as I proposed in terms of amnesty.

We cannot simply assume racism exists and we also simply can’t stop researching how race affects our society because we live in a “post-racial” state. It is important to examine closely how racism works so we can find ways to prevent it. My research and data is a step in that direction.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### CONCLUSION

#### Introduction:

“America is not yet done with the illness of racism, the electoral success of Barack Obama notwithstanding. Yet, most white folks don’t want to talk about or hear about race anymore.... Racism is a powerful word. Using it can quickly shut down a conversation. But such sensitivity cannot excuse silence in the face of a real problem and ongoing justice.”

Sociologist Lawrence Bobo (2012, 1)

Dr. Bobo is an established race scholar whose research measures white racial attitudes towards African-Americans and has shown anti-Black bias using national surveys. Dr. Bobo also argues that academics, as well, do not want to talk about racism. In a speech at the American Sociological Association in 2012, he argued that even many white liberal academics are reluctant to address ongoing contemporary racism because of what he calls social desirability. Dr. Bobo explains that because white liberals desire a post-racial state where racism no longer exists, they choose to be optimistic and often dismiss or ignore research on racism. This very much has also characterized my experience in academia, where there is a lot of focus and research being conducted about Latinos -- more specifically, Latino immigrants -- yet many scholars shy away from talking about it in racial terms. The idea that people in and outside the academy do not want to confront the harsh racial biases and stereotypes today (even with research revealing racism) renders researching Latino racialization difficult. But as Dr. Bobo (2012) reminds us, it is imperative to study race, race relations and racism if we are to fulfill the country’s promise of equality. Particularly in Sociology -- and specifically where Mexican Americans are seen within the immigrant paradigm, situated along with the Assimilation model (Alba & Nee 2003) -- the focus has been about incorporation and race scholarship is often ignored. One of my major goals in this dissertation has been to bridge these two literatures in order to provide a more comprehensive and realistic overview of the experience Latinos encounter in the United States.

#### Dissertation’s Objectives:

The primary goal of this dissertation was to “take stock” -- so to speak -- of what whites think about Latinos, and, in essence, to document and map their ideas, perceptions and expressed feelings towards Latinos. In order to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of whites’ sentiments towards Latinos, I use three methods that included: an analysis of the “Ask a Mexican,” column; a 300-respondent survey; and 40 in-depth interviews -- to untangle the complexities of race and immigration. Each of these data sets provided comprehensive data on all of these issues.

My second primary goal was to interrogate the dominant models and arguments in the literature on race and racism, in general and with particular regard to Latinos/Mexicans. I set out to identify the ways in which racialization a process continues to play a significant role shaping the life experiences of Latinos/Mexicans. Part of this task involved interrogating the black/white binary in order to assess its strengths and limitations; and the extent to which it provides useful

for evaluating the experiences of Latinos/Mexicans. I conclude that it offers some significant insights but is ultimately limited for its applicability to the experiences of Latinos/Mexicans. This is because the model does not take sufficient account of the unique and complex configuration of forces that shape this groups' experiences, including the merging of racial and ethnic characteristics, the proximity of Mexico to the United States (and it all implies into terms of migration and cultural infusion) and the close association in the eyes of white Americans of Latinos/Mexicans with undocumented status. Debates about immigration are so intertwined with the identification and targeting of Latinos/Mexicans in ways that simply do not apply to the African American experience.

All of this has been carried out in a context in which very frequent, yet unsubstantiated, arguments are being made that since the election of Barak Obama to the presidency, the United States has become 'post-racial'. Most of these arguments – actually assertions – are being made in the public sphere, by political commentators, and by politicians. While few academics have made such bold claims, nevertheless, these arguments are in line with the predominant academic arguments about the declining significance of race, about the increasing role of class, and the related obstacles caused by immigration status and language issues. In other words, while the academics don't make such bold arguments about a 'post-racial' United States, much of their work lends supports to the claims made in the public sphere. Overall, then we see an increasing reluctance to identify racism, especially institutional racism, as a continuing cause of inequality. The reluctance to identify racism as a cause of the problems that Latinos and Mexicans continue to face is even more pronounced. So my dissertation offers a counter argument to such claims – to those made in the public realm and to those made by academics.

### **Summary of Main Arguments and Main Findings**

At a recent race conference at UCLA, two of my dissertation committee members spoke about the importance of studying race and more importantly how to do it. Dr. Taeku Lee addressed the importance of using different mechanisms and methods to measure racism, to fight old paradigms and ways of approaching research on race. Dr. Michael Omi spoke at length of how race is still important today, but also how it has changed and continues to change. More importantly, he addressed the importance of research illuminating us -- not if race still matters, but how it matters (UCLA IDP Race Conference 2013). The dissertation not only maps whites' attitudes towards Latinos, it also addressed how race still matters by using nuanced approaches. The dissertation specifically addressed how race matters not solely in the Black/white binary, but how it also matters to Latinos, and not only in the past but also today. Thus, in chapter one, I take into account the importance of public discourse, media and representation of Latinos in broader sense by taking the "Ask a Mexican" archive and using it as database to exhibit contemporary ways whites think about Latinos. The questions sent in by whites were not only coming from Orange County, but from across the country. They reflected many age-old racial stereotypes of Mexicans and also exposed how whites harbor racial resentment and the desire to decrease immigration from Mexico. Moreover, the column, which is printed in the *OC Weekly*, gains a sense of legitimacy because its "news" format also reflects how the dominant narrative -- even in mainstream media -- is quite negative and often hostile to Latinos.

In chapter two, using survey and in-depth interviews I mapped five racial frames in terms of the attitudes whites expressed towards Latinos in Orange County. The in-depth interviews gave way to very nuanced explanations and rationales as to why the white respondents believed

in the negative and often racist sentiments they had of Latinos. Again many of them evoked age-old stereotypes of Mexicans, and while they initially would begin talking about the problem of “illegal” aliens, they quickly would address all the groups as being a single unit. Furthermore, they were explicit that they were also including subsequent Latino generations in their negative characterizations of Latinos. These were supported by the survey and proved to be robust. Whites made clear that they agreed with Huntington (2004) that Latinos were a threat to American values, and that Latinos inability to assimilate further explained why whites did not include them as Americans or white.

In chapter three, I traced how these attitudes had an effect on whites’ policy preferences and other choices they made in terms of the way they interpreted Latinos. Whites here addressed how they were against most policies that favored Latinos and they further argued that Blacks and Latinos were problematic because they were welfare dependent. Whites did not only address how their views towards Latinos affected their policy preferences, but how it affected their other choices, such as making a conscious choice to live in gated communities that are predominately white and choosing schools that were more homogenously white. Many of the white respondents were candid about saying that they simply did not like and disapproved of seeing Latinos in “their” park, neighborhood or at the beach. These sentiments were also supported by the survey. While many of these whites did support a pathway to citizenship it was under specific conditions -- solely for need of labor and to increase the tax base. Even those who did support a pathway to citizenship assigned racial stereotypes to Latinos.

## **Theoretical Contributions**

The extensive data provided throughout this dissertation challenge scholars who argue that Latinos can best be characterized as an ethnic group, whose experience and upward trajectory are then considered to be consistent with the classic assimilation model. My data systematically reveal that whites conflate the use of culture and race to often mean the same, and deploy ideas about both race and ethnicity in order to conclude that Latinos are inferior to whites. This perception in fact challenges the very possibility of the classic assimilation model to predict their incorporation into society. Furthermore, because this is a group that has been here for hundreds of years -- across multiple generations -- and includes many who can trace their ancestry to people who were here when it was part of Mexico, also proves that the characteristics that are assigned to them are permanent. Unlike other ethnic groups whose experience is captured by the Assimilation model, Latinos are rendered a racial group. As I outlined earlier in the introduction chapter, Hattam (2007) argues that the way to distinguish race from ethnicity is to understand that even groups that at some point in time were racialized were able to acquire whiteness, usually by the third generation. This has not proven to be the case for Latinos (Telles & Ortiz 2008). Thus, by tracing the historical continuity of Latinos racialization, as past chapters have done, we begin to have an understanding that the way Latinos have been characterized has not evolved like it did with other groups -- and that this renders them inferior to whites.

Citizenship, race and immigration are at the core of U.S. history because, while the United States claims to be democratic and inclusive, a closer examination of its history shows a different story where characteristics that deem immigrants inferior have challenged democratic principles. Gordon and Lenhardt (2007) argue the importance of citizenship not only in its formal terms (rights and responsibilities) thus, “our primary concern is with citizenship as

'belonging' -- that is. With the realization by individuals and groups of genuine participation in the larger political, social, and economic and cultural community -- and with the ways that race, ethnicity and immigration status complicate the full achievement of citizenship in this sense." Moreover, attaining full citizenship is part of a full assimilation process, thus the dissertation examined how racialization affects immigrants' path to equal incorporation.

Many scholars have acknowledged the importance of laws and policies and their effects on immigrants. Glenn notes that by examining the local labor market and the stories of workers she is able to understand how for instance, "One of the clearest examples of the gap between formal law and informal custom, between federal law and local practice was in determining the race and rights of Mexicans in the Southwest" (Glenn 2002). Mexicans were often segregated and treated as inferior even though they were deemed white by law. Thus, labor exploitation became a specific institution to impede full integration for Mexicans. This is key, because while the racism that Blacks endured were legal -- more blatant and explicitly -- the work of many Chicano scholars that have recuperated the history show that Mexicans endured similar conditions when it came to segregation, labor exploitation, political disenfranchisement and even lynching.

### Perpetual Foreigner and Racial Minority

My findings also demonstrated how Latino racialization is unique because this is an immigrant group that has also become a racial minority, and while this group is seen as perpetual foreigner and "invader," it also has to deal with labels and perceptions that come with being a racial minority, including being called uneducated, involved in crime, and welfare dependent. Yet, many scholars continue to only remark and prioritize the Latino immigrant story without also contending with them as a racial group. This preference denies how subsequent generations of Latinos who make up a larger part of the group, who are being racialized as perpetual foreigners as well as racial minorities.

For example, in Mae Ngai's (2004) Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America she addresses the construction of illegal alien and the racialization of immigrants. Ngai argues, "these racial formations produced 'alien citizens' -- Asian Americans and Mexican Americans born in the United States with formal U.S. citizenship but who remained alien in the eyes of the nation." Thus, the issue of illegal immigrants comes about in the twentieth century with restrictionist immigration laws but also converts citizens into illegal aliens due to their race. While Tichenor (2002) argues<sup>10</sup> that most scholars either look at immigration policies as restrictive or expansive and that in fact there are different periods of each, Ngai (2004) is able to shift this simplistic take by centering race and nativism to show that all immigration policies had a preference for whiteness, and thus created racial categories that corresponded with how "desirable" was each of the immigrant groups. She further argues that the overarching objective of immigration policy is regulation of who can come and why, and that

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<sup>10</sup> Tichenor (2002) states, "Yet those who focus on the resilience of nativist and racist traditions in American political life provide us with few insights about the origins and development of expansionist policy regimes. For example, most of the choices of insulated U.S. political elites since the 1960's reflect a clear trend toward intentionally expansive immigration policies."

these decisions are always made with an understanding for the need for cheap labor, but also a desire to have a homogenous society. The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act that did curtail Southern and Eastern European immigrants also, “In this presentation, white Americans and immigrants from Europe have ‘national origins,’ that is, they may be identified by the county of their birth of their ancestors birth. But, the ‘colored races’ were imagined as having no country of origin. They lay outside the concept of nationality, and, therefore, citizenship” (Ngai 2004). Furthermore, the Hart-Celler Act of 1965 -- which was seen as an expansive piece of immigration, in fact -- “Hart-Celler’s continued commitment to numerical restriction, especially its imposition of quotas on Western Hemisphere countries, ensured that illegal immigration would continue and, in fact, increase” (Ngai 2004). Furthermore, she shows that the 1986 IRCA, while giving amnesty to a couple million immigrants, also increased the border patrol and that more recently the 1996 immigration and welfare reform have also served to curtail and punish 3<sup>rd</sup> world immigrants (Ngai 2004). Thus, by tracing how race is central for twentieth century immigration policies, Ngai proves how citizenship became more tied with the nation-state, and that -- along with the establishment of the border patrol -- reinforced territoriality as well as who would be included and excluded based on whiteness.

Other scholars have argued that restrictionist immigration policy is simply about nativism and not racism. Ngai, Sanchez and other scholars have shown that often times they are one in the same and that the debates that surrounded restrictionist immigration were based on racist pseudo science such as eugenics<sup>11</sup> and cultural nationalism<sup>12</sup> which both were centered on white supremacy. Sanchez (1999) cites Higham (2002; *Strangers* who identifies three types of nativism, including one which he calls racial nativism which was, “the extension to European nationalities of that sense of absolute difference which already divided white Americans from people of colors.”

Furthermore, by understanding the intersection of nativism and racism we can account for the history of racial discrimination immigrants of color have faced. One important distinction Sanchez makes when discussing nativism and racism, is that many who fought against immigration restriction could in fact be racist because, for example, in the case of Mexicans many employers deemed them, “biologically suited for stoop labor.” Ngai’s contributions are significant because they allow us to understand how immigration regulation may not seem as draconian and racist as before but in effect they have created categories such as illegal aliens, which are racialized and consist of any, “person who cannot be and a problem that cannot be solved.”

Ngai’s contributions are immense, but still her conclusion of the impossible subject as the constructed illegal alien is only one part of the racialization Latinos currently endure. Because whites often could not and cannot differentiate between Latinos that were here legally

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<sup>11</sup> Eugenics can best be described as the bio-social movement made up of, “strict biological determinists who believed that intelligence, morality, and other social characteristics, were permanently fixed in race. They also believed racial boundaries were impermeable and that assimilation was impossible” (Ngai 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Cultural nationalism was the idea that the nation-state would be more stable and better off if everyone was the same culture, in this case European/white.

or “illegally,” respondents also addressed the subsequent generations of Latinos, understanding they were citizens, and still prescribing them with racial characteristics that are addressed to Black racial minorities, such as being gang affiliated, welfare dependent, and undeserving of group-based policies. My data also show particularly within the old/biological racial frame, that whites’ characterizations of Mexicans/Latinos at present, come from old colonial ways of thinking about the people who lived in the western hemisphere and who come from “3<sup>rd</sup> world” countries. In other words, whites’ underlying racism towards Latinos have long historical roots that can be traced back to ways Europeans thought about and rationalized colonization and then Manifest Destiny as an extension to rationalizing the U.S./Mexican war and subordination of Mexicans then and now. This project of white supremacy has a long historical trajectory that can be traced to how whites continue to conceptualize this group not as American, not as equal, but as an inferior racial minority. Thus, it is vital to not solely study Latinos within the immigrant/perpetual foreigner paradigm, because it negates the experience of subsequent generations and their treatment as a racial minority.

### Black Exceptionalism and the U.S. Color-Line

That the white respondents constructed Latinos more as a racial group also has implications on the U.S. Color-line. There is a current and vibrant debate about if and how the color line changed, to what degree, and what that means for race relations in the United States. Scholars, such as Yancey, Lee, Bean and Sears argue that the color line most clearly demarcates between Black and non-Black. While Massey, Telles and Ortiz argue that the color line is most demarcated between whites and non-whites. And, Bonilla-Silva argues that whites are at the top and Blacks and dark-skinned brown people are at the bottom, and that honorary Asians and honorary Latinos occupy the middle of the racial hierarchy. The two groups of scholars on both ends of the spectrum take opposing positions when it comes to Black exceptionalism. Yancey, Lee, Bean and Sears would argue that the racism Blacks endure is unlike any other and that Asian and Latino groups, in time, will experience assimilations comparable to European immigrants at the turn of the century. Contrastingly, Telles, Ortiz, and Massey argue Latinos have a long history of racism and continue to face racial discrimination, unlike Blacks but in their own way.

The debate can be characterized with one set of scholars who argue, “that African Americans generally have a level of alienation that is qualitatively greater than that of these other minority groups and because of this alienation do not possess the same ability to become incorporated into the dominant culture as do non-Black racial minorities.... Thus, Latinos and Asians have an ability to assimilate that escapes blacks. As they assimilate, or at least develop a thinner racial identity as they accept majority group status, the white/non-white dichotomy currently used to understand race relations will eventually be replaced by with Black/non-Black dichotomy” (Yancey 2003, 15). Other scholars in the same camp would further add, “that applying the black discrimination prototype to the new immigrant groups, as the multiculturalist prototypes does, is an imperfect fit, that the racial color line is primarily specific to the case of African Americans, and that African Americans’ place in American political life is exceptional because their history is unique.” (Sears & Savalei 2006, 898). While the scholars on the other side would argue, “Some of our findings, however, call into question the likelihood that Whiteness will expand again to incorporate all new Latino immigrants. First, and most importantly, we find compelling evidence that Latino immigrants experience skin-color-based

discrimination in the workplace.... Although Latinos can choose their racial identification, our findings show that this choice is constrained by the color of their skin.... These findings suggest caution against the sanguine view that change in the Black/white divide will result in a fading of racial boundaries for all groups. Instead they support Hochschild's conclusion that change "is a far cry from predications that the old shameful racial hierarchies will disappear" (Frank et al. 2010, 396–97). Massey (2009) further argues that much of the Mexican population is starting to appear like an underclass because, "Segregation levels are rising, discrimination is increasing, poverty deepening, educational levels are stagnating and the social safety net has been deliberately poked full of holes to allow immigrants to fall through."

My data show that whites continue to perceive and treat Latinos like a racial rather than ethnic group, thus supporting scholars who argue the colorline is more about the white/non-white divide, as opposed to the Black/non-Black divide. I would argue this is the case for several reasons. Firstly, much of the literature on Black exceptionalism/Black-non-Black assumes Latinos and Asians are "new immigrant groups" that do not have a long history of racism (Sears & Savalei 2006). This is highly problematic since the southwest was once Mexico, and since the U.S./Mexico War, Mexicans have resided in the United States for hundreds of years and through 5-plus generations (Telles & Ortiz 2008). This negates numerous Chicano scholars who have recovered critical history as to how Mexicans have been exploited for their labor, rendered non-white, suffered lynching's, experienced deep residential and educational segregation and been seen and treated as inferior by the law and people in power (Telles & Ortiz 2008). So, if scholars want to include the torrid racial history of Blacks, they should equally do it as well for Latinos, in order to make fair comparisons. For example, these scholars either are ignorant of the history or choose not to take into account how Congress perceived and treated Mexicans in the past by stating things such as "Mexicans are notoriously indolent and unprogressive in all matters of education and culture...the lowest grade of nonassimilable native-born races...much impaired by their lack of ambition and their prones to the constant use of intoxicating liquor." (Massey 2009, 16; U.S. Commission on Immigration Report 1911) And thus, these same scholars cannot understand the continuity of this racialization, as well as how its new manifestations are connected to the initial colonial project.

Secondly, what is also problematic with the characterization that Asians and Latinos are different from blacks is the assumption that Asians and Latinos are similar. Not only are these two groups heterogeneous, but they are very different from one another -- in terms of history, immigrant status, immigrant economic and resources status as well as how they are perceived by whites today. As my data revealed and that of others as well (Maher 2004), whites have a more positive perception of Asians versus Latinos. Secondly, one major problem with much of the research is that it is couched in predictions that are often tainted by the scholars' personal normative goals. In other words, scholars posit arguments, but also admit that "this is yet to be seen," and they do not currently have the data to support their predications. This connects back to Bobo's concept of social desirability, in which scholars do not want to entertain racism and racialization when it comes to Latinos. Thus, their work is often misleading. This can also be seen with the work of Lee and Bean, who make predications about Latinos and Asians becoming white based on a sample of multi-racial couples, who do not represent a wider sample, and whose multi-racial children have not come of age to actually see how their experience will or will not conform to racialization. Another example of how scholars' claims are problematic is when scholars make statements like, "And Latinos, at least, are often physically indistinguishable from whites," (Sears & Savalei 2006, 898), and offer no data to support this

claim. Others have shown that through five generations, Mexican continue to be racialized and that education is the main social barrier they face (Telles & Ortiz 2008).

Thirdly and yet another major limitation to the color line debate made by all scholars on the spectrum is that their data are based on asking Latinos themselves about these issues. My work is a critical intervention as its conclusions are based on how whites perceive and treat Latinos. This is important because it could be the case that Latinos do not report being discriminated and may even report identifying as white. They may actually be racially distancing from blacks, but yet may have been discriminated in ways they were not aware. Thus, actually talking to whites is critical in understanding how Latino racialization unfolds, why it is, and the implications of it. For example, as a direct challenge to Sears and Savalei's (2006) premise that Latinos are indistinguishable from whites, whites in my sample not only were clear in demarcating whites from Latinos. Whites went further to describe Latinos as criminals and inferior. Their responses showed how their policy preferences work against Latinos, that whites make choices about where to live and where to send their kids to school based on the notion that they do not want to interact with Latinos -- because they are not seen as white.

Moreover, my data also reveals how whites in many areas -- specifically when it comes to perceptions about crime, intelligence, and public service abuse -- feel that Blacks and Latinos are similar. This finding directly contradicts scholars who do not measure Latinos racialization or simply dismiss it. This debate should not yield to the Oppression Olympics-- as I agree African Americans have endured a particular racism then (slavery, Jim Crow) and now -- but to completely negate other racial groups, the history of their racialization and how that manifests today is problematic. As scholars we cannot let our normative goals be the only goals that drive our research, but we need to be fair to understand and contextualize all groups' racial formation (Omi & Winant 1994). This also does not mean that comparisons between the groups are not fruitful. They proved to be fruitful in my research as the white respondents themselves brought up other groups when addressing Latinos. Not only Blacks, but most also talked about Asians as the model minority, in contrast to Blacks and Latinos. We do need to pay heed to the complexities of race and race relations, but they must come from the data, not misguided and unsupported claims and predications.

The scholars who have subscribed to the model of Black exceptionalism, have further been challenged by new data and research that very much undermines past studies. During the time I have conducted my research -- and in the last ten years in general -- many significant changes have occurred and many scholars are publishing not solely on anti-immigrant policies but anti-Latino in general (De Francisc0 Soto 2010). Furthermore, as more anti-Latino policies have been introduced and passed at the local and state level, the media has increased its reporting on these policies, the root of the policies and the implications for the Latino community. These have created new research to address race and immigration. More recently there has been even more empirical data that supports the premise that Latinos are being racialized, and that they are unequivocally not being included as white.

The color line debate, whether implicitly or explicitly, has continued to be taken up by scholars. New research has committed to the criticisms I outlined above. One major one is that more and more data has been compiled regarding attitudes about Latinos and Asians, but -- unlike before -- scholars are untangling attitudes towards immigrants by country of origin. A recent study that has gained a lot of attention among academia and the media has been a survey done in Ohio by scholars Timberlake and Williams (2012) who employed over 2,000 citizens in Ohio. They summarized their work, saying, "We found that Asian and European immigrants

were generally rated most positively and Latin American immigrants most negatively.... Only Latin American immigrants were targeted for primarily negative stereotypes, and were not rated toward the positive end of the scale on any of the five traits” (p. 20). The five traits included describing the group as poor or rich, intelligent or unintelligent, violent or nonviolent, self-supporting or on government assistance, and whether they try to fit in with Americans or stay separate. They also took into account that Ohio -- unlike many parts of the United States -- has seen minimal immigrants from Latin America, and thus argued that Ohioans' negative perspective of immigrants from Latin American stems from national media, which has reported on the increase in Latin American immigrants.

Similarly, Fiske et al. (2002) measure warmth and competence for various immigrants groups. They show evidence that Asians scored high competence and low warmth, but Latino immigrants scored low warmth and low competence while Canadian and European immigrants scored high warmth and high competence. Furthermore, they argue, Latinos represented “the low-status, incompetent groups that are perceived not to be warm [and] may be perceived to have hostile, exploitative intent that impacts others in the society also provoking resentment and hatred” (p. 896). Thus, by disentangling perceptions about immigrants by country of origin we gauge a clearer picture -- one that indicates that time after time, or data set after data set, Latinos seen as the least likable immigrant group. This is also confirmed in my data, where the white respondents placed Latino immigrants and Latinos in general at the bottom of the racial hierarchy and more alongside with Blacks.

Like Timberlake and Williams (2012), Brader et al. (2008) conducted experiments that concluded that, “while news emphasizing the costs of immigration boost the perception that immigration is harmful, ethnic cues strongly condition emotional reactions to this news. Stigmatized out groups, in this case Latino immigrants, trigger negative emotions when costs are emphasized.... Citizens felt more threatened by Latino immigration, not European immigration, and this feeling triggered opposition to immigration and multilingual laws, promoted request for information and led people to send anti-immigration messages to Congress” (p. 975). In this study they were able to show not only that Latinos were seen in negative stereotypes but that this also triggered opposition to immigration. This too was the case sampled in San Diego County, which showed that Anglo aversion to Latinos coincided with Anglos favoring less migration from Mexico and having an aversion to amnesty, as well (Ayers et al. 2009). While it may seem that proximity to the U.S./Mexico border may be prompting all these negative sentiments towards Latinos, the Ohio survey proves that proximity to or contact with Latinos does not change respondents' opinions of Latin American immigrants. This is clearly a national trend and one that my work speaks too. What all these studies have in common is that their research design was administered by survey data. This is helpful not only to make more national and generalizable claims, but by sampling a larger group the research provides more robust findings and conclusions. Yet, it is in my in-depth interviews that I can really get at not simply the racial stereotypes whites have of Latino immigrants -- and policy preferences -- but why they feel that way, where it comes from, and how they continue to prescribe those negative and racist sentiments to subsequent generations who are legal.

This new academic research that has finally taken into account contemporary Latino racialization may be inspired by national and local events that have made life more difficult for Latinos. I think it is important to explore some of these that have particular relevance to my research, and to possible future research.

## Broader Implications (Nation-wide)

On April 23, 2010, Arizona's Governor Jan Brewer signed SB 1070 (The Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act) into law. The controversial law requires law enforcement to determine a person's legal status during lawful stops and arrests, and makes it illegal to be undocumented as well as to transport or harbor an "illegal alien." Many were appalled by this law, which was at the time the strictest anti-legal immigration law in the country, and were worried that this would lead to an increase of racial profiling that specifically targeted Latinos (Archibold 2010).

Shortly thereafter, Governor Brewer was asked by a reporter, "What does an illegal immigrant look like?" To this she responded, "Uh Uh... I do not know what an illegal immigrant looks like. I can tell you that I think that there are people in Arizona that assume what an illegal immigrant looks like." In essence Brewer admitted that people, such as law enforcement, are able to determine an "illegal alien," based on what "they look like." Thus, racial profiling becomes inevitable with the passage of SB 10170. Moreover, in a national poll, whites overwhelmingly supported SB 1070 by 70%, while Latinos only supported the law by 31% (Murray 2010). The racial divide was due to the fact that Latinos felt threatened and targeted. SB 1070 and other subsequent immigration bills further highlight the discrimination that Latinos continue to face today.

Upon a closer look at who orchestrated and created SB 1070, many were not only connected with the Republican Party, but also with anti-immigrant organizations. Many of those organizations also have ties to white supremacy groups (MSNBC 2010). Russell Pearce, who introduced the bill, made it clear that the intention of SB 1070 is "attrition through enforcement." In other words, Arizona made a clear choice that they were going to make living in Arizona for undocumented immigrants difficult and would force them out.

Interestingly, Arizona created another problem for itself as many immigrants fled Arizona in fear of deportation. This created a labor shortage. Many industries -- specifically in agriculture, tourism and construction -- lost in total tens of billions of dollars (CNN 2008). This is not new. The United States has a long history of labor shortages oftentimes filled by Mexican labor, which in the 1930's was deemed to have led to the "Mexican Problem" (Barrera, Montejano & Gonzalez). This reflected the dilemma that the United States needs cheap labor but prefers guest worker programs where the immigrants return to Mexico. As Reisler puts it, this reflects the ideas that Mexican immigrants are "always the labor and never the citizen" (Gutierrez 1999). While some see the need for labor and comprehensive immigration reform, many sympathize with Samuel Huntington's fear of a population that is not only made up of "illegal aliens," but is also non-white.

This warning to pay heed to the destructiveness of Latinos is the crux of Huntington's (2004) article: *The Hispanic Challenge*. Here Huntington stated that "The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two people, two cultures, and two languages. Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves -- and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream. The United States ignores this challenge at its peril." While scholars in academia have long challenged Huntington, his sentiments towards Latinos resonate with many whites (Fraga & Seguro; Telles). Like Huntington (2004), many perceive

Latinos to be culturally inferior and unwilling to assimilate. These sentiments cause anti-immigrant rhetoric and action targeted at Latinos.

Latinos do not constitute all undocumented immigrants and yet the dominant discourse conflates Latinos with the “illegal alien.” Recently, the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center released a data report quantifying hate speech in talk radio. The report found that of the 222 instances of ‘call for action’ against vulnerable groups, most focused on Latinos and immigration (Noriega & Iribarren 2011). Other scholars such as Otto Santa Ana, Kent Ono, John Sloop and Leo Chavez have also examined how public discourse leading up to Proposition 187 also reflected how people perceived Latinos and “illegal aliens” as synonymous.

Discrimination not only happens through public discourse, but through individuals who are prejudiced against Latinos and whose prejudice is frequently disguised by the discourse of illegality. For example, Brader et al. (2008) find that “citizens felt more threatened by Latino immigration, not European immigration, and this feeling triggered opposition to immigration and multilingual laws, prompted requests for information, and led people to send anti-immigration messages to Congress.” Furthermore, Victoria De Francesco Soto (2012) argues, “Opposition to immigration is closely linked to the negative racial animus toward one specific group -- Latino,” and discusses how “Nick Valentino and his colleagues at the University of Michigan looked at how evaluations of Asians, African-Americans, and Latinos influenced opinion on immigration. Negative feelings toward Latinos had the largest effect on restrictive immigration preferences.”

But Latinos have not only faced anti-immigrant policies but also policies that challenge citizens who have been here for many generations. This was reflected in Arizona’s HB 2281 that banned Mexican-American studies at the Tucson Unified School District, and at this point that ruling was upheld by a federal court. Texas is currently also trying to pass similar legislation. These are legal and practical applications as to how negative sentiments towards Latinos have real implications. As the Latino population continues to grow and whites’ fears and concerns also increase, this racism will have its consequences. Two instances that have been recently accounted for include when the federal courts determined that that Texas Redistricting purposefully discriminated against Latino voters (2012). The other involves an account from Political Scientist Lisa Garcia Bedolla (2012) who shows that “Latinos are California’s largest ethno racial group, yet have the lowest rates of college completion” (p. 1). These studies reinforce my argument that the Latino experience and not be explained solely by the immigrant paradigm and must also account how Latino citizens are also marginalized and racialized.

Sadly, Arizona is not the only state that has fallen prey to scapegoating and discriminating against Latinos. In what some call the Arizonification of America, the National Conference of State Legislatures stipulates that in 2011 almost every single state had similar anti-immigrant legislation similar to Arizona. Many states in the south who have received new waves of immigration from Mexico have also responded with a hostile reception towards these immigrants. For example, Alabama has also introduced a draconian anti-immigrant law, which many have deemed to be the “New Jim Crow.” Elon James White along with other Black leaders recently went to Alabama on a delegation to help those who had been affected by HB56. White states, “HB-56 not only creates an unwelcoming environment for any brown immigrants, it harks back to a terrible time in Alabama history that many thought was in the past.” Others like White (2011) have also expressed that this law not only gives power to state officials to enforce the law, “But when the law of the land is prejudice, it creates vigilante immigration policing.” Thus, racial profiling creates a reign of terror for all Latinos.

While the data in this dissertation are drawn mainly from the expressed attitudes of whites in Orange County, current events across the country indicate that Latinos receive a hostile reception and this hostility is passed down to the subsequent generations. My data supports the argument that Latinos and their increasing population continue to be unwelcome and more so seen as a threat and concern. This dissertation squarely demonstrates the many facets of contemporary Latino racialization and more importantly addresses how it matters and why it is important to pay attention to these local and national trends that will continue to shape the Latino experience.

There is one more important issue that emerged out of the data provided in this dissertation – that has to do with what appears to be a deep and unsteady ambivalence among whites in terms of what to do with Latinos. As I demonstrated in chapter 4 despite their expressed hostility on racial and ethnic grounds, many whites nevertheless are in support of some kind of path to legal status for Latinos/Mexicans. Many whites expressed the view that despite their undocumented status, it would be a good thing to provide Latinos/Mexicans with a path to legal status. They offer several reasons but that mainly that it would increase money going into paying and taxes and would “force” Latinos to contribute. What seems to underlie this ambivalence is a recognition that there is no other apparent solution to the issues of the 11-12 million undocumented workers in the nation, and some kind of recognition that legalizing their status would be better for the nation overall. Many respondents acknowledged how undocumented workers provided real economic benefits for the white majority, in terms of cheap labor, cheap food and cheap service industries. They also recognize no doubt that without the exploitation of such workers prices would go up. That is perhaps significant. And who wants to pay \$20 for a lettuce, or \$5 for an avocado? So the ambivalence arises due to the conflict around nationalist and racist views, alongside recognition of economic benefits.

#### Implications for Policy and Future Research:

The analysis offered in this dissertation offer some policy implications. It is estimated that there are 11-12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, and of those about half are Mexican. This makes not only Mexican immigrants more visible but the group as a whole as well. For example Arizona’s SB 1070, is not solely anti-immigrant but anti- Latino as it has targeted this group, specifically through racial profiling. The failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform has devastated communities and families across the country. Just under Obama’s administration alone, about 1.2 million undocumented immigrants have been deported. This has not only affected immediate families but also local and regional economies. In Arizona, shortly after SB 1070 passed, many immigrants fled the state in fear of deportation, which created a labor crisis. Many industries -- specifically in agriculture, tourism and construction -- lost billions of dollars. Thus, there is a political, economic, and social urgency to resolve the immigration crisis. My research examines white racial attitudes towards Latinos, and finds that the respondents overwhelmingly have negative and frequently prejudicial views towards Latinos. This is key in immigration policy reform, because while not all immigrants are from Latin America, much of the debate is dominated by fears and discourse of a “browning” America. Yet, many of the white respondents in my sample agreed with some form of pathway to citizenship because they argued that upon becoming citizens they would “pull their own weight” by paying taxes.

For respondents, paying taxes would mean a bigger tax base to pay for public services they felt Mexicans overuse. This is based on the incorrect assumption that the undocumented

currently pay no taxes and thus do not pay for services they utilize. Rafael, one of my respondents, best explains how granting legal citizenship to undocumented immigrants would lead to immigrant paying taxes, and therefore less of a burden. In this sense, white respondents believed undocumented immigrants would be forced to contribute like everyone else. “Yes. If they choose to do that, because then if they become a citizen, then they’re basically going to have the opportunities to basically work here then also to pay taxes here. There are a lot of illegal immigrants here that are working here that aren’t paying taxes here. So they’re basically not contributing to the benefit of the country, but they’re looking for benefits to take out of the country.”

White respondents acknowledged that Latinos take up jobs, particularly in the fields that no one else would do, and that it would make sense if they were awarded amnesty in order to be taxed. These exact sentiments were mirrored in a statewide survey in Arizona, conducted by the Morrison Institute for Public Policy. Even in Arizona, where Latinos have faced a considerable amount of racial turmoil, they found that 78% of Arizonans said they support legislation for those undocumented immigrants to become citizens. This included 69% of Republicans. (Fischer 2011).

Immigration and immigration policy have long been issues the United States has had to grapple with. Historically, similar issues of nativism, the need for cheap labor, and political opportunism have led to either expansive or restrictive immigration policies. There are added complexities in the contemporary immigration era. In recent times, these issues have been compounded with issues of national security (Post-9/11) and an economic recession. All of this has created a hostile anti-immigrant environment -- specifically for Latin American immigrants - - due to an increase in security at the U.S./Mexico border and local law enforcement with more power, resulting in massive deportations.

In the past, the major policy options have included a guest worker program, increased vigilance in securing the border along with deportations, some form of amnesty, or a combination of these. What past immigration policy debates have failed to address head on is that, while not all undocumented immigrants are Mexicans/ Latinos, media reports disproportionately show them to be Mexican, often using images of them crossing the border. This then creates rationales for people to feel unsympathetic toward this group and deny them equal rights. It is thus critical to address head on the fears people have of undocumented immigrants who are from Latin America, and who are often labeled criminal and inferior.

Strategies to Reframing a Pathway to Citizenship:

1. Emphasize how millions of undocumented immigrants becoming citizens will create a larger tax base that funds public services. This counters the argument that immigrants are a strain on the economy, that they do not contribute, and only abuse public services. This also allays people’s misconceived notion that only “their hard earned money” pays for the public services undocumented immigrants use.
2. Remind people that the labor and jobs that immigrants perform sustain food prices and take the jobs many American citizens chose not to take.
3. Citizenship not only comes with rights, but also with responsibilities. Granting citizenship would mean identification and holding them accountable for their actions. They would need to pay a naturalization application fee, in order to gain rights and services. This presents the issue as a contract -- so to speak -- where immigrants get rights and access to services and in exchange they would adhere to U.S. laws and be more easily accountable.
4. Expand the notion of interdependence to include non-citizens. By recognizing all the

contributions of undocumented immigrants both socially and economically, citizens will understand that it is in their best interest to usher immigrants out of the shadows and provide equal status in order to promote a country with principles of democracy and equality. Thus, incorporating undocumented immigrants is beneficial to the entire society.

5. Educate the public on the negative affects of keeping immigrants undocumented. Frame a pathway to citizenship as a way to alleviate “the costs,” and the “burden” undocumented immigrants have on the U.S. system.

These recommendations are not only meant to help Latino immigrants but the larger group as well because for Latinos, racialization does not stop at the first generation. These recommendations reflect a sliver of my findings yet offer key possibilities to gain a pathway to citizenship. What the dissertation has established and the unique contemporary racialization Latinos endure, help explain the negative attitudes whites have of Latinos and also demonstrate how they reject policies that positively affect Latinos.

Thus, it is important that we continue to measure and study race and racism, because as my research and the research of others have shown, we do not live in a post-racial state. It is also important to keep in mind how history has or has not changed in terms of how this group is perceived, and how what is “new” creates different policies and situations that need our attention. As I have described at length in the dissertation, there are multiple and compounding factors that account for the unique racialization Latinos endure in contemporary times. But one that has become more relevant has been the actual changes in demographics as well as future projections of demographics changes. Of equal importance is how these changes are characterized and reported by the media. So, in the last couple of years many major metropolitan areas and states have become majority-minority, the number of non-white births have now outpaced the number of white births. Yet, segregation and other racial inequalities have deepened. The demographic changes have also mapped onto politics as seen with the Obama presidential election of 2012, where minorities played a pivotal role in his re-election. Most whites are not in competition with Latinos for jobs, but it is the presence of Latinos, and their rising numbers that triggers whites’ fears of a browning America. They believe this threatens U.S. values and dominance (Huntington 2004, Chavez 2008, Romero 2011). Thus, group conflict is not economic but cultural. Furthermore this is going to be fought in the arena of politics where, “Political competition provides an equalizer of one person/one vote for citizens and increased concentrations of Latinos may exacerbate divisions. The impacts of Latino aversion and context represent a general fear among majority populations of “strengthen in numbers and the qualities of these groups characterized by racial resentments” (Ayers et al. 2009, 607). And while many Latinos are yet to be citizens, part of the current debate on comprehensive immigration reform is some people trying to keep Latinos from acquiring political parity. As we continue to research Latino politics it will be crucial to address Latino racialization, for which I believe, this dissertation had done much to lay the foundation. Understanding white attitudes toward Latinos and the implications of them serve to help understand the current hostile state Latinos face and shed light on the future and possibilities for race relations.

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**Appendix A:**

**In-Depth Interview Questionnaire**

The main purpose of this interview is to discuss with you your feelings about Orange County and the different ethnic groups who reside in Orange County. We are interested in whatever thoughts and opinions you have on these issues. **THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS.** Your identity and the confidentiality of your answers will be safeguarded.

<b>NAME</b>	
<b>GENDER</b>	
<b>AGE</b>	
<b>OCCUPATION</b>	
<b>EDUCATION LEVEL</b>	

**SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

We want to start by getting a better sense of who you are.

1. CAN YOU VERY BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHERE YOU GREW UP?
  
2. WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE LIVED IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD: RICH OR POOR, HISPANIC OR WHITE, ETC.?
  
3. WHEN AND WHY DID YOU MOVE/LIVE TO ORANGE COUNTY/(SPECIFIC CITY)? IN GENERAL TERMS.
  
4. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE NEIGHBORHOOD THAT YOU LIVE IN TODAY? IS THIS A GATED/UPSCALE/PRESTINE COMMUNITY?
  
5. ARE THERE PLACES IN ORANGE COUNTY YOU STAY AWAY FROM? WHY?

## **SECTION 2: FRIENDSHIP AND ROMANTIC LIFE**

Now we are going to ask just a few questions about your personal life.

1. DO YOUR FRIENDS LIVE A SIMILAR LIFESTYLE THAN YOU? WHAT DOES THAT LIFESTYLE CONSTIST OF?
2. HAVE YOU EVER DATED OR BEEN ATTRACTED TO SOMEONE OF A DIFFERENT RACE OR ETHNCITY?
3. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN WHITES AND LATINOS?

## **SECTION 3: EMPLOYMENT/LABOR MARKET, HOME INFORMATION**

1. ARE YOU CURRENTLY, EMPLOYED, SEARCHING FOR A JOB, A HOMEMAKER, OR SOMETHING ELSE?

### **QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS (PART-TIMERS INCLUDED)**

2. BRIEFLY. WHAT KIND OF JOBS HAVE YOU HAD IN LIFE?
3. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT JOB?
3. WHAT IS THE RACIAL MAKEUP OF YOUR PLACE OF WORK?
5. DO YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS HAVE WORKERS, MAID, GARDNERS, A NANNY THAT WORK IN AND AROUND YOUR HOME? WHAT IS THEIR ETHNICITY?
6. SOME PEOPLE CLAIM THAT HISPANICS POSE A THREAT TO THE AMERICAN VALUES AND WAY OF LIFE. ON THE OTHER HAND OTHERS PRAISE THEIR HARD WORK ETHIC. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**QUESTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS WHO ARE  
UNEMPLOYED, HOMEMAKERS, ETC.**

2. BRIEFLY. WHAT IS YOUR MAIN ACTIVITY IN LIFE? (USE DISCRETION)
  
3. WHAT IS THE RACIAL MAKE-UP OF YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS?
  
4. DO YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS HAVE WORKERS, MAID, GARDNERS, A NANNY THAT WORK IN AND AROUND YOUR HOME? WHAT IS THAT RELATIONSHIP LIKE?
  
4. SOME PEOPLE CLAIM THAT HISPANICS POSE A THREAT TO THE AMERICAN VALUES AND WAY OF LIFE. ON THE OTHER HAND OTHERS PRAISE THEIR HARD WORK ETHIC. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**SECTION 4: OVERALL VIEWS ON MINORITIES**

Now we want to ask you some general questions about different ethnic groups.

1. HOW DO YOU DEFINE THE IDEA OF RACE?
  
2. DO YOU THINK THAT THE RACES ARE NATURALLY DIFFERENT IN ANY WAY?
  
3. DO YOU THINK THAT MOST WHITES BELIEVE THAT HISPANICS ARE CULTURALLY DIFFERENT? HOW? WHY?

**SECTION 5: RACISM AND LIFE CHANCES**

In this section we want to specifically address the Hispanics/Latinos.

1. MANY HISPANICS SAY THAT THEY EXPERIENCE A LOT OF DISCRIMINATION IN THEIR DAILY LIVES. OTHER PEOPLE SAY THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

2. ON AVERAGE, HISPANICS HAVE WORSE JOBS, INCOME, AND HOUSING THAN WHITES. WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS THE CASE? /EXPLAIN.
3. SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT LATINOS ARE WORSE OFF THAN WHITES BECAUSE THEY LACK MOTIVATION, ARE LAZY, OR DO NOT HAVE THE PROPER VALUES TO SUCCEED IN OUR SOCIETY. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

### **SECTION 5: GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AND MINORITIES**

Now we want to talk about your views on the ROLE of the government.

1. DO YOU SUPPORT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS THAT HELP VICTIMS OF CHILD ABUSE, THE HOMELESS, AND BATTERED WOMEN?
2. HISPANICS SUFFERED LOTS OF PREJUDICE IN THIS COUNTRY IN THE PAST, DO YOU THINK THAT BECAUSE OF THIS HISTORY, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SPEND MONEY AND HAVE SPECIFIC PROGRAMS ON THEIR BEHALF?
3. REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRAT LORETTA SANCHEZ—ONE OF ORANGE COUNTY’S REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS—HAS SUGGESTED THAT ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS DESERVE A CHANCE TO BECOME CITIZENS? DO YOU THINK THAT AMERICA SHOULD OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO BECOME CITIZENS?
4. SINCE THE 1954 BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION DECISION VERY LITTLE MIXING OF THE RACES IN SCHOOL (“school integration”) HAS OCCURRED IN THIS COUNTRY AND EVEN LESS SO IN ORANGE COUNTY. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
5. SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUE BUSING, FOR EXAMPLE SHOULD LATINO KIDS FROM SANTA ANA BE BUSSED INTO NEWPORT BEACH TO GUARANTEE SOME MIXING OF THE RACES IN OUR SCHOOLS?

6. ORANGE COUNTY HAS LOTS OF ALL-WHITE AND ALL-HISPANIC NEIGHBORHOODS (“residential segregation”). WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS SITUATION?

## **SECTION 6: IMMIGRATION**

In this section we want to discuss immigration. We know that a considerable number of Orange County residents OPPOSE IMMIGRATION. A smaller segment supports IMMIGRATION.

1. ARE YOU FOR or AGAINST IMMIGRATION FROM MEXICO/LATIN AMERICA? WHY OR WHY NOT?

3. PRESIDENT OBAMA’S NEXT BIG ISSUE HE WILL BE TAKING UP IS IMMIGRATION. HIS PROPOSAL LIKELY WILL HAVE AN AMNESTY COMPONENT. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

2. DO YOU BELIEVE LATNOS CONTRIBUTE OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE U.S. SYSTEM? EXPLAIN.

3. IN THE FUTURE CALIFORNIA WILL BECOME MAJORITY LATINO. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

## **SECTION 7: JOB COMPETITION**

Now we want to talk about the job situation in this country.

1. HOW DO YOU VIEW THE JOB SITUATION (“U.S. economy”) THESE DAYS?
2. HOW ARE YOU DOING IN TODAY’S ECONOMY? (PERSONAL STATUS)
3. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT HISPANICS ARE TAKING JOBS FROM WHITES?

4. MANY WHITES SEEM TO BE VERY ANGRY ABOUT HISPANICS. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN **THEIR** ANGER?

### **LAST SECTION: CRIME QUESTIONS**

Now we want to conclude with a few questions about crime in general.

1. SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT CRIME IS DUE TO POVERTY, OTHERS DUE TO LACK OF MORALS. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
2. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT HISPANICS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES TO BE INVOLVED IN CRIME? WHY?
3. WHAT PROBLEMS DO YOU FORSEE IN CALIFORNIA IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS/DECADES? WHAT ARE YOUR FEARS ABOUT THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS/INCREASE IN LATINO POPULATION?

**Thanks very much for your time!**

**APPENDIX B: RESPONDENTS' PROFILE**

<b>PSEUDO NAME</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>CITY</b>
LOLA	25	Director of Marketing	BA/FIDM	F	Anaheim Hills
MAT	49	Civil Engineer	BA	M	Newport Beach
MAYRA	44	Flight Attendant	MA	F	
MEL	36	COO Marketing Co.	3 yrs	M	Tustin
TODD	30	Real Estate Agent	some college	M	West Covina
SALLY	39	AT&T Agent	2 yrs college	F	
TREY	30	Motivational Speaker	BA	M	Seal Beach
TIM	60	Teacher	BA	M	Seal Beach
BOBBY	27	Athletic Perf. Coach	BA	M	Aliso Viejo
RAFAEL	57	Sales and Marketing	BA	M	Newport Beach
MOLLY	44	Sales	High School	F	Anaheim Hills
CARL	64	City Planner/City council	MA	M	Seal Beach
DAVE	43	Stunt Driver	BA	M	Tustin
DILLON	61	Investment Broker	some college	M	Newport Beach
CHRISSEY	43	Hair Stylist	some college	F	Newport Beach
KILE	49	Drywall Contractor	GED	M	Newport Beach
ERNIE	30	President of Utility Co	some college	M	Tustin
NICOLE	48	Self-employed	1 yr college	F	Costa Mesa
SIMON	50	Yachtsman	some college	M	
MARK	42	Owner of Repo Co.	AA	M	Costa Mesa
PAUL	51	Broker/Real Estate Agent	some college	M	Newport Beach
PATRICIA	60	Retired	3 yrs college	F	
HOWARD	36	Lawyer	JD	M	Anaheim Hills
TOM	55	Self-employed	High School	M	Balboa Island
JERRY	52	Commercial Real Estate	some college	M	Newport Beach
WILBUR	50	Real Estate Agent	some college	M	
TONY	61	Machinist	BA	M	Costa Mesa
ALBERT	48	Owner of Medical Group	MA	M	Newport Beach

ALICE	45	Owner Clothing Store	BA	F	
COURTNEY	45	CEO AD Agency	MA	F	Newport Beach
DANIEL	43	Real Estate Agent	BA	M	Aliso Viejo
CAMIL	40	Family Therapist	MA	F	Fullerton
NATHAN	49	Disabled	AA	M	Fullerton
KADEN	46	VP of Sales of Accounting Firm	MBA	M	Newport Beach
KLOE	43	Real Estate Agent	1 yr college	M	
RANDALL	49	School Bus Driver	AA	M	Newport Beach
GARY	40	Driller	10th grade	M	
TRACY	51	Contracts Administrator	some college	F	Garden Grove
HOLLY	44	Office Manager	some college	F	Lake Forrest
ISABEL	59	Craftsperson	some college	F	Seal Beach